

The Influence of Social Networks on the State Structure and Political Processes

AIZHANA MYRSALIEVA*

Limited Liability Company "Inmobiles", Kyrgyz Republic

MAKSATBEK MOLDOMYRZAEV

Design and Construction Company "Dream Architect", Kyrgyz Republic

DANIYAR SUIUNDUK UULU

Nazaraliev Medical Centre, Kyrgyz Republic

ELIA ABDRAKHMANOVA

Open Joint-Stock Company "Optima Bank", Kyrgyz Republic

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to identify the impact of social media on state governance and political processes in Kyrgyzstan and Germany. To achieve this aim, comparative analysis methods were used, including the study of legal and institutional approaches. The study analysed national legislation regulating social media platforms and compared strategies for combating disinformation. The results showed that social media play an ambivalent role in political processes and state governance. On the one hand, they function as a powerful tool of democratisation, facilitating access to information, enhancing civic participation, and providing a platform for open discussion. On the other hand, social media also serve as a space for manipulation, the spread of disinformation, and political propaganda. The use of bots, trolls, and algorithmic targeting undermines trust in democratic institutions, threatening the stability and fairness of electoral processes. The findings indicate the need for balanced regulatory approaches that address both the democratic potential and the risks of digital communication. Particular attention should be paid to mechanisms for countering disinformation, preventing manipulation of public opinion, and strengthening media literacy among the population. Improving public understanding of how digital platforms operate may reduce vulnerability to information manipulation. In the context of rapid digitalisation, effective governance of social media requires cooperation between the state, civil society, and digital platforms. Such cooperation may contribute to using social media as instruments supporting democratic development while limiting the risks associated with digital manipulation.

Keywords: *Propaganda, mobilization, censorship, digital democracy, media space, protests.*

INTRODUCTION

The influence of social media on state governance and political processes is one of the most pressing topics in contemporary social and political research. Digitalisation and the spread of social platforms create new opportunities for interaction between citizens and the state. At the same time, social media have become arenas where political communication, public mobilisation, and information competition increasingly take place. The diversity of approaches makes comparative analysis necessary in order to identify both common patterns and unique features.

*Corresponding author: myrsalievaaizhana@gmail.com

E-ISSN: 2289-1528

<https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2026-4202-12>

Received: 7 October 2025 | Accepted: 22 May 2026 | Published: 30 June 2026

Many authors emphasise the ambivalent nature of this influence: on the one hand, platforms create opportunities for democratisation and civic participation; on the other hand, they intensify disinformation, polarisation, and manipulation of public opinion (Klüver, 2024; Weismueller et al., 2023). Social media also play an important role in political mobilisation and civic activism. Several studies demonstrate that digital platforms facilitate rapid information exchange and coordination of collective action, particularly in contexts where access to traditional media is limited (Theocharis et al., 2022; Castillo Esparcia et al., 2023). Another important line of research concerns the spread of disinformation in online environments. Research shows that algorithmic mechanisms of content distribution may amplify misleading information and intensify political polarisation (Mulyadi et al., 2024; Von der Weth et al., 2020).

The role of social media has also been examined from the perspective of human rights, digital citizenship, and democratic governance (Pangrazio & Sefton-Green, 2021). These discussions highlight the need for clearer conceptual understanding of the key terms used in analysing digital political communication. In this study, social media are understood as digital platforms enabling large-scale public communication and political interaction; disinformation refers to intentionally misleading information distributed to influence public opinion; and digital transformation denotes structural changes in political communication caused by the integration of digital technologies into governance and public discourse. Research also highlights the broader interaction between communication and politics in the context of contemporary democratic challenges (Perloff, 2021), the importance of balancing users' rights, internet safety, and technological innovation in digital governance (Vargiolu, 2022), and the role of media literacy in reducing society's vulnerability to digital threats (Celik et al., 2021).

Despite the growing body of research, several gaps remain. Firstly, comparative studies examining the influence of social media in countries with different political and regulatory environments remain limited. Secondly, the mechanisms through which states can balance freedom of expression with protection against digital threats require further investigation.

The aim of this work was to investigate the influence of social media on the formation of public opinion, civic mobilisation, and the dissemination of political propaganda in the context of different political systems, using the example of Kyrgyzstan and Germany. To achieve the research aim, the following objectives were formulated: to analyse the features of the use of social media in the political processes of Kyrgyzstan compared to Germany, to study the impact on democratic institutions and public stability, and to assess the role of state and civil mechanisms in the regulation of the digital space.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A comprehensive approach was applied in this study, aimed at analysing the influence of social media on state structure and political processes. The research was desk-based and relied on the analysis of secondary data sources. The study was conducted in three stages from January 2024 to December 2024. The first stage included the collection and systematisation of data on digital transformation and its impact on political processes in Kyrgyzstan and Germany. In the second stage, the legal frameworks regulating the activities of social platforms, as well as statistical data on the use for political purposes, were analysed. In the third stage, a comparative study was carried out, aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the two countries' approaches to regulating social media and the influence on

democratic institutions. Data sources included national legislation, international policy documents, reports of international organisations, statistical data on internet and social media use, and scholarly publications addressing digital governance and political communication. This approach allowed for the examination of both the positive aspects of digitalisation related to its potential for transforming socio-political processes and the threats associated with it, including the manipulation of public opinion and the weakening of democratic values through the spread of disinformation.

The theoretical part of the study included the analysis of key concepts such as “digital transformation”, “disinformation”, “political propaganda”, and “digital rights”. Particular attention was paid to major social networks such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and X (Twitter), as these platforms were actively used for political propaganda and public mobilisation.

The analytical procedure involved qualitative examination of policy documents and public reports, as well as comparative analysis of national regulatory frameworks and documented political communication practices. The analysis covered aspects such as user engagement, the spread of disinformation, and mechanisms for refuting it. These data formed the basis for a comparative analysis of Eastern and Western models of state interaction with digital platforms, which made it possible to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each (Article 19, 2020; Blackwood, 2020; Laaninen, 2024).

The study focused on digitalisation processes in Kyrgyzstan and Germany. Kyrgyzstan, as a representative of the post-Soviet space, faced challenges in developing democratic institutions, with insufficient media literacy among the population and active use of social networks for civic mobilisation. Germany, by contrast, demonstrated the example of a developed state with established democratic traditions and a high level of digital environment regulation. The selection of Kyrgyzstan and Germany was motivated by the contrast between their political and regulatory environments. Germany represents a consolidated democratic system with developed legal mechanisms for regulating digital platforms, while Kyrgyzstan reflects a transitional political context where digital governance and media literacy are still developing. This contrast allows for the identification of both structural differences and shared challenges related to the political influence of social media. This combination of research subjects made it possible to identify both general trends and differences in the use of social media for shaping political agendas and public opinion (United Nations (UN) Environment Programme, 2019; Frost & Jakybalieva, 2021; World Bank Group (WBG), 2024).

Examples included protests in Kyrgyzstan, where social media became a key tool of civic mobilisation, and political campaigns in Germany, where digital platforms were used both for democratic initiatives and for manipulating voters. Particular attention was given to government policy in the field of digital transformation, including strategies for regulating social networks, measures to combat disinformation, and the protection of citizens’ digital rights (European Parliament..., 2016; Federal Ministry..., 2017; Freedom House, 2024).

The methodological base of the research included an interdisciplinary approach, combining political science, sociological, and cultural analysis. The political science method focused on studying the influence of social media on the development of democratic institutions, analysing government policy in the field of digital transformation, and researching the mechanisms of interaction between the authorities, civil society, and digital platforms. The sociological analysis concentrated on studying civic activity initiated through social media, including mobilisation processes, the formation of public movements, and

citizen participation in discussions of significant issues. The cultural analysis explored media literacy among the population and the perception of digital content. This included studying how users interpreted information, the ability to critically assess data sources, and to determine the reliability of messages. Cultural differences between Kyrgyzstan and Germany were also examined in the context of the influence on citizens' political behaviour. The integration of data from different disciplines enabled a deeper understanding of the role of social media in contemporary political and social processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Networks as a Factor of Political Transformation in Kyrgyzstan

Digital transformation involves the integration of digital technologies into social and political processes, expanding opportunities for communication and information exchange. In this environment, social media have become a key channel of interaction between citizens, political actors, and state institutions. At the same time, the digital environment facilitates the rapid spread of disinformation and political propaganda, creating new challenges for democratic governance (WBG, 2024).

In the context of Kyrgyzstan, social media acquired particular importance due to the limited capacity of traditional media and the growing popularity of digital technologies among the population. According to WBG (2022) statistics, over 80% of the population had internet access, indicating a high degree of digitalisation in the country. The number of internet users in Kyrgyzstan was around 6.3 million, approximately 95% of the adult population. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of users grew by more than 20% due to improved communication infrastructure and increased availability of mobile internet (National Statistical Committee..., 2023). With limited access to independent media, social media became the main tool for political communication. For example, during elections and political crises in Kyrgyzstan, social media repeatedly demonstrated its ability to mobilise citizens and influence authorities' actions (Blackwood, 2020). This showed that the social media had already become an integral part of state structure. Nevertheless, the increasing influence of social media raised concerns about the resilience of state institutions. The spread of fake news, citizen radicalisation, and mass disinformation campaigns threatened democratic institutions. In Kyrgyzstan, these problems were particularly relevant due to weak digital regulation. In the absence of a clear regulatory framework, social media could both strengthen democracy and destabilise the political system.

Social media radically changed the mechanisms of civic mobilisation, providing users with effective tools for rapid coordination of actions, expression of political will, and building horizontal links in society. In a globally digitalised environment, the social media became platforms for transnational interaction, enabling citizens from different countries and regions to join efforts. This was especially important in the context of democratic processes, where mass participation was a key factor in political legitimacy. The formation of public opinion on social media was a complex process based on the interaction of multiple factors, including the influence of algorithms, the popularity of opinion leaders, and active civic engagement. Platform algorithms played an important role in determining which topics and opinions gained the most reach. For instance, Facebook and Instagram algorithms prioritised content that evoked emotional reactions from users, contributing to the creation of more personalised information streams. However, this personalisation had a dual effect. On the one hand, it deepened citizen engagement in political discussions by providing citizens with information aligned to the citizens' interests. On the other hand, it created so-called

“information bubbles”, where users only saw viewpoints that aligned with the own beliefs. This limited access to alternative opinions, increased polarisation, and diminished the quality of public dialogue.

Revolutionary events in Kyrgyzstan illustrate the growing role of digital platforms in protest coordination and information exchange. During the Tulip Revolution in 2005, internet penetration was only about 11%, yet activists already used online forums and blogs to share information beyond state-controlled media (WBG, 2022). By 2010, with internet access rising to around 20%, platforms such as Facebook and YouTube became important tools for organising protests and disseminating messages from opposition groups (WBG, 2022; Melvin & Umaraliev, 2011).

The most striking example of the transformational role of social media was in October 2020. During this political crisis, internet penetration in the country had reached 72% (WBG, 2022). Platforms like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook became the main channels for information distribution and mass protest organisation. For example, Telegram channels with tens of thousands of subscribers published real-time videos from protest locations, safety instructions, and protester routes. WhatsApp was used to quickly exchange local news, enabling citizens across the country to coordinate.

In Kyrgyzstan, social media became not only an important tool for shaping public opinion, but also a key channel for expressing social sentiment and coordinating civic movements. The role was particularly significant among youth, the most active users of digital technologies. Research (Kydyrova, 2024) showed that the younger generation in Kyrgyzstan was more likely to form political preferences based on information from social media than from traditional sources such as television or print media. This was due not only to increasing trust in digital platforms but also to the accessibility, speed, and interactivity. Amid high levels of migration and urbanisation, social networks played an important role in maintaining links between Kyrgyz diasporas and the homeland. Migrants abroad actively used platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok to stay informed about the political situation in Kyrgyzstan, express opinions, and even influence domestic processes (Chekirova, 2022). This contributed to the formation of a kind of transnational civil society, where the Kyrgyz diaspora became an active participant in political life despite physical distance.

Social media not only served as platforms for free expression of opinion but also became powerful tools for political propaganda and control, significantly influencing state and public processes. Thanks to the accessibility, rapid information dissemination, and broad audience reach, social media had become a key element of the modern political ecosystem, providing new opportunities and creating serious challenges for democratic institutions.

One example of such influence was the use of targeted advertising during election campaigns. In Kyrgyzstan, according to the research of the Public Foundation “Common Cause”, three presidential candidates spent over USD 9,000 on paid advertising on Facebook during the pre-election campaigning period for the 10 January 2021 election. The candidate Eldar Abakirov published the most posts – 74 promotional messages. The largest amount spent was by candidate Babur Tolbaev – over USD 2,000 (Aitbaev, 2021). Through big data analysis, political parties and candidates were able to create highly personalised messages tailored to the interests and needs of specific audiences. This not only increased communication effectiveness but also allowed focus on the most vulnerable or undecided voters. At the same time, such technologies provided opportunities to manipulate public perception, distort reality, or emphasise selective aspects of the political agenda. Beyond

elections, social media were actively used to promote political propaganda and manage public opinion in a broader sense.

For instance, in December 2020, Facebook deleted 193 accounts, 246 pages, 50 groups, and 30 Instagram accounts that used fake profiles to promote a political party and criticise opponents. This network had been active since 2017, especially during presidential elections, and posted content in Kyrgyz and Russian. The main activity focused around the party Mekenim Kyrgyzstan and popular news outlets in Kyrgyzstan (Kloop, Azattyk, Kaktus, and AKIpress). Fake accounts mainly posted comments condemning reports criticising politician Matraimov's family or the party Mekenim Kyrgyzstan, while agreeing with negative content about the opponents (K-News, 2021).

In October 2020, during heightened political tensions, experts noted the activation of fake accounts and trolls on social networks attempting to influence citizens' moods and opinions and shape internal politics. These accounts spread false information and radical messages, creating an illusion of mass support or condemnation of specific political figures (Media Policy Institute, 2020).

However, the use of social media in political crises and protests had a dark side. One of the key problems was the spread of disinformation and manipulative content, which could increase political polarisation (Table 1). In Kyrgyzstan, as in other countries, social media were often used to produce fake news aimed at discrediting the opposition or exacerbating societal tensions. This created additional challenges to political stability, especially during crises. In Kyrgyzstan, propaganda mechanisms through social networks relied on a range of technologies and strategies aimed at manipulating public opinion and shaping favourable narratives. One key tool was bot networks, consisting of automated accounts that disseminated pre-prepared messages, increased content reach, and created the illusion of broad public support for specific ideas or candidates.

Alongside this were troll groups of real users who intentionally engaged in discussions, provoked opponents, discredited rivals, and spread propaganda. These mechanisms were reinforced by platform algorithms that promoted viral content or prioritised emotionally charged posts, making it easier to influence target audiences. During the 2020 protests and elections in Kyrgyzstan, bot usage for public opinion manipulation and digital interference was documented. These bots often promoted pro-government messages or discredited the opposition. Such actions were part of a broader phenomenon known as a "digital factory", where organised networks of anonymous accounts actively interfered in political processes, shaping public perceptions.

These manipulations had serious implications for democratic processes as these manipulations sought to undermine trust in state institutions and deepen polarisation. Trolls, in turn, conducted more targeted attacks, focusing on government critics, activists, or independent media. The actions included smear campaigns, threats, or aggressive comments, often leading to self-censorship and reduced civic engagement. These methods formed part of a broader information control strategy used to strengthen the positions of political elites.

Table 1: Social media platforms and the use in political propaganda in Kyrgyzstan

Platform	Examples of use in political propaganda	Popularity among citizens	Political influence
TikTok	Campaigns through popular trends, video blogs of political activists.	38%	Influences youth, uses trends to spread political messages.
Facebook	Formation of political groups, dissemination of fake news, calls for protests.	32%	Influences public opinion

Instagram	Political imagery campaigns, visual narratives, political influencers.	60%	Affects perception through images and video content.
WhatsApp	Coordinating protests, disseminating political statements and news.	99%	Used to organize protest movements and disseminate political information.
YouTube	Advertisements, informational videos, engaging influential individuals to support political movements.	65%	Influences through video campaigns and agitation, supporting politicians through video content.
X	Hashtag campaigns, real-time discussions, political coverage.	>5%	Instant reactions to events, influence on public opinion through hashtags and short messages.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2023) and UN (2023).

As shown in Table 1, messaging platforms such as WhatsApp play a central role in political communication and protest coordination in Kyrgyzstan. Visual platforms, including Instagram and YouTube, shape public perception through multimedia content, while networks such as Facebook and TikTok are used to disseminate political messages and influence public opinion. The growing influence of social media has prompted governments to develop regulatory strategies aimed at balancing freedom of expression with the need to prevent disinformation and harmful content.

Amid high levels of political activism among citizens, social media became an arena both for the free expression of opinion and for manipulation, propaganda, and destructive activity. In response, the government proposed the draft law “On Manipulating Information” (Article 19, 2020), aimed at combating fake news and disinformation. However, the initiative sparked debate, as critics warned that such regulation could also lead to censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, enshrined in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, was one of the most important democratic values, making any intervention in social media activity a sensitive issue. Regulating platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram required a delicate approach that considered not only national interests but also user rights. For example, attempts to block certain accounts or content were often met with accusations of selectivity and abuse of power. This underscored the need for transparency and accountability from public authorities in the decision-making process.

The most contentious aspect of social media regulation was its use for political purposes. In Kyrgyzstan, social media was often used as a tool for political struggle, including the use of bot networks to spread propaganda or discredit opponents. State measures aimed at combating such phenomena included monitoring activity on social media and cooperation with major technology platforms. However, the level of interaction between Kyrgyz authorities and international corporations such as Meta (Facebook) or Google remained low. This limited the country’s ability to regulate global platforms.

Combating extremist content remains a major challenge in Kyrgyzstan. In 2019, courts blocked 97 websites and 300 social media accounts distributing extremist materials (Sikorskaia, 2020). However, regulation remains complicated due to gaps in digital legislation, particularly regarding personal data management. Government measures to regulate social media in Kyrgyzstan were at a formative stage and faced numerous challenges, such as ensuring freedom of expression, preventing the spread of disinformation, protecting users’

personal data, and tackling cyberbullying and other forms of online threats. Key tasks included developing transparent and fair regulations that would ensure a balance between safety and freedom of speech, raising the level of digital literacy among the population, and creating effective mechanisms to prevent abuse. A comprehensive approach based on cooperation between the state, civil society, the private sector, and international organisations was an essential condition for ensuring the resilience of the digital environment. Such an approach would enable the use of social media as a tool for strengthening democratic values and national security, while preserving citizens' rights to freely express the opinions.

Social networks simultaneously promote civic mobilisation while creating risks related to disinformation and manipulation of public opinion. Several studies show that social media expand political engagement by providing access to information and facilitating civic mobilisation (Secinaro et al., 2021; Lybeck et al., 2024). This pattern is also visible in Kyrgyzstan, where protests aimed at political reform were organised through digital platforms.

However, differences in the effectiveness of social media use were due to levels of digital culture and access to technology. In Kyrgyzstan, the situation differed significantly due to the political and social context. Studies by Karell et al. (2023) and Nguyen et al. (2023) emphasised that in the context of weak traditional democratic institutions and limited media freedom, social networks became one of the few available tools for expressing civic dissatisfaction and organising opposition movements. In this regard, platforms acted as a kind of "digital bridge" between citizens and the world, creating space for independent discourse.

Social media also served in Kyrgyzstan as a space for alternative sources of information, as confirmed by the research of Aigerim et al. (2024). In circumstances where traditional media was controlled by the state or affiliated entities, platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok became the main channels for disseminating independent content. This was confirmed by Olaniran & Williams (2020), who noted that the absence of clear state regulation made the platforms vulnerable to manipulation and the spread of disinformation. During periods of political instability, this led to increased polarisation of society and the proliferation of fake news, thereby exacerbating social tensions.

Another important factor was the high proportion of youth among social media users in Kyrgyzstan. As noted by the research of Kumar (2021) and Kydyrova (2024), the younger generation actively used digital platforms not only to obtain information but also to express dissatisfaction with socio-economic issues. This made social media a powerful tool for transforming public discourse but also increased the risks of disinformation.

The absence of a unified system for regulating digital platforms in Kyrgyzstan complicated the control of the use. Research by Masferrer (2023) and Mihr (2023) noted that attempts to impose restrictions in the digital space were often perceived as pressure on freedom of expression, leading to protests and public discontent. For example, bills aimed at restricting access to certain platforms or controlling content were criticised for attempting to undermine internet independence and violate citizens' rights. The results of the study showed that the influence of social media on state governance and political processes varied depending on the context. In Kyrgyzstan, social media served primarily as a tool for political mobilisation and protest organisation.

Social Networks as a Factor in Political Transformation in Europe: The Example of Germany

Germany provides a clear example of how digitalisation and social media transform interactions between citizens and state institutions and reshape political communication. This

chapter examined the key aspects of social media’s influence on Germany’s political life, including the role in citizen mobilisation, public opinion formation, and mechanisms of political propaganda and control. Social networks significantly altered the structure of interaction between the state and society. In Germany, the social networks had become platforms for direct and almost instantaneous communication between citizens and politicians, government bodies, and public organisations. Traditional barriers between voters and elites had been significantly reduced, fostering more inclusive forms of democracy. Political leaders in Germany actively used platforms like X, Facebook, and Instagram to inform citizens of the activities, promote political initiatives, and respond to public concerns (Darius & Stephany, 2020). Social networks also played a significant role in increasing the transparency of government institutions. Ministries, political parties, and other public bodies regularly published reports, explained legislative initiatives, and responded to citizens’ questions. This process contributed to strengthening trust in democratic institutions and expanding opportunities for civic oversight.

Social media such as Instagram and X had become important tools for mobilising civil society in Germany, including participation in protests, coordinating actions, and discussing relevant topics such as the environmental agenda. One example was the Fridays for Future movement, which arose as a result of global climate mobilisation but found wide support in Germany (UN Environment Programme, 2019). In Germany, citizens actively used platforms such as Instagram and YouTube to discuss political issues, exchange information, and express the views (Table 2). However, this also gave rise to problems associated with polarisation in society. Algorithms used by social networks tended to reinforce the effect of “information bubbles”, providing users with content that confirmed the existing beliefs. This could contribute to the rise of radical sentiments and a decline in public dialogue.

Table 2: Social media platforms and the use in political propaganda in Germany

Platform	Popularity among citizens	Political influence
YouTube	81%	Influences through video campaigns and agitation, supporting politicians through video content.
Instagram	41%	Affects perception through images and video content.
TikTok	34%	Influences youth, uses trends to spread political messages.
X	19%	Instant reactions to events, influence on public opinion through hashtags and short messages.
Facebook	15.9%	Influences public opinion.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Kemp (2024).

As shown in Table 2, social networks in Germany differ in popularity and political influence. Platforms featuring multimedia content, such as YouTube and Instagram, had the broadest reach, with YouTube being used for video campaigning and Instagram for shaping opinions through visual imagery. TikTok had a significant influence on youth, using trends to disseminate political messages. The platform X served as a tool for rapid response to events and shaping public opinion through hashtags and short messages. Facebook, despite being less popular, retained its role in shaping mass opinion. Each platform offered unique tools of influence, which politicians used to depend on the goals and target audience.

Fake news and manipulative campaigns influenced public opinion. In Germany, social media was used to spread false information, discredit politicians, and manipulate elections, which required active state counteraction through fact-checking and the promotion of digital literacy. Social networks served as tools for both civil society and political propaganda.

Political parties actively used social networks to promote programmes, attract voters, and carry out targeted advertising. At the same time, social media raised questions about its influence. While opening new opportunities for political participation, it was also used to manipulate public consciousness. The problem of foreign interference via social networks, especially during election periods, became a critical issue. The German authorities paid particular attention to cybersecurity and platform control, adopting measures to regulate platforms and prevent anti-democratic use.

Social media significantly influenced political processes in Germany, contributing to transparency and civic engagement, while also creating risks of disinformation and polarisation. Germany presented a successful example of adapting to these challenges through legislation, digital literacy, and cybersecurity, maintaining a balance between freedom of expression and prevention of abuse.

EU countries had a long tradition of democratic governance and actively used social platforms to strengthen engagement between society, state institutions, and political actors. However, alongside the positive aspects, the use of social networks in Europe was associated with several challenges relating to the impact on democratic institutions and electoral processes. One of the key features of social media use in the European context was its integration into election campaigns and political communication. Political parties and candidates widely employed digital platforms for targeted campaigning, fundraising, and voter mobilisation. These tools, based on user data analysis, allowed political actors to tailor the messages to the interests and preferences of various population groups, significantly increasing the effectiveness. For example, during the 2019 European Parliament elections, many parties actively used social media to attract young voters, who traditionally showed low turnout (Laaninen, 2024).

However, the rise of digital campaigning has raised concerns about transparency and manipulation of public opinion. Targeted advertising uses user data and behavioural patterns to deliver personalised political messages, which may undermine equal access to information in democratic processes. The collected data was processed using machine learning and artificial intelligence, allowing for the creation of detailed user profiles and prediction of which advertising messages would be most appealing to users. This approach increased advertising effectiveness as it became more personalised and relevant to each user.

In the context of Kyrgyzstan, the use of targeted advertising in political campaigns also took place. For example, during the 2020 parliamentary elections, political parties actively used social media to promote the programmes and candidates, targeting ads at specific demographic groups and regions (Kloop Media Foundation, 2020). This allowed messages to be more precisely delivered to the target audience and increased campaign effectiveness. However, this approach also posed certain risks. Personalised messages could be used to spread disinformation or manipulate voter opinion, undermining the principles of openness and equal access to information that were fundamental to democratic processes.

A special aspect in the European context was the influence of social media on political polarisation. Algorithms of digital platforms, designed to increase user engagement, often contributed to the formation of “information bubbles” and radicalisation of views. This led to increased social tension and reduced the capacity of democratic societies for dialogue and compromise. For example, research showed that in a number of EU countries, social media had become the main source of information for a significant portion of the population (Newman 2023), increasing media space fragmentation and complicating the formation of a common political discourse.

The regulation of social networks in Europe aims to balance freedom of expression with the protection of democratic processes. At the EU level, several regulatory instruments play a key role. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) establishes strict rules for the protection and processing of personal data and strengthens users' rights in the digital environment (European Parliament..., 2016). The Digital Services Act (DSA) introduces obligations for online platforms regarding content moderation, transparency of algorithms, and measures to combat illegal content and disinformation (European Parliament..., 2022a). Complementing this framework, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) regulates the activities of large digital platforms, limiting monopolistic practices and ensuring fair competition in the digital market (European Parliament..., 2022b).

In Germany, the regulation of social networks was based on the desire to ensure a balance between protecting citizens from harmful content and preserving fundamental rights such as freedom of expression. One of the key tools was the Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks (NetzDG) (Federal Ministry..., 2017). It imposed strict requirements on digital platforms, including the obligation to remove illegal content – such as extremism, defamation, or incitement to hatred – within 24 hours of receiving a complaint. These measures aimed to combat the growing threat of online hate and disinformation, thereby strengthening citizens' trust in state institutions and the justice system. However, despite NetzDG's high effectiveness in removing harmful content, it faced criticism for potentially infringing on freedom of expression, as platforms might preemptively delete posts to avoid fines.

In the German context, transparency in regulatory processes was an important aspect. Amendments to NetzDG in 2021 required platforms to provide regular reports on the activities, including the number of complaints, deleted content, and moderation algorithms. This increased public oversight of the work of social networks and gave users more opportunities to appeal platform decisions. Thus, the effectiveness of state regulation in Germany was determined not only by legal stringency but also by transparency of actions, which contributed to strengthening democratic institutions.

Comparing Germany with Kyrgyzstan (Table 3), it should be noted that Kyrgyzstan, on the contrary, faced more complex challenges in the area of social media regulation, due to the transitional nature of its political system, low levels of digital literacy, and the absence of comprehensive legislation. Despite high civic engagement in the digital space, the country lacked specialised laws regulating social media activity. This led to legal uncertainty and complicated the fight against phenomena such as disinformation, manipulation, and online extremism. National initiatives were mainly focused on combating extremist content within the framework of anti-terrorist policy. However, the absence of clear procedures and transparent mechanisms often drew criticism from civil society and international organisations, reducing trust in state actions.

Table 3: The influence of social networks on electoral processes

Stages of elections	Germany (tools and examples)	Kyrgyzstan (tools and examples)	Common features	Differences
Election campaigning	Use of platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram) for targeted advertising; debates through streams and posts of politicians.	Active use of Telegram to spread messages; use of Instagram for visual propaganda and appeals to young people.	Attracting young voters; using visual content; targeted advertising.	In Germany, there is strong regulation of advertising, in Kyrgyzstan, there is more attention to emotional content.
Vote	Mobile apps and platforms for election information; minimal disinformation thanks to strict moderation laws.	Dissemination of information about voting through social networks; high activity of volunteers to monitor elections.	Informing voters about the voting process through digital platforms.	In Germany, the emphasis is on data transparency, while in Kyrgyzstan, there is a greater dependence on volunteer initiatives.
Post-election analysis	Discussing election results via X; political analysts use YouTube and podcasts to explain the results.	Using Facebook and Telegram for analysis; political leaders actively comment on the results on Instagram.	Post-election discussions through social networks, involving experts and public opinion.	In Germany, analysis relies more on official data; in Kyrgyzstan, there is often distrust of the election results.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on Frost and Jakybalieva (2021) with Ziegler (2023).

In Kyrgyzstan, one of the main problems remained the use of social media to spread fake news and propaganda, particularly during election campaigns and political crises. In such conditions, the state took measures aimed at increasing control over digital platforms, including temporary blocking of websites and social networks. However, these steps were often perceived as tools for suppressing dissent, which sparked protests from the public. The low level of digital literacy among the population and the absence of fact-checking mechanisms increased society’s vulnerability to disinformation, which also limited the effectiveness of regulation.

A comparative analysis of Germany’s and Kyrgyzstan’s approaches to regulating social networks showed that the success of government measures depended on institutional maturity, procedural transparency, and the consideration of social realities. In Germany, legislation was aimed at achieving systemic balance, where the fight against harmful content did not undermine democratic values. For example, the obligation of platforms to provide reports on the activities not only strengthened the accountability but also increased users’ trust in the state. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan faced difficulties related to a lack of sufficient resources and legal frameworks. The inability to ensure transparency and predictability of actions in the digital sphere reduced the effectiveness of regulation and generated public distrust. Both countries faced common challenges such as the fight against disinformation, extremism, and manipulation of public opinion. To improve the effectiveness of regulation in Kyrgyzstan, it was necessary to develop national strategies aimed at enhancing digital literacy, establishing independent fact-checking mechanisms, and implementing transparent rules for digital platforms. Germany, for its part, could serve as a model in matters of transparency and accountability, particularly concerning content moderation and the protection of users’ rights.

The effectiveness of state regulation of social media largely depended on the maturity of the institutional system and the ability of the state to adapt to the challenges of the digital age. Germany demonstrated a successful regulatory model based on strict but transparent laws that upheld democratic principles. Kyrgyzstan, at the initial stage of developing its digital policy, needed to consider international experience while adapting it to local conditions. Only a comprehensive approach involving legislative, educational, and social initiatives would make it possible to achieve significant results in ensuring digital space security and protecting citizens' rights.

Studies by Tarafdar & Ray (2021) and Earl et al. (2022) confirmed that social networks such as Facebook and X provided users with the opportunity to quickly unite into groups to organise protest actions, run campaigns, and express dissatisfaction with the current political situation. This phenomenon became particularly significant in the context of rapid digitalisation, affecting both countries with developed democratic institutions and those where such institutions functioned less effectively.

In Germany, social networks were used mainly as a means of peaceful and constructive political mobilisation. Studies by Bursztyn et al. (2021) and Anderson (2021) highlighted those protests organised via digital platforms were characterised by a high degree of structure, clear objectives, and a focus on achieving public consensus. This feature was explained by the high level of digital literacy among the population, the stability of democratic institutions, and the state's support for digital security initiatives. Xiao et al. (2021) and Polanco-Levicán & Salvo-Garrido (2022) noted that a high level of media literacy reduced users' vulnerability to disinformation, allowing social networks to be used for constructive engagement. In this context, the platform became a space for discussing socially significant topics rather than a tool for destabilisation.

Germany's strong democratic traditions allowed for the effective integration of social networks into the country's socio-political life, as confirmed by the works of Drescher et al. (2021), and Borucki & Kettemann (2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, these platforms played a key role in informing citizens about precautionary measures, supporting electoral processes, and ensuring communication between citizens and state institutions. These examples demonstrated the potential of social media to strengthen social cohesion and the potential as tools for responding to crisis situations.

Despite significant success in the use of social media, Germany still faced challenges related to the spread of disinformation. Studies by Vasisst et al. (2023) and Ali Adeb & Mirhoseini (2023) showed that digital platforms could be used to disseminate fake news, manipulate public opinion, and intensify polarisation. However, German authorities successfully countered these threats through the development of a comprehensive approach to regulating digital platforms.

In Kyrgyzstan, platforms more often became tools for radicalising protests and spreading disinformation, as confirmed by Chekirova (2022) and Bhoortel (2024). The lack of comprehensive regulation and media literacy among the population made such countries more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media. Germany, on the contrary, demonstrated that a combination of legislative initiatives, educational programmes, and stable infrastructure allowed for the minimisation of digital threats. As emphasised by De Gregorio (2021) and Sommermann et al. (2021), the German experience was valuable for integrating social networks into a sustainable democratic system, where the role was not limited to supporting civic initiatives but also encompassed strengthening trust between

citizens and state institutions. Comparative analysis showed that Germany's approach to using social networks favourably differed from that of countries with less stable political systems.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed both positive and negative impacts of social media on governance and political processes in Kyrgyzstan and Germany. Kyrgyzstan was characterised by significant growth in the use of social networks as a tool of democratisation. Social platforms played an important role in mobilising citizens, organising protests and providing access to information beyond traditional media. Nevertheless, this growth was accompanied by significant challenges. The population's insufficient media literacy created a favourable environment for the spread of disinformation, propaganda and manipulative content. This not only undermined trust in sources of information but also deepened public divisions, intensifying polarisation in society.

Germany, by contrast, demonstrated a high level of regulation of the digital environment and active use of social media in political and public processes. Social networks became an important tool for public discussion and transparency, particularly during election periods. Political parties and public organisations actively used platforms to engage with voters, promote the programmes, and draw attention to socially significant issues. Germany also faced serious challenges related to the spread of disinformation, especially in the context of electoral campaigns and the growing polarisation of society. Despite a well-developed legal framework regulating the activities of social platforms, including the adoption of the Law on Protection Against Disinformation and measures to ensure algorithm transparency, there remained a need for further adaptation of regulatory mechanisms to the rapidly changing digital realities.

The comparison between Kyrgyzstan and Germany showed that despite differences in levels of economic development and digital infrastructure, both countries faced similar challenges related to the ambivalent role of social networks. For Kyrgyzstan, where digital transformation was only gaining momentum, it was important to focus on developing legislative frameworks that would ensure a balance between freedom of expression and protection from harmful content. Germany, for its part, despite its more advanced digital infrastructure and legal mechanisms, faced serious challenges in combating disinformation and the spread of extremist content.

For both countries, a priority direction should be the development of cross-sectoral cooperation based on collaboration between government bodies, civil society and the private sector. This approach would allow a wide range of views and interests to be taken into account, which was especially important in the context of the rapid development of digital technologies and the challenges associated with such technologies. The creation of national platforms for dialogue and knowledge exchange could become a key tool in achieving this goal. Additionally, cross-sectoral cooperation could be aimed at developing long-term strategies for adaptation to digital challenges. This included initiatives to establish sustainable response mechanisms to crisis situations, such as surges in disinformation or mass cyberattacks. The implementation of such mechanisms would require close cooperation between governmental and non-governmental structures, ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable approach to problem-solving. A promising area for both countries would be the implementation of joint research projects aimed at studying the impact of social networks on democratic processes and developing strategies for adapting to digital challenges.

BIODATA

Aizhana Myrsalieva is Head of the Department of Industry Economics at Limited Liability Company “Inmobiles”, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. Her research interests include digital communication, the influence of online platforms on political participation, and the socio-economic implications of information flows in contemporary media environments. Email: myrsalievaaizhana@gmail.com

Maksatbek Moldomyrzaev is General Director of the Design and Construction Company “Dream Architect”, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. His research interests include political communication, digital democracy, and the role of social media in contemporary political processes. Email: m.moldomyrzaev@outlook.com

Daniyar Suiunduk Uulu is Head of the Legal Department at Nazaraliev Medical Centre, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. His research interests include constitutional aspects of media regulation, legislative responses to disinformation and propaganda, and the protection of democratic institutions in rapidly evolving digital media environments. Email: d_suiundukuulu@hotmail.com

Elia Abdrakhmanova is Head of the Data Warehouse Management Division at the Software Development Department of Open Joint-Stock Company “Optima Bank”, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. Her research interests include the digital economy and also in the role of information technologies in governance and public communication. Email: e-abdrakhmanova@outlook.com

REFERENCES

- Aigerim, S., Nurtazina, R., Serikzhanova, I., Bukharbay, B., & Taitorina, B. (2024). Evolving political cultures in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan: Trends and new paradigms. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 1-24. <https://doi.org/rcfr>
- Aitbaev, A. (2021, February 27). Political advertising on Facebook: Which candidates spent thousands of dollars on targeting. *Economist*. <https://economist.kg/vlast/2021/02/27/politicheskaya-reklama-na-facebook-kto-iz-kandidatov-potratil-tysyachi-dollarov-na-target/>
- Ali Adeeb, R., & Mirhoseini, M. (2023). The impact of affect on the perception of fake news on social media: A systematic review. *Social Sciences*, 12(12), 674. <https://doi.org/rcfs>
- Anderson, A. (2021). Networked revolutions? ICTs and protest mobilization in non-democratic regimes. *Political Research Quarterly*, 74(4), 1037-1051. <https://doi.org/rcft>
- Article 19. (2020, July 3). Kyrgyzstan: Law “On Manipulating Information” must be vetoed. <https://www.article19.org/resources/kyrgyzstan-law-on-manipulating-information-must-be-vetoed/>
- Bhoortel, U. (2024). Media imperialism, propaganda and politics: Its’ impacts in third world countries. *Journal of Health and Social Welfare*, 10(1), 1-11. <https://jhswn.com/index.php/jhsw/article/view/94>
- Blackwood, M. A. (2020). Kyrgyz republic set to hold snap presidential election and constitutional referendum after parliamentary elections annulled. *Congressional Research Service*. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11517/4>
- Borucki, I., & Kettemann, M. C. (2024). Better safe than sorry? Digital campaigning governance in Germany. *Policy Studies*, 45(5), 750-772. <https://doi.org/rcfv>
- Bursztyn, L., Cantoni, D., Yang, D. Y., Yuchtman, N., & Zhang, Y. J. (2021). Persistent political engagement: Social Interactions and the dynamics of protest movements. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 3(2), 233-250. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aeri.20200261>
- Castillo Esparcia, A., Caro Castaño, L., & Almansa-Martínez, A. (2023). Evolution of digital activism on social media: Opportunities and challenges. *Information Professional*, 32(3), e320303. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.may.03>
- Celik, I., Muukkonen, H., & Dogan, S. (2021). A model for understanding the new media literacy: Epistemological beliefs and social media use. *Library & Information Science Research*, 43(4), 101125. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2021.101125>
- Chekirova, A. (2022). Social media and cross-border political participation: A case study of Kyrgyz migrants’ online activism. *Social Sciences*, 11(8), 370. <https://doi.org/rcfw>
- Darius, P., & Stephany, F. (2020). How to hijack twitter: Online polarisation strategies of Germany’s political far-right. *arXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2010.05546>
- De Gregorio, G. (2021). The rise of digital constitutionalism in the European Union. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 19(1), 41-70. <https://doi.org/gnjnzi>
- Drescher, L. S., Roosen, J., Aue, K., Dressel, K., Schär, W., & Götz, A. (2021). The spread of COVID-19 crisis communication by German public authorities and experts on Twitter: Quantitative content analysis. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 7(12), e31834. <https://doi.org/10.2196/31834>
- Earl, J., Maher, T. V., & Pan, J. (2022). The digital repression of social movements, protest, and activism: A synthetic review. *Science Advances*, 8(10), eabl8198. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abl8198>

- European Parliament and of the Council*. (2016). Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>
- European Parliament and of the Council*. (2022a). Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a single market for digital services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act). <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj>
- European Parliament and of the Council*. (2022b). Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act). <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1925/oj>
- Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection*. (2017, September 1). Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks (NetzDG). <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/netzdg/BJNR335210017.html>
- Freedom House. (2024). *Key Developments, June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024 (Kyrgyzstan)*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/kyrgyzstan/freedom-net/2024>
- Frost, R., & Jakybalieva, A. (2021, December). Campaigning against the use of hate speech in Kyrgyzstan elections. *Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)*. <https://www.wfd.org/what-we-do/resources/campaigning-against-use-hate-speech-kyrgyzstan-elections>
- Karell, D., Linke, A., Holland, E., & Hendrickson, E. (2023). "Born for a storm": Hard-right social media and civil unrest. *American Sociological Review*, 88(2), 322-349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224231156190>
- Kemp, S. (2024, February 21). Digital 2024: Germany. *DataReportal*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-germany>
- Kloop Media Foundation. (2020, December 31). "Firefighting team of power": How easy it is to create a fake factory in Kyrgyzstan. <https://kloop.kg/blog/2020/12/31/pozharnaya-komanda-vlasti-kak-legko-sozdat-fabriku-fejkov-v-kyrgyzstane/>
- Klüver, H. (2024). Social influencers and election outcomes. *Comparative Political Studies*, 58(13), 2973-2999. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140241306955>
- K-News*. (2021, January 15). Facebook removed hundreds of profiles that attempted to manipulate public opinion in Kyrgyzstan. <https://knews.kg/2021/01/15/facebook-udalil-sotni-profilej-kotorye-v-kyrgyzstane-pytalis-manipulirovat-obshhestvennym-mneniem/>
- Kumar, Y. (2021). De-radicalizing the youth in Kyrgyzstan via social media and its implications for Central Asia. *Farabi Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 21-28. <https://doi.org/rcfx>
- Kydyrova, E. (2021). *From online click to social shift: Digital activism of youth in Kyrgyzstan*. SSRN. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4834326>
- Laaninen, T. (2024). Youth, social media and the European elections. *European Parliament*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2024/762317/EPRS_ATA%282024%29762317_EN.pdf
- Lybeck, R., Koironen, I., & Koivula, A. (2024). From digital divide to digital capital: The role of education and digital skills in social media participation. *Universal Access in the Information Society*, 23(4), 1657-1669. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-022-00961-0>
- Masferrer, A. (2023). The decline of freedom of expression and social vulnerability in Western democracy. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law*, 36(4), 1443-1475. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-023-09990-1>

- Media Policy Institute. (2020, October 16). "Hybrid politics": How social networks influence events in Kyrgyzstan. <https://media.kg/news/gibridnaya-politika-kak-soczseti-vliyayut-na-sobytiya-v-kyrgyzstane>
- Melvin, N., & Umaraliev, T. (2011). New social media and conflict in Kyrgyzstan. *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Insights on Peace and Security*, 1, 1-23. <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/insight/SIPRIInsight1101.pdf>
- Mihr, A. (2023). Human rights in Central Asian states and European initiatives. In K. H. Khan & A. Mihr (Eds.), *Europe-Central Asia Relations: New Connectivity Frameworks* (pp. 121-125). Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/rcfz>
- Mulyadi, D., Nursyakinah, K., Baidhowi, N., Hidayat, C., Saharani, T., Tricahya, M., & Maswah, E. (2024). The negative impact of social media on Generation Z in election activities in 2024. *Sinergi International Journal of Law*, 2(3), 183-197. <https://doi.org/rcf2>
- National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. (2023). Communication Strategy 2024-2028. <https://stat.gov.kg/media/files/158aedca-2903-41d3-8779-1ff779537c2b.pdf>
- Newman, N. (2023, June 14). *Overview and key findings of the 2023 Digital News Report*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism; University of Oxford. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023/dnr-executive-summary>
- Nguyen, T. A., Bui, T. C., Dudareva, M., & Bubnov, V. (2023). Correlation between the world's social media usage and political stability in a country. *Public Organization Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-023-00744-y>
- Olaniran, B., & Williams, I. (2020). Social media effects: Hijacking democracy and civility in civic engagement. In J. Jones & M. Trice (Eds.), *Platforms, Protests, and the Challenge of Networked Democracy* (pp. 77-94). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36525-7_5
- Pangrazio, L., & Sefton-Green, J. (2021). Digital rights, digital citizenship and digital literacy: What's the difference? *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 10, 15-27. <https://doi.org/10.7821/naer.2021.1.616>
- Perloff, R.M. (2021). *The dynamics of political communication: Media and politics in a digital age*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429298851>
- Polanco-Levicán, K., & Salvo-Garrido, S. (2022). Understanding social media literacy: A systematic review of the concept and its competences. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(14), 8807. <https://doi.org/rcf3>
- Secinaro, S., Brescia, V., Iannaci, D., & Jonathan, G. M. (2021). Does citizen involvement feed on digital platforms? *International Journal of Public Administration*, 45(9), 708-725. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1887216>
- Sikorskaia, I. (2020). Kyrgyzstan: Counter extremism strategies need modification. *Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting (CABAR)*. <https://cabar.asia/en/kyrgyzstan-counter-extremism-strategies-need-modification>
- Sommermann, K.-P., Behnke, N., Kropp, S., Hofmann, H., Fleischer, J., von Knobloch, H.-H., Schimanke, D., Schrapper, L., Ruge, K., Ritgen, K., Jann, W., Veit, S., Ziekow, J., Mehde, V., Reichard, C., Schröter, E., Färber, G., Wollmann, H., Kuhlmann, S., & Bogumil, J. (2021). *Public administration in Germany*. Potsdam: University of Potsdam. <https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-50463>
- Tarafdar, M., & Ray, D. K. 2021. Role of social media in social protest cycles: A sociomaterial examination. *Information Systems Research*, 32(3), 1066-1090. <https://doi.org/gi6fjp>

- Theocharis, Y., Boulianne, S., Koc-Michalska, K., & Bimber, B. (2022). Platform affordances and political participation: How social media reshape political engagement. *West European Politics*, 46(4), 788-811. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2022.2087410>
- United Nations (UN) Environment Programme. (2019). Fridays for future movement – Inspiration and action. <https://www.unep.org/championsofearth/laureates/2019/fridays-future-movement>
- United Nations (UN). (2023). Interview: Social media platforms must be more transparent and accountable – UN expert. <https://news.un.org/ru/interview/2023/06/1441872>
- Vargiolu, A. (2022). *Personal privacy and internet regulation: Balancing security and freedom in the digital age*. Research Gate. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.23935.21920>
- Vasist, P. N., Chatterjee, D., & Krishnan, S. (2023). The polarizing impact of political disinformation and hate speech: A cross-country configural narrative. *Information Systems Frontiers: A Journal of Research and Innovation*, 26(2), 663-688. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-023-10390-w>
- Von der Weth, C., Abdul, A., Fan, S., & Kankanhalli, M. (2020). Helping users tackle algorithmic threats on social media: A multimedia research agenda. *Proceedings of the 28th Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) International Conference on Multimedia* (pp. 4425-4434). New York: Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3394171.3414692>
- Weismueller, J., Gruner, R., Harrigan, P., Coussement, K., & Wang, S. (2023). Information sharing and political polarisation on social media: The role of falsehood and partisanship. *Information Systems Journal*, 34(2), 854-893. <https://doi.org/gtbs4g>
- World Bank Group (WBG). (2022). Individuals using the Internet (% of population) – Kyrgyz Republic. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=KG>
- World Bank Group (WBG). (2024). *Individuals using the Internet*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>
- Xiao, X., Su, Y., & Lee, D. K. L. (2021). Who consumes new media content more wisely? Examining personality factors, SNS use, and new media literacy in the era of misinformation. *Social Media + Society*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/gkzskh>
- Ziegler, S. (2023). Watching the digital grassroots grow: Assessing party members' social media campaigning during the 2021 German Bundestag election. *Policy Studies*, 45(5), 818-838. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2023.2229248>