

Influence of social media on political views



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Social media's influence on citizen's democratic beliefs and political ideology and impact on elections

From the beginning the internet has been used as an archive tool for human behavior. Around the globe, social media has provided an outlet and has made it easier than ever in allowing individuals to voice their opinions and beliefs about government; to talk about issues, mobilize around causes, and hold various leaders and lawmakers accountable. This review will attempt to summarize how the spread of beliefs and opinions by others on social media very much influence the those who use social media as a source of getting news as well as if social media is changing the way we view a democracy.

It is just recently that in the year 2011, social media took a vital role in the Arab Spring uprisings in places such as Egypt and Tunisia as it was proclaimed a liberating technology. A considerable amount has changed from that point forward. The 2016 US presidential election conveyed to the fore the dangers of outside meddling and "fake news" and political polarization. The impact of web-based social networking on legislative issues has never been so significant to observe.

The majority of this brings up a critical issue: what impact does social media have on people's democratic beliefs, values, and political ideology?

By and large, 20% of social media clients say they've adjusted their position on a social or political issue on account of material they saw on social media, and 17% say online based social networking was the underlying factor that assisted in changing their perspectives about a particular political hopeful (Anderson 2016). Among online-based social networking users, Democrats

and liberal Democrats specifically are more likely than Republicans to state they have ever changed their perspectives on a social or political issue, or on a specific political candidate, as a result of something they saw via the internet.

The Pew Research Center conducted a survey asking respondents a time where they can recall social media having an effect of their views on the 2016 presidential election. “ Many of the responses we received in this survey, conducted this summer, mentioned one of the major presidential candidates as the “ political or social issue” they changed their minds on. Around one-in-five users mentioned either Hillary Clinton, 21% or Donald Trump, 18%, and around one-in-ten referenced Bernie Sanders”. (Kent 2016). In addition to asking whether they had changed their opinion in this way due to what they saw on the internet, social media, the survey also asked respondents to tell share in their own words the time when this change occurred.

“ I saw a video on Reddit ... that ultimately swayed me from voting independent in this election to voting for Hillary Clinton.”

“ I thought Donald Trump was leaning one way on an issue and a friend posted something that was opposite of what I believe. This caused me to think less of him than I once I did.”

“ Originally, I planned on voting for Hillary Clinton in the election, but then I found out about Bernie Sanders through social media. I decided I would vote for him instead.” (Staff P. S 2016)

It is evident that there is no deficiency of challenges at the intermix of online networking and democracy. “ As of August 2017, 67% of Americans claimed that they get in any event some of their news via social media with two-in-ten doing as such frequently, as indicated by a review from Pew Research Center” (Shearer and Gottfried 2016). Note that this is only a slightly modest increase from the middle of 2016 during the peak of the primaries where 62% of U. S. adults revealed getting news from social media.

A strong correlation is evident that the use of technological applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube and support of civil liberties. People who spend more time self-publicizing on the internet appear to value freedom of expression highly but also value the right to privacy; in contrast to those individuals who use social media less often. A cross-sectional survey was then conducted to determine the connection between online behavior, political attitude, and social media use in 2010. 913 people were surveyed with questions that pitted concerns about security and safety. In order to see a measure of these civil liberties Swigger then designed a test to measure individual's support for privacy and freedom of expression against concerns of security and safety. In conclusion of this test, among online socializations came back with a negative attitude for the right to privacy and to note the results seem to be spearheaded by respondents 25 and younger. (Swigger 602: 2013)

This pattern suggests that social media may be altering American's attitudes and beliefs about democratic values (Swigger 590: 2013). In contrast to conventional media such as television and newspaper articles where the audience passively pays much attention to, web based social media is

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designed to encourage users to create and share content about their lives which formerly would only be shared in private face-to-face conversation.

This change in behavior has led to people living their lives in the light of the public.

With regards to the 2009 German election, a study was conducted by the research institute *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* and an analysis of more than 100,000 messages containing a reference to either a political party or a lawmaker. The results demonstrate that Twitter is utilized widely for political pondering and that even a small number of party mentions precisely mirrors the race result (Tumasjan 2011). The tweets' assumption (positive and negative feelings related with a lawmaker) compares similarly to voters' political preference. In the examination 104,003 tweets examined between 13 August and 29 September 2009 prior to the German election. Of those tweets analyzed, about 70,000 of them mentioned the political party and about half of them referenced specifically the politician's name. Given the large sample size, a sentiment analysis was used, an automated mechanism to quantify the information contained in these messages. To extract such data, they used Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC2007). LIWC2007, a text analysis software developed to assess emotional, cognitive, and structural components of text samples using a psychometrically validated internal dictionary (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). In particular, this product determines the rate which certain cognitions and feelings are present in the text.

There appears to be two facets to assess in determining if Twitter can fill in as an indicator of a race result. The foremost being the share of attention

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the political parties gets on social media, specifically Twitter, with the results of the 2009 German election. The latter being whether tweets can forecast the ideological ties amongst parties and potential political coalitions post-election. The MAE (mean absolute error) of six research institutes published election polls in the sample period, ranges from 1.1% to 1.7%. Thus, Twitter comes close in mirroring these accepted results. It is noteworthy to mention the predictive accuracy when compared to the historical backdrop of the IEM, a prediction market whose sole purpose is to predict election results. The IEM produced a MAE of 1.37% in U.S. presidential elections and 2.12% in non-U.S. elections based on election eve market prices (Berg, Forsythe, Nelson, & Rietz, 2008).

In conclusion, the negligible number of tweets saying a political party can be viewed as a plausible reflection of the vote turnout and its prescient power even approaches conventional election polls (Tumasjan 2011). "Overall, our results demonstrate that Twitter can be considered a valid indicator of the political landscape off-line" (Tumasjan 2011). On the off chance that there's one essential truth about social media's impact on democracy it's that it amplifies human intent (Toyama 2011) both good and bad. At its best, it allows us to express ourselves and take action. At its worst, it allows people to spread misinformation and corrode democracy.

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