

Mapping the Literature on Social Media and Political Participation. A Bibliometric Analysis



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ABSTRACT:

Purpose

The basic purpose of this study is to find out the impact of the work in the field of social media and political participation through co-occurrence of key words, citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, document, source, author, Institute and country analysis.

Design/Methodology/Approach

This paper systematically reviews the research work done in the field of social media and political participation from 2010 to 2023. In this paper PRISMA framework for the systematic literature review was used; 789 research articles specific to Social media, and political participation were identified through a structured keyword search on Scopus and web of science Databases.

Findings

It was observed that the work in this field started from 2010 but the phenomenal growth was witnessed from 2016. Most of the work in this field has been done in the developed nations and lot is required to be done in the developing and under developing countries. Social media and political participation has been basic theme with very high relevance and underdeveloped.

Originality/ Value

In the era of highly competitive election phenomenon it is must to understand the value social media and its role in political participation so in this paper an attempt has been made to understand this relationship by mapping the existing available literature

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Political Participation, Political Attitude, Political Trust, and Political Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, and it has had a profound impact on the way we communicate, socialize, and engage with one another. In recent years, social media has also emerged as a powerful tool for political participation, allowing individuals to express their political opinions, connect with like-minded individuals, and organize political campaigns and protests. In this paper, it is an attempt to explore the ways in which social media has influenced political participation and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this phenomenon. Social media has significantly increased political participation by providing a platform for individuals to voice their opinions, share news and information, and connect with others who share similar beliefs. The ability to communicate with a large number of people in real-time has made it easier for individuals to mobilize around political causes and to engage in political discussions. Social media has also allowed for greater political transparency and accountability by enabling citizens to monitor and track the actions of their elected officials. One of the most significant advantages of social media in relation to political participation is that it has helped to level the playing field for individuals and groups who may not have had access to traditional forms of media or political power. Social media has given a voice to marginalized groups, allowing them to express their opinions and advocate for their rights in a way that was not previously possible. However, there are also some drawbacks to the use of social media for political participation. One of the most significant disadvantages is that social media can lead to a polarization of political views, with individuals retreating into ideological echo chambers and refusing to engage with those who hold different beliefs. Social media can also be used to spread misinformation and fake news, which can have a detrimental impact on political discourse and decision-making. Another issue with social media and political participation is the possibility of censorship and control. Social media platforms are owned and operated by private companies, and as such, they have the power to restrict or manipulate the content that is shared on their platforms. This has led to concerns about the potential for social media platforms to limit free speech and influence political outcomes. In conclusion, social media has had a profound impact on political participation, enabling individuals to express their opinions, connect with others, and mobilize around political causes. While social media has provided many benefits, such as increased transparency and accountability, it also has some disadvantages, such as the potential for polarization and the spread of misinformation. As social media continues to evolve and play an increasingly important

Mapping the Literature on Social Media and Political Participation. A Bibliometric Analysis

role in political discourse, it will be important to carefully consider its advantages and disadvantages in order to ensure that it is used in a way that promotes democratic values and fosters constructive political engagement. Boulianne, S. (2015) this article provides a meta-analysis of existing research on the relationship between social media use and political participation. The study finds that social media use is positively associated with political participation, although the strength of the relationship varies depending on the type of social media activity. Zúñiga et al. (2012) this study examines the relationship between social media use for news and various forms of political engagement, including social capital, civic engagement, and political participation. The authors find that social media use for news is positively associated with all three types of political engagement. Xenos et al., (2014) this article examines the relationship between social media use and political engagement among young people in three different countries. The study finds that social media use is positively associated with various forms of political engagement, including voting and participation in political discussions. Lee, N. M. (2018) this study examines the relationship between social media use and political participation among young people in the United States. The author finds that social media use is positively associated with political participation, particularly among young people who are more politically interested and engaged. Overall, these studies suggest that social media use is associated with increased political engagement and participation. However, the specific nature of this relationship may vary depending on factors such as the type of social media activity and the demographic characteristics of the user.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

RQ1: What are publication trends with respect to time in the area of social media and political participation?

RQ2: Who are the most prolific sources, journals, authors, countries and institutions in the field of political participation?

RQ3: What are the most impactful publications and research themes in this field?

RQ4: What are the emerging, disappearing and mature themes in the field of political participation?

DATA & METHODOLOGY

The Scopus database is used for analysis in this study. Recently, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) have emerged as the most popular and trustworthy databases for scientific literature. Although Scopus is now the most often used database for analysis, WoS is still regarded as a verified data source. Also, it enhances WoS (Merig et al., 2020). The WoS database has been recommended above Scopus in bibliometric research since it has a list of publications going back to 1900 whereas Scopus only goes back to 1966. (Paule-Vianez et al., 2020). In this study, bibliometric analysis has been done first, and network analysis using VOSviewer has been included. The three knowledge structures that make up the core of bibliometric analysis are conceptual structure, which identifies key themes and trends, social structure, which explains interactions between authors, institutions, and nations, and intellectual structure, which explains how one author's work influences others (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). The bibliometric approach makes use of a straightforward, statistical method that is based on an objective methodology (Aria et al., 2020).

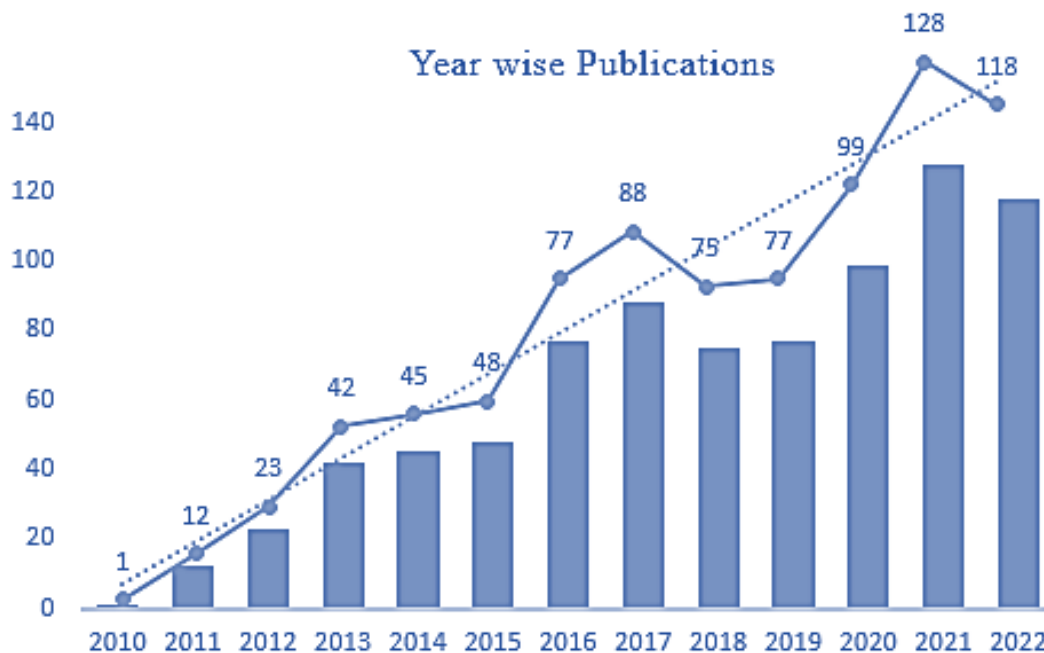
DATA

The dataset has been extracted from Scopus. In search criteria the keywords —“Social Media” and “Political Participation” or “Political Trust” or “Political Attitude” or “Political engagement” —Article Title, Abstract or Keywords have been applied. The Scopus database returned 1364 matches as a result of this search. But when the search was restricted to document type only as “Article” or “Review” and language as “English”, the search result returned 839 documents. This resulted in the dataset for doing studies in the field of Social media influence and political participation.

RESULTS

The results have been discussed in the following three subsections: publication and citation structure, literature review of most influential publications and analysis of publications of leading authors, institutions, and countries.

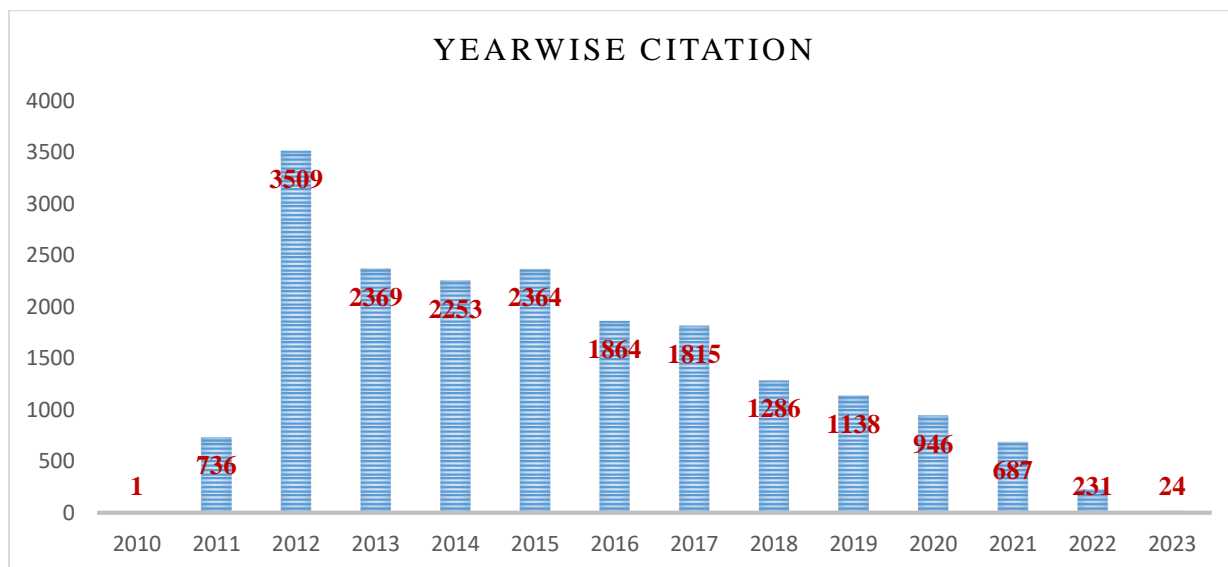
Figure 1 Year wise publication



Source: Calculated by Authors in Excel

From figure 1 that starts from 2010 and finishes at 2022 as per the dataset and it is clear from the figure that the annual publications have been increased almost every year. In 2010 the annual publication was 1 however it reached to 110 in the year 2021 that is a phenomenal growth. From 2015 this research area has started emerging and didn't stopped till to this time. However we also could see a drop in this area during 2018 and 2019 were the annual publications are only 75 and 77 respectively, but still it is quite higher as compared to where it started.

Figure 2 Year wise Citation Analysis



Source: Calculated by Authors in Excel

The figure 2 shows the annual citations year 2012 has highest number of citations i.e. 3509 followed by 2013 that has a 2369 citations. It is important to note that these are annual citations of all the documents within the mined database. The quantum of citation increases year after year so it important to note that time and citation has a strong relation. However the average citations have been 1373 which is good enough.

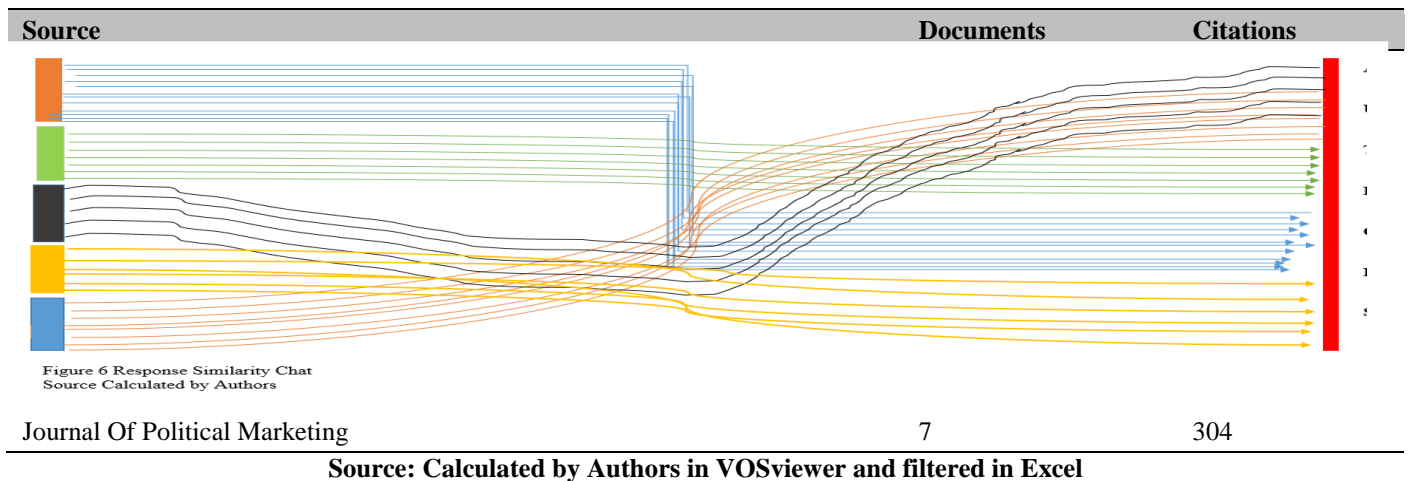
Mapping the Literature on Socia Media and Political Particpation. A Bibliometric Analysis

Table 1 Authors with highest documents

Author	Documents	Citations
Matthes J.	12	2900
Gil De Zúñiga H.	11	2005
Heiss R.	11	261
Bailey E.A.	8	106
De Zúñiga H.G.	8	497
Lee F.L.F.	8	436
Chen H.-T.	7	203
Copeland L.	7	312
Hoffmann C.P.	7	91
Theocharis Y.	7	319
Vaccari C.	7	476
Valenzuela S.	7	786
Ahmed S.	6	24
Bimber B.	6	323
Chan M.	6	168

The table 1 shows the authors who have worked in this domain in this table the first 15 authors have been mentioned in this area .The highest number of documents written are 12 by Matthes J and the number is 12 and followed by Gil and Heiss R both have written 11 documents. So the major contributor in this area is Matthes J undoubtly but other have contributed too and should not be ignored.In this table it is important to note that the documents written by an author has not been compared with the citations of the authors.

Table 2 Top 10 Sources in this Field



The table 2 shows the sources and the productivity. We have selected top 10 sources from the entire dataset. It is evident from the table that New Media and Society highest documents 30 published so far followed by Information Communication and Society and Journal of Information Technology and Politics with 26 and 22 documents respectively. There are several other journals that have equally done well in the same field. The table has been shown with along with citations.

Table 3 Top 10 countries in this Area

Country	Documents	Citations
United States	279	9614
United Kingdom	99	3607
Germany	54	1046

Mapping the Literature on Socia Media and Political Particpation. A Bibliometric Analysis

Hong Kong	43	1035
China	37	342
Australia	33	976
Italy	32	916
Austria	28	1763
Netherlands	25	459
Sweden	23	850

Source: Calculated by Authors in VOSviewer and filtered in Excel

The table 3 show the top 10 countries that have contributed majorly in this field. It is evident from the table that USA tops the list with 279 documents followed by UK and Germany with 99 and 54 documents. Countries like China, Australia and Italy have recently started working in the same domain with the greater speed .The documents are followed by the citations as well and USA has again topped in the list with 9614 citations followed by UK and Australia with 3607 and 1763 citations.

NETWORK ANALYSIS USING VOSVIEWER

In the following subsections, network analysis of co-occurrence of keywords, bibliographic coupling of sources and authors have been carried out. Some keywords that are related to other keywords have been blended before analysis. The initial default setting for the minimum number of times a keyword must appear in a publication was five. Yet, the final picture is too disorganized to do any useful analysis. As a result, the minimum number of times that keywords appeared was maintained at 1. A minimum recurrence criterion that is overly strict, however, runs the danger of producing too few keywords. But finally we keep it 10 and 44 out of the 1783 keywords meet the threshold for better understanding. Five clusters were framed represented by different color combination in the [figure 3](#). Few key words were replaced and removed if they were close or similar to make the analysis meaningful in many terms.

Table 4 Authors Key Word Occurrence

Keyword	Occurrences
Social Media	465
Political Participation	313
Facebook	52
Twitter	43
Youth	38
Internet	37
Civic Engagement	34
Online Political Participation	34
Social Networks	28
Political Communication	26
Political Efficacy	25
Political Trust	24
Participation	23
Political Engagement	23
Political Knowledge	22
Politics	22
Digital Media	18
Political Expression	18
Social Movements	17

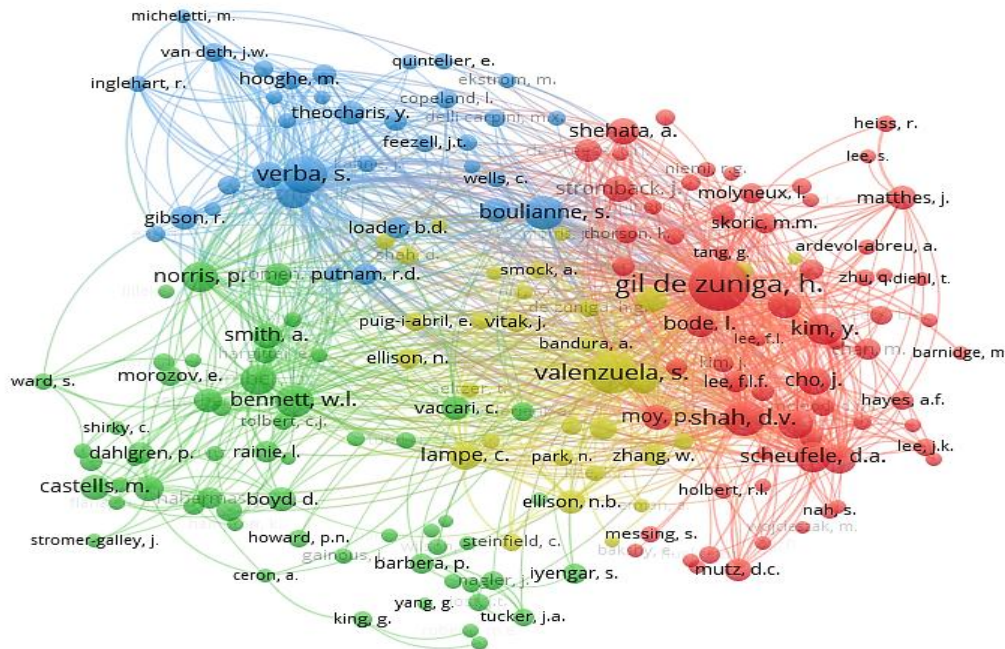
Source: Calculated by Authors in VOSviewer and filtered in Excel

The table 4 explains the occurrence of key word in the mined dataset in this study only authors keywords have been used not the index or key word-plus. It is clear from the table that Social media and Political participation has highest occurrences in the entire list 465 and 313 respectively.it was calculated in VOSviewer and the graphic representation has also been in the study.

Mapping the Literature on Socia Media and Political Participation. A Bibliometric Analysis

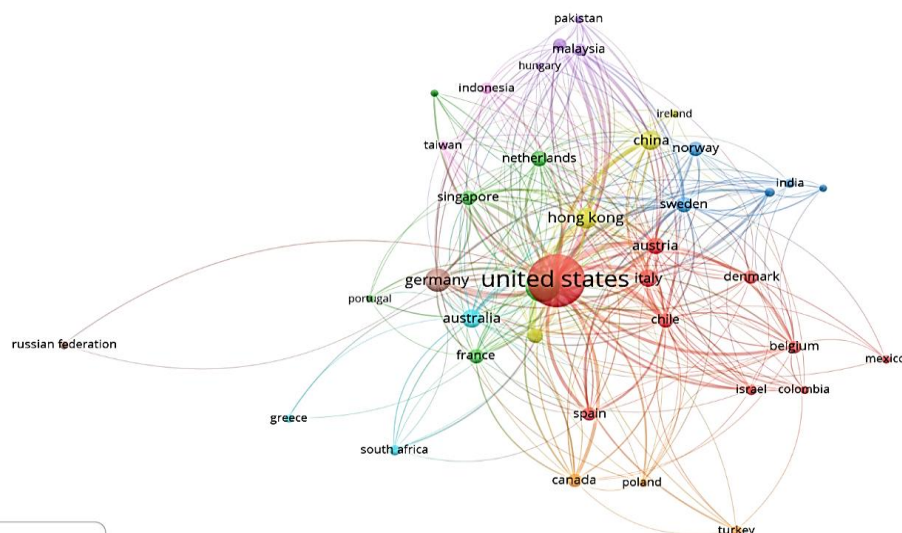
The sources in the final graph are selected on the basis of total link strength (TLS) (van Eck & Waltman, 2020).The journal of new media and society has the highest number of publications (30) with a total link strength of 8472, followed by journal of information technology with a link strength of 5811. There were 4 clusters formed in which cluster one represented by red color has the highest sources and total links with a total number of journals 10. The last cluster has only 1 source represented by yellow color i.e. journal of computer mediated communication.

Figure 6 Co-Citation Network of Authors



Monitoring pairs of publications that are often mentioned in the same source articles is known as co-citation analysis. Clusters of research start to emerge when several writers co-cite the same pairs of publications. These clusters typically have a common subject among the co-cited works. In this analysis 4 clusters were formed represented by different colors. We started with 20 as minimum citations out of the total authors 31540, 569 meet the threshold, but the output was not feasible for analysis so we kept on increasing 1 citation and finally stopped at 50 citations per author so out of the total authors of 31540, 189 meet the threshold that was feasible to analyse, Gil de Zuniga, H have the highest number of citations of 710 with a network link of 37801, followed by Valenzuela, S, with 509 and a total link network of 25915. The four colors are represented by red, green, blue and yellow.

Figure 7 Citation Analysis Country wise



Mapping the Literature on Social Media and Political Participation. A Bibliometric Analysis

The above figure 7 states that USA has the highest number of documents published 279 with 9614 citations followed by UK with 99 documents and had 3607 citations and so on and so forth. In this analysis 9 clusters were framed. The first cluster includes 10 countries with United States as the highest node, the cluster 2 has 6 nodes UK leading in the 2 cluster, the 3 cluster is represented with green color

CONCLUSION

It is to be concluded that the work in this field started from 2010 but the phenomenal growth was witnessed from 2016. Most of the work in this field has been done in the developed nations and lot is required to be done in the developing and under developing countries. Social media and political participation has been basic theme with very high relevance and under developed. USA and UK has done wonder in almost all the areas of the research. The journal of new media and society has the highest number of publications, other journals have shown the growth from 2017 when the media was completely in the propagation of political trolling and mass communication. Social media has significantly increased political participation by providing a platform for individuals to voice their opinions, share news and information, and connect with others who share similar beliefs. The ability to communicate with a large number of people in real-time has made it easier for individuals to mobilize around political causes and to engage in political discussions. Social media and Political participation has highest occurrences in the entire list 465 and 313 respectively however others close terms have the similar frequency that shows the relevance of the words used by the authors.

LITERATURE GAPS AND FUTURE AGENDA

The study was limited to Scopus and limited timeframe. The study was confined to research papers and articles only. The study takes into account only two variables for evaluation. The future researches may focus on more variables and dimensions of the risk and return in relation to crypto currency portfolio management. Furthermore databases may be explored for concrete results and outcomes. Timeframe can take for two or three decades in get into the details of the relationship. However the research was limited to only few factors, databases and timeframe and may be the avenues for the upcoming studies.

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