

Chapter 1

The Role of Digital Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Political Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The impact of digital media on public opinion and political debate is examined in this chapter. The significance of digital media in political communication and its effect on public opinion and political discourse are introduced at the outset of the chapter. It analyses the pros and cons of using social media for political campaigns. Further probes deeper into

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the proliferation of false information and propaganda in digital media, its effect on public opinion and political discourse, and the measures taken to counter it. It discusses the difficulties and ethical concerns of using digital media to encourage civic participation. This chapter provides a concise overview of the discussion and draws attention to the implications for future study and application.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media has revolutionised political communication, influencing public opinion and political discourse in previously inconceivable ways. Notably, social media has become an indispensable instrument in political campaigns. The proliferation of disinformation and false news has highlighted the need for the ethical and responsible use of digital media in political communication. Moreover, digital media can potentially promote civic engagement and participation in political processes. This chapter focuses on the influence of social media, the proliferation of disinformation and fake news, and the potential of digital media to foster civic involvement. It investigates digital media's role in shaping public opinion and political debate (López-López et al., 2023; Oparaugo, 2021).

Digital media have emerged as a significant force in modern society's public opinion and political discourse. It has revolutionised information dissemination, consumption, and sharing, giving birth to a culture where individuals can actively engage with political content and convey their opinions. Digital media's significance rests in its capacity to amplify voices, facilitate the dissemination of information, and provide forums for public discussion and debate (Chadwick, 2013).

Digital media platforms, such as social networking sites, blogs, and online news publications, provide a democratised space for individuals to voice their opinions, share information, and participate in political discussions. These platforms have a broad reach and allow individuals from disparate backgrounds to contribute to the public discourse regardless of geographical or social barriers. This extensive participation can challenge traditional power structures, make it possible for marginalised voices to

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