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Social Media and Digital Political Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of Modern Trends ^(*)

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to review, analyze, and critically evaluate academic works related to the use of social media in political participation. The researcher employed a second-level or secondary data analysis approach to examine these studies in terms of their methodological frameworks, theoretical approaches, and findings. The analysis covered all research conducted during the period from 2015 to 2024, amounting to a total of 120 studies, 41 Arab studies and 79 foreign studies, distributed across various intellectual schools (European, American, Asian, and African).

The results revealed a predominance of politically and demographically oriented topics, while there was limited attention to psychological and technological dimensions, particularly in Arab studies. The study also highlighted a clear methodological shortcoming in the use of probabilistic sampling, with 69.2% of the studies relying on non-probability samples.

Moreover, most Arab studies focused on university students, without adequate representation of other social groups. The Arab research tradition continues to rely on classical theoretical frameworks that do not align with the evolving technological nature of social media, in contrast to foreign studies, which are largely interdisciplinary and grounded in theoretical concepts.

The study concluded with several recommendations, including the need to balance quantitative and qualitative methods, to promote longitudinal research for a deeper understanding of the impact of digital platforms on political participation, to expand the geographical and social scope of research samples, and to develop measurement tools suitable for the digital environment.

Keywords: Social Media, New Media, Digital Platforms,
Political Participation, Political Interaction, Political Engagement.

^(*)The Paper was received on June 24, 2025, and accepted for publication on September 23, 2025.