

Social Media Use and Political Trust in Germany

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Abstract : Social media use in connection to political trust and political positions seems to be more relevant than ever for German society given the success of right radical parties in the European elections in 2024, especially among young voters, as well as the increasing use and operationalization of social media for political information and representation. This paper contributes to the study of social media use and trust in politics in Germany by specifically analysing the connection between different social media platforms and political trust while including the political position of social media users. Multiple regression analyses were conducted based on the German digilog@bw dataset from 2022 with 1818 participants. The results suggest that people with radical political positions tend to use social media more frequently while especially Telegram and TikTok are characterized by users with radical political positions. Additionally, different platforms were found to vary in their effect on political trust. This study shows that social media can't be generalized under one category but needs to be examined in its diversity to combat current developments and strengthen political trust by employing purposeful and unifying strategies.

Keywords : social media platforms, political trust, political positions, polarisation

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