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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Abstract. *The present article investigates youth political participation and engagement through social media perspective. It shows that modern democracy is challenged by new opportunities of online involvement. New technology transformations are changing the way we interact, communicate, produce and exchange knowledge. Social media are more and more involved into our everyday communication practice and become one of the major political communication tools.*

Key words: *political interest, internet, social media, youth, political engagement, political participation, democracy, political communication.*

Statement of the problem. The power and the influence of the Internet and the emergence of new media has significantly changed the world together with people's habits, behavior and communication. Over the years, social media have spread in most aspects of people's lives, especially among young generations. The role of social media has been investigated in many areas and it has become very popular in the area of politics. Socially desirable goal is to encourage and increase the level of political participation, especially among young people. Political participation has historically been considered as a crucial element of democratic development. What is specific about youth is that they are not stimulated by traditional media such as television, radio or newspapers. Their tendencies are directed toward new media — the Internet and social networks.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Relationship between social networks and politics was first researched in Bimber's *Contributions on the Internet impact in communication and interaction of citizens and politics* (Sandoval-Almazan, 2017; Bimber and Copeland, 2013; Bimber, Stohl, and Flanagan, 2009; Bimber, 1998; Bimber, 1999). The importance and the influence of social networks in the context of politics was also proven by Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013). They have concluded that in the last few years social media have become an important political communication channel that enables political institutions and voters to directly interact with each other. Dalrymple and Scheufele (2007) following the work of Neuman (1981) explain how political knowledge presents a two-dimensional construct. They concluded that online news media have positive effects on integrated knowledge gain. Effing (2011) also confirms the usefulness of using social networks in political campaigns stating that more activity on social networks means greater election participation. When considering the use of the Internet and social networks by politicians, Ward et al. (2003) recommend using the Internet due to cost reduction, better mobilization of supporters, encouraging electoral participation and equity participation. Viewed from any context social media data in the form of user-generated content on blogs, microblogs, SNS, discussion forums, and multimedia sharing websites (e.g., YouTube) present many new opportunities and challenges to both producers and consumers of information (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2013).

Purpose of the research. The purpose of this abstract is to determine the role of social media in shaping young people's interest in politics and political issues.

The key findings. In the age of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, political engagement through social media is easier than ever. For members of the millennial generation, where interconnectedness is driven by likes, shares, and retweets on social media sites, politicized discourse often goes viral, perhaps at the cost of meaningful engagement with the topic at hand. Thus, social media's role seems to extend beyond simply offering material to «like» on Facebook. These online interactions may be shaping the political views of an entire generation. The most significant outcome of social media may be its role in shaping the political identities and behaviors of the millennial generation.

In fact, there are 3.499 billion social media users in the world today. The total number of social media users around the world grew by more than 200 million in the past 12 months. Social media users are currently growing at a rate of 6 percent per year, with the average social media user having an account on nine different social platforms. The average global user spends 2 hours and 16 minutes on social media each day. The Global State of Digital in 2019 Report revealed that engaging in activism using social media and other online tools in USA translated to offline activism, an important finding given that social media use is nearly ubiquitous among youth. People aged 18–34 take 59% of all social media users worldwide, and 51% in Ukraine. Number of people in the world that Facebook reports can be reached with adverts on Facebook — 1.8 billion (in Ukraine — 13 million), Instagram — 802 million (Ukraine — 10 million), Twitter — 262 million (575 thousands) [12]. Judging from growing popularity of the mentioned above platforms, we may presume that Ukrainians use social media mostly for communication.

Let us now analyze how young people from western countries use social media platforms and the unique impact they have had on youth civic and political engagement. While social media companies have supported voter registration and engagement in the past, the last years many of them expanded their efforts to provide accurate information about voting and the election in an accessible way, and to attempt to encourage young people to vote. For instance, Instagram ran a campaign to encourage users to register to vote before the midterm elections in USA 2018. Snapchat ran a similar campaign and reminded users to vote on Election Day — along with providing a map to help users get to their polling place. These digital initiatives are a valuable contribution to the collective work of voter education that other groups do both online and in person, because they can provide information easily and at scale even when a potential voter is not actively looking for election-related information or is not connected to an organization that would provide it [7].

Moreover, here are five takeaways on the role social media is playing in youth political engagement:

1. *Social media platforms have extraordinary reach.* For example, forty-seven percent — or roughly 14 million — 18 to 24-year-olds heard about the 2018 elections from at least one of the four most commonly used social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. This massive reach is further amplified by the fact that, by their very nature, social media platforms allow users to connect and

communicate with their peers. In other words, social media can potentially integrate voting and election information into people's social lives, thereby normalizing electoral participation and promoting a culture of political engagement. For instance, Facebook shows users profile pictures of their friends who have already voted along with an «I Voted» button that, when clicked, shares this information with other friends. Voting, then, becomes social — an experience young people can use to encourage others to do the same [8].

2. *Social media platforms are reaching youth not engaged by candidates and campaigns.* Social media do not merely duplicate «traditional» voter education and outreach work driven by campaigns and candidates, which is essential but often relies on registered voter lists that may leave out youth who have not previously participated. Instead, social media platforms that share registration and voting information may be serving as a crucial complement, reaching youth that other efforts do not [8].

3. *Youth who get election information are more likely to vote.* Research consistently shows that one of the best way to promote youth voting is to reach out to young people and personally ask them to vote. Although online contact may not initially seem to fit that traditional mold of «personal» outreach, our research finds that social media are just as effective in mobilizing youth [8].

4. *Social media alone do not create civic attitudes — but help cement them.* Social media platforms are singularly not responsible for young people developing the inclinations and mindset that lead to civic and political engagement. It is far more likely that young people who already have an interest in elections and/or political issues seek election information on social media, and use these platforms to deepen their engagement by connecting with peers, organizations, and candidates. Therefore, social media can potentially help move young people from intent to action by helping them feel more confident that they have accurate information about how and where to vote, and that they have educated themselves further on candidates and issues [8].

5. *Politicians influence through social media.* From the beginning of the XXI century, the Internet is rapidly developing and becoming a field for political advertising. During the US presidential election in 2000, Dick Mornis identified a combination of politics and the Internet with unforeseen circumstances. The Internet will be a parliament. The Internet will be the election [5].

Social networks are now used in political communication as an instrument of influence. Political campaigns have not been an exception, and the Internet is rapidly destroying popularity. Despite success, the online presence of political candidates has no rules. For example, Trump's success and popularity is largely due to his presence in social networks, especially Twitter. Up to 45% of Trump's campaign budget for one month was devoted to digital advancement and research [6]. Donald Trump's political company has become a real innovative program that uses political communication, where a discussion is conducted with a citizen. In this phenomenon, individuals themselves determine which political actions and ideologies are regarded as worthy of popularity through the democratic process of voting with the help of lice and rector.

The problem of such wide usage of social media among youth is that they accept all the information they see. Their opinions are shaping under minds of groups and people they follow. They perceive all the information despite the fact they don't know

whether it is true or not. This issue is particularly important for youth, because the difference between youth and adults lies in the fact that the main information source for youth is social media, while adults mixes it with traditional sources. Youth are the people who form their mindset now, and this mindset will affect all the future development. Therefore, the problem of getting the right information stands critical for millennials.

The influence of social media in political perspective can be both revolutionary stimulator of political awareness and political engagement growth, and destructive for political and social mindset of people. Which variant will win depends on quality of the information flow. The effect of unconfirmed and debased information cannot be measured. We have great example of its influence on Brexit referendum. According to Carole Cardwalladr's research, the main influence on people's votes had false information about EU commitments and influences [4].

We live in information era, where information is a driver of progress and information is a weapon of manipulation. Moreover, here is where democracy is about to fall, if people do not turn from readers to analysts. Youth should create information based on facts and knowledge, not be created by information given from somebody.

How can it be implemented in Ukraine? With the help of social media, I think. We cannot control and censor what is published and posted by legislated means. We should create a mainstream motion with the idea of checking and analyzing facts before perceiving them, so it become viral via social media. This transformation is hard and slow, because it requires additional actions from Ukrainians and is going to take a lot of their time. However, if we do not devote our time to searching and approving information, we can find ourselves on the verge of losing self-identification. Moreover, society without strong knowledge and own mindset, driven by somebody's ideals and ideas is a totalistic society.

Conclusion. The results, together with the literature review, have shown that Facebook can be a very useful tool to reach young people and get them to be more involved in politics. Unfortunately, young people often lack very basic information about politics. Some of the biggest social media platforms seem to have understood this, using research-based knowledge about key information gaps to provide information to potential voters in a timely and personalized manner. However, precisely because civic education is often lacking, there is a risk of young people who are turning to social media as primary sources of civic knowledge being exposed to political misinformation and disinformation, which youth may be not prepared to recognize and filter out. It is essential that we implement civic education, so that young people can obtain the skills necessary to critically evaluate information, online and offline, and effectively use social media platforms as tools to develop their civic participation. It is necessary to encourage young people to be more active on social networks in political context and to develop their political interest because they are the ones who will shape the future of politics.

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UKRANIAN AND NIGERIAN BUSINESS CULTURE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF HOFSTEDE'S 6-D MODEL

Abstract. *The subject of research is the comparison of business cultures of Ukraine and Nigeria. The research explores economic environments both countries. Some preconditions for establishing*