NEW MEDIA AND THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

In the last decade, the penetration of new media into everyday life, particularly through the use of the internet and social media, has played an important role in shaping contemporary patterns of political communication. This research aims to examine how new media has changed the landscape of political communication and its impact on public participation in the democratic process. Through literature analysis, this study explores various aspects of the changes brought about by new media, including greater accessibility to political information, personalization of political messages, as well as the challenges of echo chambers and polarization that result. The research method used in this study is literature review. The results of this study show that new media have provided new opportunities and challenges in political communication. On the one hand, new media allow politicians to reach out and interact with voters directly and more personally, and promote wider public participation in the political process. On the other hand, phenomena such as echo chambers and online polarization raise concerns about the quality of democratic discussion and the ability of voters to make well-informed decisions. This research emphasizes that while new media provides great opportunities for democracy, there is an urgent need for effective mitigation strategies so that its negative impacts can be minimized.
Keywords: New Media, Changing Landscape, Political Communication.

Introduction

In this era known as the Digital Revolution, the rapid growth of information and communication technology has affected various aspects of life. New media, such as social media, blogs and video sharing sites, have changed the way individuals communicate with each other, obtain information and interact with the world around

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them (Stahl & Literat, 2023). This has also reshaped the landscape of political communication where people are now engaging and expressing themselves more in the digital public sphere.

With the capacity to reach a wide and instantaneous audience, new media has become an important channel for political communication strategies. Political figures, parties and organizations now use digital platforms to disseminate information, conduct campaigns and garner support (Bennett & Livingston, 2023). New media enable unprecedented speed of information dissemination, offer opportunities for more interactive political discussions, and even influence the shape and structure of political campaigns (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023).

The influence of new media on the political communication landscape cannot be underestimated, creating significant waves of change and playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion (Nordbrandt, 2023). Social media, blogs and other platforms give politicians the ability to interact with voters directly, allowing them to spread political messages without the intermediary of traditional media. These platforms encourage the creation of more personalized campaigns, where political narratives can be carved out to target voters in a more focused and customized way (Lievrouw, 2023). This not only increases efficiency in terms of cost and time but also strengthens the relationship between political candidates and their supporter base, which is an important aspect in building strong and sustainable political support (Nanz et al., 2022).

In addition, new media has created a new arena for political discussion and debate, expanding the public sphere into a virtual realm where every individual has the opportunity to participate. Citizens now have access to more information and can take part in political discussions without geographical or physical restrictions (Goyanes et al., 2023). However, this aspect also gives rise to phenomena such as 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers', where individuals are more often exposed to information that reinforces their existing views, and less exposed to contrasting perspectives. The effect creates polarization of opinions and at times, fosters the spread of false or misleading information (Sabol, 2022). Therefore, while new media has opened the door for greater political participation, it also poses significant challenges to the integrity of information and the quality of public discussion.

The emergence of phenomena such as fake news, echo chambers, and political polarization amplified by social media algorithms have become major concerns in discussions related to contemporary political communication (Wojcieszak et al., 2022). On the other hand, questions have been raised about how effective new media are in increasing citizens' political engagement and participation (Pineda et al., 2022).

Advances in information and communication technology have fundamentally transformed the landscape of political communication, introducing a new era where information flows more freely and quickly than ever before. Amid the rapid development of digital technologies, traditional media such as television, radio and

newspapers no longer dominate as the main channels for disseminating political information (Freiling et al., 2023). Instead, digital platforms and social media have become vital new terrains for political actors to reach and interact with voters. This dynamic has changed the structure of political campaigns, where communication strategies must now consider social media algorithms and the use of big data for more effective market segmentation and targeting. This allows for more personalized and targeted political messages, changing the way politicians communicate with their constituents (Jaidka et al., 2022).

Furthermore, this transformation also encourages increased public participation in political discussions. With greater accessibility to information and platforms for self-expression, citizens can now more easily engage in online activism, voice opinions and participate in campaigns (Freelon et al., 2022). Social media, in particular, has become a powerful instrument for people to organize demonstrations, rally support, and even influence the political agenda. However, it has also introduced new challenges, such as personal data security concerns, the spread of misinformation, and polarization exacerbated by echo chambers. These changes are driving important debates about the impact of technology on democracy and the quality of political discussion, suggesting that while technological progress provides new opportunities for engagement and transparency, it also raises important questions regarding the ethics and effectiveness of public participation in digital democracy (Brändle et al., 2022); (Sudarmo et al., 2021).

This research aims to understand how new media is re-engineering the political communication landscape. The study will investigate the various dynamics involved, including how political information is disseminated, interpreted, and responded to by the public in the new media sphere. By analyzing relevant literature, this research seeks to identify the advantages and disadvantages of new media in the scope of political communication, as well as its impact on democracy and public participation.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature research method. The literature research method is an approach used in research to collect, identify, compile, and analyze existing data from various sources related to a particular topic under study (Lange, 2023). Researchers using this method do not collect primary data through experiments or surveys, but instead focus on reviewing sources such as books, journal articles, conference papers, theses, and other written materials. With literature research methods, researchers can investigate and obtain a comprehensive overview of the latest findings, related theories, and developments in a field of science without conducting field data collection (Haaland et al., 2023).

The steps in conducting a literature study usually include searching and selecting relevant literature, either manually or by using search engines and scientific databases, organizing the information obtained, then analyzing and synthesizing to draw

conclusions or identify research gaps that can be followed up with further research (Verhoogen, 2023). Literature studies not only facilitate the preparation of theoretical foundations for empirical research, but can also be used as a standalone methodology in writing systematic reviews or meta-analyses of existing studies (Buera et al., 2023); (List et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion
Concept of New Media

New media refers to forms of media that have emerged from the development and convergence of information and communication technologies, primarily based on the use of the internet and digital technologies (Stahl & Literat, 2023). New media includes various platforms and applications such as websites, blogs, social media, podcasts, interactive games, and virtual reality, which enable the creation, distribution, and exchange of information interactively and in real-time (Bennett & Livingston, 2023). Compared to traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers, new media are more dynamic, accessible from a variety of digital devices, and provide users with the ability to interact directly with content as well as other users (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023).

Key characteristics of new media include content customization, where users can select and customize the information they receive according to their personal preferences; interactivity, which enables two-way communication between content creators and consumers, as well as between consumers and other consumers; and ease of access and participation, where anyone with an internet connection can become a content publisher at a relatively low cost (Nordbrandt, 2023). In addition, new media continues to evolve rapidly due to technological innovation, creating new ground for experimentation in forms of expression, business and politics. This transformation has had a significant impact on the way we produce, disseminate and consume information, as well as on the social and political structures of society (Lievrouw, 2023).

The fundamental difference between new media and traditional media lies in the way content is delivered and received by audiences. Traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, adhere to a one-way communication model, where information is delivered by content providers to a mass audience without any direct interaction or quick response from the recipients (Nanz et al., 2022). Content in traditional media tends to be consistent and impersonal, with strict editorial control and longer production cycles. In addition, traditional media require physical infrastructure such as broadcasting stations and print presses, which limits the reach and speed of information distribution (Goyanes et al., 2023).

In contrast, new media, driven by the internet and digital technologies, offer interactive platforms that allow audiences to not only receive content but also generate, modify and share content in real-time. This characteristic of interactivity

encourages two-way dialog and active audience participation in content creation (Sabol, 2022). New media also offer the possibility for content personalization, where users can customize what they see according to personal preferences and interests. In addition, content distribution through new media can reach a global audience without geographical or physical boundaries, facilitating the dissemination of information at an unprecedented speed (Wojcieszak et al., 2022). This digital revolution has changed the media landscape, questioning the role of traditional media and introducing new dynamics in the way communication, information consumption and social interaction take place (Pineda et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the difference between new media and traditional media lies in the way content is generated, delivered and received. New media, driven by advances in information and digital technologies, offer interactive platforms that change the role of the audience from passive recipients to active participants in the communication process. This creates a more dynamic and personalized environment for consuming and producing information. Meanwhile, traditional media relies on a one-way communication model that is more structured and less flexible. Both forms of media have their respective roles in society; however, the convergence towards new media continues to change the global information landscape, challenging conventional content boundaries and exerting a profound influence on contemporary social, political and economic evolution.

Political Communication

Political communication is a field that encompasses the strategies and techniques used by politicians, political parties, governments, media, and other stakeholders to convey messages, influence public opinion, make decisions, and achieve political goals. The field covers various aspects of interaction in political contexts, from election campaigns, public policy debates, media strategies, to the use of social media for mass mobilization and advocacy (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023). Political communication is not only about how messages are delivered, but also about understanding how they are received, interpreted, and influence the behavior of voters or supporters. In practice, this includes analyzing narratives, rhetoric, symbolic messages, and the use of persuasion and framing strategies to shape public perception (Lievrouw, 2023).

The scope of political communication is broad and multidisciplinary, involving knowledge of political science, psychology, sociology, mass communication, and information technology. It includes communication techniques and tools from traditional ones such as speeches, debates, and campaign advertisements, to modern methods such as digital campaigns, big data analytics, and targeted micro-advertising on social media (Nanz et al., 2022). With the development of information technology, the scope of political communication is expanding, allowing messages to be

disseminated faster and more specific targets to be achieved. In this digital era, political communication is not only carried out by political actors and conventional media, but also by individuals and community groups through new media, which further enriches and complicates the dynamics of contemporary political communication (Goyanes et al., 2023).

The development of political communication has undergone major transformations throughout history, going hand in hand with technological developments and changes in social structure. In the early era, political communication was mainly conducted through direct speech and physical print such as pamphlets, newspapers and books, which allowed political messages to reach a limited audience and took longer to spread (Wojcieszak et al., 2022). In this period, speech rhetoric was the main weapon in conveying ideas and influencing public opinion. Then, with the advent of mass media such as radio and television in the 20th century, the ability of political actors to reach a wide audience increased significantly. This era marked a shift in political communication towards more centralized and professionalized strategies, where political campaigns and messages were organized to maximize influence through mass broadcasts, shaping public views on an unprecedented scale (Pineda et al., 2022).

Entering the digital and information age, political communication underwent yet another revolutionary change, this time driven by the internet, social media and mobile technology. Digital platforms provide tools for interactive two-way communication, allowing politicians and other political stakeholders to interact directly with voters in real-time (Freiling et al., 2023). Social media, blogs, podcasts and other online channels have made room for a more diversified voice and made it easier to disseminate political information and mobilize support. This era is also marked by the rise of big data and analytics, which enable more targeted and personalized political communication strategies based on voters' preferences and behaviors. These changes not only increase the reach and effectiveness of political messages but also create new challenges in terms of privacy, information deception, and political polarization (Freelon et al., 2022).

The digital age, with its advances in communication and information technology, has fundamentally changed the landscape of political communication, introducing an era of greater transparency and public participation. Social media and other online platforms have strengthened participatory democracy, offering citizens the tools to share information, organize social movements, and directly pose questions or criticisms to political leaders (Hameleers, 2022). However, the shift to a digital world also poses challenges in the form of the dissemination of "fake news", cyberattacks, and the manipulation of public opinion through disinformation campaigns by domestic and foreign political actors. These trends demand better digital literacy skills among voters and new approaches to the regulation and monitoring of online content by social media platforms and election authorities (KhosraviNik, 2022).

In conclusion, political communication has evolved from one-way communication through speeches and print, to mass broadcasts through radio and television, and ended up in the digital age characterized by interactivity, personalization and the use of big data. This transformation has developed the capacity of political actors to influence voter opinion and behavior, but also demands greater transparency and accountability due to the increased risk of technological abuse. The future of political communication will continue to be shaped by the dynamics between technological advances, regulations governing the information space, and the need for a healthy and inclusive democracy, recognizing both the potential and the challenges that this new era brings.

New Media in Political Communication

New media, which includes various digital platforms such as social media, websites and mobile applications, has revolutionized political communication by providing innovative ways for political stakeholders to reach and interact with voters (Woolley, 2022). Social media, in particular, has become an important tool in the political communication arsenal, enabling politicians, political parties and advocacy groups to disseminate messages instantly to a wide audience, garner support and mobilize voters. The power of new media lies in its ability to support two-way communication; not only disseminating information, but also receiving feedback, questions, and criticism from voters in real-time. Interactive features of new media, such as comments, likes, shares and polls, increase engagement and allow stakeholders to assess public opinion and adjust their messages dynamically (Amsalem et al., 2022).

On the other hand, new media also democratize political participation by giving individuals and small groups a greater voice in political discourse. Ordinary people can now produce their own content, disseminate information, and mobilize support for issues or candidates through digital campaigns, podcasts, and vlogs. This has changed the landscape of political communication, challenging the information monopoly previously held by traditional media and political elites (Theocharis et al., 2023). As such, new media has expanded the space for multiple perspectives and become a powerful tool for advocacy and social change. However, challenges such as echo chambers, disinformation and online polarization require a critical and informed approach to their use in order to contribute to a more open and inclusive democracy (Boulianne & Larsson, 2023).

One of the most famous examples of the use of new media in political campaigns was Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns in the United States, which is considered an inflection point in the use of social media in politics. Team Obama utilized platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reach young voters, collect donations and coordinate volunteers. Social media was used to amplify campaign messages and build a community of actively engaged supporters (Rhodes, 2022). This

strategy not only significantly increased the number of small donations but also increased voter turnout, especially among a younger demographic, which has historically been underrepresented in politics. New media allowed the Obama campaign to personalize messages, spark grassroots action, and ensure that supporters felt an integral part of a larger political movement (Molder et al., 2022).

At the global level, the Arab Spring in 2011 is a notable example of the power of new media in political mobilization. The intensive use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by activists in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia helped spread awareness about political issues and organize protests in real-time. New media provided a platform for citizens to share stories and images of ongoing protests, often circumventing government censorship of traditional media (Kim & Ellison, 2022). It facilitates rapid coordination and dissemination of information that is indispensable for mass mobilization and collective action. The median effect, known as the "Twitter Revolution" or "Facebook Revolution", emphasizes the potential of new media to support democratic change and social harmony through widely distributed digital activism. However, the long-term effectiveness of these mobilizations is the subject of much analysis and debate, amid the realization of sustained political change and its impact on the fabric of Society (Bryant & Finklea, 2022).

In conclusion, new media has revolutionized political communication and mobilization, giving power not only to traditional political stakeholders but also to individuals and marginalized groups in society. Cases such as the Obama campaign and the Arab Spring demonstrate the potential of new media to facilitate wider political participation, transparency, and dialogue between voters and those they elect to represent them. It has enabled a more personalized and interactive approach to campaigning, as well as quick and efficient mobilization around social and political issues.

However, it also presents new challenges, including the potential for disinformation, polarization, and political manipulation. It is important for communities and stakeholders to develop strong digital and critical literacy to navigate the complexities of the new media environment (Olesen, 2022). Through this perspective, new media has the potential to be a very powerful tool to strengthen democracy, enable broader and more meaningful participation in political processes, and help build a more just and inclusive society. However, this success depends on how we, as a global society, use, understand and organize new media (Coleman & Sorensen, 2023).

The Impact of New Media on the Political Communication Landscape
The personalization effect of politics through social media

The personalization of politics through social media has changed the dynamic between political leaders and voters. Political leaders can now communicate and deliver their messages directly to audiences, allowing them to circumvent traditional media

filters and reach voters in a more personal and authentic way (Coleman & Sorensen, 2023). Through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, politicians can share personal views, private lives, and behind-the-scenes moments, building a relatable and "human" image in the eyes of voters. This can strengthen emotional connections with supporters, allowing them to feel closer and more engaged with their political leaders (Chen et al., 2023). This personalization also allows politicians to tailor their messages for specific audiences, targeting groups of voters with material tailored specifically to the interests or issues most relevant to them (Guess et al., 2023).

However, the personalization of politics through social media also brings consequences that can be negative. Reliance on personal imagery may shift the focus from substantive policy and ideological debates to more about personalities and entertainment. This may lead to a reduction in in-depth policy discussions and an increase in political polarization, with supporters and opponents becoming more adept at individual images than political principles and programs (Seyfi et al., 2023). In addition, social media may facilitate the spread of misleading information and falsehoods, as claims made by politicians may not always be subject to scrutiny or factual verification as in traditional media. This dynamic can diminish the quality of public discussion and jeopardize people's trust in their political leaders and institutions (Toff & Nielsen, 2022). In an era where personal branding plays a large role in politics, the challenge is to maintain a balance between capitalizing on the benefits of personal communication with serious attention to integrity and accuracy in political communication (Knudsen et al., 2022).

Changes in voter behavior and political campaign strategies

Changes in voter behavior in the social media era have been significant, with more and more voters relying on online platforms to obtain their political information (Cerra et al., 2023). Social media has enabled voters to become more interactive, selecting content that matches their interests and political views, and often participating in discussions and debates. Modern voters are not just passively receiving information; they are also actively searching, sharing, sorting and often commenting or responding to the content they encounter online. The phenomenon of "echo chambers", where individuals are exposed only to information that reinforces their political beliefs, has become a hot topic in this context (Bormann et al., 2022). Voter decisions may be influenced by social media algorithms that tend to accentuate personalized and polarizing content, leading to a more fragmented electorate with a mindset that may be more rigid and less open to contradictory views (Haßler et al., 2023).

To match these changes in voter behavior, political campaign strategies have also adapted. Campaigns now place a greater focus on data analysis and target marketing to deliver customized messages to various voter demographics. The use of

advanced technology to understand voter needs and preferences has enabled campaigns to microtarget messages to specific segments of the electorate with high accuracy. Social media has also been used as a tool for supporter mobilization, viral messaging, and fundraising (Yan et al., 2022). With the capacity for instant feedback through social media, campaigns can be more responsive to voter input and quickly adjust their strategies. Personalization, as part of campaign strategy, allows voters to feel like they have a voice in the political process. However, challenges remain, including the potential spread of disinformation and its impact on the integrity of voting and democracy itself (Bene et al., 2022).

The echo chamber phenomenon and political polarization

The echo chamber phenomenon in a political context refers to a situation where individuals are only exposed to information or opinions that reinforce their personal views, often through interactions on social media. In echo chambers, dissonant voices are amplified while contrary voices tend to be sidelined or fought against (Bast, 2024). This happens because social media algorithms, designed to maximize user engagement, tend to display content that appeals to users' interests based on previous interactions. As a result, users become isolated in their own information bubbles, which limits their exposure to perspectives across political diversity. This phenomenon has the potential to reinforce prejudice, reduce understanding and tolerance of divergent views, and ultimately perpetuate a homogenized and partisan information cycle (Shin et al., 2022).

Directly related to echo chambers, political polarization refers to a division in society, where individuals or groups hold strongly opposed or conflicting views that can be difficult to reconcile. Social media has contributed significantly to such polarization by facilitating and reinforcing information filters and preferences that lead to isolation and ideological confrontation (Dunaway & Graber, 2022). This polarity often sharpens conflicts and a lack of productive discourse between different groups, which can be harmful to healthy democratic practices, given that it reduces the possibility of compromise and cooperation. In a highly polarized environment, politics becomes more about team wins than the search for balanced and effective solutions to social problems (Molder et al., 2022). This can have far-reaching effects, not only on political stability but also on social coherence and society's ability to face common challenges.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of echo chambers and political polarization has become an increasingly dominating aspect of the contemporary media and political landscape, especially with the emergence of social media platforms as the main source of information for many people. Echo chambers result in limited exposure to diverse views and can result in the reinforcement of prejudices and reduce the ability to have constructive political discussions. Meanwhile, political polarization exacerbated by social media can deepen divisions in society, by making compromise more difficult to achieve and hampering democratic processes. Both phenomena present serious

challenges to modern democracies, where balanced and allocated information is essential and where citizens must be equipped with critical skills to navigate an often overwhelming and confusing information environment.

Conclusion

Research on "New Media and the Changing Landscape of Political Communication" shows that advances in information technology, especially through new media such as the internet and social media, have drastically changed the way political communication takes place. New media allows for faster and wider dissemination of information, as well as more dynamic interactions between politicians and voters. Politicians can now communicate directly with voters without the intermediary of traditional media, allowing for more personalized and often more reactive messages to current events. On the other hand, voters have access to more diverse sources of information, but also face challenges in verifying the authenticity and accuracy of that information.

In addition, the study also highlighted how new media has brought phenomena such as echo chambers and polarization to the online environment. Social media platforms, with algorithms that favor content that matches users' habits and preferences, tend to create spaces where individuals are only exposed to views that reinforce their personal beliefs, limiting exposure to alternative perspectives. This often results in a more closed mindset and increased polarization, affecting the quality of public discussion and democracy as a whole. This phenomenon underscores the need for interventions, whether in media education, digital literacy, or content regulation, to ensure that online political communication can contribute positively to a democratic society.

Thus, research on the changing landscape of political communication in the new media era shows that while new media provides opportunities for more dynamic and personalized interactions between politicians and voters, it also brings significant challenges such as disinformation, echo chambers, and polarization. The review emphasizes the need for dedicated efforts in media education and digital literacy to help people overcome these challenges, as well as the important role of regulators and media platforms in ensuring a healthy communication environment.

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