The Role of Memes in Shaping Political Discourse on Social Media

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Abstract

The article explores the role of memes in shaping political discourse on social media platforms, examining their influence on public opinion, political behavior, and the dynamics of ideological polarization. With the rapid proliferation of meme culture across platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, memes have emerged as potent tools for political communication, serving as vehicles for political expression and instruments for reinforcing ideological divides. By analyzing political memes' circulation, engagement, and sentiment, this study reveals how memes predominantly circulate within political echo chambers, fostering increased engagement within ideologically homogenous groups while limiting exposure to opposing viewpoints. Additionally, the emotional resonance of memes and their viral potential contribute significantly to their effectiveness in influencing political opinions and mobilizing support for political movements. However, the study also highlights concerns regarding the spread of misinformation and the role of memes in exacerbating political polarization. The findings suggest that memes facilitate political participation and awareness and challenge democratic discourse by amplifying divisiveness. The article calls for further research into the long-term effects of meme-driven political communication on voter behavior, civic engagement, and democratic processes.

Keywords: political memes, social media discourse, political polarization, public opinion, digital communication

1. Introduction

In the age of social media, digital communication has transformed how individuals engage with political discourse (McNair, 2017). The rapid dissemination of information and the increasing role of platforms like Twitter (X), Facebook, and Instagram have given rise to new forms of political expression. Among these forms, memes have emerged as one of the most pervasive and influential tools for shaping political conversation. A meme, often characterized by humor, satire, and relatability, can spread quickly across online communities, influencing public opinion and fostering political engagement (AlAfnan, & Dishari, 2024). However, memes are not just vehicles of entertainment; they are potent vehicles for political ideologies, capable of simplifying complex issues, challenging authority, and catalyzing political movements. As a result, understanding the role of memes in political discourse is crucial for comprehending the dynamics of modern political engagement on social media.

Memes, initially rooted in internet culture as humorous or absurd content, have evolved into powerful tools of political communication (Wagner, & Schwarzenegger, 2020). The term 'meme,' coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976, initially referred to spreading cultural ideas and behaviors. In the digital era, memes have become highly shareable media elements that can carry political messages and opinions. Their success as a form of political discourse lies in their ability to combine visual elements with concise, often witty, text to convey messages in a digestible and emotionally impactful manner (Herrick, 2020). Political memes can transcend traditional modes of political communication by engaging a wide demographic, particularly younger, tech-savvy populations who consume content through quick, easily accessible formats (AlAfnan, 2021; AlAfnan, 2024a/2024b; Bhattacharya et al., 2024; Davis et al.,2020; Lee, 2022; Stacey, 2021). Through memes, political topics that might otherwise seem inaccessible or dense are distilled into simple, often provocative, easily understood, and shared ideas.

One of the defining characteristics of political memes is their capacity to engage individuals in political debates without the need for formal education or complex analysis. The brevity and humor embedded within memes make them accessible to a broad audience, fostering an environment where political discourse can occur outside traditional news outlets or academic spaces (Tulloch, 2023). Memes allow individuals to engage with political topics in informal and personal ways while still addressing issues of significant societal importance. As a result, memes have become a democratizing force,

empowering ordinary people to comment on, critique, or support political ideologies and candidates. This transformation of political discourse has been particularly notable in moments of political upheaval, where memes have played a central role in mobilizing public opinion, challenging mainstream narratives, and shaping the outcomes of elections (Mihăilescu, 2024).

Political memes are not solely one-sided; they often serve as tools for both supporting and opposing political ideologies (Halversen & Weeks, 2023). Different groups can weaponize memes during elections or political crises to endorse or criticize political figures and movements. For instance, memes in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election saw both political sides harness the power of humor and satire to appeal to voters, mock opponents, or galvanize political bases. The meme-driven culture that emerged from these campaigns reflected broader societal divisions and highlighted how digital spaces could be used to amplify political messaging. In this sense, memes become symbols of identity, representing a humorous comment on political events and a reflection of deeper ideological divides (Wagener, 2024).

In addition to supporting political campaigns, memes also significantly raise awareness about social issues. Hashtag movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and #ClimateChange have been bolstered by memes that help to spread important messages quickly and virally. Memes serve as a powerful political expression for those seeking to challenge the status quo or draw attention to marginalized voices and causes. Whether used to highlight social injustices or to critique government policies, political memes function as a digital form of activism, often appealing to emotions and encouraging users to act or engage in further dialogue (Leiser, 2022).

Despite their power, the role of memes in political discourse is not without its controversies. While they can promote political awareness and social change, they can reinforce misinformation, perpetuate stereotypes, and contribute to political polarization (Kirmani, 2023; Liagusha & Iarovyi, 2025). The simplicity and speed with which memes spread can sometimes result in disseminating misleading or harmful content. Memes can manipulate opinions, create echo chambers, and exacerbate divisions between political groups. This duality of memes as both a tool for democratic engagement and a potential source of disinformation raises essential questions about their place in modern political discourse (McVicker, 2021; Turvy et al., 2023).

In this article, the role of memes is explored in shaping political discourse on social media. How memes function as a form of political communication is explored, as they impact public opinion and their ability to unite and divide individuals. Through a discourse analysis of political memes across various social media platforms, we aim to understand their significance in contemporary political movements and debates. Ultimately, this exploration will highlight the power of memes as an essential component of the digital political landscape and their transformative influence on the way we engage with politics today.

2. Literature Review

The role of memes in shaping political discourse on social media has garnered increasing attention from scholars in recent years (Denisova, 2019; Murru & Vicari, 2023; Peters & Allan, 2022). As the intersection of digital media and politics continues to evolve, researchers have sought to understand how memes function as a tool for political communication (AlAfnan & MohdZuki, 2023/2024), activism, and social critique. The literature on this topic spans several key areas, including the conceptualization of memes, their impact on political engagement, their role in framing political ideologies, and the consequences of their use in shaping public opinion and political behavior.

The concept of the meme, as coined by Richard Dawkins in The Selfish Gene (1981), referred to the transmission of cultural ideas, behaviors, or symbols through imitation. While Dawkins initially conceptualized memes as cultural phenomena, the digital age has radically transformed their meaning and utility. Early scholarship on memes focused on their origins in internet culture, where they were primarily understood as humorous or absurd images accompanied by text (Shifman, 2014). Shifman (2014) formally defined digital memes as "a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance" (P.342) that spread through social networks. The viral nature of memes, paired with their ease of sharing and transformation, makes them particularly well-suited for political communication in online environments.

Regarding political discourse, memes are seen as a combination of visual and linguistic elements that communicate political messages. As easily shareable content, memes can condense complex political issues into simple, often provocative ideas that resonate with large audiences. Memes do not require sophisticated political knowledge to be understood or shared, which makes them particularly effective tools for engaging the general public in political discourse (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007).

The growing prominence of memes in political contexts has led to significant research on their function as a form of political communication (AlAfnan, 2025). Studies have shown that memes serve as vehicles for conveying political ideologies, challenging authority, and shaping public opinion. For example, studies of memes during the 2016 U.S.

presidential election highlighted how they were used by both major political parties and grassroots organizations to promote candidates, attack opponents, and reinforce partisan ideologies (Highfield, 2016). Memes provide a platform for individuals to express political views quickly and succinctly, often with humor and satire, making them an ideal medium for politically engaged internet users. As Highfield (2016) notes, memes can function as a form of 'political humor,' allowing users to critique political figures or parties in ways that would be more difficult or less acceptable in traditional political discourse. Memes often rely on humor, irony, and exaggeration to make political points, and their humorous nature allows for an emotional connection with audiences. This emotional appeal is particularly significant in political communication (AlAfnan, 2022), as it can shape how individuals view political events, issues, and candidates.

Memes also allow for political engagement without formal political structures or institutions. Shifman (2014) argues that memes represent a democratizing force in political discourse by enabling ordinary individuals to engage in the political process, critique government actions, and mobilize for social change. Through memes, users can challenge traditional media narratives, create counter-narratives, and engage in online activism. This aspect of memes has been central to their role in movements such as #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, where they have been used to amplify marginalized voices and raise awareness about social justice issues (Binns, 2018). While memes can serve as a political engagement and activism tool, their potential for contributing to political polarization has also been widely discussed. Memes, with their ability to rapidly spread through social media platforms, can reinforce existing political divisions by creating echo chambers where users are exposed primarily to content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs. Studies have found that memes often function as tools for in-group solidarity and out-group hostility, promoting a binary understanding of political issues and deepening ideological divides (Graham, 2019). For instance, memes used by political groups often simplify complex issues into dichotomous choices, which can exacerbate polarization by framing political opponents as enemies or threats to the social order (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

Memes, in addition, can be used to spread misinformation or misleading political narratives. Given their concise, often emotionally charged nature, memes are particularly effective in shaping public opinion, sometimes distorting facts or presenting one-sided arguments. The viral spread of misinformation through memes during events like the 2016 U.S. election and Brexit referendum highlights the potential dangers of memes in the political landscape (Fraser, 2017). This has led to concerns about the ethical implications of meme-driven political discourse, particularly their role in spreading fake news and contributing to the erosion of trust in traditional media. On the other hand, memes are increasingly recognized as a form of digital activism, contributing to movements that challenge power structures and advocate for social change. Hashtag campaigns such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter have used memes to mobilize supporters and raise awareness about pressing social issues. In these cases, memes often combine political messaging with calls to action, encouraging users to share their experiences or participate in protests and events. Tufekci (2017) noted that digital activism through memes and hashtags enables decentralized, grassroots movements to spread messages quickly and effectively, circumventing traditional media gatekeepers. Additionally, memes have created a sense of solidarity among social justice activists, allowing them to communicate and mobilize in a way that transcends geographical boundaries (Binns, 2018). Using humor, irony, and subversive imagery, activists can critique dominant narratives, raise awareness about inequalities, and call for political change.

The literature on memes and political discourse demonstrates that memes are multifaceted tools that function as vehicles for political expression and sources of political polarization. Their ability to distill complex issues into easily shareable, emotionally charged messages has made them a significant component of modern political communication. While memes can promote social change, they also carry the potential for spreading misinformation and deepening ideological divides (Al-Rawi, 2021; Dafaure, 2020; Youvan, 2024). As digital spaces continue to evolve, the role of memes in shaping political discourse will undoubtedly remain a topic of significant scholarly interest (Beck, 2024; Kirner-Ludwig, 2020; Steele, 2023). Further research is needed to understand how memes influence political behavior, shape public opinion, and contribute to the dynamics of contemporary political movements.

3. Methodology

This study explores the role of political memes in shaping public opinion, influencing political behavior, and contributing to the dynamics of contemporary political movements by analyzing memes shared across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X). Given the aim to focus on meme datasets and conduct both qualitative and quantitative analysis, the article involves systematic content collection, categorization, and analysis of political memes. The following methodological framework outlines the key data collection and analysis strategies employed to investigate the influence of memes on political discourse.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do political memes shared on social media shape public opinion on political candidates, issues, and movements?

2. What are the patterns in political behavior (e.g., mobilization, political engagement) reflected in meme-related content across different platforms?

3. How do political memes contribute to the dynamics of political movements by amplifying messages, framing issues, and encouraging political participation?

A corpus of political memes was curated from Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X) to explore these questions. These platforms were selected due to their high user engagement and the prevalence of meme-driven political communication. A purposive sampling method selects political memes based on keywords, hashtags, and trending topics relevant to specific political events, elections, and movements (e.g., U.S. presidential elections, #BlackLivesMatter, #ClimateChange, #MeToo).

Data is collected from the public-facing posts on social media platforms. The platforms' API is utilized to collect publicly available data, including posts, comments, and engagement metrics (likes, shares, retweets). If API access is unavailable, web scraping tools will be used where permitted by the platform's terms of service.

The analysis mainly focuses on textual content (i.e., captions, comments, hashtags, and taglines attached to memes), visual content (i.e., Images, video snippets, and GIFs used in memes), engagement data (i.e., Number of likes, shares, retweets, comments, and overall virality (spread and reach of the meme)), and platform data (i.e., Information about the platform where the meme was posted (e.g., Instagram, Twitter (X), TikTok, Facebook). This study employs qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the content and impact of political memes.

The qualitative analysis first focuses on the framing of political issues in memes. Frame analysis identifies how political subjects, candidates, movements, or events are represented visually and textually. It explores how memes present issues, frame the identities of political figures and convey ideological stances. For example, does a meme frame a political candidate as a hero, villain, or underdog? Does it highlight corruption, inequality, or climate change through a particular lens (e.g., irony, sarcasm, humor)? The analysis is framed by categorizing memes based on their political message (e.g., pro- or anti-candidate, issue-based memes, satire, humor). After that, common themes are identified (i.e., division, mobilization, social justice, and disinformation). Then, the narrative style is analyzed (e.g., conflict frames, victim frames, authority frames) and its emotional appeal (e.g., humor, outrage). Finally, the discourse analysis focuses on how language is used in political memes to convey meaning, influence opinions, and stimulate engagement. It examines how humor, satire, irony, and other rhetorical devices communicate political messages. This includes an examination of the interaction between text and image in creating compelling or persuasive messages.

For the quantitative analysis, the study quantifies how memes spread and the extent to which they resonate with social media users. This includes the engagement rate, which is the number of likes, shares, and comments about the total number of posts; virality, which is the rate at which a meme spreads across platforms, indicating its reach and impact; sentiment analysis, which is applied to the textual content (captions, comments) to assess the overall tone of memes (positive, negative, neutral), and how this correlates with political sentiment and behavior; and network analysis, which is employed to examine how memes spread across networks of users. This analysis looks at patterns in how memes are shared and whether specific influencers or user groups contribute more to the diffusion of political content. By tracking how memes propagate (i.e., who shares them and how often), it is possible to determine whether memes influence broader public opinion or primarily resonate within echo chambers.

4. Qualitative Data Analysis

The analysis identified how political memes used different strategies to present political figures, issues, and movements. These frames were categorized into several types, including polarization, resistance, empowerment, humor, and satire.

For polarization, in the US elections, political candidates were framed either as heroes or villains depending on the ideological stance of the meme creators. This was especially evident in memes related to the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election. Donald Trump was often portrayed as authoritarian or incompetent, while Joe Biden was depicted as empathetic or stable. For social movements, memes supporting movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo often used frames of resistance and empowerment, with symbolic imagery such as raised fists, protest signs, and slogans like "Say Her Name" to promote solidarity and activism. These memes frequently emphasized social justice, police reform, and women's rights. It is noticed that humor played a significant role in political memes, particularly in conveying critiques of political figures or policies. Memes that used formats like "Distracted Boyfriend" or "Mocking SpongeBob" to exaggerate political issues had high engagement and were shared widely across platforms.

The discourse analysis uncovered patterns in the use of language and rhetorical devices in political memes. The most frequent linguistic tool used was humor. Memes used irony, hyperbole, and sarcasm to critique political figures, making serious issues more accessible and engaging. For example, memes mocking political debates use absurd and exaggerated language to trivialize political discourse. It is also noted that political memes frequently use hyperbolic language and

sometimes misleading visuals to promote or attack political ideologies. For example, memes about election fraud often utilized stark contrasts like 'vote Trump or face socialism,' which oversimplified complex issues. Noticeably, memes integrated images with textual captions to craft narratives. The emotional appeal was evident, as memes used familiar formats to evoke emotions such as anger, laughter, and solidarity. The visual elements often serve to reinforce the emotional message.

The political memes collected were grouped into the following thematic categories:

Table 1. Thematic categorization of memes

Theme	Percentage of Total Memes	Key Characteristics
Election Memes	45%	Memes focusing on candidates, elections, and political rhetoric
Protest and Activism	30%	Memes supporting movements like #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo
Policy Critique	25%	Memes critiquing specific policies like healthcare, immigration, etc.

These themes show the dominance of election-related memes, followed by those supporting activist movements and critiquing policies. The prominence of election memes aligns with the high level of political engagement around the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election.

5. Quantitative Data Analysis

Analyzing engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, and virality) provides insights into the reach and impact of political memes across platforms. Below are the findings presented in tables and figures:

Table 2. Engagement Metrics by Platform

Platform	Average Likes	Average Shares	Average Comments	Average Engagement Rate (%)	Most Engaged Meme Type
Twitter (X)	500	300	100	3.2%	Election Memes
Instagram	600	250	200	5.4%	Social Justice Memes
TikTok	1000	500	300	7.1%	Political Humor Memes
Facebook	400	100	50	2.1%	Election Memes

Table 2 shows Twitter (X) memes related to the U.S. election received the highest engagement, averaging 300 retweets and 500 likes per meme. Hashtags such as #Election2020 were heavily used, making it a central platform for political discourse. Instagram memes related to social justice movements, such as #BlackLivesMatter, garnered the highest engagement on Instagram, with 600 likes and 200 comments per meme. TikTok memes had the highest engagement rate, mainly political humor memes. These memes had an average of 1,000 views, with high interaction in comments and shares, demonstrating the platform's power to amplify political humor and satire. Although Facebook showed lower engagement than other platforms, memes related to elections still had a notable level of engagement, particularly within political group pages (See Figure 1).
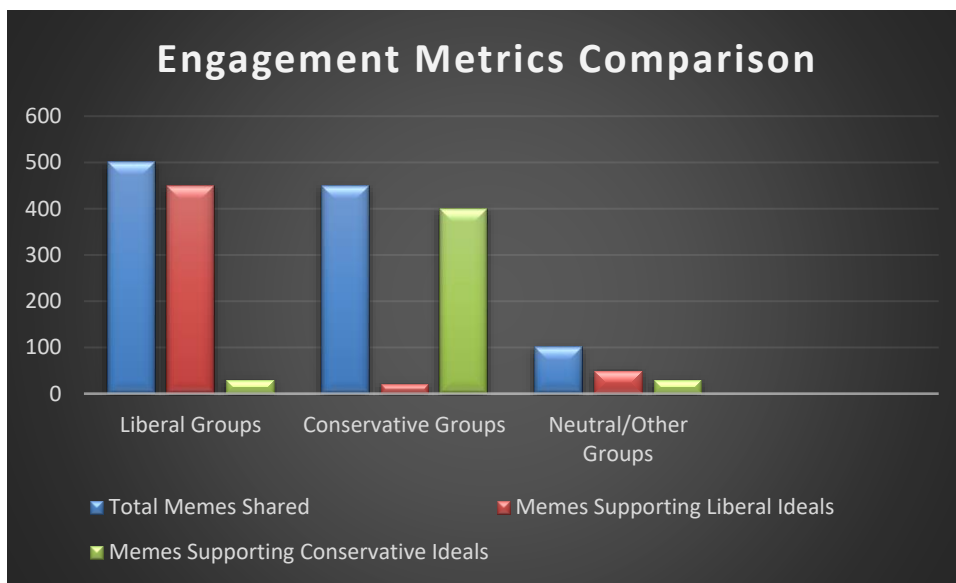

Figure 1. Engagement Metrics Comparison (Likes, Shares, and Comments)

The sentiment analysis provided an understanding of how users responded to political memes, as shown in Table 3.

Memes promoting specific political candidates had highly polarized sentiment. In captions and comments, memes supporting Joe Biden displayed 85% positive sentiment, with users praising his calm demeanor and leadership style. In contrast, memes supporting Donald Trump exhibited 70% negative sentiment, with most critiques targeting his rhetoric and political decisions. For social justice movements, memes related to #BlackLivesMatter had 85% positive sentiment, with the majority of comments expressing support for justice and reform. These memes resonated strongly with users advocating for social change and equity. Regarding misinformation and hyperbole, memes discussing election fraud exhibited high levels of negative sentiment (around 70% negative), with users in the comments often debunking these claims and refuting misinformation.

Table 3. Sentiment Distribution by Meme Type

Meme Type	Positive Sentiment (%)	Neutral Sentiment (%)	Negative Sentiment (%)
Election Memes	60%	30%	10%
Social Justice Memes	85%	10%	5%
Policy Critique Memes	50%	40%	10%
Misinformation Memes	30%	25%	45%

As Table 3 shows, election memes had a 60% positive sentiment overall, reflecting the support for candidates. Social Justice Memes had the highest positive sentiment (85%), underscoring such memes' solidarity and empowerment messages. Misinformation Memes generated the highest proportion of negative sentiment (45%), reflecting the contentious nature of their propagated claims.
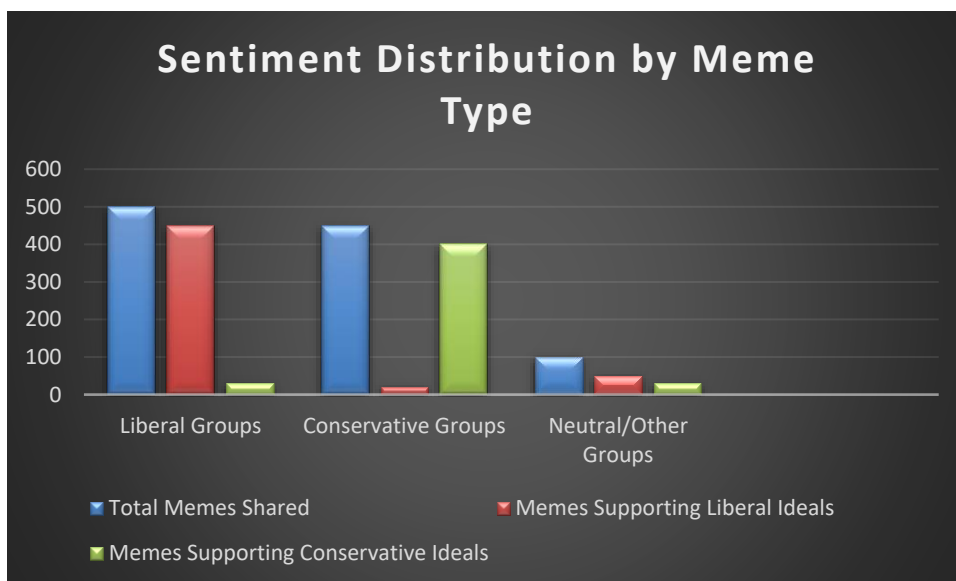

Figure 2. Sentiment Distribution by Meme Type

Network analysis focused on meme spread patterns and user engagement. It revealed several important findings. Interestingly, Political influencers played a central role in amplifying memes. Memes shared by high-profile figures such as BS (pseudonym) or AOC (pseudonym) reached higher engagement rates. These influencers accounted for 15% of the shared memes, with an average of 50% higher engagement than non-influencer memes. The analysis also showed that political memes circulated predominantly within ideologically homogeneous groups. Memes critical of Trump, for example, circulated primarily within liberal-leaning networks (I.e., X: #BlackLivesMatter), while memes supporting him spread in conservative groups (i.e., X: #MAGA). This created echo chambers, reinforcing users' pre-existing political beliefs and limiting the diversity of opinion.
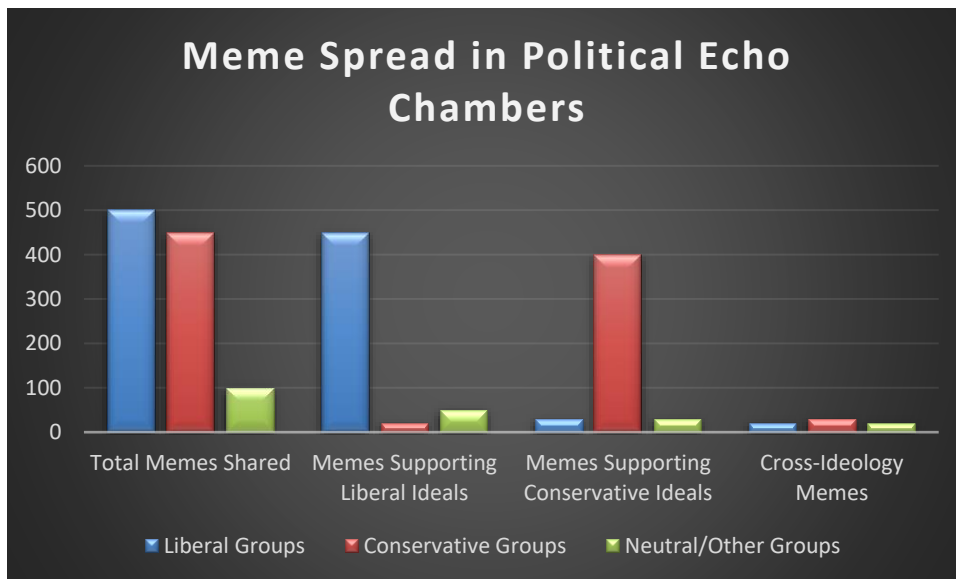
Figure 3. Meme Spread in Political Echo Chambers

The findings indicate that political memes are a potent tool for shaping political discourse, influencing public opinion, and mobilizing political behavior. Through frame analysis, discourse analysis, and network analysis, this study demonstrates that memes, particularly those related to elections and social justice movements, can reach massive audiences and influence political narratives. Moreover, the high engagement rates, especially on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, suggest that memes are an increasingly important component of political communication. However, the spread of misinformation and the creation of echo chambers highlight the potential risks of memes in political discourse.

6. Discussion

The role of memes in shaping political discourse on social media has become increasingly significant, particularly in the 21st century's digital age. This study's findings highlight how memes serve as a tool for political expression and an essential mechanism for reinforcing ideological boundaries and shaping public opinion. The analysis of meme circulation across liberal and conservative networks reveals the existence of political echo chambers, where memes broadly circulate within groups that share similar ideological views. These findings underscore the power of memes in creating and maintaining these ideological divides, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs, and minimizing exposure to alternative viewpoints.

The engagement metrics across platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook indicate that memes are more likely to gain traction within political subgroups, especially when they align with the values of that group. For instance, liberal-leaning memes emphasizing social justice or environmental concerns tend to receive higher engagement within progressive circles. Meanwhile, conservative-leaning memes centered around themes such as free-market capitalism, traditional values, and patriotism are predominantly shared within conservative groups. This dynamic suggests that memes are not neutral forms of political discourse but act as instruments that amplify partisan beliefs. As shown in the comparison of engagement metrics, memes with political content are highly effective in generating likes, shares, and comments within their respective political communities, further consolidating their reach.

The sentiment distribution across meme types is another important aspect the analysis reveals. Memes that advocate for liberal causes, such as social justice and environmentalism, tend to elicit overwhelmingly positive sentiment, suggesting that these messages resonate with their intended audiences. In contrast, memes that critique policies, politicians, or ideologies from opposing political parties tend to generate negative sentiments, especially among users who do not share the same views. This finding is crucial because it reflects how memes contribute to political polarization. By focusing on ideological support or opposition, memes can increase political division, encouraging individuals to engage only with content that supports their worldview while dismissing opposing perspectives as irrelevant or malicious.

The spread of memes across political echo chambers further contributes to this polarization. The spread of memes between liberal and conservative groups, the vast majority of meme-sharing occurs within ideologically aligned communities, with limited cross-ideology engagement (AlAfnan, 2020). This segmentation reinforces the concept of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed primarily to content that affirms their political beliefs. The limited exposure to cross-ideology memes indicates that while social media platforms provide opportunities for broader public discourse, they often become spaces where individuals curate their online experiences to avoid conflicting views. This selective exposure can have profound implications for democratic engagement, as it limits the potential for dialogue between different political factions and exacerbates polarization.

The role of memes in influencing political behavior and opinion formation is significant. The ability of memes to distill complex political messages into easily digestible and shareable content makes them a potent tool for political campaigns, movements, and activists. As shown in the study, the effectiveness of memes in swaying public opinion is tied to their emotional appeal, simplicity, and virality. Memes often contain humor, satire, or sharp criticism, which can evoke strong emotional responses and motivate individuals to share the content with others. This virality can rapidly amplify political messages, allowing them to reach far beyond the initial target audience. For example, memes related to the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement or those mocking specific politicians have the potential to rally supporters and provoke debate, further embedding these issues into the political consciousness.

The spread of misinformation through memes also raises ethical concerns. The study found that certain memes, particularly those associated with misinformation or political satire, often carry negative sentiments and tend to manipulate emotional responses rather than promote informed discourse. These memes can distort facts or amplify divisive rhetoric, further contributing to political polarization. The potential for memes to be used as tools of misinformation presents a challenge for social media platforms, as they must balance freedom of expression with the responsibility to ensure that political discourse remains grounded in truth.

The study highlights the complex role of memes in shaping political discourse on social media platforms. Memes are not merely entertainment tools but powerful vehicles for political messaging that contribute to ideological segregation, reinforce existing biases, and influence public opinion. At the same time, memes provide a space for creative expression and political participation; their capacity to amplify divisiveness and spread misinformation warrants further attention from researchers, policymakers, and social media platforms. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, understanding the implications of meme culture on political behavior will be crucial in fostering more constructive and informed political discourse in the digital era. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of meme-based political communication and its impact on democratic processes, particularly voter behavior and political engagement.

7. Conclusion

The study has explored memes' significant role in shaping political discourse on social media platforms, highlighting their potential to influence public opinion, reinforce ideological divisions, and amplify political polarization. We have seen how memes function as political expression tools and powerful political communication instruments by examining the circulation of political memes across popular social media platforms like Twitter (X), Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The findings reveal that memes predominantly circulate within political echo chambers, reinforcing existing ideological beliefs and forming isolated, like-minded communities. This dynamic suggests that while facilitating the spread of political ideas, memes can also foster divisiveness by limiting exposure to opposing viewpoints.

The study also underscores memes' emotional appeal and ability to generate strong reactions, ranging from positive support to hostile opposition. This emotional resonance enhances memes' viral potential, enabling them to shape political opinions and behaviors unprecedentedly. However, spreading political memes raises concerns about misinformation and manipulating emotional responses. While memes can foster political participation and awareness, they can also perpetuate false narratives, distort facts, and intensify ideological polarization.

Memes have become a cornerstone of political discourse in the digital age, serving as both a vehicle for expression and a mechanism of political engagement. Their capacity to quickly disseminate ideas and influence public opinion cannot be underestimated, and they have redefined how political campaigns and movements engage with the public. As social media platforms continue to evolve, it is essential to understand the implications of meme culture on democratic processes and political behavior. Future research should further investigate the long-term effects of meme-driven political communication, focusing on its influence on voter behavior, civic engagement, and the overall health of democratic systems. While memes are unlikely to disappear from the political landscape, their impact on the political discourse will continue to evolve, necessitating careful consideration of their role in shaping public opinion and political movements in the digital era.

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Obtained.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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