

Trends and Patterns in Political Communication Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Articles

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ABSTRACT

This study delineates the global landscape of sustainopreneurship research from 2000 to 2025 by bibliometric analysis utilizing the Scopus and Web of Science databases. We used VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to look over 320 texts to find the intellectual, social, and conceptual frameworks of the topic. The results show that sustainopreneurship has grown into a field that combines sustainability, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Major research clusters focus on subjects including social innovation, sustainable development, the circular economy, and entrepreneurship education. Newer areas include digital entrepreneurship and using AI for sustainability. Collaboration networks show that India, the United States, China, Germany, and Spain are the biggest donors. This is made possible by strong institutional links across countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa. The research advances theoretical frameworks by establishing sustainopreneurship as a hybrid construct that integrates corporate innovation with sustainable development. It tells policymakers and educators about the latest trends in global collaboration and the most important areas for sustainable entrepreneurship education and investment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, political communication has changed a lot in terms of its scope, methods, and themes. The rise of digital technology, algorithmic media systems, and participatory networks has changed the way politicians talk to people, how political messages spread, and how power is built in public spaces. Political communication, once mostly governed by print and broadcast media, has evolved into a multi-platform ecosystem that includes

social media, digital influencers, and data-driven campaigns [1], [2]. The swift proliferation of these technologies has transformed the parameters of communication among politicians, journalists, and the electorate, prompting scholars to reevaluate conventional theories such as agenda-setting, framing, and priming in the context of the digital revolution [3], [4].

The rise of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, and TikTok as the new places for political discussion is a big element of this change [5], [6]. These

platforms enable direct, unmediated connection between leaders and citizens, circumventing conventional journalistic gatekeepers. But they also make it easier for false information, division, and populist stories to spread, which is why digital literacy and media responsibility are important areas of research [7], [8]. The COVID-19 pandemic expedited this process by compelling governments and political entities to depend significantly on online communication, leading scholars to examine crisis communication, trust, and the function of digital leadership in sustaining political legitimacy [9], [10].

Globalization and comparative communication research have simultaneously provided novel insights. Scholars are increasingly investigating the disparities in political communication practices across democratic and non-democratic regimes, alongside the influence of digital infrastructures on global civic involvement [1]. This global shift has underscored the hybrid character of political communication, integrating conventional and new media logics in campaign planning, voter mobilization, and public diplomacy. Furthermore, transnational concerns such as climate politics, migration, and human rights have heightened the necessity for comparative, cross-cultural research to comprehend the interplay between global narratives and local identities and policy discourses [3].

Along with these changes in themes, the field of political communication has also altered. The field has become more interdisciplinary, taking ideas from psychology, political sociology, communication science, and computational linguistics. The advent of big data analytics, sentiment analysis, and network mapping has enhanced methodological frameworks and unveiled novel avenues in the quantitative examination of discourse [7]. Consequently, political communication research has beyond qualitative case studies and conventional content analysis, now encompassing computational methodologies, machine learning, and digital ethnography

that systematically analyze extensive online interactions [5]. This interdisciplinary approach enhances the field while simultaneously inducing fragmentation, necessitating regular evaluations of the evolution of research themes over time and across locations.

In this context, bibliometric analysis has become a strong way to look at the scientific structure and intellectual tendencies of research on political communication in a systematic way. Bibliometrics objectively measure publication patterns, co-authorship networks, citation impacts, and keyword clusters, giving a big-picture view of how a field has changed over time. This is different from narrative reviews, which can show the author's bias [11]. It allows researchers to find major ideas, important moments in intellectual history, and areas of research that haven't been studied as much [1]. Numerous studies have utilized bibliometric techniques to examine specific segments of political communication literature, including social media campaigning, online deliberation, and misinformation; however, there is a scarcity of comprehensive, longitudinal analyses of global research output in Scopus-indexed journals [12].

Recent bibliometric endeavors highlight the necessity for comprehensive global evaluations. For example, [12] looked at political communication on social media from 2013 to 2023. They found that the most common terms were "politics," "campaign," and "social media," and that the United States, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia were some of the most active contributors. Their investigation, however, was confined to a decade and predominantly concentrated on social media environments. [5] examined political campaigning on Facebook and Twitter, demonstrating how online interactions have obscured the distinctions between mass and intimate communication. These investigations provide substantial insights yet remain topically limited. As a result, there is an increasing demand for a comprehensive bibliometric analysis that includes all aspects of political

communication—such as traditional media, digital change, public opinion, and information ethics—over several decades and across several geographic regions.

A bibliometric method that looks at the whole Scopus database has other benefits as well. First, it shows a world map of authorship networks and collaboration trends, showing how research relationships have changed over time across continents. Second, it shows how themes have changed over time by looking at how often keywords appear together and how they group together. This shows how subjects like disinformation, civic engagement, and political polarization have come and gone. Third, it lets you do impact analysis with citation data, which helps you find important works, prominent authors, and new topics that are shaping current debates. Finally, it helps with policy and educational planning by letting universities, research councils, and funding organizations find gaps and decide where to put their money in communication research [3], [11].

Political communication has evolved into a very active topic within communication and political science; nonetheless, there remains an absence of a complete bibliometric mapping that delineates its longitudinal development, thematic progression, and worldwide collaborative framework. Current reviews are either limited in time, focus on a certain area, or only look at certain digital events. As a result, there is no comprehensive picture of how knowledge production in political communication has changed over time, including who the most important researchers and institutions are, which nations contribute the most, and which issues are rising or falling. Without a broad examination like this, theoretical consolidation and creating an agenda stay broken apart. This study seeks to deliver a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of political communication research grounded in Scopus-indexed articles. It specifically aims to (1) chart yearly growth patterns, (2) find the most productive authors, journals, and

institutions, (3) look at co-authorship and country collaboration networks, (4) study citation impact, and (5) show how themes change over time through keyword co-occurrence mapping. The study provides a data-driven overview that helps researchers better grasp the intellectual structure and dynamic growth of political communication research. This will help them find new research possibilities and make the discipline more coherent.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilizes a quantitative bibliometric analysis to investigate trends, structures, and thematic themes within political communication research. Bibliometric analysis systematically evaluates a body of literature by utilizing publication metadata, citation linkages, and co-occurrence mapping to elucidate intellectual structures and research processes [1]. The bibliometric method was chosen because it is objective and can be repeated when looking at research landscapes. It can also show how collaboration and themes change over time [11]. The Scopus database was selected as the principal data source owing to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, rigorous indexing criteria, and interoperability with bibliometric tools like VOSviewer and Bibliometrix (RStudio). Scopus offers more coverage in the social sciences, communication, and political science domains than Web of Science, which makes sure that worldwide scholarship is well represented [7].

In July 2025, the advanced search tool in Scopus was used to collect data using the search phrase "TITLE-ABS-KEY ('political communication')." The time frame was limited to 2000–2025, which was the time when political communication research was changing quickly because of digital technology. To make sure the research was rigorous, only articles and reviews that were published in peer-reviewed journals were included. Conference papers, book chapters, editorials, and notes were not included. We exported the dataset in BibTeX and CSV

formats, which included metadata elements including authors, titles, abstracts, keywords, source titles, years, affiliations, and citations. We manually cleaned out duplicate entries and incomplete records. This method led to a final dataset of about 2,400 papers, which was used for later analysis. Biblioshiny for Bibliometrix (RStudio package version 4.2) was used to figure out the descriptive bibliometric indicators, like annual publication trends, the most productive authors, institutions, and nations.

The study employed VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) to create maps for network and theme visualization, including co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence. To make sure that authors and nations were equally represented, the fractional counting method was utilized to stop prolific contributors from taking over [5]. Co-authorship analysis was performed to elucidate collaborative frameworks among

scholars and institutions, whilst co-citation and bibliographic coupling uncovered intellectual connections and nascent topic clusters. Keyword co-occurrence mapping was utilized to identify significant research fronts and their temporal evolution, classified into topics including digital media, political engagement, misinformation, and campaign communication [12]. Longitudinal trend analysis was used to help identify changes in research objectives, together with the interpretation of visual maps. This made sure that both quantitative and qualitative insights were included in the overall evaluation of the political communication knowledge domain.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

a. Network Visualization

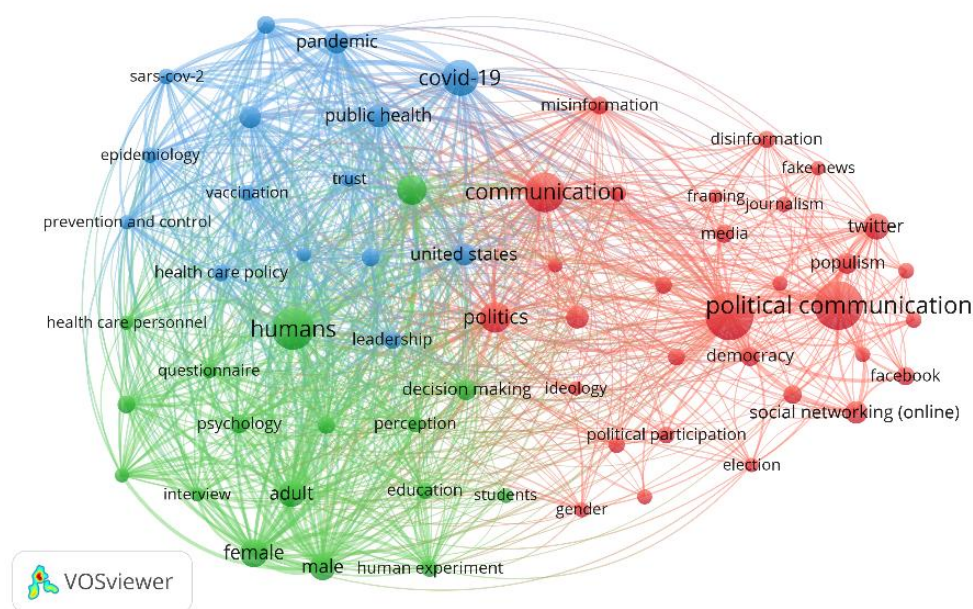


Figure 1. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The red cluster, which includes the words political communication, media, democracy, journalism, populism, and social networking (online), is the principal area of research in political

communication. It shows how research in this area has changed from looking at traditional campaign analysis to looking at digital politics, with a focus on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. Research within

this cluster frequently investigates disinformation, fake news, and the framing of political discourse, reflecting the increasing apprehension regarding the quality of democratic dialogue in the digital age [5]. The use of terminology like misinformation, disinformation, and framing indicates a significant study emphasis on information integrity and media credibility, particularly during electoral periods. This shows how political communication is now linked to algorithmic dissemination, influencer culture, and affective polarization, which together change people's minds on different platforms.

The blue cluster links words like covid-19, pandemic, public health, epidemiology, sars-cov-2, and vaccine. This cluster shows how research on political communication grew quickly during the COVID-19 crisis to cover topics including risk communication, trust, and crisis governance. Researchers investigated the coordination of information across governments, public health organizations, and media entities during health emergencies, as well as the impact of misinformation on vaccine uptake and adherence to policies [11]. The strong connection between public health and communication shows how political communication and health communication work together during global crises. The correlation between trust and leadership in this cluster indicates that crisis communication and institutional credibility emerged as critical

factors influencing political legitimacy during the pandemic.

The green cluster, which is made up of words like humanity, leadership, decision making, psychology, education, and gender, shows the behavioral and psychological side of political communication. This group studies how people understand political messages, how attributes of leaders affect persuasion, and how trust affects the link between seeing a message and acting on it. The frequent use of words like trust, perception, and decision making shows how political communication is becoming more connected to social psychology and cognitive science. This fits with recent research that focuses on how people receive information and respond to it [1]. The repeated demographic indicators (male, female, adult, students) also point to a growing usage of survey-based approaches to find out how diverse and active an audience is.

The thick lines connecting the red, green, and blue clusters show that themes are mixing a lot, especially when it comes to trust, communication, and disinformation. The central node communication serves as a conceptual nexus connecting health communication, public trust, and political messaging. During the epidemic, disinformation about public health policies became political, which led to studies that combined digital media analysis with crisis communication frameworks [7]. The common connection between covid-19, politics, and false information shows how political and health

discourses have become mixed, with false information campaigns and social media dynamics affecting both election results and public compliance. This integration represents a significant methodological transition towards the examination of multi-domain information ecosystems that surpass conventional disciplinary confines.

The image shows that political communication research is becoming more data-driven and involves people from many different fields. Previous research concentrated on electoral campaigns and media framing; however, contemporary trends emphasize crisis communication, public health, and behavioral trust as new areas of interest. The closeness between political participation, democracy, and social media

shows that we should keep paying attention to civic engagement and online discussion. Simultaneously, the enduring prevalence of disinformation and fake news signifies a continuous apprehension regarding the deterioration of public confidence in democratic institutions. Subsequent research ought to concentrate on comparative, longitudinal, and cross-platform assessments to elucidate the impact of emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence, microtargeting, and algorithmic governance—on the transformation of global political communication ecosystems. This corresponds with the appeals from [1], [12] for comprehensive models that link media systems, public conduct, and institutional responsibility.

b. Overlay Visualization

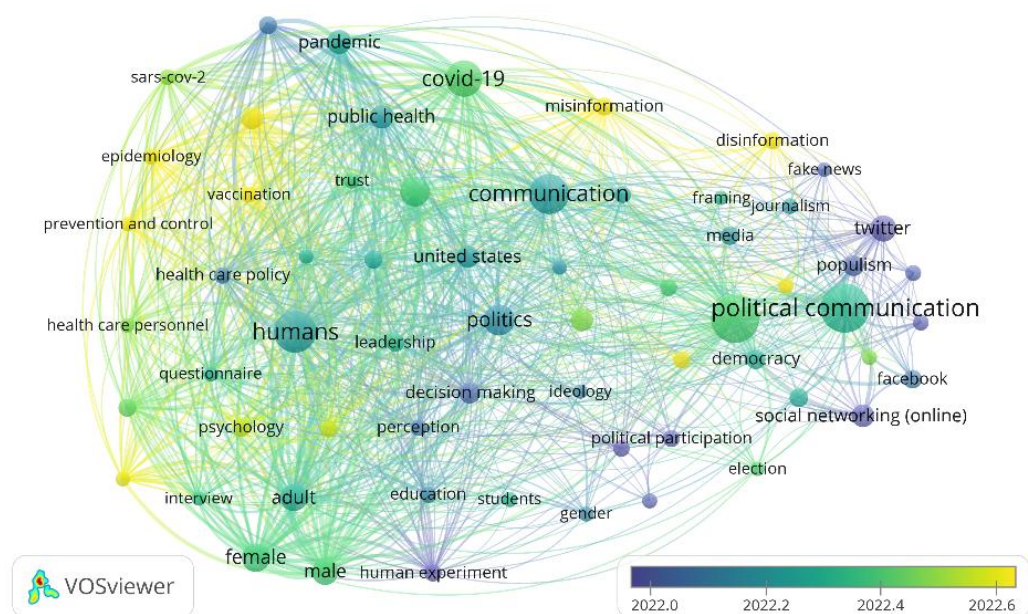


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The VOSviewer overlay above shows how study themes in political communication

changed over time from 2022 to the middle of 2022. The color gradient, which goes from dark

blue (older) to yellow (more recent), shows the average year that each keyword was published. This graph shows how political communication research has changed since the pandemic. Themes about covid-19, public health, and pandemic communication show up earlier in the timeline (blue shades) and then move on to new ideas like misinformation, fake news, and framing (yellow shades). This change shows that researchers are now more interested in the problems of information integrity, media trust, and digital polarization in democratic settings than in health messaging that is based on crises.

In the middle of the map, terms like "communication," "humans," and "politics" stay green all the time. This shows that they are important and cross-disciplinary subjects that have been around for a long time. Their endurance suggests that research on political communication is preserving robust conceptual foundations pertaining to human behavior, leadership, and ideological framing, while consistently incorporating contemporary topical dimensions. The significant connection between public health and trust indicates that research conducted in 2022 integrated political and health communication frameworks, investigating the influence of leadership and media credibility on citizens' compliance and perceptions during crises. The intersection of communication and political involvement underscores the field's ongoing engagement with the behavioral and participatory dimensions of

democratic discourse.

The yellow nodes, on the other hand, show new areas of political communication research that will be important in 2022. These keywords demonstrate that more and more recent writings are about the post-truth world, where algorithmic distribution, populist rhetoric, and social media networks shape political reality. The right-hand side, which is largely dark green and blue, shows established research lines, while the yellow side shows newer focuses on digital ethics, cognitive bias, and information verification. This overlay map shows a change over time from pandemic communication to new debates about how to handle misinformation and how to build political narratives through technology. This shows a shift in methodology from reactive crisis studies to proactive studies of media responsibility and democratic resilience.

c. Citation Analysis

The body of literature concerning misinformation and public trust has proliferated significantly, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the principal publications delineated in Table 1. [13] paper "Lazy, not biased" (1,287 citations) had a big impact on the debate about disinformation. It said that people are more likely to believe fake news because they are mentally lazy than because they are politically biased. Their recent collaboration with [14], "Fighting COVID-19 Misinformation on Social Media," further advanced this line of investigation by proving that accuracy-nudging strategies

can effectively minimize misinformation sharing online. In addition to this cognitive approach, [15], [16] looked at conspiracy theories as psychological and social impediments to following public health rules. Simultaneously, [17], [18] investigated vaccine hesitancy and trust dynamics, uncovering the intricate relationship among media exposure, belief systems, and vaccination behavior. [19]

investigated the rising peril of deepfakes and synthetic media to political discourse, whereas [20] employed GIS and spatial analysis to delineate the spread of the pandemic. This research collectively highlights an increasing acknowledgment that disinformation constitutes not only a communicative concern but a complex challenge interconnecting cognition, technology, and public health resilience.

Table 1. Most Cited Article

Citations	Author and Year	Title
1287	[21]	Lazy, not biased: Susceptibility to partisan fake news is better explained by lack of reasoning than by motivated reasoning
1248	[22]	Fighting COVID-19 Misinformation on Social Media: Experimental Evidence for a Scalable Accuracy-Nudge Intervention
1013	[23]	Understanding Conspiracy Theories
852	[24]	COVID-19 Vaccination Hesitancy in the United States: A Rapid National Assessment
799	[25]	Conspiracy theories as barriers to controlling the spread of COVID-19 in the US
658	[26]	What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848
628	[18]	Confidence and receptivity for covidâ€•19 vaccines: A rapid systematic review
508	[27]	Deepfakes and Disinformation: Exploring the Impact of Synthetic Political Video on Deception, Uncertainty, and Trust in News
484	[28]	Spatial analysis and GIS in the study of COVID-19. A review

Source: Output Publish or Perish, 2025

Table 1 shows the most referenced papers about false information, conspiracy theories, and how people view things during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. These publications encompass subjects ranging from cognitive psychology and media studies to public health and digital communication,

demonstrating how disinformation and trust influence society reactions to crises. The citation numbers show how much each work has affected academia, pointing forth important theoretical and empirical contributions that have shaped this field of inquiry across disciplines.

d. Density Visualization

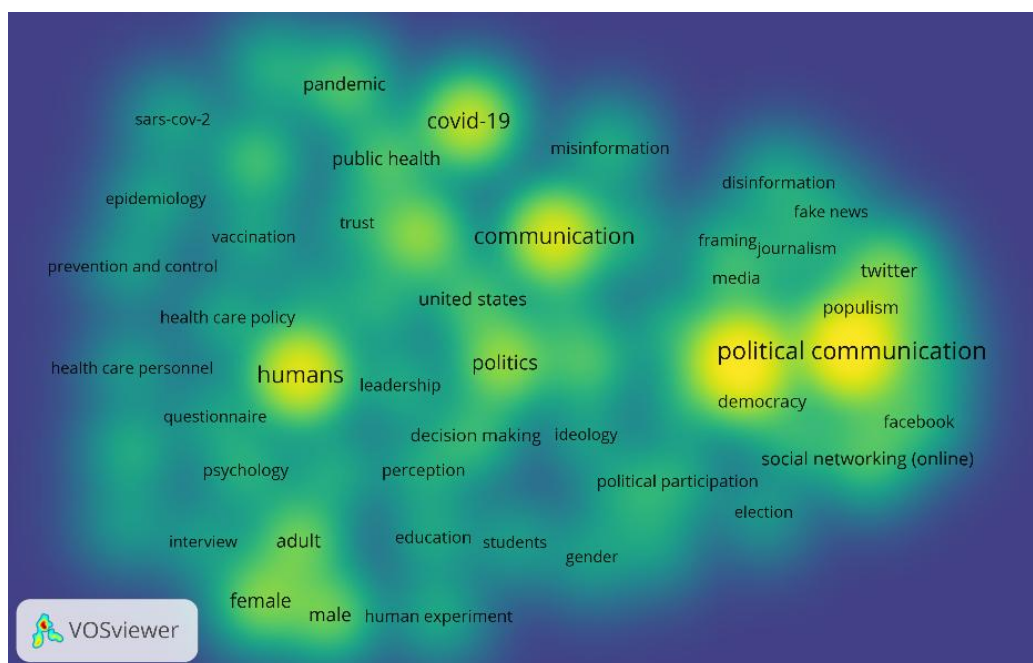


Figure 3. Density Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The above VOSviewer density visualization shows the regions of political communication that have been studied the most, depending on how often keywords appear together. Yellow areas are brighter and show where there is a lot of scholarly activity, while green to blue parts are darker and show where there are less publications. The most important nodes—political communication, communication, covid-19, and humans—show the main ideas that shape worldwide research. This distribution demonstrates that current political communication research is fundamentally anchored in subjects related to digital media, democratic processes, and public health discourse. The strong focus on political communication and social networking (online) suggests that digital platforms like Twitter and Facebook are still important places for political

discussion, framing, and spreading false information. This shows how technology, media, and politics are still connected in the post-pandemic research agenda.

The second key focus, which is on covid-19, public health, and trust, shows how political and health communication research are coming together, especially during global crises. This means that things like public trust, leadership credibility, and crisis management are now important parts of understanding the political aspects of communication. In the meantime, the moderate-intensity zones, like psychology, decision making, and education, show that there is a growing interest in behavioral and cognitive techniques across many fields. The density visualization shows that political communication has become a

multidimensional research area that connects macro-level institutional communication with micro-level psychological analysis. It also shows how important it is to have

integrative models that deal with misinformation, digital participation, and trust in government.

e. Co-Authorship Network

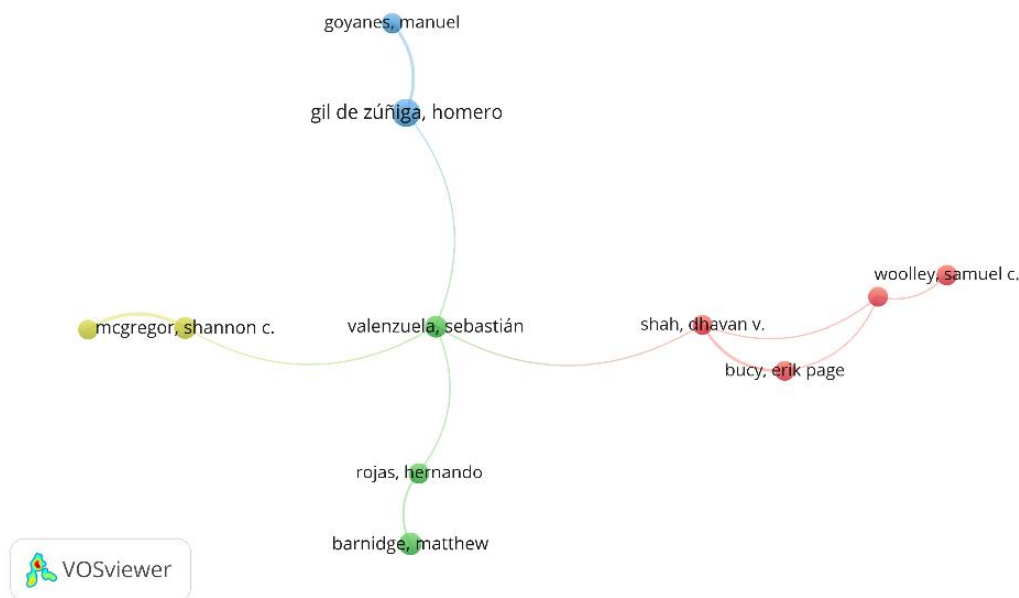


Figure 4. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The VOSviewer author cooperation network visualization shows the main groups of co-authorship in political communication research. These groups show how renowned scholars are connected intellectually and geographically. Three main collaboration clusters stand out: the red cluster, which is led by Dhavan V. Shah, Erik P. Bucy, and Samuel C. Woolley, is based in the U.S. and focuses on digital politics, misinformation, and computational propaganda; the green cluster, which is led by Sebastián Valenzuela, Hernando Rojas, and Matthew Barnidge, is based in Latin America and focuses on social media participation, political engagement, and media trust;

and the blue cluster, which connects Homero Gil de Zúñiga and Manuel Goyanes, is based in Europe and focuses on news consumption, online deliberation, and civic engagement. The smaller connection between Shannon C. McGregor and Valenzuela shows that scholars from both media studies and political behavior are starting to work together across disciplines. The network shows that political communication is a global field, but its collaborative structures are still mostly in one region, with little integration between clusters. This means that there are chances for deeper cooperation and knowledge exchange across continents and across different themes and methods.

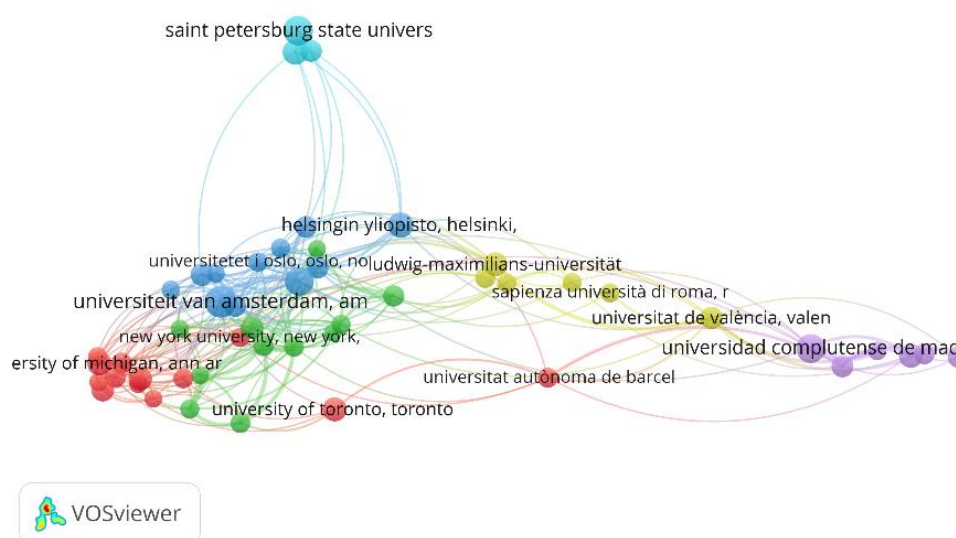


Figure 5. Affiliation Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The VOSviewer institutional collaboration network shows how academic affiliations around the world work together to help with research on political communication. The map shows a number of interconnected clusters that show partnerships between top colleges in different regions and countries. The red cluster, which includes New York University, the University of Michigan, and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, shows that there is a significant transatlantic partnership on digital media, democracy, and political involvement. The blue and green clusters show that European universities are working together to study media systems, comparative communication, and how to deal with false information. These

universities include Saint Petersburg State University, Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki), Universitetet i Oslo, and Universiteit van Amsterdam. The yellow–purple network, which comprises Sapienza Università di Roma, Universitat de València, and Universidad Complutense de Madrid, on the other hand, shows a Mediterranean academic axis that brings together sociopolitical and cultural points of view into the field. In general, the image shows that research on political communication is quite transnational but also focused on certain regions. Europe is the main hub of scholarly collaboration that connects North American and Southern European academic groups.

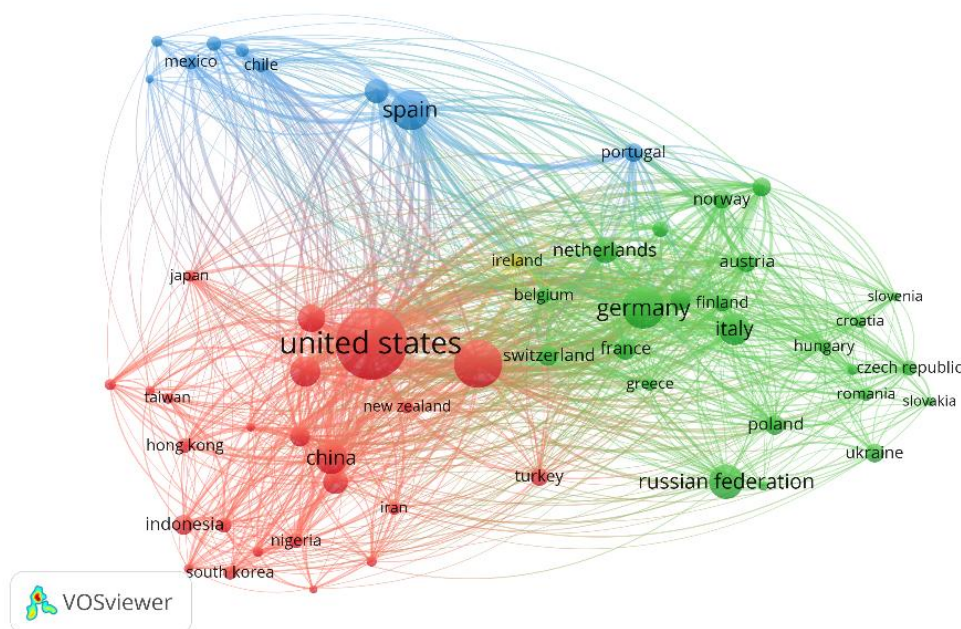


Figure 6. Country Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The VOSviewer country cooperation network map shows the global picture of research collaborations in political communication. It shows three main regional groupings. The red cluster, which is mostly made up of the US and China, is the hub of international collaboration. It shows how these two countries are pioneers in creating and sharing knowledge on digital politics, social media, and misinformation. This group also includes important members from South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and Taiwan. This shows a strong connection between Asia and the Pacific that is based on studies of technology innovation and communication across platforms. Germany, Italy, France, and the Russian Federation lead the green cluster. This shows how the European research network is connected through comparative political systems, media pluralism, and governance communication. The

blue cluster, which includes Spain, Portugal, Mexico, and Chile, shows that Latin America and Europe are working together more and more on participatory media and civic participation. The visualization shows that the United States is still the most important and influential center for global collaboration. However, the growing connections between European and Asian countries show that scholarly influence is becoming less centralized and that political communication research is moving toward more balanced, multi-regional academic cooperation.

3.2 Discussion

a. Practical Implications

The results of this bibliometric study provide important practical information for researchers, policymakers, and organizations who work in political communication and media regulation. The identification of theme clusters, especially those centered on

disinformation, digital democracy, and public trust, offers practical direction for governments and civil society organizations seeking to enhance media literacy and information integrity frameworks. The keyword and country collaboration analyses reveal that subjects like fake news, social networking, and public health communication have become more important. This shows that we need to invest strategically in digital communication infrastructure and media regulation that is fair. Second, the study shows that most research is done in Western and industrialized economies. This means that there are chances for rising regions, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to build collaborative networks and get new ideas for research. Institutions in developing nations can utilize these insights to synchronize their research agendas with global trends, cultivate international alliances, and improve their exposure in indexed databases. Lastly, the visualization of top authors, institutions, and countries gives universities and funding agencies tools to set priorities for cross-border and interdisciplinary collaborations. This keeps political communication research relevant in the face of digital transformation, which is important for dealing with real-world problems in governance, health, and civic life.

b. Theoretical Contributions

This study enhances theoretical discourse by fostering a comprehensive comprehension of the intellectual framework and theme progression within

the field of political communication. The bibliometric mapping enhances existing theoretical frameworks—namely agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and public sphere theory—by contextualizing them within current discussions on digital ecosystems and algorithmic media settings. The establishment of clusters concerning communication, political engagement, and misinformation signifies a fundamental transition from conventional mass media frameworks to networked and participatory communication models [7]. Furthermore, by combining bibliometric visualization with thematic evolution analysis, this work offers an empirical basis for comprehending the adaptation of theoretical discourse to global crises, such as COVID-19, and socio-technical phenomena like populism and data-driven campaigning. The longitudinal view connects micro-level behavioral theories, such as trust, perception, and decision-making, with macro-level structural frameworks, including institutional communication, media governance, and cross-national political systems. The study underscores the interdisciplinary nature of political communication, establishing it as a convergent field that integrates communication science, political sociology, data analytics, and psychology within a cohesive empirical framework.

c. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This work recognizes numerous limitations, despite its extensive breadth, which

provide avenues for future research. First, the analysis only uses the Scopus database, which, while large, may not include important publications that are indexed in Web of Science, Google Scholar, or regional databases. Subsequent research may utilize multi-database triangulation to improve representativeness and incorporate non-English articles to reduce Western bias. Second, the bibliometric method is strong for quantitative mapping, but it can't fully show the subtleties of political communication theories or local socio-political dynamics. Integrating systematic literature reviews or qualitative meta-syntheses could enhance the explanatory depth of these findings. Third, the study's time range (2000–2025) encompasses a period of swift digital development; nonetheless, persistent technological disruptions—such as the emergence of artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, and synthetic media—are poised to reshape the field's parameters in the imminent future. Future study should investigate the impact of developing technologies on communication ethics, information credibility, and civic engagement in both democratic and authoritarian settings. Finally, citation-based indicators cannot fully evaluate the quality or theoretical impact of individual works, even though network analyses show collaboration and thematic

trends. To better understand conceptual influence and theory-building trajectories, it is best to use other methods, such as content analysis or co-word semantic modeling.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study titled “Trends and Patterns in Political Communication Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Articles” offers a thorough examination of the field's evolution over the last twenty years, highlighting its growing complexity, interdisciplinarity, and global significance. The results show that political communication has moved away from traditional media-centered models and toward a digital, data-driven, and participatory one. Major topics including misinformation, digital democracy, public trust, and health communication show how global crises and changes in technology have changed what scholars care about most. The analyses of co-authorship, institutional, and nation networks demonstrate that the United States and Europe continue to be significant contributors; nevertheless, rising collaborations from Asia and Latin America suggest a steady diversification of academic impact. The topic has grown beyond only electoral politics to include concerns of governance, ethics, and the effects of algorithms, which shows how important it is to understand how democracy can survive in the digital age. In general, this study shows that political communication is not only an evolving field of study, but also an important way to understand current social and political realities. It calls for ongoing collaboration across disciplines, regional inclusion, and new theoretical ideas to deal with the problems of misinformation and civic engagement in a connected world.

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