


OPEN PEER REVIEW

Social Media as a Political Arena: A Qualitative Analysis of Online Activism

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The manuscript could benefit from a more detailed description of the participant selection process and the rationale behind the choice of interviewees. While theoretical saturation is mentioned, elaborating on this concept and how it was achieved would strengthen the methodological rigor. Additionally, incorporating information on the demographics of the interviewees, beyond their professional background, could provide a more nuanced understanding of the perspectives presented.

The discussion touches upon international comparisons in hate speech legislation but does not delve deeply into specific examples or how different legal systems address the balance between hate speech regulation and freedom of expression. Including a comparative analysis of a few notable jurisdictions could enrich the discussion and provide readers with concrete examples of how different societies navigate these issues.

While the manuscript discusses the challenges digital platforms face in moderating content, it would be beneficial to include examples of specific policies or initiatives that have been successful or controversial. This could offer practical insights into how digital platforms are currently addressing the balance between curbing hate speech and ensuring freedom of expression.

The conclusion section briefly mentions the limitations and avenues for future research. Expanding this section to more clearly articulate specific questions or areas that future studies could explore would be valuable. For instance, the impact of evolving digital communication technologies on hate speech legislation and freedom of expression warrants further examination.

The literature review effectively sets the stage for the study but could be enhanced by incorporating more recent studies, especially those examining the impact of social media and digital communication on hate speech and freedom of expression. Highlighting emerging trends and debates in the field could provide a more comprehensive background for the study.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The manuscript would benefit from a stronger theoretical grounding. Integrating existing theories on freedom of expression and legal studies on hate speech could provide a more robust framework for analyzing the interview data. This would also help in situating the study within the broader academic debate on these issues.

The section on the societal impact of hate speech, particularly the victim impact, is crucial. It would be valuable to expand this discussion to include more about the support systems for victims and how these can be improved within the context of balancing freedom of expression. Providing examples from the interviews or case studies could enrich this analysis.

The manuscript offers insights into legislative and policy responses but stops short of providing clear recommendations. Elaborating on specific policy changes or new approaches that emerged from the analysis would make the study more actionable for policymakers and stakeholders. Suggestions for how digital platforms can better balance hate speech regulation and freedom of expression would be particularly useful.

While the study mentions limitations, a more in-depth reflection on how these might impact the findings and interpretations would enhance the manuscript's credibility. For example, discussing the potential biases in participant selection or the challenges of interpreting qualitative data could provide readers with a clearer understanding of the study's scope and reliability.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, expanding on the ethical considerations involved in conducting the research, especially in terms of protecting the anonymity and safety of participants who are victims of hate speech, would be beneficial. This could include a discussion of the measures taken to ensure ethical rigor throughout the study process.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.