

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
جامعة عباس لغرور- خنشلة
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**Analyzing The Electoral strategies through Social Networking as a New
Tool of Political Influence: The Case of Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012
Presidential Campaigns**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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Academic year 2019/2020

Acknowledgements

First, we would like to thank our creator Allah, for giving us strength to accomplish our academic work and the will to finish this dissertation.

We would like to thank our supervisor Baghiani Amira for her incredible support and patience especially during the pandemic crisis.

Thank you for the help, and the time you offered to us in order to make this work academic and flawless. Thank you for directing us to unlimited number of resources and pushing us to give our best.

We would like to show our gratitude to the jury members for their time in reading and evaluating our work.

We would like to thank our teachers at Abbes Laghrour University for providing us with the knowledge we need to enrich ourselves and to make our world a better place.

Dedication

We dedicate this research to every student seeking to gain knowledge and providing scientific and cultural knowledge base.

Thank you for the most incredible women in our lives, who were a source of inspiration and encouragement, and showed us an infinite support from the early beginning, we would never be able to achieve this level without your sincere Douaa our mothers.

To our families who stayed up nights for us to enlighten our paths and who were keen to encourage us from the beginning of this journey.

To our beloved ones who supported us in the joys and the sorrows and taught us that life is a struggle and its weapon is knowledge.

To those who sought for our comfort and success, to our dear parents who have always been a strong and steadfast support.

To our brothers and sisters who were a gift from God and who knew the meaning of brotherhood were such a blessing from God.

To our dear friends, who were among the most beautiful people with whom life brought us together.

A special dedication goes to the people who let us down, and provide us the will to survive and accomplish more.

To the ones we love, thank you for the help and for being a source of hope and strength throughout this journey.

Abstract

This work aims to analyze the rising influence that social networking has gained in Barack Obama's political campaigns and to evaluate its actual contribution in the light of the rapid changes that occurred in the social media environment over the course of Obama's 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, taking into consideration the paramount objective which is interpreted by electoral gains. This research work also considers the Democratic candidate practices to adopt political communication strategies through political slogans, active volunteers and donors working online which, in turn, generated the rise of social networking in his 2008 and 2012 campaigns and gained advantage and popularity as a politician.

Résumé

Ce travail vise à analyser l'influence croissante que les réseaux sociaux ont acquise dans les campagnes politiques de Barack Obama et à évaluer sa contribution réelle à la lumière des changements rapides survenus dans l'environnement des médias sociaux au cours des élections présidentielles d'Obama de 2008 et 2012, en prenant en considération de l'objectif primordial qui est interprété par des gains électoraux. Ce travail de recherche considère également les pratiques des candidats démocrates pour adopter des stratégies de communication politique à travers des slogans politiques, actifs bénévoles et donateurs travaillant en ligne, ce qui, à son tour, a généré la montée en puissance des réseaux sociaux dans ses campagnes de 2008 et 2012 et a gagné en popularité et en popularité en tant que politicien.

ملخص

يهدف هذا العمل إلى تحليل التأثير المتزايد الذي اكتسبته الشبكات الاجتماعية في حملات باراك أوباما السياسية وتقييم مساهمتها الفعلية في ضوء التغيرات السريعة التي حدثت في بيئة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على مدار انتخابات أوباما الرئاسية لعامي 2008 و 2012 ، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار في الاعتبار الهدف الأسمى الذي تفسره المكاسب الانتخابية. يدرس هذا البحث أيضًا ممارسات المرشح الديمقراطي لتبني استراتيجيات الاتصال السياسي من خلال الشعارات السياسية والمتطوعين النشطين والجهات المانحة التي تعمل عبر الإنترنت والتي بدورها أدت إلى ظهور شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في حملته لعامي 2008 و 2012 واكتسبت ميزة شعبية كسياسي.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

MyBO	My Barack Obama
SNS	Social Networking Sites
TV	Television
U.S.	United States
VS	Versus

Introduction

The Presidential campaigns are considered as one of the fundamental traditions of US, the first thing politician needs to do is to prove his presence in the political field and to promote his policy, each campaign has its own strategy, goals, and objectives that give the citizens a version of what America would be if the campaign succeeds. These concepts are built to accomplish effective and efficient communication between the candidate and politicians, which is considered the fundamental core of a successful campaign. Although the methods of making a campaign vary over history but the transmission of the candidate's message is still one of the campaigns' principles.

With the appearance of new forms of technology, citizens have the ability to access to different tools, starting with the radio, television and moving to the internet and social media, they always have a platform in which they could acquire more information about different political matters but they always need more space to share their political views and to communicate in a better way with the candidates, therefore politicians need to fill this hole and start to use different tools of communication to make the existing gap between politicians and candidates smaller. Roosevelt communicated with Americans by radio to control the rumors, JFK used television to win the presidential chair. In 2004 internet was used by John to gather his supporters but he didn't succeed in winning the 2004's presidential race. Obama was another politician who was best known for his effective use of social media to mobilize the mass and became the president of US in two terms.

In the 2008 and 2012 presidential races, Obama has made social media as one of the main elements of his campaign and he succeeded in shaping the future of presidential campaigning in America to become a symbol of change. However, politicians still ignore the use of social media in their campaign because they do not yet realize the effectiveness of social media in

building a community of supporters and huge number of votes. Minimal researches exist on the influence of social media as a political tool and its use by politicians to promote their policies.

The present research deals with U.S. politicians' use of social media as an integral part of their campaign strategies and the case of Obama's presidential campaigns of 2008 and 2012 as an example.

There hasn't been done a lot of research concerning the factor that influence the use of social media by politician (age, race, gender,...etc), as a consequence recent studies ignored to focus on the voting behavior of citizens and its relationship with Facebook and Twitter as the most used tools by politicians and focus on the voting turnout. Moreover, another area of the research is under developement concerning Obama's 2008 and 2012 campaigns and the way he redesigned presidential campaigns through social networking and his useful tools that attributed to his success and victory.

This study is conducted in order to examine if there is an effect of the use of social media as a tool by American politicians, generally, on the success of the presidential campaigns and to investigate Obama's use, specifically, of different social networking sites to promote his campaigns in 2008 and 2012. This research aims to explore how politicians made their campaigns over history; also how social media helped to raise the voting behavior of citizens and had an impact on the victory of Obama.

Bruce Bimber, in his work entitled *Digital Media in the Obama Campaigns of 2008 and 2012: Adaptation to the Personal Political Communication Environment*, describes election campaigns as communication campaigns that change in communication throughout history; it offers the citizens a chance to be linked with different democratic institutions and to establish a relationship with the citizens themselves. Campaigns changed the way politicians held their

campaigns and communicate with their supporters, the adaptation of technological innovations have made the communication system of politicians radically transformed.

Bruce Bimber claims in his work that the presidential elections of 2008 and 2012 provided an illustration of the adaptation of new technological tools in political campaigns in order to establish a real communication between candidates and voters, these changes in communication strategies of presidential campaigns still happening due to the development and the advancement in technology. In 2008 Obama used the digital tools intensively in a way that no other candidate did, not only the presidential elections but also candidates running for higher offices. In 2012, when Obama ran for presidential elections for the second time, his opponents have adopted his method of using digital tools and did the same so he found himself in a place where he had to change his strategies in order to win; therefore he used new digital strategies with preserving the traditional ones which have been used in 2008.

Bruce Bimber added that Obama was named the internet candidate because he employed different digital tools to achieve his success with keeping on traditional strategies and not only with the use of internet as one crucial element all alone. Obama's 2008 campaign was the combination of many different tools from traditional to new tools, he succeeded in making Facebook, YouTube and other networking sites to be active and to create an intensive interaction with his supporters. He also used text messages and emails to update the voters with the latest news, he relied on his website to provide users with political activities. His approach was based on the idea of making different demographics interactive and in touch with him on different social media tools.

James Katz, Michael Barris and Anshul Jain in their book *The Social Media President: Barack Obama and the Politics of Digital Engagement* described the use of social media as a tool that shifted the public engagement and transformed the political communication; Obama

was commitment with his team and his supporters to make a change in history. Different tools have been used from radio, television to the World Web Wide during the American elections to serve the political communication but only Obama knew the potential of internet to build a supportive community and mobilize people; therefore Obama should be praised for his effective use of different social media.

The authors claimed that Obama marked his presence in the American politics and put high standards that will make other politicians facing real troubles to overcome his reputation of using different digital tools effectively. In the second term, he relied on public and still has used technological platforms to gather his supporters; Obama's administration has embraced social media tools to achieve their preexisting objectives and succeed in mobilizing mass public.

The main question of this research revolves around: what is the influence of social networking as a political tool on the presidential campaigns generally and on Obama's more specifically? The hypothesis to this question is that the use of social networks as political tools has shifted the way politician make their campaigns. Moreover Obama has presented a new digital strategy that helped him be the first African-American president of U.S.

This work attempts also to answer on some sub-questions which are: Have social media changed the way American politicians design their presidential campaigns? Is there any effect of the use of social media tools during the presidential elections on politicians' success? Did social media create another dimension of communication between candidates and their supporters?

What are the different factors that affect the use of social media by politicians? Is there a relationship between the voting behavior of American citizens and the use of social media by presidential candidates?

How did Obama become the first president of U.S because of his use of social media? and what are the different strategies done by Barack to achieve his goal? Could social networks become the solution to the issue of the lack of communication between politicians and citizens?

In order to reach the objective of this work and answer those questions, a qualitative research has been conducted in which two different approaches have been used, the historical one to review the development of technology and internet in American history and use them as tools to promote the presidential campaigns and the analytical approach in order to examine the relationship existed between the use of social media and political campaigns taking Obama's 2008 and 2012's presidential campaigns as a case of a study

In this research, various tools and sources have been used to examine the proposed issue, including print and web sources. Primary sources are given an importance such as reports, government publications and newspapers, and secondary sources like books, magazines articles on different websites.

This work is divided into three main chapters, the first chapter entitled "history of social media use by US presidential campaigns" in which we give a brief history of how technology and internet have been used by politicians in their campaigns. It is divided into two sections, the first one "the social media revolution in U.S presidential politics" where we give the definition of different social media tools: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter with taking consideration to the concept of advertising in the political campaigns. The second section titled "The role of social media in U.S political campaigns, it emphasizes on the presidential communication over the history of U.S in addition to the effect of technology and internet on U.S. campaigns.

The second chapter revolves around the factors that affect the use of social media sites of U.S. politicians (the young voters, the age, the gender, the race, the political party affiliation and the educational and social level of individuals). The second section based on the idea of voting behavior and Facebook and twitter use in which we will see the effect of each tool on the voting behaviors of Americans.

The title of the last chapter is the first elected social media president: Barack Obama's use of social media as a successful tool in 2008 and 2012 elections which is divided into two sections, in the first one we deal with the presidential elections of Obama in 2008 and how he redesigned political campaigns through social media in addition to his influence on the youth. In the second section we deal with Obama's second presidential campaign of 2012 and the advantages he made from 2008 until 2012 by using social media in addition to a comparison between his usage of social media and Romney's. To conclude, the positive effect of social media tools on the presidential campaigns of U.S. have made them as the main strategy to make a campaign.

Chapter One

History of social media use by U.S. Presidential campaigns

In this era, the era of technology, internet, and social media, the use of new tools by presidential candidates became one of the essential elements and strategies of American campaigns. Starting with innovations like radio and television, moving to the internet and social media; every candidate tried to create a campaign that is unique and convincing in order to attract as much voters as they could. Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter become crucial in the strategy of every campaign to communicate with large groups of people like every other president did, taking as example Kennedy, Roosevelt, and later Obama.

In this chapter, two major points are going to be discussed; the first section is about the revolution of social media in the presidential politics of U.S. in which a definition for the social media and its different tool such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube will be presented in addition to the advertising during the presidential campaigns. The second section is related to the role of social media in US. Political campaigns by presenting its impact and how the presidential candidates used to communicate with the voters. Besides that, the role of Obama and his use of social media in the Presidential campaigns will be discovered in this chapter.

1.1. The Social Media Revolution in U.S. Presidential Politics.

1.1.1. Definition of social media

New media platforms play an important role in social and political matters and issues nowadays, especially in US politics; they could serve as new effective tool to communicate with others in a challenging time (Elmer 28).

Barron in his article stated that communication is the essential key to gain the American people, presidents knew how to communicate with people during the period of presidential

elections beginning with Roosevelt with his personal touch of communication when he used radio to stay in touch with the American people especially on the period of the great depression¹. Kennedy is another president who knew how to convince Americans to vote for him, he used Television to show his perfect political image that helps him a lot to become the president of US. Nowadays, with the development of technology and internet, a lot of politicians are trying to adopt with the modern forms of communication, Obama is the one who master the internet and the social media to create a whole supportive community that helped him to win the presidential race of 2008 and 2012 (2).

Researchers claimed that people use the internet for various reasons: for reading, watching, searching or to buy and sell some products or do some services, recently they started to use platforms such as websites, blogs, e-mails, and social networking sites to share their content or discuss different issues. The influence of the social media that is considered as a phenomenon can touch a lot of things, it can ruin a reputation, builds a community, start a career. Social media create an interactive communication in which people can discuss, argue and change their ideas (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre 241).

They added that social media sites differ according to their functionality and their scope, some sites are for general users such as Facebook, others are more professional like LinkedIn; YouTube is concerned with the videos and other different platforms that created an online space for consumers (242).

They stated that Social media presented changes to communication around individuals and communities; it became a useful tool with a positive impact on the communities (250).

A definition was presented by Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana, Patil, Dwivedi, and Nerur in which they say that social media is: “a set of information and technologies which facilitate interactions and networking They also stated another definition ²: “Social media is made up of

various user-driven platforms that facilitate diffusion of compelling content, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience. It is essentially a digital space created by the people and for the people; it provides an environment that is conducive for interactions and networking to occur on different levels (for instance, personal, professional, business, marketing, political, and societal” (qtd.in Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana, Patil, Dwivedi, and Nerur 536).

Other researchers define social media as “web-based applications which provide functionality for sharing, relationships, group, conversation and profiles” (qtd. in Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre 241)

Huang and Benyoucef introduces another definition that claims that social media refers to internet-based applications built on web while web refers to a concept as well as platform for harnessing collective intelligence³(287).

1.1.2. Advertising

With the merge of internet people were getting all the information they need from it, in addition to low cost of advertisements on internet politician took advantage of making their campaigns‘advertisements online. According to Hendricks and Kaid, “the twenty first century audience is no longer a passive audience, but active consumers who deliberately seek out specific information and interact directly with it and with those who sponsor and produce it” (qtd.inHendricks and Kaid 14).

There are three types of media in advertising: bought, earned and owned, Drell in his article “*How Social Media Is Changing Paid, Earned & Owned Media*” defined bought media as the media that is paid for like TV advertisements, earned media what is covered by news or comments on the social media, and owned media every platform owned or controlled by the company like campaign websites or Facebook page.

He claimed that the audience is active and engaged in social media; therefore marketing has become ongoing more than in Television and transformed into “two-way street”(qtd.in Drell “How Social Media Is Changing Paid, Earned & Owned Media”). Social media such as Facebook and twitter started from being paid to owned, in other words to gain profits from Facebook and YouTube the owner of the site should employ and pay for someone to organize, manage and produce an attractive content so it would turn to an owned media (Drell “How Social Media Is Changing Paid, Earned & Owned Media”).

Drell added that earned media can be considered as the result of combining paid and owned media; for instance buy a product (paid) then you promote it on your Facebook page (owned) after that people will start talking about the product and it will be a sort of earned media, so you can make people talk about it and make it popular yet you cannot force them to buy the product therefore an engagement will be happening (“How Social Media Is Changing Paid, Earned & Owned Media”).

Corcoran in his article “*Defining Earned, Owned And Paid Media*” said that these types of media work effectively together but making the choice of what to include is very essential especially if there is a budget that cannot be passed, but basically media are categorized according to the objectives and the roles .Owned media is something that can be controlled, it enables the owner of the media (website, Facebook or twitter account) to communicate directly with consumers and make the product viral and popular.

He stated that earned media is a term used to mean getting the product or the brand into media but freely without paying for advertising it. Learning to listen and respond to the consumers is one of the essential things to learn when using earned media However Paid media started to disappear and shift away (Corcoran “Defining Earned, Owned and Paid Media”).

In politics it is used to reflect the candidate and the campaign. Zavatarro said “When a president is a brand, turned into a commodity, and marketed like a product, consumer drive takes over for practical, rational ones” (qtd.in Zavatarro 127).

Monitoring and listening to the consumers is an important feature in any campaign, listening to experts, analysts, journalists and anyone else who is official in your subject (Scott 87). It is necessary to do so because when you stop listening to the journalists, experts analysts at that moments your advisors will post news that can damage your campaign (90).

1.1.3. Social Media Tools

1.1.13.1. Facebook

Facebook now become an online community that is used for several purposes, the first thing to do when it comes to using Facebook a registration and creation of Facebook profile must be done to become one of the users. Once the Facebook profile is created, the user can add many friends and follow others; it enables the user to communicate with his friends by liking, commenting, and sharing their posts in the user’s own profile .It is considered as a virtual place in which anyone can communicate with people and send messages even to unknown people (Toivo14).

Facebook enables the users to share their activities and get the information they need by scrolling through the news feed, a lot of things are offered to the users freely and reduce the time spending on searching what they need (Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison, and Lampe 108) .

They added that Facebook helps in raising the engagement of the citizens in the politics for instance, they can comment, like, dislike, share, post, upload videos or photos, buy items related to the candidate (t-shirts, signs, stickers) and even participate in activities or going to

events sponsored by the candidates who use this platform in order to build a close relationship with the voters, to exchange views and also to listen to their problems. When following the candidate's page; voters and citizens will find links related to the campaign pages (107).

In 2008, the use of Facebook by presidential candidates have afford a new way to make the campaign successful online and gave the politicians the chance to use the technology, this platform have become an integral part of their campaigns. Facebook have the ability to not just change the direction of the presidential campaigns, but to make the relationship between the candidate and the voter effective (Williams and Gulati 1).

They added that Facebook made some new opportunities for the 2008 presidential candidates; it gave them pages in addition to their profiles which made them able to post anything they want such as announcements, advertisements, events, photo albums.... The Facebook page offered them great capabilities to post several materials of their campaigns; also it enables them to be classified as a social figure like any other celebrities and other organizations (5).

Williams and Gulati stated that the 2008 presidential elections embrace the use of Facebook, it was recorded that a huge majority of both democratic and republican candidates had a presence on Facebook to make their campaigns popular; 72% of candidates had a Facebook page and about half of that percentage updated their political page (9).

They added that Facebook offers more than a communication among the voters and the politicians, it also make citizens more active and politically engaged and gave the politician a chance to be seen as an authentic and truthful person. Politicians can make a real mobilization by just clicking a button (17).

Obama is one of the politicians who recognized the power of Facebook and used it in his presidential campaigns; Dutta and Fraser Stated in their article "Barack Obama and the

Facebook Election” that the 2008 Presidential election was highly influenced by social media it is often referred to as the “Twitter election,” and Barack’s victory called “one decided by Facebook”; Obama was frequently photographed using his Blackberry texting others. He was not only active on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and MySpace but also on Flickr, LinkedIn, AsianAve, MiGente and other networking sites. They also added that Obama’s campaign was based on making the candidate’s image seem youthful; his Facebook page was designed in a way to capture the young population.

1.1.3.2. Twitter

Elmer stated that Twitter is a social networking site that started to rise up with other social networking sites such as Facebook; it offers a precise number of characters that can be used to post a tweet (19).

The central idea of twitter is to follow others’ tweets and to retweet it or write one’s own tweet; users can choose which friend to follow therefore they can see their tweets and messages unlike Facebook where you can see anyone’s post. Basically, when creating a twitter it’s better to start by observing how tweets work because they are very short ,so you can express you idea briefly without talking too much in addition the ability o share links is the best thing to do in order to support your tweet by something more clear (Toivo 13).

The user’s posts are called tweets appeared with the most recent post on top. The user have the ability to make his tweets private or public, he can link photos. Political candidates relied a lot on twitter to promote their campaign like Obama who succeed in 2008 presidential race and knew how to integrate twitter with all the social media he used (Tumasjan, Sprenger , Sandner, and Welp 402) .

Elmer argued that twitter is the best tool to be used during the political matters such as the elections, it is considered a super active platform; once a new tweet is posted it pushes all the

old ones down and this feature enable the user to be updated every hour (19).He added that the rapid development of Twitter, conventions introduced by this social network and the rules and regulations that organize this site; help this platform to make a shift in the online communication sites (20).

Twitter allows the citizens to share their political beliefs freely with others no matter what was their parties, genders, beliefs .All kind of people are being exposed to each other in this platform , Journalists, bloggers, candidates, participants and voters (McGregor and Mourao3).

1.1.3.3. YouTube

People could find anything political and important on YouTube by just typing key words of the wanted video. It became important in political campaigns, candidates can use videos in which they promote and show their policies and programs. They could publish them easily on YouTube without paying anything; so this platform could be the alternative solution of TV advertisements that costs a lot. It is not concerned only with videos f candidates showing their faces and talking for about three or five minutes, yet candidates can make an edited video which is composed of photos of his family, screenshots about peoples ‘opinions, the activities and events organized by him or even post an interview, film or debates and speeches (Toivo14).

Ramirez in her article “*The YouTube Election*” said that YouTube become the new fashionable tool used by politicians during the presidential elections, they started by creating their YouTube channels as a place for voters to upload their supportive videos such as “I got A Crush on Obama”.

She added that Obama relied on YouTube in his campaign, he started by hiring an expert to examine the posted videos which were based on Obama’s speeches, what the voters think about him and other videos related to the policy of Obama .After his victory, he decided to

keep posting in YouTube thinking that this medium allows him to interact with citizens and establish a sort of democracy (The YouTube Election”).

He used his YouTube by raising donations in the platform where his supporters spent a lot of time, like in his YouTube channel he designed a section next to the video for donation up to 1000\$ (Barron 17).

When the 2008’s presidential elections ended, it was recorded that the videos mentioning Obama received 1.9 billion views compared with the other candidate who had 1.1 billion views. In fact if Obama have launched those videos on television, it would cost him 46\$ million, unlike YouTube where every posted video is free (Ramirez “*The YouTube Election*”).

1.2.The Role of Social Media in U.S. Political Campaigns

1.2.1. Presidential Communication

Blumler and Kavanagh said that political communication have passed by three successive phases, each one has a special principle and has been influences by different things;The first one was called the golden age, politic was always related to a certain party ,many voters belonged to a long-lasting party .The existed communication at that time was related to the dominant party, politicians used to talk about their problems and the issues they faces during the elections and the changes they want to see in their government (211).

They aaded that the next era was related to the appearance of television which was the most dominant medium in that time, people were open-minded and flexible but they couldn’t communicate directly with the candidates (212). The last age is related to the development of technology and the appearance of internet which have combined all the previous media, it combines the power of radio, the newspapers and the effectiveness of television (213).

After radio and television, internet was introduced as new tool that combine both radio and television, it is a combination of audio and visual features in addition to other qualities that have never been seen before in other medium such as the power of transmission data around the world in a little amount of time with the ability to create an interactive communication. Obama's campaign is the best example to be given through the use of many tools which offer the ability to engage people and gain an online popularity (Barron 2).

Smith described the President Roosevelt as the first American president "to master the [radio] medium as a source of political advantage" (qtd.in Radio: FDR's Natural Gift) because he was able to make all the American people involved in the political life (*Radio: FDR's Natural Gift*).

Roosevelt did understand the potential of the radio in changing people's opinions so he was able to control the news about him and stop all the misinformation spread by his concurrences "For Franklin Delano Roosevelt, it was quality time to clear up rumors spreading the nation, and squelch his critics as he gave people the 'real news,' on Roosevelt's terms, unfiltered by the press" (qtd.in Lumeng 89); So he used this medium to make his policies clear and stay in touch with his wide audience (Lumeng 89).

The effective use of radio by Franklin Delano Roosevelt Showed that the discussions and the conversations done by the candidate had the ability to make him close to his supporters and it gave him the chance to be seen as a trusted president who was serious about all the matters no matter what they were about (McJimsey 36).

Webley claimed that it is very common now, that without the televised debate Kennedy would never win the elections, and this was the point where political communication was shifted towards television and things changed. Kennedy started his televised debate with confidence and calmness unlike his opponent who appeared sweaty and nervous, those who

listened to the debate in the radio expect that Nixon will be the president but the ones who watched the debate knew that Kennedy will be the winner. Kennedy admitted that television was the crucial element in his victory and could not ignore the role of television in his victory (*"How the Nixon-Kennedy Debate Changed the World"*).

Dean Howard is another politician who marked his use of technology during the presidential elections of 2004; internet was crucial in his political campaign, Barron claimed that 2004 election made a step in combining the internet and the political matters; Dean used internet to gather donations and raise money and to make Americans interested in the politics. The civic engagement of Americans can be seen through the money raised by Dean who raised a huge amount of money online from people who were giving a little amount; he proved that a candidate can raise a lot of donations by appealing to a large number of small donors. He also succeed in organizing meet ups for his supporters who have common interests and started to make discussions about their professional, social, familial interests (Baroon 6).

Despite the fact that he brings new strategies to the presidential campaigns other researchers such as Gerodimos and Justinussen argued that Dean nevertheless the availability of the communication tools, he didn't communicate with his supporters and there was a lack of communication which can be the reason behind his failure to win the presidential elections (125).

Barron claimed that by 2008, a shift happened in the tools used by candidates to communicate with voters, inexpensive tolls like emails, videos, and mobile phones which were effective and reliable to gain the support of voters and create a supportive public. He added that Obama relied heavily on the new media to speak and communicate directly with voters which is something that cannot be done when using traditional media. He used

effective tools and strategies that helped him to gain more than 600 million and create an online community of 10 million supporters who were active and engaged in the politics (10).

1.2.2. Technology and the Internet's Impact on U.S. Campaigns

Geri Zaballa Eddins claimed that radio became common in 1920; it was used by all the Americans to get the information they need as a result everyone could make their decisions and vote. In the 1960, the role of visual images have been seen clearly when Kennedy appeared handsome and young while Nixon seemed tired yet his debate was brilliant, listeners of the radio were confident that Nixon will be the winner but it turned out to be the one who lost the presidential race. After the TV, it comes the internet which is the fastest medium ever that brings the message in a blink of an eye then the creation of websites and social media profiles appeared and become the new trend used by politicians (*"Persuading the People: Presidential Campaigns"*).

Lee and Capela discovered that individuals who listen to the talk radio their knowledge in political field have raised in addition it shapes the voters attitude towards politics that's to say, radio talks were an effective tool to raise the knowledge and the political beliefs of the voter (369). Ross stated that the radio gave the chance to radio listeners to express their ideas freely and therefore exchanging a lot of opinions and thoughts during the talk radio programming (786).

The presidential debate of both candidates Kennedy and Nixon that was presented on Television, it gave the chance to American Voters to make their final decision. The American people who did not watch the debate through television had the chance to hear it on the radio believed that Nixon is better on the debate than Kennedy but the other 70 million American people were charmed of the good looking charismatic Kennedy and ignored the unattractive Nixon (Webley *"How the Nixon-Kennedy Debate Changed the World"*).

Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego said that Because of the significant impact of new technologies and especially the internet on different aspects of society and politics, people need to adapt to the existing changes and be a part of this online generation (872).

In addition, the internet allows the citizens to acquire the political information they need in a fast and cheap way, from this we expect the rise of political participation among Americans .However, the access to the political information need from the user to be daily active, generally speaking the access to the internet would be valid and beneficial for certain users and reinforce the participation of people who are not interested in politics (866).

They added that the ease access to the internet reduce the cost of acquiring a political information, the internet allows the user to get unlimited number of information they need without spending a lot of time or money unlike the other medium therefore ,it is expected to record more political participation among the voters especially thou younger ones ;at the same time internet may enforce the participation of people who not interested in politics .At the end internet has a positive effect to make the people involved in the political matters(867) .

Dutta claimed that the 2008 election was the first in which all the candidates tried to communicate directly with American voters via online social media; it was called the “Facebook Election”. It will be marked in history due to Obama’s powerful use of technology; he was affecting the young people ("Barack Obama and the Facebook election").

He added that it was recorded that 70% of Americans who vote for Obama were under age 25 and become the first president who win the elections on the web .Obama mastered the use of Web and social media and made a shift from old traditional tools to a new fashionable tools Which gave the chance to anyone to participate and share their beliefs on Facebook and YouTube because there are no boundaries to access to these platforms ("Barack Obama and the Facebook election").

1.2.3. The Mobilization Theory

The mobilization theory is all about making the information available to everyone, connecting users with each other in order to exchange the ideas and interests. It was argued that the raise of interactions between voters, citizens and candidates will reduce the cost of political participation (Anduiza, Cantijoch, and Gallego 869).

They added that the internet is a new place to the political mobilization, its low-cost use by sending an e-mail or write comments or post anything is much more inexpensive unlike the use of face to face or telephone communication. Also the internet is” decentralized “ method used by politicians to gain support, because anyone can access to the internet and send emails or communicate with others to motivate citizens to vote for heir favorite candidate or organize and activity and be a part of the political matters ,it’s obvious that the use of a cheap and objective medium will result to the rise of participants therefore the online mobilization is a considered as a factor in raison the political participation and the voting behavior of citizens (869).

Geri Zabella stated that Presidential candidates work hardly on their campaigns and supporters; they try to be everywhere, in TV news, coffee shops, newspapers articles, and even in our online platform. The main role of the presidential campaign is to win the war or the battle to gain the minds and he votes of American people (“*Persuading the People: Presidential Campaigns*”).

He added that technological advances that happened in the 20th and the twenty-first century had make mobilization easier and faster than ever, promoting campaigns through Radio, T.V, Internet and social media that allows politicians to spread their messages and gain votes ,however many other campaigns continue to use the old-fashioned ways of communication such as meetings (“*Persuading the People: Presidential Campaigns*”).

Obama succeed in mobilizing people through mobile phones, 90% of Americans are spending 24 hours per day in their phones ,people still reading text messages and using social networks more than emails ,text messages was an effective strategy used by Obama to mobilize Americans because he could reach them at anytime. His campaign managed to text the Americans by sending them from five to twenty messages each month, also it released a free iPhone application that updated people of the political information (Lutz 10).

Obama knew the effect of internet and social media to mobilize the mass as Shirky stated social media is an important tool to serve the candidate, it helps the voters and he candidate to establish a close relationship, he said that “the receiver cares about the sender “(qtd.in Shirky 184), therefore creating a perfect environment for the candidate to help him gain support and popularity (190).

Obama was seen using his BlackBerry during his campaigns to send messages and communicate with others .His campaign used other social media tools to mobilize the masses. He was the most effective online politician during the presidential race and established a virtual community that helped him to run the presidential office. Obama had more than 2 million American users on Facebook while McCain had just 600.000 on Twitter Obama reached 112000 supporters unlike McCain who had only 4600 followers (Dutta"*Barack Obama and the Facebook election*").

Social media is considered as a communication websites that allows users to establish relationships no matter what was their background, as a result an informative society will be formed ,a society where we can find an explosion if information and unexpected opportunities. Social media exists deeply in our communities, people rely heavily on it to get the news and be updated with the latest news (Kapoor, Tamilmani, Nripendra, Patil, Dwivedi, and Nerur 531).

To conclude politicians always needed to communicate with their voters and supporters, some of them succeed in establishing a supportive community which helped them to be part of the American history and others failed to create a real connection and a strong relationship with the voters.

Communication did exist but the way politicians used to communicate with people is what has changed over history, radio, television, technology and internet were different tools implemented by American politicians to gather their supporters and to promote their policies.

Starting with Roosevelt and John Fitzgerald Kennedy who knew the power of the audio-visuals tools and moving to Obama who used internet and social media to mobile people and to become the first African American president of U.S.

Endnotes

¹ The Great depression: The great depression began after the stock market crash from 1929 and lasted until 1939, it was the worst economic downturn in U.S. history, in which the industrial production has declined and the employment has risen. History.com Editors. "Great Depression History." *A and E Television Networks*. 29.Oct.2009. Web. 20.Aug.2020. <<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history>>

² Social Networking Sites: social network sites was defined by "as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site." (qtd. in Boyd and Ellison 211). Boyd, Danah M. and Nicole B. Ellison. "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 13.1(2007):211. Web <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393>>.

³ Collective Intelligence: "is the body of knowledge that grows out of a group. When groups of people work together, they create intelligence that cannot exist on an individual level. Making decisions as a group, forming a consensus, getting ideas from different sources, and motivating people through competition."

<<https://www.organizationalpsychologydegrees.com/faq/what-is-collective-intelligence/>>.

Chapter Two

Factors that Affect the Use of Social Media Sites of U.S. Politicians

Overall, what we observe is that the relationship between social media and voter turnout has to do with different individual factors (age, education and party) and all these factors combined influence whether you go out and vote or not. Politicians started to target groups of online users and make them an essential element in their campaigns, by observing how different category of people are using social networking sites candidates knew that they have to make people interested no matter what was their age, race, educational level, income and their gender.

This Chapter also is divided into two main sections. The first section is devoted to emphasize the different category of voters, such as their race, educational prospects, in addition to their political party affiliation and see if there is an existing relationship between the engagement and the political participation of American citizens and the stated demographics. The second section is devoted to analyze their voting behavior in using Facebook and twitter during the presidential campaigns.

2.1. Demographics

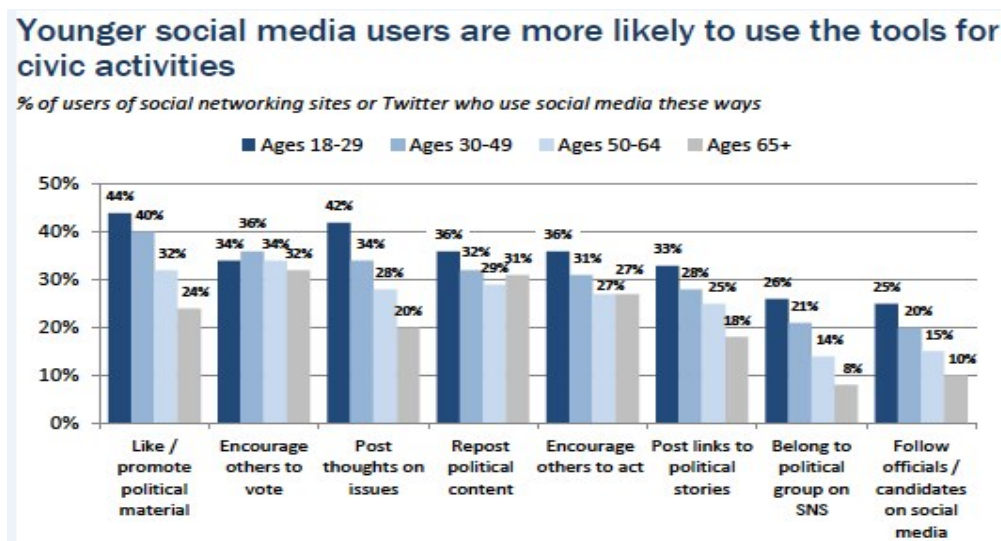
2.1.1. Younger V. Older Voters

Internet and technology have become an essential part of communication between people, 82% of American adults said that they use their cell phones to communicate, the new developed tools has involved in all the kinds of communication and become a regular part of political campaigns. Politicians have targeted a new demographic which are the younger adults; they are considered as the most group who use their cell phones in every daily activity (Smith and and Rainie 1).

Rainie, Smith, Scholzman, Brady, and Sidney claimed that political activities are more interesting for the young people more than the older ones, they post, share, comment and upload political videos, advertisements, posts; they also prefer to express their ideas and get in debates about their favorite candidate, social media push and encourage people to express their ideas freely and enjoy political groups online and follow their elected candidates in their official pages (2).

In a survey done on Americans citizens ,it was recorded that 60% of all American adults ages 18 and older use social networking sites especially Facebook and Twitter,38% of them use social networking sites to like or to share materials related to political issues that others posted, 35% of young users use social media to encourage people to vote and involve in the political issues, 34% of Social media users said that they use social media to express their opinions and comment on the political debates which is something that was not available before (2).

Figure 1: The different use of social networking sites according to the user's ages



Source: RainieLee , Aaron Smith, Kay Lehman Scholzman, Henry Brady, and Sidney Verba. "Social Media and Political Engagement." *PewResearchCenter.org*.19.Oct.2012.Web.26.May.2020.<<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2012/10/19/social-media-and-political-engagement/>>.

The young voters were used as major key by Obama to win the presidential elections, he knew how to capture the attention of young citizens, he was energetic and social candidate with a vision of change and hope. This category of people was an integral part in Obama's campaign, according to exit polls taken during the election period, 70% of voters were young Americans that were 25 or more; this percentage was the highest record since 1996. Obama's strategies to capture the youth people by using social media where the youth are always gathering (Asante 111).

By using social media, Obama and his team worked hardly during his presidential campaign to inspire and mobilize the youth. He succeed to fill the gap that was existed before between politicians and citizens, Asante claimed that Obama decided to emphasize on the unity of Americans and give them a hope of change; by establishing the peace in Iraq and making the decision of not starting a war although there was a lot of politicians people who stand against him in the decision, but he chose to stand with the citizens' view and showed that his campaign and his policy is all about the international peace and the stability of America (113).

The growth in the use of social media since 2008 until 2012 is a remarkable and cannot be ignored, also social media networks have become very common and popular among American Adults who use them as tools to be engaged politically and to discuss different social or political issues online ,it was noticed that younger adults are the first demographic who use social media to share, post , or comment on political issues unlike the elders who are considered as the group of citizens who share their opinions and be politically active offline (Smith 31).

2.1.2. Race

Being active online is considered as a major item in making the citizen be more aware of the political matters. White voters were active online more than any other racial group. Smith stated that 46% of whites discuss politics or public matters online via email or social networking sites while 36% of African Americans do. Also, 69% of white users are active on social networking sites compared to 62% African Americans (29).

According to Smith white Americans were dominant over the other races, however African Americans have followed slowly these online politics and begun to catch up in the recent years for example the percent of African American who looked online for new and information increased by 21% while for whites, there was an increase of 8%, it can be said that there was a gap between those who can access to technical devices and those who cannot. With 2009 until 2012 African Americans who had Smartphone and broadband consumers have increased by 10% (33).

This shows that African Americans were starting to be engaged in online activities more than ever, Rainie and Smith claimed that 36% of all African American adults used their cell phones for political activities during the 2010 midterm election while 25% of Whites and 25% of Hispanics did so (5)

The African American become aware of the importance of internet which allows them to get all the political information they need depending on many online political sources and especially without being misinformed. Rainie and Smith argued that almost half of African Americans find social networking sites are important in finding other people with the views, they added that 38% of African Americans population believes that social networking sites are important for debating political issues, while 30% of whites and 21% of Hispanics believe the same. Despite the fact that the percentage of African Americans who use internet are

high than the other races, Americans give a huge importance to the online political sources, additionally African Americans are becoming more engaging in the political matters (9).

Several studies have been done to show the increase in the percentage of the vote by race from 2000 to 2012. Binstock states that In 2000, 80% of the overall racial vote were white voters, by 2012 they were increased by 6%. In contrast, the percentage of African Americans who participated in the voting process was 9% in 2000 and have increased to 13% in 2008 as well as 2012. In addition, during the 2008 election 55% of White Americans voted for John McCain while 43% for President Obama. However, in 2008 95% of African American voted for Obama and 4% for John McCain. In 2012 there was no much difference in the recorded percentage 93% voted for Obama while 6% for Romney (700).

2.1.3. Education and Wealth

In the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, education and the wealth of the person were related positively to the political participation of citizens. Smith stated that on social networking sites, users with a higher education level are more involved in online political activities, it was recorded that 51% of adults who were politically active on SNS have a high educational level and with a college degree while 23% don't have a high school diploma (6).

With these recorded percentages, users who have high educational level are more politically active on SNS than those with less educational level but also we can say that social media are used also by those who have a lower level to express their ideas and be politically active (4).

He added that people with high educational level (graduated or attended college) and those who have a high income are more engaged in political spaces and more interested in political activities online and offline, it was noticed that this gap in participating is more noticed when

ding activities like: working in a political party, working with citizens on some issues to solve them, being an active member in an online or offline group ...etc (4).

But when it comes to use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, it was recorded that 60% of American adults are using it politically no matter what was their income. Facebook and Twitter have offered equal chances to all the users to use social media politically, and make the gap getting smaller between the highest and the lowest one, yet when it comes to the educational level it was noticed that Americans who have high education level are politically engaged and interested more than the Americans who have less educational level (4).

The wealth or the income of the individual is another factor to be taken besides the education, it was recorded that 57% of social media users who were politically active in SNS had an annual income of more than 100k\$ while 30% of people who were politically active on social media have household income of 10k\$; these statistics indicates that, the wealthier the user is the more he was going to be active politically on social media; another interesting thing is that people who have less income get involved just online, especially in social networking sites but they don't participate in any other online or offline activities. These users are younger, less educated and less rich than the ones who participate in the political activities whether they are online or offline (6).

Therefore, social media re the best tool to be used by politicians to make their campaign popular and successful among all the categories of voters. A lot of political activities can be taken into consideration but online videos are the ones chosen to be analyzed and discussed, it was recorded that 75% of internet users who watch political videos are the ones who have a college degree while 60% of those who have not a college degree neither an experience in the college. The educational level plays a role in the political matters, yet we can say the category

of the people who have not a social degree is important as much as the ones who have a degree (Smith and Duggan 2).

Broadly speaking, Americans with lower social and economic levels are less involved in the political activities and less engaged in the political field whereas the ones who are well-educated and well-financed are considered to be the kind of citizens who are involved in the political matters online or offline (Smith 5).

2.1.4. Gender

Schlozman, Burns, Verba, and Donahue found that women are interested in political activities as much as men are, also they give importance to the same issues that men do such as children, youth, the environment crime and drugs; however there is an exception when it comes to education and abortion (274). They also added that women who have studied in college and have a 50000\$ income are more interested in the topic of abortion more than other women who have just a high school education and less than 20000\$ per year, but both of them are interested in the educational issues (286).

Conway, Gertrude, and David Argued that the increase in political participation of women¹ is an element of cultural change, in other words the change of attitudes about the gender roles and identity in society is what makes the political participation of women increase in a noticeable way. They presented some explanation about the different policy preferences, the inequality treatment of women and men in the interpretations of laws and government rules and religion was given also as an explanation, many religions impose women to be less supportive to their issues such as: abortion and child care (35).

Another argument was presented is that women devote their time and energy in her house and in her job yet her income is not as much as men's earn, and for sure with the lack of money which is demanding a lot in the political matters and even in two income families, men

still the one controlling the spent of money (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1964). Therefore a decrease in the participation in different political activities was noticed when it comes to women while men are seen more active in different activities such as: voting and participating in campaigns or any other similar political activity whether it is formal or informal, collective or individual (1968).

The participation of women on equal terms with men is becoming an essential to achieve the equality and democracy, but there are some factors that stood between achieving the equality between genders; the availability of time, the family income and civic skills are affecting the role of women in politics (1980).

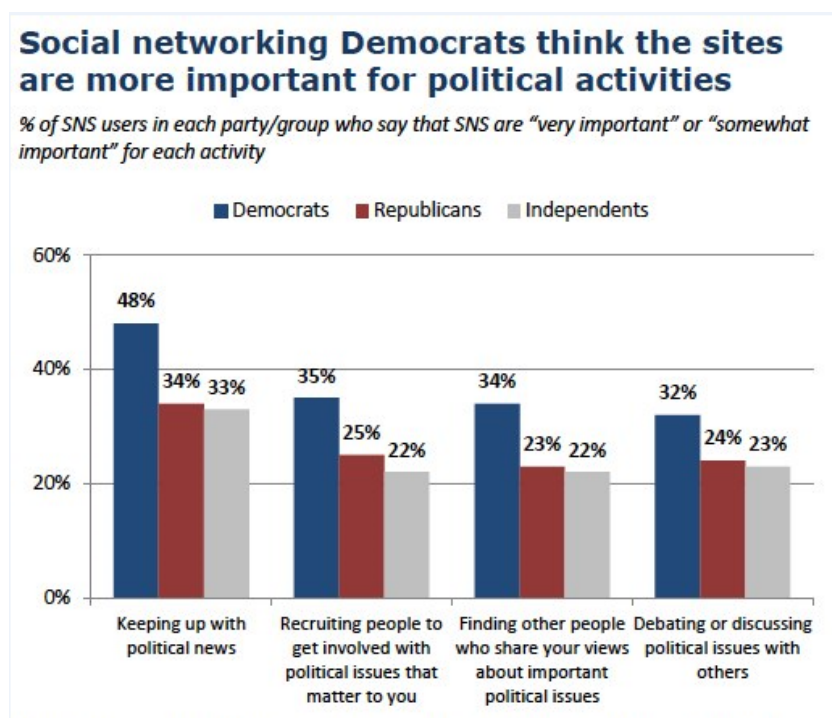
Generally speaking, we find that men control most of the political matters, Lorber argued that this inequality is related to some social factors that cannot be studied alone: race, gender, ethnicity and social class. He claimed that since men have more time, money, high educational level; they have more advantages than women who are responsible for their houses and works therefore it is difficult for them to have a big amount of control over men in political field (134).

2.1.5. Political Party Affiliation

Rainie and Smith stated that the use of Social networking sites was more important for democrats which was helpful and effective with their political activities, than the republicans or independents who didn't use them. Social networking democrats affirm that these sites are necessary to guarantee the effectiveness of political activities (1).

The figure below presents different political activities that are used by different parties on US.

Figure 2: The importance of social networking sites for every party.



Source: Rainie, Lee and Aaron Smith. "Politics on Social Networking Sites." *Pew Research Center.org*. 04.Sep.2012.PDF.<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_State_of_the_2012_race_online_video_final.pdf>

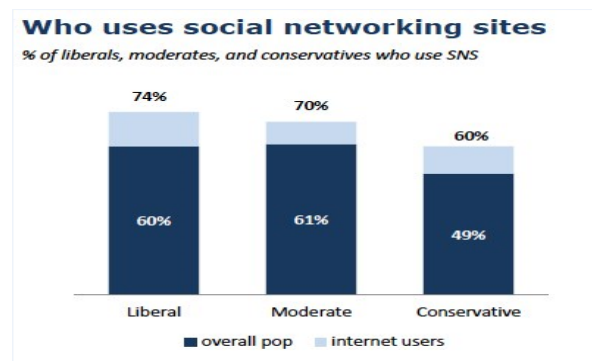
They added that the activity of liberals and democrats has risen thanks to using social networking sites and they are more likely to admit that than the others, 33% of democrats who use social networking sites say this, 24% both republicans and independents who use social networking sites. 39% of liberals who use social networking sites have got more involved in comparison with 24% of SNS users conservatives and 21% moderates (3).

Social networking sites play a major role in politics and campaigns. The use of Facebook pages and other social media tools by Obama, Mitt Romney, scores of state and local candidates was a very effective method to engage more voters. Pew Research centre's internet and American life project have made a survey order to figure out the people's general use of social networking sites for political issues and how they share and reinforce with their friends political views. As a result for this survey they found that 80 % of Americans use the

internet and 66% participants of social networking sites such as Facebook LinkedIn, or Google+ and this represents over half of the entire U.S. population of social networking sites users. It is more likely for those who describe their political doctrines as measured to use social networking sites than the conservatives: 74% of liberals use social networking sites and 70 % of moderates are SNS users in comparison with 60 % of conservative internet users who are also SNS users (Rainie and Smith 5).

It is obviously clear in the chart below what attribution of the whole population falls into these categories. It was equally likely among democrats, republicans and independents in the use of social networking sites and there is no statistically different significance between them:

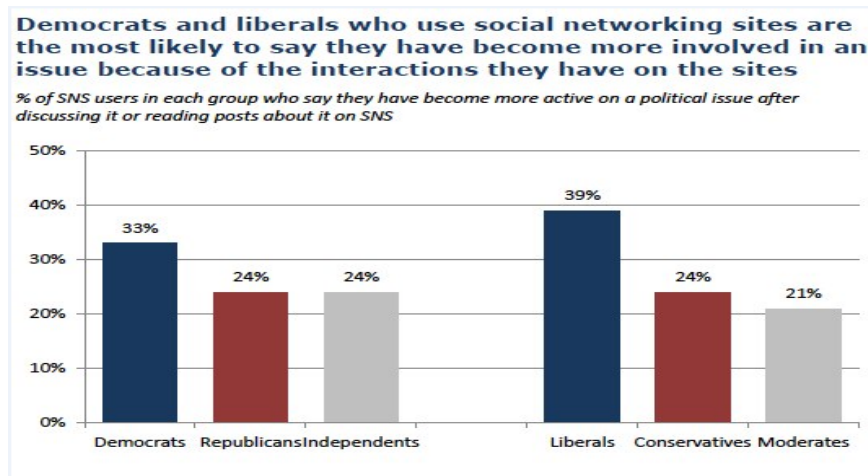
Figure 3: The users of social networking sites.



Source: Rainie Lee and Aaron Smith. "Politics on Social Networking Sites." *Pew Research Center.org*.04.Sep.2012.PDF.<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_State_of_the_2012_race_online_video_final.pdf>.

They stated also that users of social networking sites who claims to be very conservative are the most likely to say that almost of their posts are about politics despite the fact that there's not enough analysed cases it appears that the conservative have the biggest share of posts related politics among the other ideological groups and the same for social networkers who have friends that posts about politics on these sites (10).

Figure 4: Members of parties who have been affected by the political posts on social networking sites.



Source: Rainie, Lee and Aaron Smith. "Politics on Social Networking Sites." *Pew Research Center.org*. 04.Sep.2012.PDF. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_State_of_the_2012_race_online_video_final.pdf>

In general , the spreading and raising of political posting and reading posts has only some unassuming differences over partisan lines .it is more suitable for Democrats using SNS than either republicans or independents to tell that their friend's posts are about political materials and also the posts they post themselves involves political contents (Smith and Rainie 11).

Very few partisan differences exist in terms of viewing political videos or making them recommended by other Democrats and Republicans who have also seen political Videos in the election season online, have recommended political videos to others and received these recommendations from registered voters who identify themselves as political voters (Smith and Dugan 2).

Beneath these distinctions, voters who have a variety of political and ideological Stripes tend to take part in similar levels of online political video consumption. Democrats and Republicans on-line, Moderate and conservative Internet users are most likely to watch on-line political videos. This table represents the types of videos watched by voters:

Table 1: Members of parties who have been affected by the political posts on social networking sites .

What types of political videos are voters watching?				
<i>All percentages based on registered voters who use the internet within each group</i>				
	All RV's who go online (n=721)	Republican (n=203)	Democrat (n=224)	Independent (n=261)
Video news reports about the election or politics	48%	44%	52%	47%
Previously recorded video of a candidate speech, press conference or debate	40	37	43	40
Informational videos that explain a political issue	39	38	38	41
Humorous or parody videos dealing with political issues	37	33	40	39
Political advertisements	36	38	37	34
Live video of a candidate speech, press conference or debate	28	24	30	27
Total ("yes" to any of the above activities)	66	64	69	65

Source: Rainie, Lee and Aaron Smith. "Politics on Social Networking Sites." *Pew Research Center.org*. 04.Sep.2012. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_State_of_the_2012_race_online_video_final.pdf>.

There are few events and variations unit comes to have another comment as for watching on-line political films with political content material. Smith and Duggan claimed that the only exception relates to social networking web sites liberal internet you just have registered movies, liberals are significantly much more likely than moderates or Conservatives to have had offers advocate on-line political movies for them to look at on social networking websites . The raise of social media's involvement among liberal citizens is involuted with the age profile of that ideological association as younger adults are much more likely than other categories to have videos recommended to them as with looking on-line political motion pictures (5).

They also added that one quarter 23% of registered internet users electorate have influenced Other users .observe online movies associated with the election or political troubles related to this political campaign. Online political videos are equally recommended

by republicans and democrats to the others and the same for liberal and conservative internet users (6).

Although it is truly common when it comes to recommend videos to others. It is consistently rare behaviour during political campaigns activities that only 1% registered citizens were able make their own online movies associated with the marketing campaign or to election issues (Rainie, Smith, Scholzman, Brady, and Sidney 6).

2.2. Voting Behavior and Facebook and Twitter Use

Vergeer, Liesbeth, and Sams stated that political actors started to adapt the internet and technology as a new tool to influence the voters and citizens especially on electoral campaigns, they see the internet as the change that will make a revolution in the way they can communicate with the others to provide them with the most important information about certain political issues (1).

They claimed that the importance of internet is growing day by day and it may be considered as a factor that affect the political engagement of citizens and their voting behavior because of the possibility of making the exchange of information easy and offer a new place to the voters where they can discuss any political event (2).

They explained that internet offer the community two-way communication² which was not existed before and it is considered as stimuli as factor that makes the citizens politically active and well-informed. Most online campaigns were one –sided, there was no communication or direct relation between the politicians and the citizens, information were sent by parties or candidates as an informative content and published in the websites, but now with the innovation of new application and social media an increase in the voting behavior was noticed(2).

They added that politicians tend to use different platforms of social networks; they use Facebook and Twitter to create a well connected population that show them their interests and share with then public and private information. The fast dissemination of information in social media enables the citizens to be informed quickly and the politicians to gain a lot of time and money, by re-tweeting in twitter and sharing it on Facebook (5).

As it was said by Vergeer, Liesbeth, and Sams social media is used by politicians as a tool of showing the campaign strategies and goals. Facebook and Twitter are the most used sites because they allow users to add a lot of details that haven't been seen in the traditional media; the personnel side of the candidate is more intensive n social media for instance voters can see the hobbies, interests, political views, social character and even the family of their chosen candidate. Therefore a personal relationship will be created between citizens and candidates and the campaign will be more "personality-centered" (qtd.in Vergeer, Liesbeth, and Sams 5).

The availability of political information in social media makes the political participation of citizens easier than ever; a study was conducted to show if decisions made by the voters are related to the availability of information on media; it was done on the period from 1952-2000 they noticed that there is a decline in the news consumption by citizens over the past 50 years (Gilens, Vavreck, and Cohen's 1160).

They said that this decline is related to the appearance of internet as a new source of information while other state that people are becoming less interested in the political participation because they have no platform in which they can express their views freely and have a close look to their candidate, yet there was no evidence about the decline of voting behavior because the lack of information, instead people are becoming more engaged in the political matters with the appearance of social media as a new source of information(1161).

To discuss the effect of social media, Twitter and Facebook are taken as examples of two used platforms by citizens and by politicians:

2.2.1. Using Facebook

Social media networks work on seeking the attention of people, make them interested and informed about the elections , also it offer them the chance to express their political views and opinions, post online videos and audios, writing blogs, exchanging their ideas via e-mail or other networks. It offered them a platform in which they feel free without fear (Johnson and Perlmutter 557).

It is considered as a mean of communication and interactivity between friends and strange people in which they can share their photos, publish some posts, comment on the status and even playing games (Vergeer, Liesbeth, and Sams 3).

Over history, information was transmitted to people by newspapers and with the introduction of technology citizens tend to use radio and Television until the internet appeared .Howard Dean started the use of internet in 2004 by relying on Blogs, and Obama was demonstrated as a successful politician who proved that the strategies used by politicians are now changed to something modern. His success was not related just to the use of Facebook yet to his well-organization and fundraising of his campaign with his ability to mobilize millions of people (Johnson and Perlmutter 555).

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When websites become a standard communication tool, politicians wanted to change the norms of their communication with voters, so they adopted new tools and Facebook was one of the social networking platforms that offered them a new way to mobilize voters. In 2008, the use of Facebook by candidates has doubled because they knew that the emergence of Facebook will help them not only to establish new tools in their campaign, but will reinforce the relationship between politicians and voters. Digital tools accelerate the transmission of information and make their content accessible to a large number of people in inexpensive way and also it makes youth an easy target (Gullati and Williams 71).

Facebook have made some changes concerning the 2008 elections, it offered political candidates pages instead of profiles, where they can post different kinds of their campaign's materials such as announcements, photo albums, YouTube links and information related to the events. Also their pages were classified near to celebrities, public figures, restaurants and organizations thus it was easy to find the candidate on Facebook (56). Researchers claimed that during their study, they found that 72% of candidates had a politician Facebook page and 49% have updated it, these numbers have risen from the previous election to 2008's election (58).

It was approved that Facebook groups helped the citizens during the 2008 presidential elections by discussing with each other and receive information from different users, or obtain any information related to the candidate's campaign, political issues and other subjects with political purposes (Johnson 556).

Facebook gave the users who watch the debates online or via Television the ability to ask any question they want and the candidate will answer them. They also can interact with other as a part of interactive communication, this feature was introduced by the administration of Facebook under the hope of making citizens become interest in politics and give their votes to

their presidential candidate (Fitzpatrick “Facebook, NBC joining forces to host social presidential Debate”).

Facebook has become a platform in which a peer to peer interaction is happening; it has allowed voters to be more engaged politically with the candidate. Johnson and Perlmutter said while previous presidential elections gave a lot of control to the candidate on his message and image, Facebook made a shift in the way candidates control their image in the society, it gave the voters a place in where they can speak freely and express their opinions about the candidate, therefore citizens are becoming more interested in the political issues such as the voting behavior (Johnson and Perlmutter 555).

Fitzpatrick’s “Facebook, *NBC joining forces to host social presidential Debate*” includes that Online communication in Facebook is an essential factor used by politicians to gather a lot of voters, they are not simply posting photos or posts ,but also they react and reply to other’s comments and answer them .He stated that The 2008 presidential campaign is taken as an example, Facebook offered the ability to make a political debate online which was the first time politician use the internet in that way, in 2012 the widgets used in the presidential debates showed the evolution of Facebook in offering different chance to the candidate in order to deliver their message and convince people to vote for them.

Facebook offers an online platform in which voters will have the choice to be more engaged and involved in the political process, it enables the candidates to attract a lot of users and gain an online support that will be transmitted and showed by the Election Day. Williams and Gullati stated that the more political participation is done on Facebook, the more people will be engaged in the voting process by raising their political knowledge, political interest and political self-efficacy (53). Social media networks works on seeking the attention of people ,make them interested and informed about the elections, also it offer them the chance

to express their political views and opinions, post online videos and audios, writing blogs , exchanging their ideas via e-mail or other networks. It offered them a platform in which they feel free without fear (Johnson and Perlmutter 557).

2.2.2. Using Twitter

Twitter is another social network, it is available o be used on phones and computers, it gives the user the choice of making his tweets private or public; and limit his messages with 140 characters. One of the common features of Twitter is the ability of being notified or not when someone posts a tweet; therefore a possibility of being popular is very common in Twitter (Vergeer, Liesbeth, and Sams 3).

Elmer claimed that Twitter is an interaction platform that relies on the activity of friends and contacts t re tweet the post to make it in the top Twitter. Political campaigns should expand the readership of their posts by making other followers re tweet it and be hyperactive in order to push the old tweets back and make the new posts in the top of the page (19).

Twitter have a lot to do with the political issues and the voting behavior of citizens, it was recorded that35% of Twitter users have make It as a tool to encourage people and push them to vote, a majority of social media users make twitter as a tool to promote the policy of their candidate and to make people more informed about his campaign. Others have used twitter to post their own ideas and express their political thoughts, so they can receive others ‘opinions. It gave them the ability to share some links related to politics and other materials such as: videos, photos, events, donation (Rainie, Smith, Scholzman, Brady, and Sidney 2).

McCue in his work *“Twitter ranked fastest growing platform in the world”* claimed that Twitter started to be an essential tool used by politicians especially during the presidential election, it was recorded that 260 users of Twitter are active during the election period more

than any time and this number grew by 40% by the last six months of 2012; This means that Twitter is becoming a platform where politicians and citizens are expressing their ideas.

He added that Twitter become a trend in U.S and one of the reasons why people are using more Twitter is the emergence of mobile phones it was recorded that by 2012 the number of mobile internet usage have raised from 37% to 43% and the number of users from tablet grew from 8% to 18%. The use Twitter is not concerned only with Young people, old demographics are active on Twitter and represent tens of millions users (*“Twitter ranked fastest growing platform in the world”).*

Researchers stated that Twitter provide the candidate with new strategies to seek the voter’s attention and gain popularity, Elmer stated that the new features of Twitter such as the live debates, images, posts, passages from speeches and comments allow the citizens to reconnect and easily access to the information they need (20).

Researchers claimed that social networking sites and Twitter has become a major element to be used by politicians to make people engaged and politically active, it offer them the chance to participate in different groups and organizations and it was found that Twitter users re more politically active than the ones who do not use Twitter and other social networking sites (Rainie, Smith, Scholzman, Brady, and Sidney 3).

To conclue, the voting behavior of citizens is related to some factors that cannot be denied , therefore a relationship was established when examining certain factors: there is a positive relationship between the engagement of young demographic, the ones with high educational and social level; comparing with old demographics and people who don’t have a high degree diploma. In the other side we find that the engagement of different races is increasing by time and American elections became to attract Hispanics, African Americans, and Latinos.

While the internet and social media continue its way to development, politicians tend to use it and adopt with the different digital tools and definitely there is a relationship between the use of Facebook and Twitter by politicians and the voting behavior of citizens. The online content of candidate has a great effect n his victory and popularity, in addition to the huge space given to the voters to share their political opinions and create a relationship with their candidates.

Endnotes

¹ See also: Patterson, Thomas E. "Social media Advancing Women in Politics?" *Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center*. 2016. Print.

² two-way communication: Obama knew the way he interacts with people in order to promote real dialogues and establish an effective communication by making different social media tools available for the voters to create a two-way communication (Groysberg and Sind "A Presidential Campaign Should Be a Conversation"). Groysberg, Boris and Michael Sind. "A Presidential Campaign Should Be a Conversation". *Harvard Business Review* 21.Sep.2012. Web. 13.Aug.2020. <<https://hbr.org/2012/09/a-campaign-is-a-conversation>>.

Chapter Three

The First Elected Social Media President: Barack Obama's Use of Social Media as a Successful Tool in 2008 and 2012 Elections

Presidents have to master the art of communication with their communities; Obama is one of the politicians who knew how to transform the online community to million votes and a supportive public, therefore achieving a historical victory twice in 2008 and 2012. He combined the audio feature of the radio, the visuals of television and the power of internet all together to create his history in U.S. politics.

In 2008 Obama won the battle and became the president of U.S. , he had the ability to mobilize voters and gather his supporters online by using different social media tools effectively to reach different demographics and gather their votes. It's undeniable that Obama used social media as a main strategy to win the 2008's elections and to communicate with his online community that showed a lot of interest to know him more beyond the politics.

This Chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents the 2008's presidential election, more specifically, Obama's campaign that is considered as one of the most successful campaigns in American history and demonstrates the new strategies presented by Obama to redesign the American campaigns and his use of social media tools. Another point discussed in this section is the great effect of young voters on Obama's success and his ability to mobilize them and make them interested in his campaign.

The second section examines the 2012's campaign and analyses the advantages established by Obama from 2008 to 2012 and the way he succeed to overcome Romney and became the president of U.S. for the second time.

3.1. Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Election

3.1.1. Barack Obama redesigning electoral campaigns through social media

On the 8th of November Obama became the first African American who won the elections against a republican nominee and became the president of U.S. with the help of his team (Aaker and Chang 1), Fox on his article "The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 vs. Obama 2012" claimed that Obama crushed the republican candidate John McCain¹ when it comes to the use of digital tools, he showed that he is different in establishing an online base and accomplished a different level of political engagement.

Obama would not win the American elections of 2008 without the help of 66.7 million American voters, almost 18% of those voters were young people aged between 18 and 29 years old. Because of his use of the internet to gather people, mobilize them and raise donations; His 2008 campaign is considered as a turning point in the way politicians make their strategies (Barron 20).

Aaker and Chang stated that Obama started by hiring professional persons to make the technology an integral part of his campaign, he knew that the involvement of technology and social media would lead him to a never seen before victory. Therefore, David Plouffe², the campaign manager, felt that the integration of technology and especially the new media is an essential part that must be added to the campaign strategy to achieve their goal (17).

Traditional campaigns did not make the people and the voters as a central element in victory, unlike Obama's campaign that did not focus on just raising money and votes, yet they needed another element which is the time to make people involved and interested in the political matter and establish a personal relationship between the candidate and voters. Therefore, the campaign emphasized on creating different ways and platforms for people to participate from e-mails, website, text messages and different social networking sites (17).

Lutz claimed that the campaign was organized in a way that will make people engaged and inspire people by giving them a voice of hope and change, also make a direct connection with Obama's supporters. The principle objective of his campaign is to make different types of supporters and Americans engaged in the political process by providing them with different opportunities to be politically involved. Obama's team tried to be in a relation with the voters and supporters in different levels; the personal level by creating a profile and be friend with Obama to check his posts, comments or even sending him different messages (6).

The social level starts by making comments on others' status and share with them the different opinions about Obama, therefore a popularity of the candidate will be established among the supporters' friends. Another thing was established by Obama's team is that anyone would jump into the site (MyBO.com) and create a profile to support Obama by joining any online event or even making a group which will lead us to the third level, the advocate, in which the supporter can be more active by posting videos, hosting events, asking for donations and votes (6).

Another feature on Obama's campaigns was that they knew the places where people are more connected and target them, because when you want to reach lot of Americans you should know where to find them. So they have to know that each user no matter where he is connecting should know a lot of information about Obama and be interested in his candidacy. Obama made sure to create his profiles on important platforms and direct people to his My BO site where a lot of political activities were introduced (8).

He added that Obama's use of different social media as tools to influence Americans have revolutionized the communication between candidates and their supporters, he ignored the traditional way that is considered a top-down approach³ and a one way communication and relied on various tools of social media and internet. He succeed in mobilizing voters,

Americans are using their cell phones daily and reading their text messages more than checking up their emails, Obama's campaign made sure to reach people wherever they are and in effective way without losing much time or money. Obama started his campaign by making a team of 11 people that made social media as an integral part of his presidential campaign (12).

Aaker and Chang claimed that integrating online and offline was one of the campaign principles, the voters were given places related to some political events in order to connect the offline and online universes and push the voter to move and make a real 'CHANGE' by voting on Obama and not only a comment or a like. Days before the elections, voters have received a sort of reminder in their emails in which they find the nearest polling address, moreover, they could find the names of their neighbors on the campaigns website to encourage them to vote together and make the voting process something funny and interesting (20).

Obama's team have used emails and text messages to communicate with supporters and voters during the 2008 elections, they started launching the email program on May, 2007 in order to achieve three different goals: send messages, mobilize people and gain money; while the texting strategy was launched to send between 5 to 20 messages in month and voters could respond by sending "HOPE" to subscribe (18).

Barron in his article Obama have used social media tools effectively in way that made him raise 600\$ million and gain more than 10 million supporters, it was a successful campaign that had mastered the use of different social media tools; videos, mobiles, emails and other applications have been used by his team to communicate with Americans (10).

Researchers said that Obama's team presented a new strategy to raise money and donations which have turned the traditional fundraising upside down in what is Called "Dinner with

Barack”; the common fundraising dinners were based on the fact that donors who pay a lot amount of money are the ones who are allowed to buy access and have the dinner with the candidate. In fact, Obama’s campaign did the opposite and chose four donors who gave any amount of money and shared their stories to sit with Obama, having dinner and discussing their issues with him. Those dinners were published on YouTube and Obama ‘campaign’s website, as a result, a lot of Americans have been affected and inspired to donate (Aaker and Chang 19).

In his first election he run against 20 other candidates from different major parties and had a major success. Obama’s campaign was the most sophisticated of them all, it combined online technology and different social networking sites with the collaboration of old and new media. It was financed and organized in a good way (Johnson and Perlmutter 554).

Aaker and Chang concluded that the major factor of Obama’s success was the use of technology and different social media tools as an integral part of his campaign strategy by raising money and donations online, gather supporters and voters from different places and empowering them (16).

Barron claimed that after his success, Obama still in contact with his supporters and didn’t leave the internet’s organization behind, yet his team worked on the fact that Obama should still be connected directly with millions of Americans even after his victory (18).

Obama Changed the way elections are running and would be run in the near future, with the help of his team. He discovered the power of social media in making his victory historical, the most important thing is that he was able to use technology to show the power of individuals in making change they want with the help of a candidate who knew how to communicate and evolve million of people in different political issues (Aaker and Chang 20).

3.1.2. Social Networking to Influence Young Voters

During the political career of Obama, he emphasized on including young voters on his political operations and make them part of his strategy to win the presidential race of 2008. His appeal to the youth was considered as a phenomenon that was presented by his campaign; he was able to mobilize young voters by using internet and social media in order to motivate them. As a result they gave him their supportive votes and made him the president of United States (Price 145).

On his speech when he declared his intention of running for president in 2008, Obama stated that “Each and every time, a new generation has risen up and done what’s needed to be done. Today we are called once more—and it is time for our generation to answer that call.” (qtd. in Price 146). He emphasized on the word generation and repeated it more than thirteen times (146).

Rosentiel claimed that the general elections of 2008 marked a huge support of young adults who were giving their votes to the democratic candidate Obama, it was recorded that 66% of young voters have given their votes to Obama and became a major reason of his success. Obama won the presidential race of 2008 and did make the difference in voting process by creating a huge gap, which was not existed since 1972, between the young voters and the other age groups (“Young Voters in the 2008 Election”).

He also claimed that Obama leaned on the youth to win the presidential race, young people did not give only their votes to Obama yet they had the ability to convince their parents, friends, and elders to choose Obama and vote for him. They were very active online and offline, from creating groups on different social media to attending political events and donating (“Young Voters in the 2008 Election”).

He added that Obama's campaign worked on the idea of making the voters attached and on a direct relationship with Obama and with his team. They knew how to mobilize them, it was recorded that young voters were contacted by Obama's campaign more than McCain's campaign did, for example, they were contacted in person or by phone by someone who is representing Obama. It was agreed on the fact that Obama's team knew how to mobilize voters especially the younger ones and gave them all the available sources and information in affordable and easy way ("Young Voters in the 2008 Election").

Binstock claimed that the 2008 presidential election was marked in history as the second time in which older citizens voted for the looser and failed to vote for the winner, who wins the election because of the younger voters that are considered the majority (697). Obama was 48 years old when he was running for presidential elections of 2008 while McCain was 72 years old, 54% of older people gave their votes to Obama while 66% of young people have favored Obama; in a survey was done it was recorded that 60% of people said that age was not that importance in making their decisions while voting for the candidates (699).

Barron described Obama's appealing to young voters as a factor that contributed to Obama's success, he was a popular candidate who offered his campaign an interesting message that captured the attention of young voters .Obama's campaign didn't use something new yet it combines different social networking sites together to target different kind of people, raise money and gain a lot of voters (16).

He added in the same article that because of Obama's mastering of the internet and social media, he was able to communicate, fundraise and build a network community. Therefore he had appealed to young people more than his opponent .It was recorded that 91% of young people use the internet.

Researchers reported that young people who are active on social media politically tend to be also active to vote and turn their online engagement to an offline votes more than adults who do not show an activity related to politics on social media or other websites (Rutledge "How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in the 2012 Presidential Campaign").

3.2. Barack Obama's 2012 Presidential Election

3.2.1. President Obama's distinct Advantage from 2008 to 2012

In 2012, Obama's social media campaign clung to each other by using some strategies from its previous campaign in 2008 for instance the perseverance in building an online community which could translate into offline induction. Yet, substantial changes were made by the 2012 campaign and adopted new social media tools and as a result, the campaign was converted into various podiums (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 9).

Moreover, Obama has made radical changes in 2012, he worked on making his digital content and messages more clear and reduced the role of the traditional media in promoting his policy; he gathered 27.6 million friends on Facebook ,200000 YouTube subscribers and more than 18 million followers on Twitter ,those numbers are huge compared with the numbers of 2008. His campaign worked on the development of the website, they added a new setting which is the ability of gather and find any information related to the user's state; every available source and information related to Obama's campaign was organized according to the name of each state (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 6).

Fox in his article "The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 Vs. Obama 2012" claimed that Obama's 2008 campaign was praised for its effective use of digital tools and made a shift on the level of the communication between candidate and voters; Obama's campaign was present on Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and Twitter, in addition to the campaign's website. He succeeded in engaging Americans in the political process under the slogan of 'Change' and was able to reach the presidential chair.

He added that the media named 2008's presidential race "The Facebook Election", yet 2012's cycle have showed a lot of development in the digital world and an explosion of Facebook and Twitter have occurred at that time, therefore Obama and his team found themselves facing a new competition and new opponents. However this did not stop them from making new strategies that will allow the transformation of the online community to an offline votes (Fox "The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 Vs. Obama 2012").

Fox added that Obama's team had created new profiles in different platforms, Instagram is another social application, it was used by his team to share some photos and short videos from the campaign; a new mobile application "Obama for America" was released to support Obama, join events and to donate; he used the new feature of Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter which is Town Halls to answer the users' questions. In addition to other applications and innovations were used by Obama's team to stay in touch with his supporters ("The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 vs. Obama 2012").

Obama was the first president whomake use of social media during his presidency period, he used different servceslike facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat, but these services weren't existed before or heve not been used by a broad public before. Obama was good at using social media, before hispresidency, he was always inseparable from his phone and his interest in science and technology has made him manage his campaign in an effective way.The Obama White House has kept its relation with amerin people, different services were offered for Obama, the GIF search created a specialpage for Obama, and different Twitter accounts have been created to post the White House tweets (Bogost "Obama was Too Good at Social Media").

The researcher stated that Obama and his team have made an effort to mobilize Americans and to establish an online community, it all started in 2008 when the use of social media was under experience and lasted until 2012 when Obama made his second victory and became the

president of U.S for the second time. The use of social media effectively and successfully had attributed to the success of Obama and his team ("The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 vs. Obama 2012").

Obama's Presidential campaign was marked on History not just because of being the first African American to lead the country but also for his impressive use of different social media tools as a leading strategy to remind the people of their rights to vote for a better country and especially the youth. Four years later, the development of the digital tools have increased the number of users across all the demographics from 37% in 2008 to 69% in 2012 (Rutledge "How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in the 2012 Presidential Campaign").

She added that Obama is the first social media president just as John. F. Kennedy was the first president who mastered the use of Television. By 2012 Obama found that he already had his powerful community that was established in 2008. His relationship with his supporters still the same and that was the advantage he had against Romney, Obama's team worked on making the relationship with the voters close so they offered them a new feature of making memes which is considered as a cultural event. Broadly speaking, 2012's campaign did not make the use of social media as new exciting strategy, yet it became a central and essential form of communication with voters (Rutledge: "How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in the 2012 Presidential Campaign").

And this growth was not only about numbers but also as a worldwide influencer, Facebook has become a marketing platform for companies all around the world through these four years. The pressure brought by Twitter have made all the tweets re-tweetable and seen by all the users, this is considered as one of the changes that happened from 2008 to 2012, it had started to gain attention of journalists and voters and become a crucial element in every political matter. The changes did not occur only on social media but on the web and on mobile phones also, people were attached to their phones to the point where they must have a

glance on their profiles before going to bed and as soon as they wake up (Sreenivasan: “8 social-media changes since the 2008 elections”).

Leuschner said that since the 2008 elections, Social media has undergone main changes and has become more effective. For example, Facebook and Twitter have grown significantly: Facebook grew from having 100 million users in 2008 to having 850 million users in 2012 .As for Twitter, the number of its users has increased from 6 million in 2008 to 500 million in 2012 (39). New social media sites have emerged and gained currency and spread into 2012 elections delineation (40).

3.2.2. Barack Obama V. Mitt Romney’s Usage of Social Media in 2012 Election

The use of social media has shifted dramatically from 2008 to 2012, it was used as a component of Obama’s campaign, but with the development of old social networks and the appearance of new tools like iPhones and iPods, political candidates started to make new strategies; Obama and Romney illustrated the new challenges and opportunities that have appeared during the 2012 presidential elections (O'Brien: “Social Media in 2012 Elections will Make 2008 Look like Digital Dark Ages”).

He added that Romney the former governor of Massachusetts has become a nominee in the presidency of 2012. Obama and Romney have struggled to gain success by accessing and using social media to collect voters and supporters therefore rising their circulation (“Social Media in 2012 Elections will Make 2008 Look like Digital Dark Ages”).

During the 2012 campaign Romney converged fundamentally on three outstanding social media tools: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Unlike Obama who spread through many platforms, he was really successful in using Twitter since his job plans were already based on Twitter and as a result to this Romney job plans were included in the ten most downloaded

list on kindle for a week (O'Brien: "Social media in 2012 elections will make 2008 look like digital dark ages").

But this success was not rising, a pew research study in 2012 detected that Obama's use for social media tools in direct messaging was more effective and beneficial than Romney's campaign use. When Obama's campaign rated 29 tweets per day, Romney's campaign had just one tweet per day. Obama's campaign doubled the output of the blog posts and the uploads as many YouTube videos as Romney's campaign had (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 2)

The Obama campaign have used every available social tool and focused mainly of Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, but with the appearance of Instagram, spotify, and Tumbler they started posting many photos and sharing Obama's favorite songs. In 2012 they figured that people need to feel that they are connected with real persons, so instead of posting the same thing on different platforms, they posted different things in its appropriate platform (O'Brien: "Social media in 2012 elections will make 2008 look like digital dark ages").

A study was conducted by Pew Research Center announced that Obama did not give up on his website and stayed in touch with his community, almost every user end up by returning to the website in order to donate money, to join a community or to read anything related to the campaign. In his website, voters were able to join any group they want because they were divided according to gender, race, age, ethnicity...etc and then start receiving a content that is related to one of the eighteen groups. This quality was not presented by Romney's team until August when he offered nine different groups (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 3).

It was written that their campaigns were based mainly on economy, almost a quarter of the Romney's content was based on economy and was devoted to jobs while Obama's campaign focused on two aspects related to economy which is the affordance of jobs and the economy policy as a broad topic, but voters didn't show their interest in these kind of posts and showed

a reaction towards posts of immigration that were published by Obama's campaign and Romney's posts about health care have received more reaction than those related to economic (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 27).

Also they claimed that Obama's online effort was highly remarkable more than Romney's, he had personal accounts on different online platforms: YouTube, Facebook, Goggle+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Flickr, Spotify, Instagram and two different accounts on Twitter which is the twice of what Romney had that time and then he expanded his profiles on different social networks, yet Obama still in front of him because he posted almost four times as much as Romney did. It can be said that Obama was more active than his opponent on different social media: Twitter more specifically, YouTube, the website and Romney marked his presence on Facebook more than Obama did (5).

In an article entitled "Obama and Romney's social media face-off", it was stated that Obama had more than 30 million like in his facebook page while more than 9 million users liked Romney's facebook page, in Twitter Obama had more than 20 million followers and it was considered the 6th account most followed in the world, Romney had almost 1.4 million followers on Twitter. On Youtube Obama had 240,000 followers, in his channel he posted campaign advertisements and posted videos where supporters showed their love for Obama, while Romney had less than 23,000 followers. Both candidates relied on other different social networks such as Pinterest which became the most intimate platform in which candidates published their photos according to different themes.

Obama and Romney followed two different strategies when promoting their campaigns, Obama for instance focused on publishing his achievements and tended to communicate by using texts while Romney devoted a remarkable space to talk about his opponent Obama

attacking his actions and his policy, in addition he relied on photos and videos rather than texts when publishing his content (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 43).

The response of voters is another point to talk about, Obama posted on Facebook twice what Romney did, and consequently he received more of interaction on his Facebook page. Twitter marked a difference in the way people engage with their candidates, Obama's tweets were retweeted more than 150.000 while Romney's tweets were retweeted almost 8600 times. On YouTube the same thing was recorded, the interaction on Obama's videos was high unlike Romney's videos that attracted half the attention of Obama's (Rosenstiel and Mitchell 25).

Fox in his article "The Digital Smackdown: Obama 2008 vs. Obama 2012" claimed that a controversy occurred between some people that Romney's campaign lagged behind the Obama's campaign therefore Romney had less supporting candidates and less connecting activities than Obama had.

Rutledge claimed that Romney dedicated so much of his time talking about the economy and this was another disputed error for him. Although the economy was a dominating subject for both of the nominees in 2012 but it wasn't what was voters and supporters interested in. maybe his campaign couldn't get the concept of who was listening. It was noted that Obama's responses to immigration produced four times as much reaction as his economic tweets ("How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in 2012 Presidential Campaign").

It can be considered as the same thing for Romney's posts about health care or veterans which was raised and doubled the reactions than his economic messages. This means that Obama's campaign was more successful in using social networking strategies to target a special class of voters than Romney's. Obama's online success was connected to the increasing complexity of online data collection. It was possible for Obama's team to foretell which categories of people who tend to be induced by which forms of the content and the

concept, by being able to collect and analyze digital data on an inclusive scale (Rutledge “How Obama Won the Social Media Battle in 2012 Presidential Campaign”).

Jackson claimed that Obama’s campaign has managed effectively to depict Romney as being a plutocrat who is away from the middle class. Romney wasn’t really interested to unsuitable comments which appeared in videos when he discarded “47%” of Americans who either didn’t pay taxes or living off government relief. He added in the same article that Obama’s team have worked on the strategy of getting people out of their chairs and vote, turning the online community to an offline supporters and voters, they started making calls, knocking on the doors and target potential voters to the polls and this strategy was more sophisticated and effective than the one of 2008, also it helped Obama defeat his worries over the economy of his country and his opponent Romney (“How Obama won re-election”).

In sum, Social media had played a significant role in the 2008 presidential campaign especially by Obama who had the ability of interaction with voters online and builds a never seen before relationship with his supporters; it helped him to win the presidential race over John McCain and transformed the way politicians made their campaigns.

Many changes had happened since the victory of Obama in 2008, politicians figured out new strategies to gather supporters and adopt social media in their campaigns to target people, raise donations and gain support. Social media had become a fundamental part of the presidential campaigns and helped Obama to win the presidential election for the second time on 2012 over Romney.

Endnotes

¹John McCain: was a vietnam war veteran and a U.S sentaro from Arizona, he lost he presidential eection of 2008 against Barack Obama.He supported the Iraq War and President Bush’s reelection in 2004.in 2012, he showed his support for Romney claiming that U.S needs a radical change.Biography.com.“John McCain Biography.”*TheBiography.com,A&E Television Networks*.02.Apr.2014.Web.30.Aug.2020.<https://www.biography.com/political-figure/john-mccain>.

²David Plouffe: Obama’s campaign manager and the author of “A Citizen’s Guide to Beating Donald Trump” in which he explained different political strategies and he is the most recognized and successful strategist in the country.(David Plouffe- A Citiien’s Guide to Beating Donald Trump) “David Plouffe- A Citiien’s Guide to Beating Donald Trump.”*Politics and Prose BookStore*.5.Mar.2020.Web.03.Sep.2020.<<https://www.politics-prose.com/event/book/david-plouffe-citizen-s-guide-to-beating-donald-trump-gw-betts-theatre>>.

³top-down approach: is a system of command and control in which the governeor sets different goals and he needs to achieve them by the use of a clear hierarchical authority; while the bottom-up approach like the one used by Obama, insists on the target groupe and must give the whole attention from its gioals and strategies to the people (Top-down and Botom-up Approaches Within Implementation). “Top-down and Botom-up Approaches Within Implementation”.*Political Pipeline*.21.Feb.2013.Web.30.aug.2020.<<https://politicalpipeline.wordpress.com/2013/02/21/top-down-and-bottom-up-approaches-within-implementation/>>.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to indicate how social media influences political campaigns and voting behavior as mentioned in the introduction; it was evident that social media played a major role on behavior change of the respondents. Social media has played and will continue to play a significant role in political campaigns. Specifically by President Obama there was a significant use of social networking sites in the 2008 and the 2012 presidential elections.

Social media have played a vital role in Obama's victory against John McCain in 2008. It also continued to be increasingly used in political campaigns since the 2008 campaign. There was a declaration among the researchers, claims that social media had massive changes since the 2008 campaign, and these changes were adopted by politicians in a new way creating new strategies of social media. Through platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, social media wasn't just used for its facility in distributing a campaign message but also for creating an interaction between voters and candidates and receive support in the form of donations and volunteers.

In this dissertation, it was made a contribution to the academic discussion on social media by comparing the utilization of social media tools by Obama in his first campaign in 2008 and in 2012. The usage of social media by Obama was also emphasized in this research how he used them as an innovative campaign tool in 2008, and this resulted in a creation of a new type of technological aspect to the elections. It was argued that Obama managed to use the fullest potential of social media sites.

The Obama campaign team has focused on creating a sense of interactive and connection with young voters category while lowering the cost of building a political brand. In this dissertation the changes of social media on a wide range were also discussed. In this research

it was emphasized that even though the Obama campaign held on to many of its strategies from 2008, it also embraced new technologies available. The Obama campaign has ensured the inclusion of useful content on the most useful media platforms. The main focus of the campaign was to understand how they would be assisted through media platforms to fulfill their three main goals. The first one being persuading to voters, the second to recruit volunteers and the third one raising donations.

The comparison between the two examples, Mitt Romney and Obama, proved how to Romney failed to create a reputation and an image that had an impact and resonance on the public and the voters. Even with the use of an ambitious strategy, he was unable to reach and persuade all the internet users and impose his strategy to the extent that Obama reached, which was the reason for his overwhelming success in the presidential elections.

This study provides insights into how political communication is shaped by social media. It was a revolutionary process for political campaigns through social media platforms which has the biggest impact and influence on their success and progress. This method was very effective for the candidates to reach their willings, by using social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. These means that opened a wide field and paved the way for these campaigns to expand, and had the credit in the first place in their success. In addition to advertising which helped the candidates to make their campaign advertisements online since this process has low cost and also was effective in creating the communication and interaction among internet users , it enabled them to get every information they needed including political issues.

This study also examines how politicians used to communicate before using social networking sites; at first an era was called the golden age when politicians and voters used to discuss the changes and political issues in a long lasting party. The next period the television

and the radio have appeared and politicians used it to express their selves but it wasn't that much useful because it didn't provide a direct communication. After this the internet showed up to combine all the previous methods and had the ability to create an interactive communication. The best sample was Obama's campaign which used many media tools that helped him to gain popularity and engaged with voters. Reducing the cost of political campaigns was a result to the mobilisation theory through which raised the interaction between voters and candidates which allowed them to exchange and check information easily.

This dissertation also discussed some factors which affect the use of social media sites of U.S politicians mentioning young and old voters, social media created the way for politicians to not just only influence and affect old voters but also young adults who were the most targeted category. Education and wealth also affected the voting behaviour; therefore people with high educational level were more involved in political matters. The next factor is Gender; women have become more interested in politics which was an element of cultural change and progress.

The conclusion that this dissertation ends with is that social networks have shifted the electoral strategies in U.S. and made of Obama the first politician who knew how to make digital tools a weapon that helped him to overcome his opponents. Therefore social networks can be considered as a new effective strategy to be adopted by politicians in the light of the technological development. Mobilizing people, emphasizing on young generations and different demographics that have occupied different social networks, gathering supporters and donors and more importantly, building an online community that needed a real leader who is interested in building real relationships with his supporters rather than just collecting votes; these elements are considered the major points that helped Obama to be marked in American history and offered the U.S. politics a new dimension of campaigning.

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