

## The Use of Social Networking Websites as Political Campaign Tools

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### **Abstract**

*There are many various social media networking sites, each with a distinct target audience and a distinct set of tools for connecting people via the information exchange such as ideas, videos, photos, and links. Because of the targeting capabilities of social media as well as the fact that internet advertising is typically more costly than TV or print ads, corporations are increasingly using it in overall marketing plans. Companies were not the only ones taking advantage of these sites' advertising and networking potential. Snail mail has indeed been overtaken by email or social networking sites' rapid interactions since the invention of the internet, which has increased the pace at which information travels between individuals. In the months prior up to the general election, politicians from around the country and regions begin their campaigns with such a barrage of TV ads, live debates, and commentary from the press and "infotainers." In order to do this, election candidates must be "Americanized" or "Professionalized" in terms of their effective communication. Narrowcasting is used to reach certain groups of constituents while still concentrating on the press in these systems that are nationally coordinated. As a result, an campaign that stresses the repeating of well crafted messages to a particular group in order to present the candidate in a positive light is created. Light that is as bright as feasible. Campaigns are becoming increasingly 'McDonaldized' because they focus on sound bites and speed over quality information, delivering messages that sound nice to supporters but do not address political issues.*

Keywords: *Social Networking, Campaigns, Social media, Elections, Tweeter, Facebook*

### **Introduction**

Technology's steady development initially brought us all the internet, and later social media outlets. Social networks have demonstrated that they may be utilised in a variety of subjects, including politics, instead of socialising and pleasure as they initially appeared. Social media has both benefits and drawbacks when compared to more traditional forms of media. That it can attract large crowds in a short amount of time is the most positive aspect here. Social media gives people the freedom to do anything they want because the rise of the Internet. Censorship, although well, may sometimes restrict such unbridled expression. People's self-esteem rises when individuals gain access to a wide range of social media apps. Since they can put their skills on display here. Economics and the news

of the day would be separated in your minds. People's propensity to vote for political groups with ideologies similar from their own and their ability to spread that ideology to huge numbers of people through social media have led to a shift towards from referring to people by name. In particular, young voters can be swayed by the well propaganda campaign. But the absence of this seems to be a sign of social media use that is done unconsciously. The term "social networking" refers to a network in which people are sharing the material they produce and curate. People and institutions alike are drawn to social media for its ease of use and openness. Denying that social media's primary job is to educate, it may also be utilised for a variety of different purposes. The new concept of social media has also carried with it a number of controversies and advantages. (Fischer 2018)

### **Objectives**

The specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To determine the many types of social media sites that the respondents make use of.
- To have a better grasp of the appeal of various social media sites.
- To determine which social media site is most often utilised by respondents for increasing their political knowledge.
- To do research on the influence that social media has on society.

### **Literature Review**

Research was conducted in advance of the elections that took place in Germany in 2009, and it looked at more than 100,000 Twitter interactions (also known as "tweets") in which political candidates or parties were mentioned. In order to accurately anticipate the preferences of voters for politicians and political parties, it was necessary to assess the strength of the emotions that were represented in those tweets. This was accomplished via the use of a text analysis approach. According to the data, the likelihood of an election increases proportionately with the number of times a candidate, party, or person is mentioned. According to the findings of this study, Twitter is a platform where political views are discussed and exchanged. This indicates that politicians have the opportunity to take advantage of the fact that individuals are willing to exchange political knowledge with one another. Due to the fact that Twitter is such a widespread social media network, politicians may use it as a potent weapon in their campaign plans. On Twitter, many have

expressed their opinions over the reelection of a British MP. It was more probable for members of parliament elected in 2005 to use social media, such as Twitter, in their reelection campaigns than it was for members of parliament elected earlier in the decade. Researchers came to this conclusion as a consequence of the fact that politicians who were competing against each other on Twitter were more inclined to utilize work to get an advantage over their rivals. Interacting and engaging with people on this social media platform is one strategy that politicians use in order to bolster their standing in the public eye and enhance their public image. We looked at both the content of tweets and the interactions between users, with a particular emphasis on how politicians use Twitter to engage with their constituents. Studies indicate that political campaigns using social media are rapidly growing in not just popularity but also sophistication and significance in today's political landscape. However, it was shown that the use of Twitter in campaigning did not result in a closer link between politicians and the people who voted for them. According to research, Twitter may be an use campaign tool for politicians; however, the success of this tool is contingent on the candidate's usage of the site. The study found that Twitter's capacity to raise voter participation is limited since it is unclear if Twitter users represent genuine voters. This makes it difficult to determine whether Twitter users are actually voting. According to the findings of this research, the use of social media platforms such as Twitter may have a detrimental effect on the result of an election. Research has shown that a politician's use of Twitter does not necessarily result in an increase in the number of votes they get. This is because it is quite uncommon that a voter would switch parties as a result of using Twitter. According to findings from previous research, the use of Twitter by politicians does not have a significant impact on the outcomes of polls.

### **Impact on Elections**

The use of social networks has a significant impact on the results of elections. In so many cases, conventional media mass medias, like cable television, are merged with social media sites. A significant number of people rely on cable tv as their primary and initial point of contact for obtaining news, data, and other types of media. Commentary on cable television helps to the development of polarisation and plays into people's preconceptions to favor certain parties. The messages transmitted by conventional media are often amplified and reinforced by social networks, that further contributes to the creation of party differences. The authors of the an article published in the Journal of Communication came to the conclusion that while social media does not have a

massive effect upon people's opinions and voting patterns, it also does not have a minimal effect on such qualities. Instead, the bandwagon effect is created by social media. This happens if a candidate in an election makes an error or achieves a great success. Users of social media will then greatly amplify the influence of such a failure or triumph. According the findings of the Pew Research, nearly one quarter of Americans learn something about candidates via an online source such as Twitter. Social media is being used by about one in five people in the Usa, the majority of which are people between the ages of 18 as well as 29. The presence of young people on social media platforms often serves as just an impetus again for formation of protests and movements. **(Smith 2013)**

For example, during in the presidential election in 2008, a Facebook group featuring 62,000 members was founded to support the election of Obama. Within days, colleges all over the world conducted rallies that drew millions of people each. The term "Facebook Effect" is frequently used to refer to protests and movements like these. On the other side, social media sites often have the opposite impact as well as place a substantial burden on several of its users. According to the results of a poll study by the Pew Research Center, roughly 55 percent of people are using social media in the America said that they will be "worn out" by the amount the political postings that they see on social networks. Since the election in 2016, that number has increased by nearly 16 % as a clear result of the continued rise of technology and social media. In contrast to 2016, when just 56 % said the same thing, almost 70 percent of people now say that it may be "stressful as well as unpleasant" to discuss politics on social networks with people who hold opposing viewpoints. As a direct result of this, the proportion of humans who describe these discussions as "interesting and informative" has dropped from 35 % to 26 % in 2018. **(Moore 2019)**

### **Political Advertising on Social Media Platforms**

The use of campaign ads is a method of campaign that enables politicians to actually communicate with voters and have an impact on the political discourse. Candidates have the ability to build brand recognition, bring attention to important problems, and draw attention to a shortcomings of their opponents by running advertisements on various types of media. This allows the candidate to reach audiences which otherwise may not have been paying close attention to the election. Newspapers, radio, tv, and direct mail were the main distribution channels for political advertisements inside the

past. When Barack Obama decided to run for president in 2008, he was among the first politicians to employ advertising on social media sites. During that electoral cycle, in 2008, candidates spent a total total of \$22.25 million on online political advertisements. Ever since, internet political ads on has seen meteoric growth; in 2016, candidates spent a total total of \$1.4 billion on such advertisements. Regarding the results of the presidential race in 2016, the general public gained a better appreciation of how influential & potentially game-changing the effects of political online advertisements can be. According to a tweet sent by Brad Quality related, the digital director for the Trump campaign, the Trump performance on the field on Facebook was "100x to 200x" more effective than the Clinton team. As soon as leaker Christopher Wylie revealed that data analytics team again for Trump campaign, Cambridge Analytica, "used personal details taken without authorization in early 2014 to build a system that might profile individual U.S. voters, in order to target people with individualised political advertisements," the possible explanation for this became plainly obvious. It was also found that several of the advertisements that have been posted on social media did not arise in any of the candidates. **(Teehankee 2016)**

According to a study came from the House Select Intelligence Committee, the Russian state spends around one hundred thousand on advertisements that were posted on Social media in an effort to influence the results of a presidential race that was held in the Americas. The impact of those advertisements has indeed been amplified as a result of the fact that they were created with intention of stoking disharmony on divisive topics, such as those relating to gun control and race issues, and were then directed toward individual people who were most vulnerable to the impact of those messages. The impact of those advertisements was magnified by the fact that those advertising messages were designed to fan split on polarising issues. While it may seem like a pathetic sum when compared to the price of a tv commercial, the effect of those advertisements was amplified by the fact that those advertisements have been designed to fan divide on polarised issues. As a society, we still are dealing with the fallout from these revelations, and we are currently striving to identify exactly what sort limitations, if any, must be put on social media sites in reference to political communication. The controversy was rekindled in November of 2019, after Facebook neglected to remove false advertising that were run on Joe Biden during the reelection campaign of President Donald Trump. These commercials were released by the Trump campaign. You have a responsibility to investigate the regulations that social media sites are creating for political ads as

the election in 2020 approaches closer. You also have a duty to consider the consequences such rules have towards our electoral vote. We need to do this because the 2020 election is coming near.

**(Vaidhyanathan 2018)**

The First Amendment and Marketing in Political Campaigns It is helpful to look into the history of political market in the United States and how it's been controlled in those other kinds of media in order to gain a better understanding of the challenges involved in regulating television campaigns on social media sites. Candidates in this nation have a long and distinguished history of spreading false information about their rivals, starting with Thomas Jefferson's campaign, which stated that John Adams was going to take the country to war with France. This practise has a long and distinguished history. It also is entirely legal to lie in ads for candidates and parties. Some people have been taken aback by this data due to the notion because advertisements are subject to the regulations that forbid them from making false claims about items or about rivals. For example, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) severely punished Kentucky Fried Chicken in 2004 for making a false assertion that eating fried chicken as part of a healthy diet was feasible. The company was forced to pull the commercials and also to offer up all of its marketing for evaluation by the FTC for next five years. **(Persily 2017)**

Those do not remain true for somebody who is campaigning for political office and runs an advertising in which they make false claims about his rival. Why? Because advertising for candidates and parties are considered a kind of political speech, and the First Amendment law prioritises the security of political expression above the security of other forms of speech. When it comes to the regulating of political advertisements, the government does not even have nearly as much power as it does whenever it comes to the regulation on corporate speech. The reasoning for this is that people have a right to be informed from politicians which has not been censored, which they can then assess for themselves before taking their judgments at the ballot box. A victim of the a misleading attack ad has no choice but to file political lawsuit for libel as their sole legal remedy. This is attributable to the fact that no government entity has the power to punish a candidate who lies in an advertising. Litigation of this kind is often not very frequent since there are several technical barriers towards its filing. Candidates for political office have a difficult time winning such types of lawsuits because people in the public eye are held to a higher standard of proof when libel is alleged against them. A public person must show, just as a private suit would, that false



claims of fact were made against them, and that these statements caused injury to their reputation. But, on top of that, they need to prove that the assertions was made with "actual malice," which means people who produced the advertisement either understood it was false or didn't care if it was true or not. Although a number of applicants may be able to overcome these obstacles and triumph in their court dispute, doing so might not be worth their energy and cash to them, particularly while they're in the midst of running a campaign. **(Wong 2019-10-30)**

But let's say just for argument that a candidate does indeed wish to sue somebody for libel; who exactly may he sue? Obviously, individuals have the ability to take legal action against the person or organisation who thought of and paid for the advertising; but, is the news business that was capable of actually disseminating the advertising message to the public at large also liable? The many methods of communication each have their own unique guideline. Publications are regarded to be publisher, and that they are responsible for the advertisements which they decide to be included in their periodicals. As a corollary to this point, businesses have complete choice over the ads that can run, and that they are not required to operate any advertising which they do not voluntarily choose to run. In point of fact, according to the first Article, they have the right to decide for themselves how they will write. This privilege is legally protected. Television and radio stations that are a part of the a simulcast are banned from selectively choosing which television campaign to broadcast, at least with regards to significant major candidates for the same seat. This is a glaring contradiction. **(Unver 2017)**

They have the choice of not airing any political ads at all, but if they do, they are required to do so for almost all politicians who want them. Why? The rationale for this is that the airwaves because broadcasters utilise are indeed a limited resource. Since there is a limit to the number of broadcast stations that can operate on the spectrum, there is always the possibility that some viewpoints will never be spoken publicly. Because of this risk, the First Amendment rights of broadcasters may be limited by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which has the authority to do so. This restriction is intended to guarantee that the general public is exposed to a wide range of perspectives and information. Because of this, broadcasters do not have any legal obligation for the advertising that they air. The laws which apply to broadcasting companies are not implemented on the channels that are accessible via cable television. They need not possess the same distinctive qualities as broadcast channels have—for example, they are not restricted in amount means that they are free to

choose which political ads they wish to air and which ones they do not like to air. As a consequence of all this, they are not only liable for any false advertisements that appear, and they also risk getting sued for libel. **(Eder 2020)**

## **Political Ads on Social Media**

As one of the most current mode of communication to join the fray, social media is characterised by a number of distinctive features that distinguish it apart from forms of media which came before everything. In same way that there is no limit to the number of television stations or newspapers, there is no limit to the number of various social media platforms that may exist. In reality, however, there's only a few large networks that have a prevalent marketshare, and those companies include Facebook (together with its subsidiaries Messenger and Instagram), Alphabet (along with its subsidiary YouTube), and Tweet. Another similarity that have with newspapers as well as cable tv networks that they're not required to air every campaign commercial which is sent to them, unlike newspapers as well as cable tv networks. It is a common misconception that social media platforms are forced to comply with the First Constitution, but that isn't the case. Because they are regarded to be private corporations, they are allowed to create their own material and information rules. In contrary to broadcast channels, online technologies are exempt form the need which they provide advertising space to all competitors. The reason for this is that there are no rules in place that control the stuff that companies manufacture. On either hand, in contrast to tv channels and newspapers, social media websites would be in no way considered as publishers.. **(Deibert 2019-01-09)**

They are considered as internet providers, and in line with Clause 230 of the Communications Decency Act, they are exempted from legal obligation for the content that the other users post on their websites. They are exempt from legal action for posting false political ads and for tolerating false content on their websites. The very last and maybe most important distinction between social media sites as well as the press that came in front of them is that social media sites allow for a strategy that is known as "targeted advertising." "A marketing technique that leverages consumer information what they enjoy, whoever they are connected to, what they demographic are, what they've purchased, and more—to segment them into small groups for higher scores" is one way to



broadly define microtargeting. When it came to highly targeted commercials, this practise has become increasingly controversial over the course of the past several years. When it comes to the sorts of political advertising that they will run as well as the kinds of targeting that they might permit for those commercials, each of the major platforms has its own policies. **(Moy 2010)**

### **Use of Social Media in India**

The political process is being significantly impacted by social media in India in a new and substantial way. In order to engage with India's younger and more wealthy population, political parties and leaders in India have devised new techniques in recent years. During the assaults that took place in Mumbai in 2008, information was communicated between Indians and the rest of the world via Twitter and Flickr, which brought attention to the utilisation of social media in India. Political parties in India made an effort to engage with voters by utilising social networking websites during the national elections that took place in May 2009. This was the first time that online voter registration and transparency campaigns had been initiated by political parties. On the other hand, political parties in urban India are becoming more tech-savvy as a result of the fact that this is the only method to communicate with educated young people. On Indian social media platforms, the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) is by far the most popular political party. **( Hussain Md Bajlun 2018)**

The BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) has been much more active on social media in recent years. A large number of government officials, including SushmaSwaraj, Rajnath Singh, ArunJaitley, and NarendraModi, are regular users of social networking sites. NarendraModi, who is running for president as a candidate for the BJP this year, will have his own team to manage his presence on social media. The young AamAadmi Party (AAP) and its candidate, ArvindKejriwal, were able to accomplish an unexpected victory in the municipal elections held in Delhi thanks to the help of social media. Traditional political parties were their opponents. On the other side, there is the possibility that social media platforms may be used in an inappropriate manner on a mass scale. Some politicians have been accused of using social media to smear their rivals by making false claims about the number of followers they have on their accounts on platforms like Twitter and Instagram. The use of social media to promote violence against members of religious and ethnic minorities has become widespread. **(Sadashivam 2019)**

## **Policies Governing the Targeted marketing of Political Advertisements on Social Media**

It is not always a negative thing to offer people the right to decide for themselves not if they accept the statements made by a politician; in fact, one might argue that it is an integral part of the democratic process. In a perfect world, a market economy would give the wider populace access to as much info as possible regarding the applicants, a free media would evaluate the comments made by the applicants and expose any dishonesty, and voters will indeed talk about the issues among themselves before trying to cast their ballots. When it came to inaccuracies in political ads that are televised nationally, radio, and newspapers, it has typically become the pattern that has developed throughout the last few history. Because these advertisements are distributed to such large and diverse audiences, they are instantly subjected to the a considerable amount of scrutiny from the general public. Microtargeting is facilitated via social media, putting it apart from less conventional channels of information in a significant way. **(Morgan 2018-01-02)**

This is the defining quality that sets social networks separate from other, more traditional forms of communication. Furthermore addition, the use of microtargeting makes it increasingly hard to differentiate between credible news sources as well as those who spread misleading info. Ellen L. Weintraub, head of the Commission On elections, argued inside an opinion piece arguing for social media sites to restrict to indeed campaign ads because it is simple to single out vulnerable groups and clear political messaging to them with no responsibility. This is because the vast majority of people in the public never actually watch the commercial. Despite the fact that all of these lies have the potential to get a big influence on elections, it is possible that they will go undetected as a result of all this. This is despite the ability to be able that they will go undetected as a consequence of all of this. However, it is important to remember that the impact of microtargeting on democratic institutions is not totally detrimental, but this is something that should not be ignored. Because internet advertisements often cost a far lesser number than spots aired on television & radio, this paves the way even smaller groups with much less money to successfully connect with voters. It also offers candidates the opportunity to zero in on actual and specific problems that matter to their prospective constituency, as opposed to more general and vague messages that tend to broadcast on traditional media; this, in turn, may increase voter involvement overall turnout. **(Andrejevic 2013)**

When creating its policies on microtargeting of political ads, Facebook and Google most likely examined both the positives and negatives of the practise; yet, they came at startlingly different results. As according Google's existing policy, political advertisements can only be targeted to broad demographic factors such as age, gender, and postcode. Contextual targeting is possible through the use of this platform, that means that a person who is reading an item on immigration can be shown an advertisement about policy on immigration, for example. "this will align our approach to election ads with long-established practises in media such as TV, radio, and print," Google said that when it revealed the modification to its policy in November of that year. "This will lead in election commercials being much more widely viewed & open to public debate." Facebook, on either hand, has adopted a much more liberal approach toward customer - oriented marketing, deciding to not place any boundaries on how organizations may target their advertisements. In other words, Facebook doesn't really restrict microtargeting in just about any way. Instead, Facebook has promised to provide consumers with a greater degree of control so over number of political advertisements they view and to streamline the process of browsing throughout its library of political advertisements. A large number of critics are of the view that these measures will not substantially increase the openness of targeted advertising. (Wellman 2012)

### **Conclusion**

Due to the fact it has the capacity not only to report as to what is occurring around the globe but to form a popular sentiment on the ongoing issues, social media has been called the fourth pillar for democracy for a substantial period of time. The word "democracy" suggests that people take role in the decision process. This involvement was made much easier by the media. The rise of social media, on the other hand, had caused a shift in the manner in which people currently take part in democratic institutions. When compared to traditional forms of media, social networking has a wider reach, is simpler to use, makes it easier for large numbers of people to participate, and offers instant updates. These elements has led to a scenario in which people depend more on social networks than its conventional counterparts in order to be aware of their surrounds as well as participate in discussions - whether social, economic, or otherwise - and this, in turn, improves democratic. However, it is more than just one side to the story when it comes to an impact of social media on democracy. On the other hand, its been abused quite a few occasions, often becoming the antithesis of democratic in the process.

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