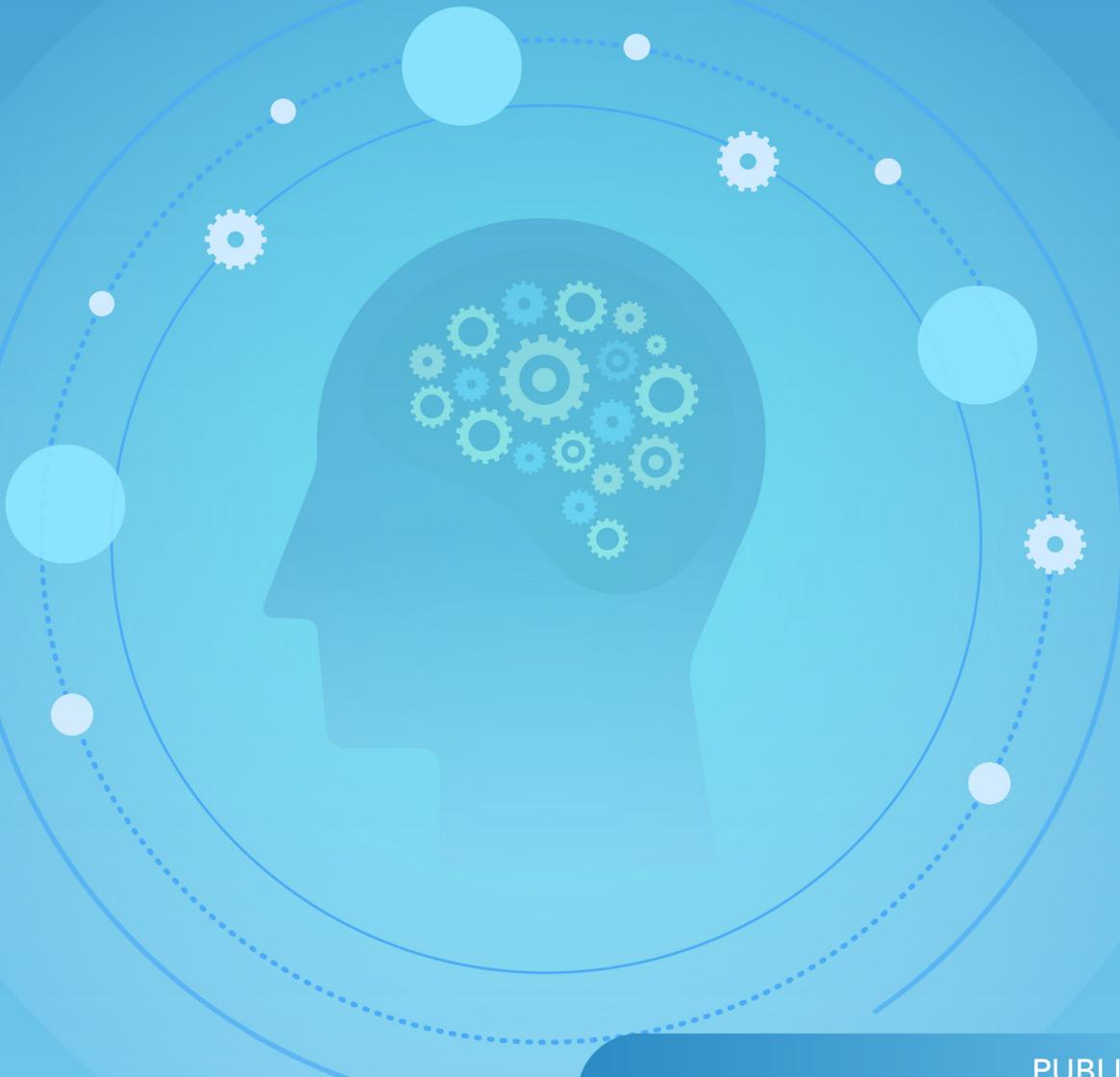




American Journal of Arts and Human Science (AJAHS)

ISSN: 2832-451X (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1 (2025)



PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Examining the Role of Social Media and Mass Media in Political Campaigns: A Review of the Literature

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Article Information

Received: October 21, 2023

Accepted: November 28, 2023

Published: December 21, 2024

Keywords

Dependency Theory, Mass Media, News, Political Campaigns, Social Media, Televised Election Debates

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of social media and mass media in political campaigns. It draws from a review of related studies/literature in an attempt to establish the vital role of social media and mass media in said campaigns. While the author did not utilize specific research methods in this research, a close examination of relevant literature on the subject matter has been conducted accordingly. The literature review underscores how the social media are increasingly utilized for political purposes. However, some authors note that politicians still depend on the traditional media for such purposes. While the traditional media remain as valuable vehicles of information in political campaigns, the social media are increasingly recognized as dynamic campaign tools. Along this line, in past campaigns in the U.S. and Brazil, the level of sophistication on how the social media were applied has been noted. As for other countries, the potentials of social media have yet to be harnessed and maximized since these primarily served as a platform for exchange between the candidates and the voters. Notably, televised election debates have been documented as the candidates' crucial means of informing and persuading voters. Apparently, we have witnessed how these televised debates (as these are likewise streamed via YouTube) trigger discourse/exchange among citizens in the course of these debates. More importantly, in such discourse, the citizens themselves campaign for their chosen candidates.

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to examine the role of social media and news (via mass media) in political campaigns.

The literature/works cited in this paper acknowledge how the social media are increasingly utilized for political purposes in the recent years. However, some authors note that politicians still depend on the traditional media (television, radio, and newspapers) primarily for such purposes.

Smith (2011) notes how the social media have enabled voters and politicians to share information, as well as to garner more supporters online. In the Obama campaign, the social media made possible the sharing of information between Obama and his supporters, facilitated the mobilization of volunteers, helped garner more supporters, posted important news, and notably, brought in campaign funds. In Malaysia, Raooof *et al.* (2013) note that parties and candidates utilized the social media to increase the awareness of people (particularly the youth), to spread political views, and "to attract voters and gain their support." Raooof *et al.* (2013) likewise note that European parties utilized the social media and "were, to some degree, mirroring the strategy of Obama in their campaigns" (Lilleker & Jackson, 2012). In Brazil, presidential candidates utilized social media interactively while gubernatorial and senatorial candidates used these media rather informatively (Gilmore & Howard, 2012).

Indeed, in what ways were the social media utilized in past campaigns? On the other hand, what was the role of news (via mass media) in past political campaigns?

The dearth of literature on the role of news via social

media or the role of online news in political campaigns, however, compelled the author to discuss separately the role of news. Nevertheless, the author attempts to give an analysis and insights across the two forms of media (social and mass media).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The arguments of the paper are based on the theoretical assumptions of Dependency Theory.

The theory suggests that individuals in urban areas have become "dependent on mass communication to assist them in receiving the information that they need, in order to make a variety of decisions concerning their everyday lives" (DeFleur & Rokeach, 2002). The idea is that one becomes "more dependent on media that meet a number of... needs than on media that provide just a few" (Littlejohn, 2002). If an individual then "finds a medium" that provides him/her "with several functions that are central" to his/her desires, he/she "will be more inclined to continue to use that particular medium in the future" (Spring, 2002). The theory further posits that in times of conflict,... society as a whole tends to become more dependent on the media for a sense of stability. Moreover, one may see an increase in media usage when something important is coming up, such as a presidential election. These special circumstances make viewers more dependent on the media to find out what is happening in society.

The key ideas of the theory can be summarized as follows: "The potential for mass media messages to achieve a broad range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects

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will be increased when media systems serve many unique, and central information functions” (DeFleur & Rokeach, 2002). Thus, “the more the medium has to offer, the more useful it will become” (Spring, 2002).

Cognitively, “since the theory complies with the idea that people rely on it for information determining their decisions, it clearly can help individuals develop certain attitudes regarding given subjects” (Spring, 2002). It can likewise encourage individuals to talk about certain things. Affectively, “it can create many different feelings such as fear, anxiety, and happiness” (Spring, 2002). The media can also “promote behavior changes.” Spring (2002) elaborates that “this can result in an audience member doing something” that he/she “would not ordinarily do.” The mass media have these capabilities and as such, “society has become dependent on the media for virtually all its outside resources in order to make decisions” (Spring, 2002).

Raouf *et al.* (2013), for instance, note that social network sites play an important role in the “political arena nowadays.” The authors add that these sites are “growing engagement tools that assist in improving the political process by helping electoral candidates in communicating their political programs and thoughts to the community, as well as in rallying their campaign supporters.” “On the other hand, voters can also use social media sites to unconditionally communicate with the candidates” (Raouf *et al.*, 2013).

Smith (2011) also acknowledges the potentials of the social media in campaigns. She cites that (according to the Mass Communication and Society study), “the ability to express political views and opinions online plays an important role for social media in campaigns.” Aside from allowing users to “seek information,” it enables interaction “with others through online expression such as posting political commentaries on blogs and social network sites and sharing multimedia commentary” (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2011). Smith (2011) further notes that in “past campaigns, Facebook users have expressed themselves politically in many ways, such as making online donations, encouraging friends to vote, or posting graphics or status updates expressing political attitudes and opinions.” Twitter and blogs have also been “used by candidates and voters to comment on social and political issues, share information and encourage participation.”

The vital role of the mass media in political campaigns can likewise be deduced from the literature reviewed by the author. Apparently, the mass media are important vehicles in transmitting political messages to the voters. In Scandinavia, for instance, the mass media are utilized by candidates to communicate politically to the voters.

The paper then assumes that politicians utilize/depend on both social media and mass media for their potentials, especially in crucial events like political campaigns. It is believed then that politicians have certain needs (for such political campaigns), which will be addressed by (utilizing) the social media.

Various relevant literature on the subject matter had

been closely reviewed/examined by the author in an attempt to determine the role of both the social media and traditional media in political campaigns. Hence, the author did not utilize specific research methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Social Media in Political Campaigns

Smith (2011) notes how the social media have enabled voters and politicians to share information, as well as to garner more supporters online. The author cites, for instance, that “in past campaigns, Facebook users have expressed themselves politically in many ways, such as making online donations, encouraging friends to vote, or posting graphics or status updates expressing political attitudes and opinions” (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2011). Twitter and blogs have also been utilized by candidates and voters “to comment on social and political issues, share information and encourage participation” (Smith, 2011).

Along this line, Smith (2011) specifically relates how the Obama campaign utilized the social media “to mobilize volunteers and to reach young voters.” Campaign activities like house parties “where like-minded voters would gather to watch campaign events or participate in phone banks” were organized through social media platforms (Greyes, 2011). Consequently, Obama was able to raise a “record-breaking amount of funds...”

“...voter and supporter-generated groups” likewise played a key role in Obama’s campaign. “Facebook groups like One Million Strong for Barack, founded in 2007 by Farouk Olu Aregbe, have mobilized many volunteers and garnered support for Obama.” (Smith, 2011) “According to the group’s description, members of the group have used the group’s discussion board to coordinate political action with one another in order to propel Barack Obama to victory in the presidential election” (Aregbe, 2011).

YouTube also became a major part of the campaign where “more than 1800 videos were uploaded by Obama supporters to the BarackObama.com channel, which counted about 115,000 subscribers” (Graber, 2011). Parody videos (such as the “Obama Girl’s I Got a Crush on Obama”) also “helped to promote Obama” (Smith, 2011). The author elaborates that such videos were viewed “more than 100 million times.”

Greyes (2011) notes how Obama “integrated” the different social media platforms. For instance, YouTube videos were posted in Facebook and such posts were also tweeted. “By doing this the Obama campaign delivered the content supporters wanted in the format they wanted it” (Greyes, 2011).

Obama’s Facebook page currently has “more than 19 million likes” (Smith, 2011). It contains information on his “whereabouts, as well as posts relevant news from the White House.” The page also “lists Obama’s favorite books, movies, television shows and hobbies, just like the Facebook page of any user.”

Apparently, the Obama campaign utilized social media platforms not merely for information purposes as

previously mentioned, such media made possible the sharing of information between Obama and his supporters, facilitated the mobilization of volunteers, helped garner more supporters, posted important news, and notably, brought in campaign funds (though the amount of funds was not disclosed). Thus, the social media were used interactively. It is also important to note how the utilization of the social media resulted in other campaign activities (interpersonal, that is) like watching campaign events and participating in phone in banks. The integration of the different social media platforms in the campaign is also commendable as this considered the possibility that users have media preferences. Indeed, the Obama campaign's utilization of the social media, especially, how it used such media to Obama's advantage, in a way, influenced other politicians to utilize the media in their campaigns. However, in the succeeding literature review, social media platforms were not strategically used (by candidates) as in the Obama campaign.

Raouf *et al.* (2013) and Lilleker *et al.* (2011) who showed that "political parties within Great Britain, France, Germany and Poland (that stood in the 2009 European parliamentary elections) followed a strategy adopting all the features of web 2.0 and the internet to give their supporters the chance to talk to each other or to talk with party leaders directly."

Web 2.0 refers to the "second generation of the World Wide Web (WWW), which focuses more on the ability of people to collaborate and share information online in contrast to the first web version, where people were mainly obtaining information" (O'Reilly, 2006). "One of the most popular Web 2.0 technologies are the Social Network Sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc." (Click & Petit, 2010).

In Malaysia, Raouf *et al.* (2011) note that parties and candidates utilized the social media to increase the awareness of people (particularly the youth), to spread political views, and "to attract voters and gain their support." Though the authors acknowledge how such parties and candidates have "leveraged on Obama's effective utilization of Web 2.0 technologies in politics, especially in elections," it would be important to note that the somewhat-restrictive media environment of Malaysia is also a factor that pushed these parties and candidates to use an alternative media. If they were not restrained by the traditional media then, is it possible that they would not turn to social media? Also, though Raouf *et al.* (2011) noted how the social media were utilized by the candidates, concrete data were not provided the way these were laid out in the Obama campaign.

Milliken Raouf *et al.* (2013) likewise "examined how four of the candidates running in the 2012 presidential election: Michele Bachman, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, and President Obama benefited from employing social media and the Internet on a large scale in their campaigns." The author elaborates that such media "provided a platform for candidates' words and messages without any kind of filtering or modification which usually happens in

traditional media, although each candidate used them in different ways." Again, this highlights the unrestricted potential of the social media.

Raouf *et al.* (2013) further note that European parties utilized the social media "as they were influenced by the American success story" (Karlsen, 2012). Lilleker *et al.* (2011) also examined how UK political parties utilized the social media "in their campaigns during the 2010 UK general elections." The authors noted that "some UK parties were, to some degree, mirroring the strategy of Obama in their campaigns (Lilleker & Jackson, 2012). The specifics though were not described."

In Brazil, presidential candidates utilized social media interactively while gubernatorial and senatorial candidates used these media rather informatively. In the campaigns for presidency, Gilmore and Howard (2012) note a certain level of sophistication as the candidates really hire web developers and content producers in an effort to maintain their sites. In the authors' words, these technical people "work around the clock to keep their respective candidates' online presence "fresh" for the voting public." They hire video producers as well to produce campaign videos.

Apparently, as the authors of the forgoing literature claim, there is a certain level of sophistication applied in the aforementioned campaigns. As it can be recalled in the Obama campaign, for instance, videos that were uploaded in YouTube and posted on Facebook as well were produced by Obama's supporters. In the case of Brazilian candidates, apparently, significant budget must have been allotted to the technical people who were responsible for the web sites and videos. It is worthy to note, though, how the campaigns used the social media to be able to draw more supporters and to organize "on-the-ground campaigns." (comparable to what the Obama campaign has done) "For instance, Worker's Party candidate Dilma Rousseff's new media team went as far as to set up a Facebook-style social media site called Dilmaweb where ideally campaign team members would network with a wide array of political allies including other Workers' Party candidates, community organizers, bloggers, voters, as well as voters themselves in order to better coordinate their on-the-ground campaigns." (Gilmore & Howard, 2012). Also, the "digital media team for Green Party candidate, Marina Silva, created and highly promoted their interactive community organizing application called "Case de Marina" on the candidate's website where supporters and organizers could register their own address as one of Marina's "casas" (houses) and then locate other similar residences in their vicinity in order to facilitate neighborhood networking and organizing" (Gilmore & Howard, 2012). On the other hand, it should also be noted that among the gubernatorial and senatorial candidates, such sophistication was not evident. It was observed that free blog sites were utilized by the candidates. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine this detail, as well as the fact that the websites of these candidates are merely informative ones compared

to those of the presidential candidates whose sites were found to be interactive.

In the Philippines, through the efforts of the Philippine Network Foundation (PHNET), the Philippines got connected to the Internet in March 1994 (Guioguo, 2015). Two years after, approximately 40,000 Filipinos were using it.

Guioguo (2015) notes that the country had “more than thirty known online news publications” in 2006 and recalls that this number includes “only those that provide news as their main service, ranging from online versions of print newspapers to online daily newspapers, online weekly newspapers, online news magazines, and online newspaper-television joint ventures”. A lot of these operate in Metro Manila while the others are based in the provinces (Guioguo, 2015).

Pertierra (2012) acknowledges the potentials of new media by saying that these encourage “personal interaction and the free flow of opinions” (Pertierra, 2012). The social media (e.g. Facebook and YouTube), for instance, are being considered as “indicators of public opinion”. Cognizant of this fact, politicians have started to utilize such media. Pertierra (2012) elaborates that politicians “now commonly join Facebook, have their own web sites and even blog”.

Former President Aquino utilized the social media to his advantage: “Taking a page from the Obama campaign, Noynoy deliberately cultivated social media as a way of contacting the youth. Within the first two months of his campaign, Noynoy had over 95,000 ‘friends’ in Facebook, dwarfing all the other presidential candidates. Building on this early success, Noynoy also has a website (Official Gazette. <http://www.gov.ph/2010/10/11>) meant to engage citizens in a conversation with the President.”

Nazemroaya (2016), on the other hand, relates the centrality of media in the 2016 Presidential campaign in the country as demonstrated by “intense media coverage”, dependence of the candidates on various forms of communication and “mass communication technologies” (“specifically the internet and social media), as well as the public’s activity via various online discussions. The public, reportedly, talked about “political dynasties, corruption, change, patronage, clientelism, constitutionalism, embezzlement, fraud, integrity, morality, the rule of law, and the future of the peoples of the Philippines” (Nazemroaya, 2016). Additionally, they were very active in campaigning for the candidates they supported: they replicated the messages of their chosen candidates and even continued campaigning via social media even when the campaign period was supposed to be over (Nazemroaya, 2016).

The Role of News (via mass media) in Political Campaigns

Unlike the social media, which served as interactive tools in past political campaigns, the mass media remained as informative vehicles, providing the public and the candidates news coverage on the “horse race”,

poll results, and candidates’ character, Kaniss (1993) particularly for the presidential race in the U.S. in 1988. The “horse race” depicts “who is likely to win and lose.” Kaniss (1993) also cites Patterson *et al.* (n.d.) who found that news coverage in the media was rather focused on the “horse race” and therefore, dealt less with substantive issues. With regard to poll results, however, Kaniss (1993) notes their importance. “...polls may be used to check candidates’ claims about the direction of popular opinion and, in turn, inform candidates about the nature of public sentiment on a variety of issues.” The author further notes analysts’ claim that polls aid the voting public in making “informed decisions” during elections, letting them know “when they might be throwing away their vote because a candidate has little chance to win.” On the issue of character, journalists have contended that “character is a valid subject for coverage because a president needs to possess qualities such as moral goodness, strength of will, judgment, and leadership.” Indeed, despite criticisms that news coverage during this time was rather focused on the “horse race” and not on the substantive issues, apparently, the mass media remained the primary sources of information among citizens. And though the mass media were utilized merely as informative tools, it may be worthy to note that during this time, the new media were inching their way into the world of politics. Along this thought, Kaniss (1993) notes that initial studies on the “emerging use of the new media have recognized their strength in “decentralizing the dialogue” of a campaign and in providing longer exposure to candidates.” In elaborating this, however, Kaniss (1993) merely mentioned how cable’s Music Television (MTV) Channel was utilized for campaign purposes. It is apparent then that Kaniss’ concept of “new media” during this time was not yet inclusive of our “new media” nowadays. Nevertheless, such example illustrates how other media forms can supplement the mass media, which, despite its role in transmitting political messages, have its weaknesses.

Kahn’s account (1991), on the other hand, was for the senatorial race, (also in the U.S. in 1984 and 1986) where the mass media (newspapers, in particular) provided information on the horse race, issues, and candidates’ traits. Unlike the news coverage of the presidential race, however, stories on the “horse race” were less while information on various issues was more substantial (Kahn, 1991). In relation to this, Kahn (1991) notes that “during the average Senate campaign, 221 paragraphs were devoted to the issues and only 85 to the horse race.” As in the presidential race though, the mass media were utilized as informative tools. Issues covered during the campaign period include Foreign Affairs, Economic Issues, Farm Issues, Social Issues, Social Programs, and others. Trait coverage, on the other hand, received “very little coverage” (Kahn, 1991). While the concept of “new media,” (though Kaniss’ example was MTV) which was inching its way into the world of politics, (and utilized to supplement the mass media), was introduced by Kaniss (1993) during the 1988 Presidential campaign,

Kahn's account of the Senate campaign merely focused on the role of newspapers in such campaign. It should be noted, however, that the Senate campaign transpired two-four years earlier than the Presidential campaign. It is possible then that the "new media," which Kaniss (1993) mentioned in 1988, were not yet visible in the years 1984-1986.

In Scandinavia, Siune (1987) notes that "political parties consider newspapers important vehicles for reaching voters." While Kaniss (1993) and Kahn's (1991) accounts of the Presidential and Senate campaigns in the U.S. demonstrated how the mass media served as informative tools both for the voters and candidates, Siune (1987) highlights candidates' dependence on the mass media and further notes that voters use information from the mass media "rather heavily." Along this line, the author notes that "the only limitation on the use of newspapers by campaigns is their party affiliation, but the general coverage of political party activities is wider than the party affiliation of an individual paper would indicate." Parsby (1976) and Siune (1987) elaborates that "the parties want support and coverage from the press, but broadcasting and especially television" is the most preferred medium in disseminating political information. The author likewise adds that news is a "form of political communication highly valued by the political parties." However, since journalists assume the gate-keeping role, not all news coming from the parties are accepted (Siune, 1987). Despite this, however, it can be seen that the mass media are being utilized by candidates in Scandinavia to communicate with the voters. Unlike in the U.S. campaigns where news coverage was rather one-way (coming from the media), it is important to note that media coverage of news in Scandinavia partly depict the candidates' views. In support of Siune's earlier statement that Scandinavian voters use information from the mass media rather heavily, the author revealed that in Denmark, "answers to a series of questions derived from the uses and gratifications model showed that the majority of Danes followed political campaigns on television, either for information or out of habit (Sauerberg, 1976). Siune (1987) further supported this by citing the "relative reliance" of Danes on information sources with respect to problems deemed to be very important. "Television was consistently cited as the most important source"; newspapers the second, "and the highest among the better educated"; "radio was third" (Siune, 1987).

In West Germany, undeniably, the mass media are instruments of information, transmitting political messages through different forms of media. Schoenbach (1987) notes that in 1980, in the last four weeks of the Bundestag election campaign, "more than 80 hours of political programs of all sorts" were broadcast by the two West German national television channels, "averaging almost three hours of political information per day" (Feist & Liepelt, 1982). The aforementioned authors add that "fourteen percent of television prime time news was devoted directly to the campaign." Also,

in broadsheets, "an average of 21% of the front page space contained campaign reports." (Weiss, 1982, p. 268, cited by Schoenbach, 1987) In tabloids, on the other hand, such proportion "is considerably lower, but only about 15% of the population read tabloids exclusively" (Schoenbach, 1987). Also, though Schoenbach (1987) acknowledges that reality entertainment comprises "more than 60% of the TV programming," "there is more political information and highbrow cultural programming on German television than on most other television channels around the world." Newspapers, and, "to some extent, free sheets" are practically the lone source of local information. Radio and the "statewide third television channels" deliver reports about "larger areas only, such as states or larger portions of states" (Schoenbach, 1987). Aside from these media, however, other campaign channels are utilized by the candidates --- flyers and brochures, weekly newspapers, posters, and billboards. Also, it is important to note that although substantial amounts of political information are delivered through the mass media, interpersonal channels (like information desks/discussions with candidates, as well as political rallies) are maintained. Schoenbach (1987) notes though that seemingly, "personal contact with local candidates... is neither common nor very important to voters." Does this mean that the other channels mean more to the voters? Does the voting public rely more on the mass media? Indeed, these details still need investigation. On the other hand, it is surprising to note how huge amounts of money (hundreds of millions) are poured into campaigns. It is worthy to note, however, that a significant amount comes from donations and that the candidates also receive subsidies from the federal government. Likewise, there is support from the broadcasting industry, where the parties are given the right to air free commercials. Though apparently, various media (including the mass media, of course) used in the campaigns tend to complement each other, the interpersonal part of the campaign seems to entail a great effort on the part of the candidates --- the rallies, discussions, donations. On this note, it is amazing to note how these tasks, nowadays, can be done efficiently through the social media. Also, where the social media function interactively among voters and candidates, we can see from the West Germany case that the interactive part of the campaign is done interpersonally. On the whole, we can see how the mass media perform its information role but this is rather a one-way function --- apparently, it is a transmitting task. It is crucial to note though that with the advent of various information technologies, nowadays, the mass media have tried to integrate such technologies into their tasks. But, amidst all these happenings, as we have seen the vital role of the social media in political campaigns, their merits should be greatly considered.

In the Philippines, advertising guru Reli German (2004) relates how presidential campaigns back in the mid-1960s utilized "state-of-the art campaign techniques". In Ferdinand Marcos' presidential bid, for instance,

commercials and jingles were used. German (2004) elaborates, Advertising professionals had been involved in Philippine election campaigns as far back as 1965, when radio was reaching its peak and television, just beginning to make a dent in Filipinos' consciousness". ... "Soon after the United States introduced elections in the Philippines, the country's former colonizer also exported to the islands U.S.-style campaigning. This included the use of the mass media to create and manipulate public images, the hiring of public relations and advertising professionals, and later, the employment of sophisticated tools like campaign research and polling. Candidates like Manuel Quezon, Ramon Magsaysay, and Ferdinand Marcos were sold to voters partly through images crafted by experts and peddled to the public through newspapers, radio, and later, television. At least in terms of elections, the Philippines is not the laggard of Asia, but perhaps the first country in the region that has mastered the use of first-world election techniques (German, 2004).

Pertierra (2012), on the other hand, notes that it was only in the mid -1970s that television gained "mass appeal" in the realm of "political campaigning". Radio and film proved to be much more successful in persuading the masses to support political candidates (Pertierra, 2012). Along this thought, Caparas (2004) acknowledges that besides the use of music, it was a "battle of books and films" for Macapagal and Marcos in their presidential bid in 1965:

Marcos struck first with the hagiographical "For Every Tear a Victory: The Story of Ferdinand E. Marcos". Macapagal countered with "Macapagal the Incorruptible". The next arena was the silver screen: "Iginuhit ng Tadhana (Destined)", which portrayed Marcos as an intellectual and hero. "Daigdig ng Mga Api (World of the Oppressed)" illustrated Macapagal's grandiose blueprint to deliver the masses from poverty (Caparas, 2004).

Though Caparas (2004) did not give detailed accounts of how interpersonal channels were used in the aforementioned period (1965), he recalls how Marcos captured the electorate's attention through his "oratorical genius". Also, he notes how Imelda Marcos' singing "helped seduced votes for her husband".

In the early 2000s, politicians appeared in commercials endorsing milk and detergents "to make money and get their names and faces recognized" (Hays, n.d.). Specifically, they made appearances on "television, radio, billboards, and posters". One presidential candidate endorsed a brandy while President Arroyo endorsed "low-price medicines, cheap rice and a commuter train service (Hays, n.d.). Notably, televised presidential debates are key political spectacles that the mainstream media and candidates invest on. On the other hand, prospective voters look forward to these as a means of educating themselves about the candidates prior to voting. Maier (2022), however, notes that in televised election debates, candidates primarily intend to woo voters rather than educate them. Turkenburg (2022) likewise argues that televised election debates essentially aim at informing and

persuading voters.

In the Philippines, the 2016 Philippine Presidential Debates were significant as these were the first COMELEC-organized debates in twenty-four (24) years (Primer Media Inc., 2016).

For the first debate alone, GMA News Online reportedly got 3,567,404 page views while "the site's main debates page (gmanews.tv/eleksyon2016/debates) which housed the debate's livestream, got 1,028,341 public views" (GMA News, 2016).

Additionally, "the hashtag #PiliPinasDebates2016 became the top trending topic on Twitter in the Philippines and worldwide at the time the debate was being shown. Data from Twitter shows that organic impressions of tweets sent by @gmanews generated 13.4 million organic impressions. Impressions are real views of @gmanews' tweets. There were 54,200 clicks on links mentioned in tweets sent by @gmanews and 513,900 clicks on native videos it tweeted" (GMA News, 2016).

CONCLUSION

While traditional media remain as valuable vehicles of information in political campaigns, the social media are increasingly recognized as dynamic campaign tools. Along this line, in past campaigns in the U.S. and Brazil, the level of sophistication on the how the social media was applied has been noted. As it can be recalled in the Obama campaign, videos that were uploaded in YouTube and posted on Facebook as well were produced by Obama's supporters. In the case of Brazilian candidates, apparently, the significant budget must have been allotted to the technical people who were responsible for the web sites and videos. It is worthy to note, though, how the campaigns used the social media to be able to draw more supporters and to organize "on-the-ground campaigns." (comparable to what the Obama campaign has done) "For instance, Worker's Party candidate Dilma Rousseff's new media team went as far as to set up a Facebook-style social media site called Dilmaweb where ideally campaign team members would network with a wide array of political allies including other Workers' Party candidates, community organizers, bloggers, voters, as well as voters themselves in order to better coordinate their on-the-ground campaigns" (Gilmore & Howard, 2012). Also, the "digital media team for Green Party candidate, Marina Silva, created and highly promoted their interactive community organizing application called "Case de Marina" on the candidate's website where supporters and organizers could register their own address as one of Marina's "casas" (houses)and then locate other similar residences in their vicinity in order to facilitate neighborhood networking and organizing" (Gilmore & Howard, 2012).

As for other countries, the potentials of social media have yet to be harnessed and maximized since these primarily served as a platform for exchange between the candidates and the voters.

Notably, televised election debates have been documented

as the candidates' crucial means of informing and persuading voters. Apparently, we have witnessed how these televised debates (as these are likewise streamed via YouTube) trigger discourse/exchange among citizens in the course of these debates. More importantly, in such discourse, the citizens themselves campaign for their chosen candidates.

As users of social network sites continue to soar worldwide, and likewise, considering their potentials and those of the mass media, it would be important to see how these media could be utilized altogether and how these complement each other to achieve political ends. Thus, as there is a dearth in local literature, such areas could be investigated. Content analysis and observations across the aforementioned media channels are highly recommended.

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