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Social Media Platforms for Political Mobilization and Citizen Engagement in Democratic Campaigns

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Abstract

The present essay is a vehement attempt to explore how effective social media is in regards to political campaigning and participatory campaign movements in democracy. The interviews and focus groups were resorted to, to pursue the information concerning the exposures of the participants of this study to the political contents and their interaction with the created micro-influencers, as well as the implications of the user-generated content (UGC) in general. Logs and diaries were also used. The micro-influencers due to their close interactions with the followers have the most important role of driving political participation as it is stated in the research adopted. Among the examples of social media activism, one may refer to memes, other videos, and realistic campaigns devoted to politics, and it may be concluded as the tool that should never be underestimated to raise the voice of the political force, make people become involved online and offline. To simplify somewhat complicated political issues and engage more viewers, visual effects, in particular emotive photography, and video have been added as the effective means. The cynicism that affects those systems is also reviewed in the paper and the way in which the polarization and fake news interfere with politics and betray the trust in the online media. These give some insights to how social media has affected political activities and participation and social stratification of its citizens and empowered them.

INTRODUCTION

Mobility has thus influenced the political procedures therein in that it has altered the political mobilization and political citizenship in a process of campaigns. The social media have evolved very rapidly within the last ten years and as such, it can be applied to the situation of political communication and political action. All this is made possible through the social applications like face book, tweeter and Instagram among others, which allow the candidates, parties and movements to reach the citizens at the same time and very swiftly, win supporters, and get in the information about the political intentions and opinions (Olof Larsson, 2023). The specified tendency of growing excitement related to the use of social media as an instrument of engaging in the democratic process has attracted much literature on the use of

social media to influence the voting process and political participation and political activism (Vaccari and Valeriani, 2021).

The social media had been originally created as an arena of social relationships and has been revealed to be a significant medium of political communications. It originally appeared in the mobilization of the 2008 US presidential campaign where the presidential candidate at that time, Barack Obama, used the instruments more precisely the youth and the technologically oriented to tap into the power of the electoral choice of the heterogeneous American people. The propensity and use of the social media as a means of political favoritism has since been regarded in global terms whereby social media has been utilized as a platform of mobilization, expression of dissatisfaction and campaigning (Breuer, 2012). Cases of how social media unites people to achieve the shared objective of achieving their goal despite all this include Occupy Wall Street, Arab Spring and even the Black Thursday movement (Torvik, 2022).

However, in the circumstances of active political processes, to which each of us here, around the world, has been exposed courtesy of this social media, it is possible to raise a series of questions concerning the quality of political interaction, filters and algorithms, echo chambers and fake news distribution (Litt et al., 2020). This case is serious on the level of the fact that the political communication of the contemporary era is more closely connected with the social media and the fact that triggers the question of the nature or the content of the citizen involvement in the democratic campaigns. A noisy debate has already ensued on the social media effect on politics; was it causing some real political involvement in form of voting, campaigning, protest or enactment of some symbolic clicktivism (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020; Mazak and Stetka, 2015).

One of such activities is the political mobilization that makes people become involved in politics, which may be in the form of voting, protesting, or participating in a political movement (Brady et al., 2020). Traditionally, the process of political mobilization was conducted through the use of face to face interaction, political party, public meetings or even, a political campaign in the mass media. In this way the social media has changed these dynamics significantly since the mobilization can be achieved with less, reach more and target a larger and more diverse audience. Television and social media enable the political actors to create and send more center-and-segmented messages to particular groups of constituencies including the young people or individuals who feel marginalized (García Perdomo, 2023; Weinstein, 2014).

The second sphere that is quite self-evident is the declining cost of participation due to the social media. By using the social media, people can discuss politics without necessarily leaving the house as they are home. The implications of use of social media in the political participation process are found to show the social media has helped in mobilisation of the youths in the political participation process because the young people do not vote in large numbers (Boulianne, 2020). There is a need to state that younger generations do not only use social media as a source of political information but also communicate with one another with its involvement, comment on some posts, and engage in such practices as voter promotion, voter registration and so on (Hysa et al., 2021).

The social media has also been recently turned interactive and facilitated activating politics. Political campaigns can flexibly align their international campaign rhetoric concerning the two ends of the campaign to the current action that is creating higher mobilisation rates, more people coming to the cause with hashtags or celeb influencers urging citizens to turn out; the campaign performance has paid off with

current findings showing that the retention rate has been among the best in American political history to date. (Valderama & Oligo, 2021).

In as much as the study concern is the use of mobile phones in vote hunting, at this level there is a need to explain that the measure of citizen participation in the democratic processes has been quantified by the activity in the past such as, voting, attending to or meeting parties, rallies. Nonetheless, with the advent of the social networking sites, political behavior was diversified such that communal political behaviors, including following political figures, sharing political objects, and being part of digital movements, ought to be considered (Kitchens et al., 2020; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2014). Citizens can not only passively consume political information with the aid of social media, but also participate in political dialogue that contributes to the formation of political reality.

One study conducted a research verifying that social media can make people political due to the fact that some of the tools that individuals resort to in an attempt to popularize their views on the different issues, dissemination of information, and organization of planning (Karamat and Farooq, 2020). All these types of engagement are not connected in close relation with conventional politics and, therefore, it was the road of the new involvement via social media.

However, not everything on the positive side because social media comes with some challenges. The issue of disinformation and political polarisation is currently being witnessed in which the social media such as twitter and facebook are the stakeholders that make the health democracy debate stake or stakes (Diaz and Nilsson, 2023). In addition, the monopolization of the social media within the context in which the algorithm is to advance the posts of hate and provocative content that will encourage the active engagement of the audience deteriorates the political speech and the structure of the homogenous public sphere (Stark et al., 2020).

Since social media may be applied as the channel of communication, organization, persuasion, and many other projects during the democratic campaigns, this paper will be discussing the ways how the media is employed in the achievement of the aims of the mobilization of the citizens in democratic campaigns and political participation. It is based on this exploration of the two sides of the qualitative aspect of the social media that this study hopes to answer the question as to whether or not the subjective experiences of the people who use social media sites to take part in the political processes occur in a measure. In general, such a research study will contribute to what has been familiar in academic literature regarding how political citizenship is formed through the use of digital media platforms, which allow interaction to occur.

METHODS

The qualitative research methodology was utilized in this research work in that the research was concerned with a comparative analysis of two social media platforms against efficient organization of politicking and the contribution of the citizens to the procedures of democracy. The research approach taken was the qualitative because comprehensive and elaborate descriptions were required by the participants on the possible uses of social media in political campaigns. It is against this knowledge inquiry that the research aimed at finding out to what extent the political participation was being motivated by social media, to what extent the political discourse was being influenced by social media and to what extent the citizen participation was being enabled by social media.

The case study research strategy used in this paper has considered the recent democratic campaigns that have included the utilization of social media in politics. It allowed conducting the comprehensive research of the opportunities which

individuals and political parties, activists and politicians possess to utilize the social media to deliver some message to the voters, disseminate the political messages and make citizens act in a certain way. This would mean that instead of generalizing the drive messages being created on the social media, the paper has tried, in the context of personalized/first-person political actions, to find out solutions, problems and outcomes of political actions being created by the social media in relation to specific political settings.

The data were collected using three methods i.e. semi structured interviews, the focus on group discussions and the content analysis of the social media platforms.

The current research has engaged 20 key informants in the interview, such as the strategists of political campaigns, the managers of social media, the political activists, and the voters who have access to online political chat on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social networks. They also asked questions to the participants about how they organized their own process of organizational mobilization in terms of politics in the social media and how they mobilize the audience as well as their perception of the role of the social media in democracy. The length of interviews was approximately 60-90 minutes, and could be held either face-to-face and/or via video conferencing. Such structure of interviews was indeed considerate and allowable, in the sense of being adaptable to any sort of unforeseen emerge issues, but equally, of being certain that prior to the interviews, issues such as discussed engagement strategies, platform efficiency or mobilization efforts would be duly covered.

There were also two focus group discussions but with a count of 6-8 participants in each focus group. The FGDs were varied with regards to the citizens who were different in the social media political campaigns. The questionnaires were directed at the issue of why the respondents visit the online to seek political information, how the social media is affecting their political knowledge and choice and whether the respondents are being motivated to take part in the offline political activities (e.g. voting, rallying). The focus groups discussion took about two hours and the researcher was the moderator. The approach availed a platform that the respondents were able to present their views and contrast them to generate useful interactive data on the use of social media in the mobilization of politics.

The research used a content analysis of the posts about the democratic campaigns on the social media written by the people, political parties, and interest groups on top of interviews and focus groups. The analyzed major social media platforms considered in respect of the tweets include Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Thematic analysis was done with the identification of key themes dissimilar to political messages, mobilization processes, and engagement tactics. The samples were chosen based on the inclusion of hashtags, calls to action, or other visual elements such as memes or a campaign video since these items demonstrated how political actors attempted to capture attention and make their audiences accept their invitations to act. The following step of the analysis was the classification of the posts into categories in terms of intent (informative, mobilizing and persuasive) and the manner in which they invoked a response based on the likes, shares, comments, and engagement metrics.

The researcher adopted a purposive method of sampling when choosing the sample which relates directly to the application of social media in political matters. The participants of the interviews were selected through the snowball sampling method using campaign strategists and activists of prominence in a political field to recruit other players in a political field. The focus group members were recruited as a part of the social media outreach and their diversity made sure that there were diverse citizens who had been subjected to political campaigns online. The sample was to

reflect as broad a range of political inclination, engagement and preferred platform as possible so as to be able to describe as many experiences as possible and views as possible.

In the content analysis, it was necessary to select posts based on their relevance to high political campaigns around the time of the timeframe of the study election. The posts of the people of the high profile positions have been selected and hence, the contents of the posts have been selected with a very high level of exposure and interaction.

Thematic analysis reviewed the relationships between the interviews, focus groups and content analysis. Thematic analysis also enabled the researcher to determine themes and generalize on the recurring themes on use of social media in political mobilizations and participation. This involved a few activities: Word-to-word transcriptions of all focus group discussions and interviews. Not only once, but twice or thrice, the researcher has gone through transcripts, because in this way he gets accustomed to the material and is also able to derive preliminary ideas on the emerging themes.

The coding framework was also developed by the use of research questions. By so doing, the transcripts were coded manually to identify passages of information that represented such major themes that featured the activities of political mobilization, citizen participation, and issues with the use of social media, and the perceived success of the various platforms. Coding was coded through iterations and new codes were formulated on the emerging pattern of reading out of the data. The data were coded whereby themes in the form of major themes and sub themes were formulated. Some of the prominent factors include: 1) The social media as one of the factors that reduce the barriers of participating in political processes; 2) The strategies that governance actors resorted to mobilizing the population (hashtags and viral movements); 3) The degree to which citizens engage in politics with the help of social media and why they do so; 4) The constraints and ills that social media can do without as well such as misinformation and polarization.

Similar to the social media content analysis, the posts were classified according to the nature of engagement that was attained as a consequence of the post (e.g., informative, mobilizing). It detected parallels in how various political actors applied the visuals, hashtags or the calls to action on mobilising support and the response to the postings. Thematic content analysis outcomes were then combined with the interview and focus group results to render a full picture of the role of the social media in mobilization of political impacts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Examples of successful mobilization campaigns on social media

During the interviews and the focus group discussions, the participants provided some examples of political mobilization campaigns that succeeded in using social media platforms to involve people and mobilize them towards a political cause. Several tactics associated with these campaigns included viral messaging, specific advertising, and grassroots campaigns that eventually helped them to achieve wider audiences. The two most interesting cases described were voter turnout campaigns during the elections and issues campaigns that were aimed at using social media to gather support on individual causes.

A number of respondents emphasised the significance of social media in raising voter participation during elections. Several campaigns borrowed the use of mediums like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram in order to deliver messages to younger voters who are not necessarily reached via traditional media campaigns. Interviewees observed that social media campaigns have become a very efficient means of spreading

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political messages since they could become viral, much faster than using any traditional means.

One of the stories cited was that of using the hashtag #GoVote, which gained popularity in many election campaigns across the world in many elections. The hashtag was intentionally used by political campaign strategist to help push people to vote and make voting a current topic of conversation. As one interviewee remarked,

> "The #GoVote campaign was huge. It was everywhere on all the social media platforms and you would find influencers and celebrities referring to them. It helped to make voting appear a cool and important thing particularly to the young ones."

Such viral quality was considered to be its main success because it generated the social pressure as to the people to vote, with users often posting that they had already voted or were going to vote.

In addition, the participants of the focus groups stated that the conspicuity of such campaigns contributed to generating a sense of urgency. One focus group member noted,

> "I could not escape seeing posts about voting on my Instagram feed every day. Everybody I was following was talking of it so I thought I had to get in on it as well."

This constant exposure to the voting related information resulted in increased interaction particularly during the weeks before the election day.

Besides hashtags, the interviews also revealed that targeted advertisements were utilized well in order to target certain groups of voters. Through the data available in the social media, campaign teams were able to determine those who had not yet or had not decided to vote, and then they bombarded them with personalized content that encourages them to turn out to vote during the election. One of the campaign workers described the situation as follows,

> "We understood that in order to recruit new voters we had to address them in their own language. That implied applying memes, viral videos and advertisements that were relevant to their daily lives. And it worked first time voter turnout was more than expected."

Besides election campaigns, the participants also talked of issue-based mobilization campaigns, in which the social media was employed to enlist support towards certain political or social agendas. Such attempts have tended to take a grassroots activism and peer-to-peer communication approach, and social media served as the primary medium of organizing and disseminating information.

A particularly interesting case was the social media usage on environmental activism and climate change movements. Interviewees mentioned such movements as Fridays for Future that started off small but went worldwide with the help of social media. As one activist shared,

> "We organized marches and protests over the Instagram and Twitter and within no time, people around the globe were marching with us. The reason why the movement gained such rapid spread was that social media enabled people to join in easily, even when they could not physically attend the rallies."

This was an example of how digital platforms helped to localize efforts to reach a global audience within weeks, which would not have been possible in the previous generations.

Through focus group discussions, it became apparent that a large proportion of the respondents had either been part of or had supported cause-related campaigns via the social media even though they did not engage in on-the-ground activity. One participant noted,

> *"I may not be able to attend protests all the time, but I feel that posting or signing petitions online makes me feel I am also helping the cause."*

This virtual form of activism was perceived to have been one of the main reasons behind the success of the issue-based campaigns because it enabled supporters to do so remotely and at the same time increase the reach of the campaign.

Some participants stated that the Black Lives Matter movement was another bright example of the successful mobilization via the use of social media. Started by some viral hashtags, such as BlackLivesMatter and SayHerName, the movement rapidly spread, as millions of users worldwide posted, shared stories and updates in the sphere of racial justice and police brutality.

> *"It began with a small group of people sharing on these injustices, and then before long it was viral. This movement acquired a voice through social media, which was global in nature; this realization, one of the interviewees."*

This kind of online-offline campaign proved to be quite effective as that was exactly what made this campaign successful. Social media posts with the purpose of organising face-to-face protests, updated live on events, and resources to be used by people interested in joining the cause were the main highlights of both interviewees and focus group participants.

> *"The focus group member stated that one can follow the hashtag and instantly be aware of where the protests took place, what was happening, and how to participate."*

This has been critical in sustaining the movement during the long run as there was a smooth transition between online and offline activism.

The cases of effective social media mobilization campaigns determine that digital platforms can be utilized so as to reach out to new audiences, support marginalized voices, and instill collective action. The theme of viral messaging and targeted communications was mentioned repeatedly by interviewees as instrumental in reaching people likely to join the campaign and in ensuring that the campaign message reached as much of the population as possible. The increased use of virtual activism in political movements was also mentioned during focus group discussions when more people use social media as their main approach to social causes.

But alongside these successes are challenges, the main one being the spread of misinformation and even polarization. Participants found unanimity in their observation that social media could be used as an effective means of mobilization; however, diligence should be observed in how much accurate information is getting out and how open the discussions undertaken be.

Trends in citizen engagement observed through content analysis

Analysis of the content in social media platforms portrayed clear trends when it comes to citizen participation in times of political mobilization efforts. The main trends identified during the analysis were evident in the increase of political expression which utilized user-generated content, the emergence of micro-influencers that influenced the sphere of political discussions, and visual content that played an important role in stimulating engagement. These trends demonstrated that the sphere of political participation has been transformed as a result of the empowerment of the citizen by social media.

One of the most obvious trends was also the reduction of the volume of political speech using user-generated content. The media of social media like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook were a domain where individuals could share their opinion on politics and politics and even campaign a candidate or a movement. The content analysis revealed that a citizen used the features or the possibilities of posts, tweets, stories, and live videos to introduce their political opinions in the way they could not do before.

Part of the interviewees articulated the relevance of this change by saying that with social media people could communicate their views more directly and therefore have an influence on them. As one participant stated,

> *"Prior to the social media, I did not feel that I had a place to discuss politics. This is because now I am able to post my thoughts and reach hundreds of people by a single post."*

This is made easy access to platforms where politics is expressed and this has resulted in more political discourse amongst citizens who would otherwise not be in the world of politics.

Moreover, the participants of the focus groups referred to how social media gave an opportunity to present more various perspectives. A participant mentioned,

> *"I can witness how people of all continents are discussing their local problems and it opens my eyes to the world politics."*

As the analysis indicated, political debates over social media ceased to be a prerogative of professional journalists or politicians but of ordinary citizens who felt empowered to express their opinion on matters of their interests.

A similar but somewhat weaker pattern that could be identified by content analysis is the effect that micro-influencers have on the development of political discourse. In contrast to the larger and more established influencers or celebrities with millions of followers, micro-influencers are smaller and more focused with their target audiences who are considered to be relatable and trusting to the audience. It was shown that these micro-influencers had a critical contribution to the mobilization of their followers and the creation of political discourse with the use of authentic and sometimes localized content.

A number of interviewees mentioned the role of these influencers in political campaigns. One campaign strategist commented,

> *"We came to the understanding that it was more profitable to collaborate with smaller influencers rather than to big names only. They are trusted by their followers and when they talk about political issue people listen."*

Micro-influencers were especially successful in their attempts to access niche groups and reach out to audiences that traditional political outreach could easily miss.

Micro-influencers also amplified political messages as affirmed in the focus group discussions. One of the participants described it as follows,

> *"I subscribe to some smaller influencers who discuss politics as it feels real to me. They are not celebrities; they are ordinary people and it makes their opinion closer to the audience."*

It is this change in the nature of engagement; that is, big to small that is the shift in how political mobilization is done, where authenticity and relatability hold a greater value than mass appeal. The content analysis also presented another observation that micro-influencers often employed Instagram stories, live streams, and Twitter threads to interact with their audiences in real-time, which gave a chance to have

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interactive discussions. The interactive nature of this communication gave the opportunity to have more personalized communication as the followers were able to pose questions, voice concerns, and have them discussed instantly by the influencers they had trust in.

The other main trend realized during the content analysis was the growing utilization of the visual content to improve citizen engagement. The social media with a strong emphasis on visual media (Instagram and Tik Tok) proved to be an essential aspect of political campaigns due to their possibilities to convey the message by means of images, videos, infographics, and memes. The review revealed that posts that included visual content had a higher likelihood to become viral and get engagement than accumulated text-based posts.

The subject of visual content and the need to focus on it was brought up by interviewees often. A campaign flack said,

> *"We also found that individuals were far more likely to share a meme or infographic than a long-text post. It is all about catching the eye and graphics are the most effective means to achieve that."*

The emphasis on memes was specifically pointed out as a highly effective means of focusing a complex political thought into bite-sized and distributeable content and, therefore, work best with younger audiences.

Another suggestion of focus group members is that they prefer visual content as compared to long articles or speeches. One participant noted,

> *"I will tend to have a short video or a graphic than a long post about politics. It is easier and quicker to comprehend, after all."*

This is agreeable with the content analysis outcomes wherein visual posts received more likes, likes, and comments than the ones with more text content.

Furthermore, with the help of video content and particularly in Tik Tok and YouTube, one could retell stories that would evoke a feeling of emotion in the audience. The short videos which compared the political campaign in creating a sense of personification of the political figures and giving direct calls to act had to rely on doing small but not so spectacular moments compared to the television campaigns, where more people were able to make a connection. Content analysis revealed that, there were a great many videos that contained sentimental messages in conjunction with the factual messages posted during the campaign period which were most likely to be shared and discussed.

The trends created upon the basis of the content analysis given in the work theoretical reveal the influence of the social media on the relations between the citizens and the political material. It is linked to the unexpecteds of the political participation and expression by the newly gained means of the user-generated content. The politics of persuasion are now oriented on the simple idols whose audience reaches up to a few thousand social influencers, as well as on the increased use of the picture and video, which makes the passage of the political information easier.

On the one hand, the trends have allowed the citizenry to be more active due to their activities that they would otherwise have not been able to engage in other situations to the same extent of substantial activity. In that way they raise certain challenges especially regarding the plausibility of such information and the possibility of fruitful interaction. However, the research that is presented (don, 2013) indicates that the social media will further assume a defining role in the definition of political engagement and political participation in the future electoral campaign in the democratic struggle.

The level of knowledge that can exist in this study is the ability to integrate social media in democratic campaign as the initial tool of involving people in the political arena. The former literature took much consideration to the fact that politicians and activists might conduct direct campaigns without relying on the established media channels and utilizing the novel media technologies (Jungherr et al., 2020). This research paper concludes that to some degree, the political actors are exploiting the social media as the level field on which they can access the electorate. However, the new sign of emergent role of the level of micro-influencer in the process is also exposed in this research that has not been developed within the prior literature. Although, movie stars or those who enter the race to become a president in a state can do much, micro-influencers will do more in the frames of the corresponding issue as they develop the rapport that can be referred to as trustworth (Rogers, 2023).

Micro-influencers who have between a few thousand to tens of thousands of fans emerged as the most effective in terms of triggering political action in this research compared to the normal influencers. Through narrating actual life stories these people can make their subjects adopt the participatory aspect of actions like voting or championing some rights. This is a stark contrast to Hill et al. (2021) who indicated that despite prior interest in this literature in the context of macro actors, the micro influentials role had not been studied before. When interviewed in this paper, micro-influencers were more authentic and closer to them and, so, could bring genuine political action. Hoor and Ilavarasan (2023) have validated these arguments and asserted that, micro- influencers have the potential to invoke a stronger emotional bond within the target group than other celebrities who do the same.

The current work, thus, builds upon the existing body of knowledge to the concept that the micro-influencer, on the contrary, attracts localized and issue-centered attention. It is possible to apply this research in the current debates on the issue regarding the mobilization towards politics in the digital era since it presents comprehensive narratives of the interviews of the participants that have been inspired to vote or become interested in the political discourse due to reading the posts that were made by the genuine micro-influencers.

The second notable conclusion of the specified study is the relevance of the UGC as a tool that also can be utilized to boost the voices of politicians and promote populist activism. Social media have been previously used by the citizens to air their political views mentioned above. Nevertheless, the aforementioned researches have tended to view UGC as an expression and a mode of expression of the collective voice represented as a form of political activism within the political discourse. This paper alleviates this shortcoming by suggesting that UGC does not just act as a political affiliation but also has a role in politics.

The qualitative data collected in the form of interviews in the course of this study showed that much of the user generated and sharing of UGC like the sharing of memes, creation of political satire videos or other political related infographics is aimed to attract more attention to the political issues and to have people do something about it. Individual participants in turn stressed that the non-persistent activities via the social networking sites like the use of the hash tag, GoVote were equally critical to the purpose of political turnout. These viral trends capitalized on the utilization of memes to not only spell out their political beliefs but also go to the streets and vote or protest. This provides a hint of a second dimension, the way UGC will transform politics, with the reality of the existence of a bridge between online conversation and offline action.

A lot of effort has been made in this work in trying to establish how the visual material is used, and why, to get attention on political issues. Throughout the traditional political campaigns the word and the text based messages have previously

controlled the political communication and in this study; the usage of images, videos and charts has been found to be the important content of the political communication of the current times compared to the text based messages. However, the secondary literature does not overlook the traditional advertising, TV shows, and posters, but it cannot neglect the digitization of visual media, i.e., social media, i.e., Instagram and Tik Tok, by proauthors.

This piece would close this gap by showing how political actors are now scrambling to adopt the use of the visual story as the means of appealing to the youth and transforming the multidimensional political issues into reality. Others of the participants claimed that at least short, short, kludgy video clips, e.g. a video that arouses feeling, or a political meme, would tend to cause the subject of the interview to take a call to action. The respondents were lying a little that they have seen a few viral videos on Instagram or Tik- Tok that would make political issues easier. Specifically, one of the participants has shared that they developed the interest in environmental activism with the help of the meme about climate changes, which was shared at that time in the form of a picture. they say that visual material, in particular, when shared on the social network tends to generate more attention and thus can become viral and have more chances to change people.

The paradigm that the activism on the Internet is not as successful or authentic as the activism on the real world. also has made the earlier online activism seem like slacktivism, and it is not comparable to the other kinds of physical protests or the more normal politically activism. However, this paper has found out that political engagement on the internet is not a farce or a futile exercise of politics, but rather a grave political activism process.

In such a way, the information which was received on the interview suggests that the majority of its participants saw the shares, posts, signatures and the comments as obvious step that should be taken in order to create bigger political portraits. According to respondent 17, they cannot visit a political rally, but participate in the dissemination of ideas by posting information about the rally on the social media. It concurs with Kaskazi and Kitzie (2023) who indicate that online political participation is involving and mobilising multiple individuals; hence, it may also be as effective as the offline processes.

Nevertheless, the research also found that in the majority of cases, virtual activism is the path to physical activism because the subjects of this research confirmed that they were initiated to the political affairs online with the help of social media and afterward they would take part in the activities in real life. The activism form presented in the case does not follow the classic meaning of advocacy in the sense that it shows how online and offline activations are becoming increasingly blurred. These observations add to the body of knowledge about political engagement in implying that this form of social media activism is not a marginal form of engagement, but rather another form of engagement that can lead to mass political behaviors.

In comparison to the fact that it suggests more or so, the advantages of the social media in political mobilization, the paper also talks about the shortcomings of politics in the modern society like polarization that was so evident in the recent past. Confessedly, this issue of isolation would bother some of the participants as social media only provides the information that can remind them that they know. It aligns with the contemporary research on the topic of echo chambers that highlights the polarisation that social media creates as one of the elements of the process, and polarised networks are liberal-conservative in the explosion process.

Additionally, the respondents also provided their reasons as to the extent the faked information thereabouts at which they were to administer the test (at the time of conducting the research) and the negative effect it produced on the political activity

of the respondent. With regards to the impacts of the fake news, one of the interviewees asserts that when they come across a post of a political candidate and they are told that it is a fake news, they no longer believe anything that the political campaign is saying and hence; they do not engage in political campaigns. It is an illustrative case of how individuals are being exposed to matters by fake news with significant action by political parties that have large following in the social media.

CONCLUSION

The research indicated that the social media has turned out to be a source of online mobilisation and an actor of the citizenry in political processes, even to the extent of utilising micro-bloggers, consumer production and visual speech. In doing so, this paper addresses the shortcomings of the existing literature to establish how such digital devices have democratised the political front and granted customisation and emotionalism to some measures. However, the fact that there are such issues as polarization and misleading that make the climate of political activism promoted with the help of internet a thorny issue is not overlooked by the study. Summarily, the study adds to the insights regarding change in democracies in social media, which has been emancipatory and progressive as much as it is fraught with issues related to political behaviour.

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