



POLITICAL NARRATIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING ELECTIONS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Narratives can be understood as a story or a description of a series of events or a particular way of explaining or understanding events. Narratives play a significant role in clearly expressing values, ideals, and representative claims, distinguishing one's identity for political purposes.

The concept of political narrative has gained traction in public debates and academia in recent years with the evolution of digital technologies, especially after the advent of Web 2.0. Political actors – parties and leaders – have been using these platforms to engage with the masses. The engagement expands throughout the year including elections.

The study in this background attempts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) employing the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) technique using keywords-political narratives, social media, and election along with sub-keywords like electoral narrative, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and X, for advanced searches on three databases – Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The time frame for study is 2005 to 2024. On the search results, various filters were applied to have a final total of 322 results, which include Scopus (155), Web of Science (48), and Google Scholar (119). The study then performed a screening of titles and abstracts and other steps in the PRISMA technique to select 102 literatures (articles, book chapters, conference papers) for carrying out a quantitative analysis. The study found most of the literature focusing and originating from American and European nations with least or literature from many Asian and African nations including India alongside mostly originating from discipline other than communication.

Keywords: Political Narratives, Political Actors, Election, Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), SLR.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Narratives “the most potent of all ideological forms”, play an essential role in clearly expressing values, ideals and representative claims, distinguishing one's identity for political purposes (Mugge & Runderkamp, 2023; Eagleton, 1979). The advancement of technology led to advent of social media platforms that took political activities into public sphere and provided political actors with a new means to disseminate, counter and control narratives.

The first successful use of social media for a campaign was recorded during 2008 US presidential campaign of Barack Obama, when

he “converted everyday people into engaged and empowered volunteers, donors and advocates through social networks, e-mail advocacy, text messaging, and online video. The proclivity of the campaign to online advocacy is a major reason for his victory” (Aaker & Chang, 2009).

Since then, the political actors across globe adopted social media platforms for political communication including electoral campaigns. This adaptation shaped the electoral campaign practices significantly across democracies in the globe.

Twitter provided a mode of political dialogue in Africa- a restricted media environment as demonstrated in a study focusing on electoral discourses of Zimbabwe, where hashtags served as an alternative public sphere (Mano, 2020). Similarly, Idris and Alab (2024) studied 2023 presidential election in Nigeria, where Twitter played a role in campaign but platforms' effectiveness was limited by structural challenges—such as weak party infrastructures, and allegations of electoral malpractice. The patterns were similar in form of differentiated engagements in Latin America.

Women politicians in Argentina predominantly used Twitter for agenda dissemination than dialogic interaction generating high level of activity but strategy led to intra-partisan engagement producing filter bubbles rather than cross-cutting discourse (Recalde et al., 2019).

Similarly, a semiotic and discursive analysis of Instagram content of Spain's radical-right party Vox found a strategic amalgamation of visual storytelling, metaphorical nationalism, and populist emotional appeals for consolidating a hyper-personalised narrative focusing on party leader Santiago Abascal using memes, short-form videos and militaristic imagery (Bernardez-Rodal et al, 2020). Similarly, a broader trend of emotional branding and leader humanisation in 2022 Andalusian election, which was limited to audience polarisation and negativity bias (Castro & Muros, 2024). Such social media campaign strategies transcended into India boundaries, where these become instrumental for controlling narratives and projecting political actors in good light. Bharatiya Janata Party utilised Twitter to build an electoral agenda around development and governance simultaneously discrediting the Congress party during 2014 General Election (Bajaj, 2017). The 2014 Indian Election Campaign relied on hyper-personalisation of Narendra Modi-prime ministerial candidate of BJP.

Similar strategies were witnessed in 2019 Indian Election, when WhatsApp was weaponised by the BJP and the Congress to craft narratives (Jakesch et al., 2021). This strategy re-appeared in 2024 elections as the BJP utilised multi-platform strategy—encompassing WhatsApp, YouTube, and

Instagram—along with influencer collaborations and demographic micro-targeting to reach women and youth (Mir, 2024).

The platforms have been utilised in Italy, Philippines, Argentina, Turkey and other parts of world in the last two decades. In this background, this study conducted a SLR (Systematic Literature Review) using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) technique for reviewing existing literature with the objectives:

1. To identify the trend of such electoral study over the years, their origin and focus region.
2. To identify the major subject area, domain and discipline of the studies.
3. To identify the major research methods, methodology and theoretical framework in studies.
4. To identify the major research gaps in the existing literature.

2. METHODOLOGY:

2.1. Systematic Literature Review

A systematic review provides a mechanism for careful planning to anticipate potential issues and document the intended approach, ensuring reproducibility, testing of the planned method, reducing duplication and biases in the selection of literature for their review (Shamseer et al., 2015; Moher et al., 2015). The systematic literature review has been utilised by various media researchers to find out the relation between social media and outbreak and management of disease (Charles-Smith et al., 2015), social media and sharing of knowledge (Ahmed et al., 2019), user generated content studies (Naab & Sehl, 2016), and in health communication research (Moonrhead et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2019). Hence, this study adopted a SLR to search for existing literature (journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers) from three databases: Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. for the time frame from 2005 to 2024.

2.2. Search Strategy:

The study used three main keywords: *Political Narratives, Social Media, Election*, and five sub-keywords: *Electoral Narratives, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, X* to conduct an online advanced search on Scopus, Web of Science (WoS) and Google Scholar databases within a

time frame of 2005 to 2024. To limit the study, the filters like Subject area (Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities), document type (Article, Book Chapter, Conference Paper), Language (English) and Publication Stage (Final) were applied for Scopus and Web of Science during search to get 155 and 48 literatures respectively. The study during search on third database- Google Scholar, tweaked search strategy slightly in accordance with its requirement in advanced search option. The search bar used is give below:

With all of the words: *Political Narrative, Election, Social Media*

With exact phrase: *Electoral Narrative*

With at least one of the words: *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, X*

Time Frame: 2005-2024

The search resulted in 119 articles on Google Scholar. Search result was scraped into an Excel sheet using 'NocodeSerpApi- a freely available Google tool for scraping data. Hence, the search strategy resulted in a cumulative total of 322 literature (articles, book chapters, and conference papers) from three databases.

2.3 PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020

This review then employs the PRISMA-- Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses 2020-- technique, designed primarily for systematic reviews of health intervention studies, which can also be applied to other interventional or non-interventional studies, mixed-methods systematic reviews to synthesize the literature (Page et al., 2021). Page et al. (2021) in a study noted that PRISMA 2020 has been developed to ensure a systematic review is valuable to users, who shall prepare a transparent, complete, and

accurate account of why the review was done, what they did, and what they found and provides updated reporting guidance for systematic reviews that reflects advances in methods to identify, select, appraise, and synthesise studies. This study followed PRISMA 2020 for deciding about the inclusion or exclusion of the 322 articles collected during the search on three databases. The steps followed for inclusion and exclusion of records are mentioned below in PRISMA flowchart (Fig 1).

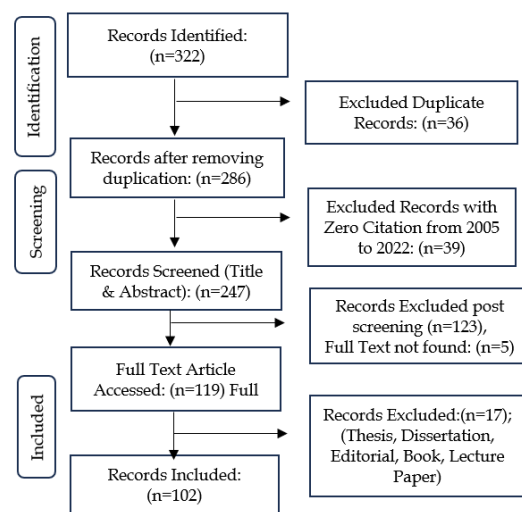


Fig 1: PRISMA Flowchart

It is clear from the above discussion that 102 pieces of literature have been included as part of this literature review. The list of articles, along with details such as Author, publication year, and citation count, is provided below in Table 2.2.

The list of articles, along with details such as Author, publication year, and citation count, is provided below in Table 1.

Table1: List of Included Literatures with Author, Database, Google Citation

S. No.	Title	In-text Citation	Database	Citation
1	Hashtag Wars: Political Disinformation and Discursive Struggles on Twitter Conversations During the 2018 Brazilian Presidential Campaign	Soares & Recuero, (2021)	Scopus	78
2	Mobilized and Polarized: Social Media and Disinformation Narratives in the 2022 Philippine Elections	Arugay & Baquisal, (2022)	Scopus	30
3	"Long Live Freedom!": Digital Communication of Argentina's Emerging Libertarian Populism	Tarullo & Fenoll, (2023)	Scopus	6
4	Twitter, Elections and Gendered Disinformation Campaigns in Zimbabwe	Mare (2023)	Scopus	3

S. No.	Title	In-text Citation	Database	Citation
5	Social Media and Malaysia's 2022 Election: The Growth and Impact of Video Campaigning	Tapsell (2023)	Scopus	9
6	The narrative that wasn't: what passes for discourse in the age of Trump	Anderson (2019)	Scopus	8
7	Tell Me an Instagram Story: Ephemeral Communication and the 2018 Gubernatorial Elections	Towner & Munoz, (2024)	Scopus	7
8	Politainment on Twitter: Engagement in the Spanish Legislative Elections of April 2019	Berrocal-Gonzalo et al., (2023)	Scopus	16
9	Political campaigning and party strategies: the importance of rallies in the northern states	Kumar, (2024)	Scopus	6
10	Meme-Ing Waves: unpacking political narratives in the Romanian context	Mihailescu, (2024)	Scopus	0
11	Trend Alert: A Cross-Platform Organization Manipulated Twitter Trends in the Indian General Election	Jakesch et al., (2021)	Scopus	39
12	Social media, political discourse and the 2019 elections in India: Journalists' perspectives on the changing role of the mainstream media in setting the political agenda	Sharma & Sivakumar, (2023)	Scopus	18
13	Between Hagiography and Self-Trolling: Multimodal Analysis of Memes for Boric in the 2021 Chilean Presidential Election	Fuentes & Mellado, (2024)	Scopus	0
14	A Torn Country: Erdoğan's Turkey And the Elections of 2023	Yavuz, (2023)	Scopus	6
15	Representations of Latinos in a Democratic Party Campaign in the United States: Identity Ownership, Narratives, and Values	Larrosa-Fuentes, (2022)	Scopus	1
16	"Well, It's Election Day ... Again": How a Multi-day Memetic Narrative Captured the World's Collective Anticipation during the 2020 "Election Week Limbo"	Birthisel et al., (2022)	Scopus	1
17	What Are Crises for? The Effects on Users' Engagement in the 2022 Italian Election	Ceron et al., (2024)	Scopus	5
18	Social media and the rise of radical right populism in Portugal: the communicative strategies of André Ventura on X in the 2022 elections	Prior, (2024)	Scopus	6
19	The Digital Role in Building Public Profiles of Political Actors	(Punziano et al., 2022)	Scopus	1
20	Populist Leaders as Gatekeepers: André Ventura Uses News to Legitimize the Discourse	(Baptista et al., 2024)	Scopus	2
21	Digital populism, propaganda and the construction of electoral legitimacy in the 2022 presidential elections in Kenya	(Maweu, 2024)	Scopus	0
22	Do you believe in fake after all? WhatsApp disinformation campaign during the Brazilian 2018 presidential election	Santini et al., (2021)	Scopus	26
23	Blame It on the Algorithm? Russian Government-Sponsored Media and Algorithmic Curation of Political Information on Facebook	Kuznetsova & Makhortykh, (2023)	Scopus	7
24	Reputation matters: parasocial attachment, narrative engagement, and the 2018 Taylor Swift political endorsement	Nisbett & Schartel Dunn, (2019)	Scopus	45
25	Putting the blame back on Brussels: strategic communication of the populist radical right in the 2019 European Parliament elections	Popivanov, (2022)	Scopus	4
26	Characterizing social media manipulation in the 2020 U.S. presidential election	Ferrara et al., (2020)	Scopus	247
27	When Machine Behavior Targets Future Voters: The Use of Social Bots to Test Narratives for Political Campaigns in Brazil	Santini et al., (2021)	Scopus	28
28	Biopolitical Populism in Poland: The Case of PiS	Yatsyk, (2020)	Scopus	6

S. No.	Title	In-text Citation	Database	Citation
29	Controlled empowerment of women: intersections of feminism, HCI and political communication in India	Mangurkar & Rangaswamy, (2022)	Scopus	9
30	Walking with Bourdieu into Twitter communities: an analysis of networked publics struggling on power in Iranian Twittersphere	Kermani & Tafreshi, (2022)	Scopus	17
31	"Fake and Fraudulent" vs. "An American Right": Competing Imaginaries of the Vote in the 2020 U.S. Presidential Campaign	Stromer-Galley et al., (2024)	Scopus	1
32	Down the bot hole: Actionable insights from a one-year analysis of bot activity on Twitter	Luceri et al., (2021)	Scopus	29
33	Sharing political nostalgia in Hungary is yearning for the past successful on social media?	Szabó & Kiss, (2021)	Scopus	17
34	Pride or Prejudice? Clarifying the Role of White Racial Identity in Recent Presidential Elections	Fording & Schram, (2023)	Scopus	14
35	Construction of political emotions: an analysis of the use of Twitter in electoral campaigns in Bogotá	Gonzalez & Ferré-Pavia, (2021)	Scopus	3
36	Populism, Twitter, and Political Communication: An analysis of Jair Bolsonaro's tweets during the 2018 election campaign	Mangerotti et al., (2021)	Scopus	24
37	Populist political advertising in times of pandemic: Framing Elites as anti-religious	Stoica, (2021)	Scopus	10
38	Trumping hate on Twitter? Online hate speech in the 2016 U.S. Election campaign and its aftermath	Siegel et al., (2021)	Scopus	80
39	On the way to deep fake democracy? Deep fakes in election campaigns in 2023	Łabuz & Nehring, (2024)	Scopus	33
40	Political Coalitions and Social Media: Evidence from Pakistan	Mir et al., (2022)	Scopus	15
41	Right-wing populism with Chinese characteristics? Identity, otherness and global imaginaries in debating world politics online	Zhang, (2019)	Scopus	183
42	The 'changing' face of media discourses on poverty in the age of populism and anti-globalisation: The political appeal of anti-modernity and certainty in Brazil	Lugo-Ocando, (2019)	Scopus	29
43	Populism in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Horizontal traditions and vertical novelties	Savić-Bojanić, (2020)	Scopus	5
44	Populist Narratives in the Czech 2021 General Elections: 'Hero Fights, Ruler Protects?' The Linkage between Brand Archetypes and Populist Narratives	Ostrá, (2022)	Scopus	4
45	TikTok and active audiences in processes for political and structural change. An exploratory study based on the Scottish referendum	Alonso-López et al., (2023)	Scopus	13
46	Misogyny, social media and electoral democracy in Zimbabwe's 2018 elections	Mateveke & Chikafa-Chipiro, (2020)	Scopus	16
47	"Yes We Vote": Civic Mobilisation and Impulsive Engagement on Instagram	Adi et al., (2018)	Scopus	49
48	New challenges in the study of right-wing propaganda: Priming the populist backlash to "hope and change"	Minnite, (2012)	Scopus	13
49	The role of the mass media in the 2017 gubernatorial election of Jakarta	Hermawati & Runiawati, (2019)	Scopus	4
50	Live-Tweeting a Presidential Primary Debate: Exploring New Political Conversations	Hawthorne et al., (2013)	Scopus	120
51	Whose Fingerprint Does the News Show? Developing Machine Learning Classifiers for Automatically Identifying Russian State-Funded News in Serbia	Denkovski & Trilling, (2020)	Scopus	5
52	The price of goodness: Everyday nationalist narratives in Denmark	Koefoed & Simonsen, (2007)	Scopus	62

S. No.	Title	In-text Citation	Database	Citation
53	Is Social Media Transforming Canadian Electioneering? Hybridity and Online Partisan Strategies in the 2012 Quebec Election	Giasson et al., (2019)	Scopus	29
54	Tribal Politics, Suits and Rock Music: Electioneering in Meghalaya	Guenauer, (2016)	Scopus	8
55	Kissing Macaca: Blogs, narrative and political discourse	Burroughs, (2007)	Scopus	20
56	An analysis of fake narratives on social media during 2019 Indonesian presidential election	Rumata & Nugraha, (2020)	Scopus	6
57	Religious (de)politicisation in Uganda's 2016 elections	Alava & Ssentongo, (2018)	Scopus	56
58	Hybrid spaces of politics: the 2013 general elections in Italy, between talk shows and Twitter	Iannelli & Giglietto, (2015)	Scopus	40
59	Instagram and political storytelling among Malaysian politicians during the 14th general election	Mohamed, (2019)	Scopus	34
60	The grammatization of emotions on facebook in the elections to the parliament of Catalonia 2017	Coromina et al., (2018)	Scopus	34
61	Dormant bots in social media: Twitter and the 2018 U.S. senate election	Takacs & McCulloh, (2019)	Scopus	16
62	Alternative responses to presidential tweets on elections in Africa: A new counter power?	Mano, (2020)	Scopus	13
63	'New politics', new media - New political language? A rhetorical perspective on candidates' self-presentation in electronic campaigns in the 2013 Israeli elections	Orkibi, (2015)	Scopus	28
64	In the Shadow of the Smolensk Catastrophe – The 2010 Presidential Election in Poland	Czesnik, (2014)	Scopus	31
65	Women in politics and their presence in twitter: Argentina as a case study	Recalde et al., (2019)	Scopus	14
66	Evolution of bot and human behavior during elections	Luceri et al., (2019)	Scopus	93
67	Vox political party discourse, strategies and interactions on its official instagram account during the a-28 elections. Radical right and social networks;	Bernardez-Rodal et al., (2020)	Scopus	143
68	Toward an enriched understanding of factors influencing Filipino behavior during elections through the analysis of Twitter data	Pablo et al., (2014)	Scopus	20
69	Reconstituting the 'good woman': Gendered visual politics on social media during 2021 state election in West Bengal, India	Banerjee & Mitra, (2024)	WoS	2
70	Populist alone, but harmless together? Analysing inter- and transnational populism of EP parties ID and ECR on Facebook	Peters & Schlußmeier, (2024)	WoS	1
71	Focusing on the fellas: Stacey Abrams' social media campaign addresses misogynoir in US politics	Grant & Lyons, (2024)	WoS	0
72	Political storytelling of Ekrem Imamoglu on Instagram during 2019 Istanbul mayoral elections in Turkey	Melek & Muyesseroglu, (2021)	WoS	10
73	Becoming a Presidential Candidate: Social Media Following and Politician Identification	McLaughlin & Macafee, 2019	WoS	44
74	Political Fiction: Political E-Mails During the 2014 US Midterm Election	McLaughlin et al., (2017)	WoS	13
75	Social media and political communication in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament	Nulty et al., (2016)	Google Scholar	300
76	The use of twitter during the 2014 Indian general elections: Framing, Agenda-setting, and the personalization of politics	Bajaj, (2017)	Google Scholar	33
77	The influence of the 'Tomos narrative' as a part of the Ukrainian national and strategic narrative	Zakharchenko & Zakharchenko, (2021)	Google Scholar	7
78	Hybrid 2018 campaigning: the social media habits of Italian political leaders and parties	Bracciale & Cepernich, (2018)	Google Scholar	33

S. No.	Title	In-text Citation	Database	Citation
79	Emotions and political leadership in the 2022 Andalusian Parliament elections in X	Zarauza-Castro & Mendez-Muros, (2024)	Google Scholar	0
80	Did Social Media Really Matter? Effectiveness of Twitter for Electoral Campaigns and the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria	Idris & Alab, (2024)	Google Scholar	0
81	Towards the Mainstream? UKIP and the 2009 Elections to the European Parliament	Hayton, (2010)	Google Scholar	94
82	The era of ineluctability? Post-apartheid South Africa after 20 years of democratic elections	Everatt, (2016)	Google Scholar	49
83	"Strategic Lying": Or How the Conservatives Dominated the Campaign News Agenda	Gaber & Fisher, (2021)	Google Scholar	4
84	The politics of fear and the securitization of African elections	Jenkins, (2020)	Google Scholar	30
85	Contrasting strategies and messages: an in-depth comparative study of Albania's national and municipal election advertisements	Licenji & Hoxha, (2024)	Google Scholar	2
86	Social Media and Electoral Dynamics: Insights from the 2024 Indian Lok Sabha Elections	Mir, (2024)	Google Scholar	2
87	Visualising Ideological Dichotomies in Nigerian Presidential Election Cartoons	Adeagbo, (2024)	Google Scholar	0
88	Automated analysis of the US presidential elections using Big Data and network analysis	Sudhahar et al., (2015)	Google Scholar	82
89	Lithuanian election 2016: the mainstream left and right rejected by voters angry with the establishment	Valentinavicius, (2017)	Google Scholar	6
90	Authoritarian elections in contemporary Southeast Asia	Lidauer, (2023)	Google Scholar	0
91	India after the 2014 general elections: BJP dominance and the crisis of the third party system	Schakel et al., (2019)	Google Scholar	41
92	A game of masks: the communicative performance of the Portuguese populist far-right	Novais, (2023)	Google Scholar	12
93	Conservative populism in Italy and Estonia: playing the multicultural card and engaging "domestic others"	Braghiroli & Makarychev, (2022)	Google Scholar	8
94	Beyond Surname-Unpacking the Return of Marcos Jr to Filipino Politics	Huang, (2023)	Google Scholar	0
95	Opportunity and influence: the third sector and the 2010 general election	Parry et al., (2010)	Google Scholar	11
96	Chronicle of a death foretold: The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand and the 2017 election	O'Brien & Huntington, (2017)	Google Scholar	4
97	It's my party: opposition politics, party motivation and electoral strategy in Namibia	Cooper, (2014)	Google Scholar	18
98	Historical perspectives on the 2022 electoral cycle in France	Chabal et al., (2023)	Google Scholar	2
99	How does an opposition party become successful in a dominant party system? The case of South Africa	Mac Giollabhuí, (2018)	Google Scholar	10
100	Law and New Zealand's 2014 election campaign	Geddis, (2015)	Google Scholar	1
101	The 2019 Governorship Elections in Nigeria and Pathology of Voters' Apathy	Ikenga, (2024)	Google Scholar	1
102	The geography of the nationalist right in Portugal: Outlines of an emerging process	Madeira et al., (2021)	Google Scholar	11

The above table points towards contribution of respective literature to the academia in terms of their citations. The table above also provide details of database from which the literature was identified during the search process.

3. RESULTS:

3.1. Classification of Identified and Coded Parameters

The study identified 16 parameters and coded those based on findings from included literature. This study attempted to divide those parameters into three broad categories with

first set being providing details about quality and diversity of included literature (*databases, JCR Impact factor, Citation, No of authors, publishers, access type, literature type, no of keywords, keywordscloud*).

Second set of identified parameters are for contextualising study (*subject area, focus region, focus country, origin region, origin country, focus platform, timeline*) and third are core research parameters (*method, methodology, theoretical framework*). The parameters under broad category second and third is used for identifying research gap in this study.

3.1.1 Quality and Focus of Included literature:

As part of this study, first set of identified parameters details about quality of selected literature. Around three-fourth or (74.56%) of included literature has four or more keywords (fig 2), which resulted in a world cloud (fig 3) with frequency of election, political, social media, campaign, narrative, electoral remained highest among all the keywords.

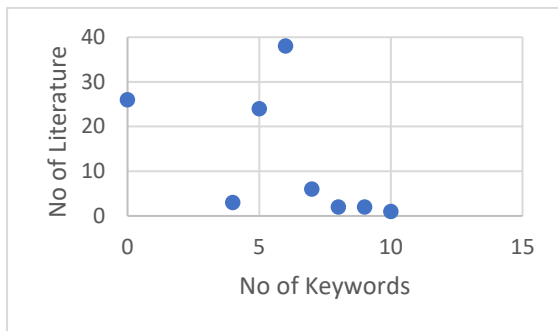


Fig 2: Keywords Count in Included Literature



Fig3: Word Cloud of Keywords

Moreover, as many as 72.54% of included literature have been identified and selected cumulatively from Scopus or Web of Science (WoS). (Fig 4). Of those 102, 56.86% are Open Access and 5.88% are Public Access implying

over 62% of literature are available for public consumption without any payment. (Fig 5).

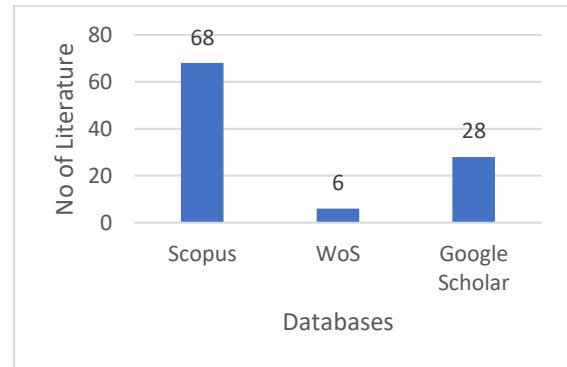


Fig 4: Database of literature's Origin

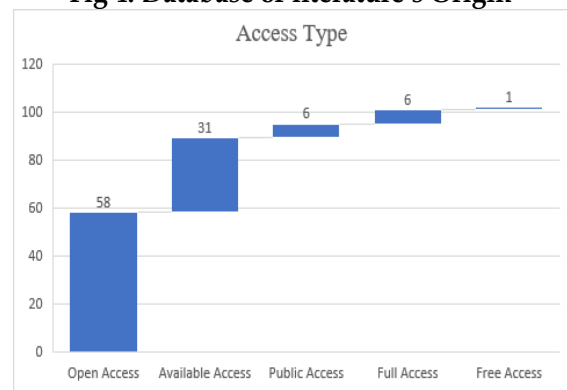


Fig 5: Access Types of Included Literature

On dividing literature in different types, it was found that around 89% of 102 are research articles, followed by Book Chapters (8.8%) and Conference papers (1.9%) (fig 6).

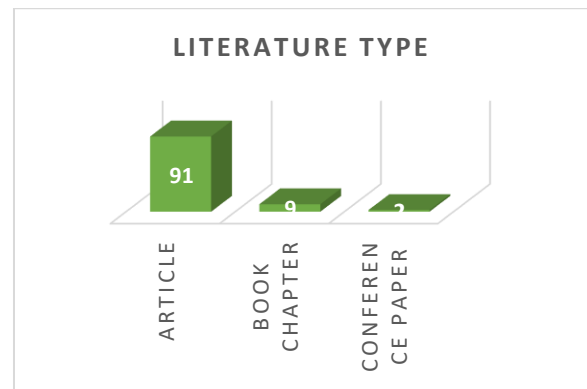


Fig 6: Types of Included Literature

Of those included literature, around 59.80% have been published cumulatively by international reputed publishers including Taylor and Francis, Sage Journals, Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan, MDPI, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press (fig 7).

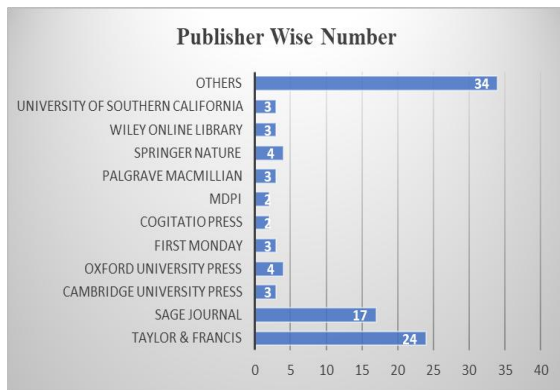


Fig 7: Publishers of Included Literature;

***Others** (Ramon Llull University, ACM Digital Library, QuiEdit, Brill, University of Chicago Press, Brazilian Journalism Research, Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies, Now Publishers Inc, Nomos, Masaryk University, University of Navarre, Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews, International Journal of Communication, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press, El profesional de la informacion, History of Information Systems (HISIN), Elsevier, Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, Italian Political Science, Universidad Polit3cnica Salesiana of Ecuador, Association of Academic Researchers and Faculties, Journal of African Studies and Sustainable, Mykolas Romeris University, Heinrich Boell Foundation, SSRN, University of Southampton, University of Otago, International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research and Editora Celta).

Further, of those 102 included literatures, 71.5% have been found JCR 5-year Impact Factor- a parameter for assessing qualities of journals, list with impact factor above zero (fig 8). Among those listed JCR Impact factor list, around three-fourth have impact factor of 1 or more than 1, which signifies a very good quality for journals.

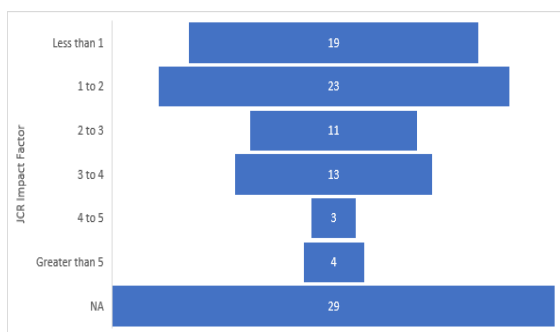


Fig 8: JCR 5-year Impact Factor

Moreover, in terms of google citation- a metrics, showing the contribution of literature in academics, 91.17% of 102 included literature have citation of 1 or above with the maximum citation at 300 (fig 9). Impact factor of 1 or above is considered very good in social sciences and Arts and Humanities subject domain. Of those included literature, 63.72% have been work of collaboration of authors either from same country or different country (fig 10).

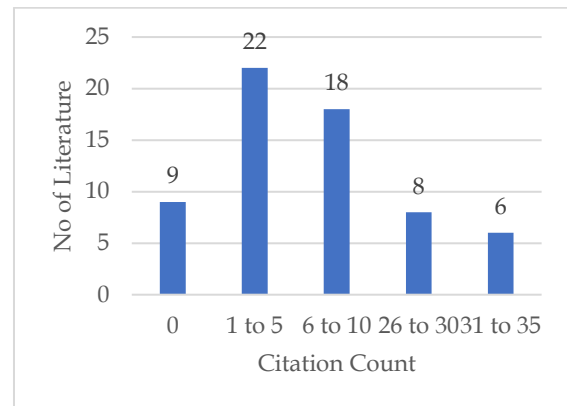


Fig 9: Google Citation Count

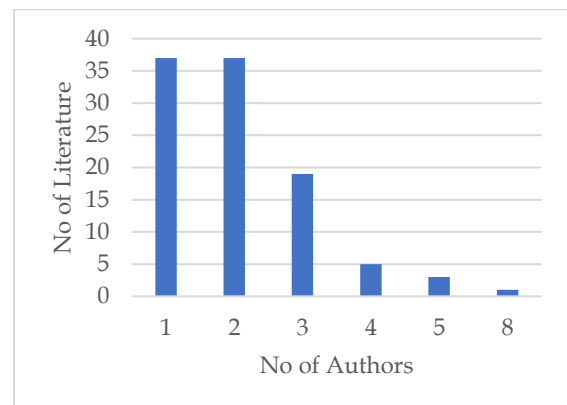


Fig 10: Authors Count

3.1.2 Context of Included Literature:

The study has carried out an analysis of included literature on basis of subject area, which revealed that 66.66% originated from social science subject area and 31.37% from others (fig 11). On further analysis of Social Science subject area, it was found that mostly literature have originated from Political science, Psychology, Linguistics, Economics, and Econometrics and Finance.

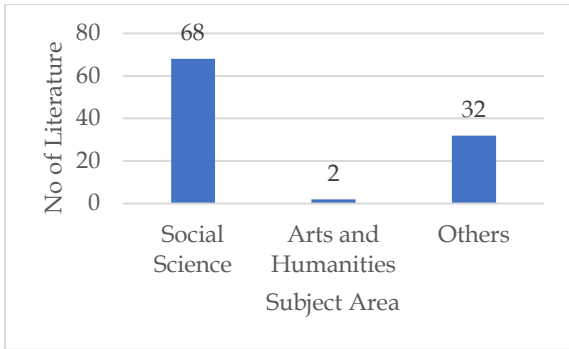


Fig. 11: Subject Domain of literature; *Others (Include combination of Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Business, Management and Accounting, Finance, Computer Science, Decision Science, Environmental Science, Psychology, in combination with either social sciences or Arts and Humanities or Social sciences and Arts and Humanities).

Gap1: There is a gap of studies from Arts and Humanities Subject Area. The studies originated from other subject areas in Social sciences except communication.

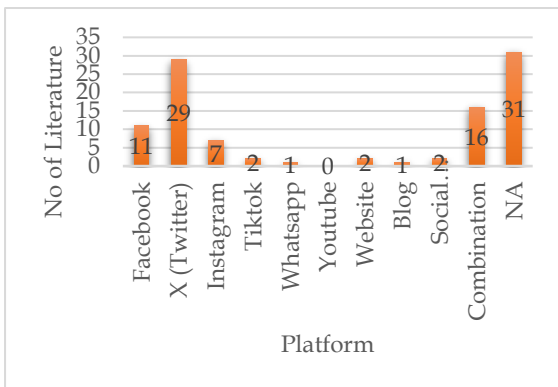


Fig 12: Platforms studied for Electoral Campaign

The included literature focused on campaigns on different social media platforms. On analysis, it was found that 30% haven't studied any platform, 28.43% focuses on X (twitter), 10.78% focuses on Facebook, and 6.86% on Instagram. Around one percent studies focus on Tiktok, Websites and less than one percent studies focus on Whatsapp and zero studies Youtube. (fig 12)

Gap2: There is a significant gap of studies focusing on Youtube, Whatsapp, Tiktok, Instagram and Facebook as a platform for electoral communication.

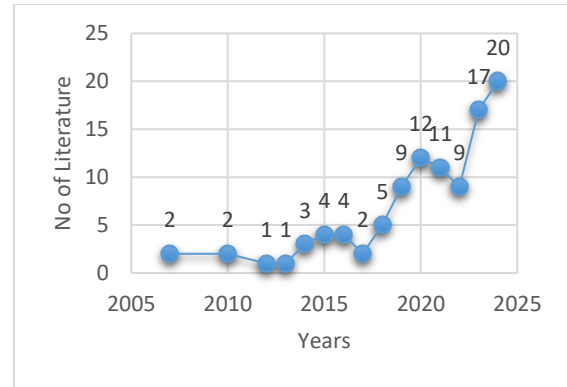


Fig 13: Year-Wise Literature Publication Trend

Further, the study on analysing year-wise publication trend of studies found that studies witnessed a quantum jump after 2019 (SARS-COVID-19 pandemic breakout year) and it peaked in 2023 and 2024 with 36% of included literature published in those two years (Fig 13). In 2020, when world witnessed pandemic induced lockdown 11.76% of included literature was published. The trend-line in figure 13 implies the growing importance for study of electoral communication across globe. The analysis of studies for their focus region, it has been found that two-third (66.66%) of 102 included studies focuses on election in high income region- Europe, North-America, South America, Australia (The World Bank Group, 2025) (Fig 14). On further analysing literature based on their focus country, the study found that around half of studies focused on elections in USA, UK, Brazil, Italy, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Spain and European Union (Fig 15). In case of Indian elections, only 7.8% of literature focused on world's largest democracy (fig 15).

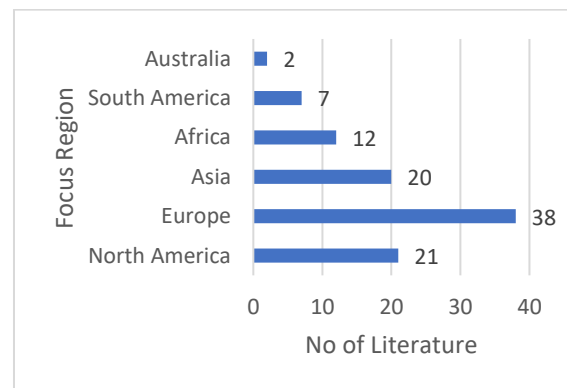


Fig 14: World Region focused in Studies

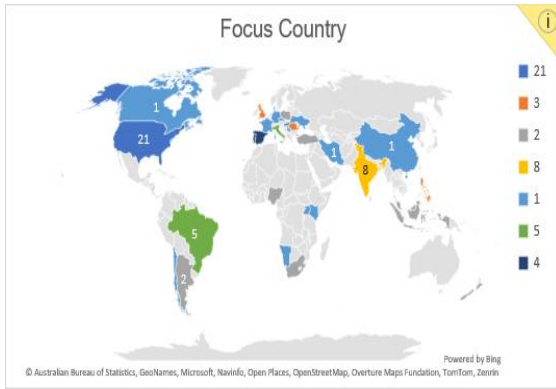


Fig 15: Countries focused in the Studies

Gap3: There is a considerable gap in studies focusing on elections in low-income region and countries with low middle or low income.

Gap 3a): Very less studies focused on Indian Elections

Similarly, analysing literature based on their region of origin, it has been found that 73.52% included studies originated from high income region- Europe, North-America, South America, Australia (The World Bank Group, 2025) (fig 16). On analysing included literature based on country of their origin, it was found that half have originated from USA, UK, Spain, Italy, Colombia, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Poland etc and less than two percent studies originated from India (fig 17).

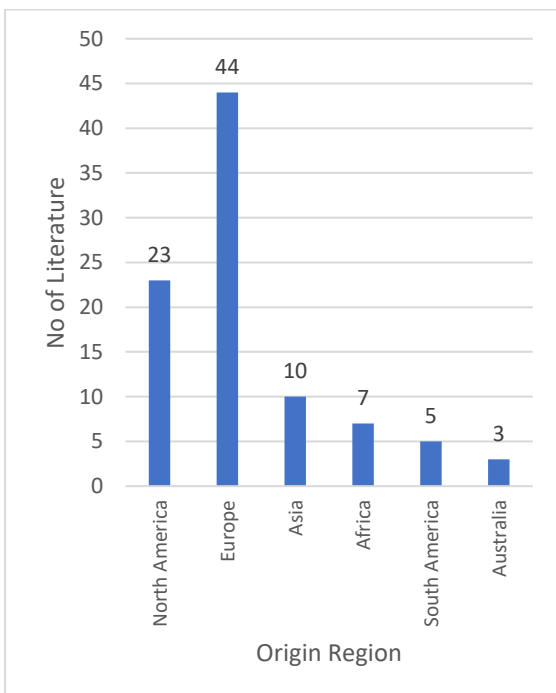


Fig 16: World Region for Studies Origin

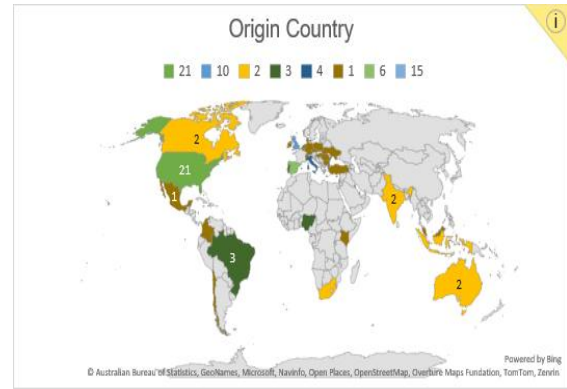


Fig 17: Origin Country of Studies

Gap4: There is a considerable gap in studies originating from low-income region and countries with low middle or low income.

Gap 4a): India lagged behind in generating quality studies on Elections

3.1.3 Core Research Parameters:

The study analysed the methods used in included literature to find that over half (53%) utilised qualitative study approach, 22% used mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative both), 20% used quantitative and one percent used conceptual method (fig 18). Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that conceptual and quantitative methods are least used methods in the studies conducted.

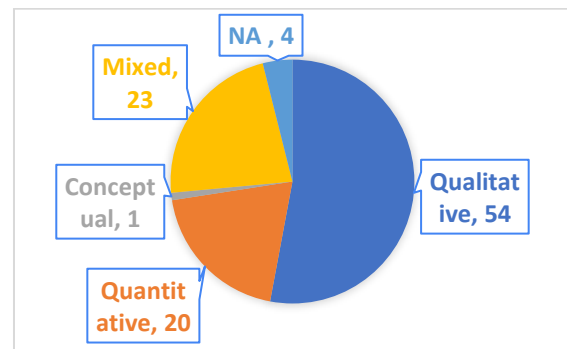


Fig 18: Study Methods

Gap5: There is a gap of studies using Conceptual and Quantitative method.

Over 55% of included literature either uses methodologies other than those used in communication research or don't specify their study methodologies specifically. Even the content (18.62%) and discourse analysis (8.82%) have been performed either in computer science, decision science domain or political science domain, where application differs from application in mass media and communication

research (fig. 18). The other three methodologies- Narrative (2.94%), Thematic (1.96%), Textual Analysis (3.92%) were employed in very less studies (fig.19).

Gap6: There are very less studies using Narrative, Thematic, and Textual analysis methodologies along with no studies using framing analysis, semiotics, experimental research and survey research methodologies.

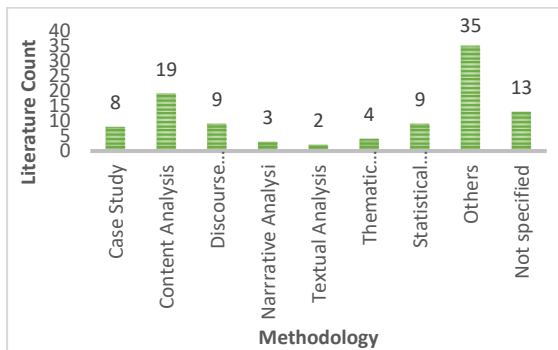


Fig 19: Methodology Employed in Studies;

***Others** (Multimodal Analysis, Sentiment Analysis, Image analysis (Visual Content Analysis), Rhetorical Analysis, Social Network Analysis, Manual discourse analysis and language modeling, Communicative Performance, Open-ended Heuristic Method, Computational Textual Analysis, Machine-learning-augmented dictionary-based approach, Participant observation, Exploratory, Virtual Ethnography, Text-as-data methods, machine learning, and manual content analysis or combination of methodologies).

Over 86% of studies either used theoretical framework unrelated to communication domain or hadn't used any such framework. Less than one percent studies digital culture, grounded theory, critical discourse analysis, news framing and two step/personal influence and 2.7% used agenda-setting, narrative framework as theoretical framework for analysis (fig.20).

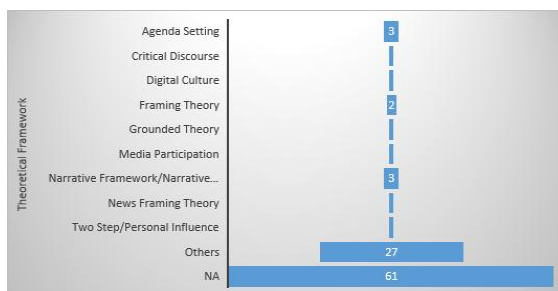


Fig 20: Theoretical Framework in Studies;

***Others** (Intersectionality theory, Heuristic paradigm, Hagiography, Populism, Field Theory, Populism and Internet Theory, Information apocalypse, social construction theory, Alternative political communication, Social construction of gender and visual political communication, misogynoir framework, Securitization theory, functional theory of campaigns, Grammar of Visual Design's tripartite metafunctions, party motivation conceptual framework, Elite Theory or combination of more than one theory as framework).

Gap7: There is significant gap in studies using CDA, Digital Culture, Grounded Theory, Media Participation, Framing Theory and Two Step//Personal Influence theory as theoretical framework. There are no studies using theoretical framework as Cultivation theory, audience-centred theories like encoding/decoding etc and media convergence theories.

4. CONCLUSION:

In its attempt, the study found a rise in electoral studies across the globe in the last couple of years. However, this study found research gap based on analysis of 16 broad parameters used to analyse study as part of this systematic literature review pointing to a smaller number of studies or no studies focusing on elections happening in low-income region and nations of Asia and Africa, where maximum population of the world resides. Due to this, there are a few studies focusing on elections in India, which is worlds' largest democracy. Further, mostly electoral studies were conducted from perspectives of political theories, Social Network Analysis, Language Processing, etc with mostly qualitative methods to analyse different use of languages and content during election. But there are a very few attempts to look into engagement metrics of political campaigns held during Elections across world especially from communication perspective to study themes of narratives employed to form discourse through political rhetorics. The significant theories like CDA, Digital Culture, Grounded Theory, Media Participation, News Framing Theory and Two Step//Personal Influence theory were not employed in studies. Further, in terms of platforms important ones like Youtube, Whatsapp, Instagram and Tik Tok were least studied despite the fact that first three became the most important ones and even weaponised during elections including in India. Therefore, there is a need to make serious attempt to study the electoral campaigns from

communication perspective quantitatively and qualitatively to understand the dynamics of social media platforms, campaigning, and election in developing and underdeveloped nations like India. The study explored the existing literature to analyse it based on 16 different parameters limiting its dimensions.

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