Parahyangan Catholic University

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

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Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights:

United States Presidential Election 2016

Undergraduate Thesis

By

Helmut Rachman Nugroho

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Social Profiling dan Hak Asasi Manusia Secara Digital:

Pemilu Presiden Amerika Serikat 2016

Skripsi

Oleh

Helmut Rachman Nugroho

2017330122

Pembimbing

Drs. Sapta Dwikardana, M.Si, Ph.D

Bandung

2021

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
International Relations Department
Study of International Relations

Thesis Validation

Name   : Helmut Rachman Nugroho
NPM   : 2017330122
Title   : Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights: United States Presidential
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Has been examined in the Final Examination
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And thereby declared **PASSED**

The Board of Examiners
Chairperson and Member of Examiners
Anggia Valerisha, S.IP., M.Si.   : _____

Supervisor
Sapta Dwikardana, Ph.D.   : _____

Member of Examiners
Jessica Martha, S.IP., M.I.Pol.   : _____

Approved by,
Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Science

Dr. Pius Sugeng Prasetyo, M.Si

STATEMENT

I, the undersigned

Name	: Helmut Rachman Nugroho
NPM	: 2017330122
Department	: International Relations
Title	: Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights: United States Presidential Election 2016

Hereby declare that this research titled "Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights: United States Presidential Election 2016" is a product of my own intellectual work and is itself unique from others that were previously proposed to gain an academic degree. Ideas, statements, and information acquired from various sources are officially cited in this research in accordance with the generally agreed scientific writing method.

I declare this statement with full responsibility and willing to take any consequences in accordance to academic rules in case this statement is proven to be false.

Bandung, 7th July 2021

Helmut Rachman Nugroho

2017330122

ABSTRACT

Name : Helmut Rachman Nugroho

NPM : 2017330122

Title : Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights: United States Presidential Election 2016

The 2016 US Presidential Election is considered by many to be highly controversial. One of the controversies is the discovery that Ted Cruz and Donald J. Trump employed a data company named Cambridge Analytica to utilize big data based social profiling in their presidential campaign. While Barack Obama has utilized some form of social profiling and big data in his presidential campaign in 2008 and 2012, the issue with Cruz and Trump's data-based campaign is magnified when investigative journalist discovered that the data obtained by the employed data company is from Facebook and other social media platforms through illegal means by using a third-party quiz application that relies on the user's information. This case raises a possible research question on the effect of social profiling to the 2016 US Presidential Campaign. In order to find an answer to this research question, this paper utilized Constructivism as interpreted by John G. Ruggie and the concept of Digital Rights. Constructivism considers that state has a social construct that determines its identity, and that construct can be influenced by individuals in great number. Digital Rights is a concept that extends Human Rights to the digital landscape, which includes the right of digital privacy where everyone is entitled to their data and should be considered as private property that cannot be violated. This research discovered 4 results regarding the effect of big data and social profiling on this case study in which social profiling and big data is now mainstream due to the existence of big data analyst businesses, social profiling could change social construct through immense number of individuals, there are privacy violations that happened in the 2016 election, and finally US laws regarding the protection of privacy are lacking based on modern standards.

Keywords: *big data, data company, political marketing, privacy, social media, social profiling, US, US Presidential Election 2016*

ABSTRAK

Name : Helmut Rachman Nugroho

NPM : 2017330122

Judul : Social Profiling dan Hak Asasi Manusia Secara Digital: Pemilu Presiden Amerika Serikat 2016

Banyak orang yang menganggap Pemilihan Presiden AS tahun 2016 merupakan hal yang sangat kontroversial, alasannya karena Ted Cruz dan Donald J. Trump ditemukan telah mempekerjakan perusahaan data bernama Cambridge Analytica untuk memanfaatkan profil sosial berbasis data besar dalam kampanye presiden mereka. Walaupun Barack Obama telah memanfaatkan beberapa bentuk profiling sosial dan data besar dalam kampanye presidennya pada tahun 2008 dan 2012, isu Cruz dan Trump membesar ketika jurnalis investigasi menemukan bahwa data yang diperoleh perusahaan yang dipekerjakan mereka memperoleh data dari Facebook dan media sosial lainnya melalui cara ilegal dengan menggunakan aplikasi kuis pihak ketiga yang mengandalkan informasi pengguna. Kasus ini memunculkan sebuah pertanyaan penelitian yang perlu diteliti pada pengaruh profil sosial terhadap kampanye presiden AS tahun 2016. Untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian tersebut, analisis ini memanfaatkan konstruktivisme sebagaimana ditafsirkan oleh John G. Ruggie serta konsep hak digital. Konstruktivisme menganggap bahwa negara memiliki konstruk sosial yang menentukan identitasnya, dan konstruk ini dapat dipengaruhi oleh individu dalam jumlah besar. Hak digital adalah konsep yang memperluas hak asasi manusia ke lanskap digital, salah satu hak dalam konsep ini adalah hak privasi digital di mana setiap orang berhak atas data mereka dan harus dianggap sebagai properti pribadi yang tidak dapat disalahgunakkan. Penelitian ini menemukan 4 hasil mengenai pengaruh data besar dan profiling sosial pada studi kasus, profil sosial dan data besar telah menjadi sesuatu yang normal oleh karena keberadaan bisnis swasta dalam bidang analisa data besar, kedua profil sosial berpotensi mengubah konstruk sosial melalui individu dalam jumlah besar, ketiga adanya pelanggaran privasi yang telah terjadi dalam pemilihan 2016, dan terakhir undang-undang AS mengenai perlindungan privasi tidak memenuhi standar modern.

Kata Kunci: data besar, perusahaan data, kampanye politik, privasi, sosial media, profil sosial, AS, Pemilihan Presiden AS tahun 2016

Foreword

First, the writer would like to express his gratitude to God for placing him within this world to experience it.

The author made this research, titled "Social Profiling and Digital Human Rights: United States Presidential Election 2016" to finish his undergraduate thesis as a student of International Relations major in Parahyangan Catholic University. There are imperfections within this paper and the author understand that many segments could be improved. Hence, the author welcomes any form of constructive criticism to improve this paper further. The writer hopes that this research would create more discussion for the readers regarding the topic of discussion and would inspire more research in the future.

In constructing this paper, the author realizes that the support he acquired was one of the main reasons it could be finished, without them; the author would not have the capability to construct it, be it intellectually, physically, and mentally. First the author wishes to express the deepest gratitude towards all lecturers of UNPAR's International Relations major. There are several instructors that are especially influential to the author's mindset and perspective. First to Drs. Sapta Dwikardana, M.Si, Ph.D. who is also the writers' supervisor in this endeavor and has helped tremendously in many aspects, including his knowledge and perseverance. The researcher also wishes to express his gratitude to lecturer Sylvia Yazid, S.IP, MPPM, Ph.D. and to the late Drs. P.Y. Nur Indro, M.Si. for their unique, engaging, and most importantly fun lectures that directly challenges and influences author's perspective.

company for many years and still even today. The author is beyond gratitude to these two men and wish them the best of luck.

Finally, to the dearest and most special friend the author ever has, Aris. His role in the author's life was and is still enormous. Without him the researcher will not even reach this point of life and it is not an exaggeration. Gratitude the author has to you, brother, is beyond words and expression even though the writers wish to write so much more. The author believes that this person can achieve something substantial and perhaps more, thank you.

Bandung, 25 July 2021

Helmut Rachman Nugroho

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Word Glossary

No	Terminology	Definition
1	Algorithm	A program, system, or codes which would act as a control mechanism formed after a learned routine, these routines came from the activities of the users which would be profiled by the system.
2	Big Data	A collection of data, a set, that is almost impossible to be obtained and processed through traditional database capabilities because of the sheer amount of data.
3	Big Data Companies/Data Companies	Private businesses who are providing big data and social profiling services.
4	Bots/Bot Accounts	Pre-programmed artificial intelligence that are made to do specific task and could adapt to situations. They are placed within social media disguised as real humans.
5	Digital Landscape	Synonym for the internet.
6	Engagement	Terminology used to describe a user interaction with contents within the internet.
7	Personalized	Something that is customized personally for each user.
8	Social Media	A platform of socialization through the digital landscape that houses multiple features ranging from informational to entertainment.
9	Social Media Algorithm	A variation of algorithm used in social media.
10	Social Networking	The act of user interaction with other users in the digital landscape. Can also be used synonymously with social media.
11	Social Profiling	A series of process to create an extensive and detailed 'virtual model' of individuals that are entirely composed of collected data from multiple sources.
12	Social Profile	The end-result/model produced by social profiling.
13	User Data	User's private information that could contain many data ranging from age, gender, and occupation to more complicated information such as daily routine, health, and political opinions.
14	User Interface	The interactive interface in digital applications for the users.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In United States of America, the year 2016 was a politically active year. A Presidential Election was happening, red versus blue, a nation divided into two sides of political spectrum in the battle for the presidential seat. This year however was different than the previous years, in which politicians have the technology to further improve their political campaign.

Enter Cambridge Analytica, a service company that specializes in user data and behavioral analysis, which claims its capability to analyze multitudes of individual's data to profiles users who are marketable.[1] As a data analyst, the company boast their wide range of user data sources, including a variety of popular social media platforms, specifically Facebook to polling quizzes such as a personality test.[2] The Republican Party saw an opportunity with this service, in which Ted Cruz was the first one to hire the company and employ their unique technological prowess.

When Cruz was still in the running for the 2016 presidential candidacy, he fully believes in the capability of big data for political campaign. During the early preliminaries of the presidential voting, the service divided six different kinds of individuals, two of them are categorized as "timid nationalist" and "aggressive

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[1] Hilary Osborne, "What Is Cambridge Analytica? The Firm at the Centre of Facebook's Data Breach," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, March 18, 2018), https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/18/what-is-cambridge-analytica-firm-at-centre-of-facebook-data-breach.

[2] Ibid.

nationalist" are the primary target for Cruz's political marketing.[3] The campaign for these two categories was different in its delivery, the stance regarding issues and politics are more or less the same however; it was within the messaging, how it was delivered that creates a lasting impact.[4]

After the Indiana Primary, Cruz forfeits his candidacy to give way to Donald Trump, and the Cambridge Analytica team followed suit[5]. Allegedly, Trump's campaign did not rely on data sciences as Trump himself viewed the practice as 'overrated'. Despite of the following, Britain's Channel 4 was able to confirm Analytica's important role in Trump's efforts as they were the utmost contributor towards research, analytics, targeting, digital and televised campaign, and their collection of data influenced the campaign's strategy.[6]

With that out of the way, creates a lot of exposition to do for the background of this analysis. Firstly; *social media*, it is a bit different than the conventional platform such as television, radio, and newspapers, despite its form of media; they are not necessarily a social one. Many industry experts consider media as "social" only when an interaction between two or more individuals could be sustained. There needs to be reciprocation and exchange between parties; it's not just about consuming information that turns a platform into a "social" one.[7]

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[3] Scott Detrow, "What Did Cambridge Analytica Do During The 2016 Election?," NPR (NPR, March 20, 2018),
https://www.npr.org/2018/03/20/595338116/what-did-cambridge-analytica-do-during-the-2016-election.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Christian Fuchs, *Social Media: A Critical Introduction* (Los Angeles, California: Sage, 2017), 6-7.

Social media, is usually categorized by the masses and experts alike as a part of the '*new-media*'. The 'new' refers to wide and rapid changes of media in multiple aspect, ranging from its production, to its distribution of said medium to the user, and also its usage by the consumers.[8] There are a few characteristics of this particular media, the first one is *digital* where all information are stored as numbers within a machine. It is considered to be *interactive* due to the audience having the ability to interact and is not a passive participant anymore; hence the term 'user', *hypertext* which means the work contains materials that is connected to numerous other works which can be navigated through, *networked* in which users are almost free to explore a series of decentralized connections, v*irtual* in which the users experience an alternate form of reality to some capacity, and finally *simulated* because it is a fabricated world or experience designed for the end-users.[9]

The usage of *social media* can also be considered as the activities of *international communication*. In the traditional political sense, *international communication* is a term exclusively used in the sense of state to state relations, be it between their head of states and or government or between other governmental actors with the official capability to establish such communication. These interstate interactions are usually on the topic of socio-economy and politics, state cultures, and military concerns .[10] However, with the rapid development of communication technology; the sphere of *international communication* has been expanded to include non-state actors such as *Non-*

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[8] Martin Lister et al., *New Media: a Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London, England: Routledge, 2010), 1-16.

[9] Ibid, 16-44.

[10] Daya Kishan Thussu, *International Communication: Continuity and Change* (London, England: Hodder Arnold, 2006), 1-10.

Governmental Organization (NGO) and *Public Interest Organization* (PINGOs) with examples of Amnesty International and International Rescue Committee, business and economic stakeholders in *International Business Organizations* (IBO); for instance International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).[11] This expansion would also include individual communications; a people-to-people interaction that has no bearings on grand politics or macro-economics, and usually more focused on more personal topics such as education and cultural exchanges.[12]

In the realm of social studies, there is a surge of discussion regarding *user and social profiling*, which becomes the major theme of this research. To be frank, this term is used to describe a series of process to create a 'virtual model' of individuals that are entirely composed of collected data.[13] These data can be obtained through public domains, most notably, from *social media* where the majority of its users shares their information online.[14] For example, data such as age, location, birth dates, gender, occupation, and education, are usually present in user's profiles.[15] More complex data mining can acquire preferences, personality, social behavior, and more through more complex analysis of the users action within the social media sphere.[16]

While *Algorithm*, is a common term used by computer scientist and engineers to describe a program, system, or codes which would act as a control mechanism formed

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Muhammad Bilal et al., "Social Profiling: A Review, Taxonomy, and Challenges," *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 22, no. 7 (July 10, 2019): pp. 433-450, https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2018.0670.

[14] *The Social Dilemma* (Netflix, 2020).

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

after a learned routine. These routines came from the activities of the users which would be profiled by the system and would be able to provide their end user a personalized content and feed to keep their users engaged in the activities of *social media* interaction.[17] *Algorithm* has been used extensively in the rise of *social media*, may would even call it the actual backbone of these services. The program allows its users to browse contents that are suitably tailored for them with. This unique usage of the system gives the name of *social media algorithm*, however; this is also the main problem regarding the usage of this system in *social media*.

Lastly, there is big data, a collection of data that is almost impossible to be obtained and processed through traditional database capabilities because of the sheer amount of data.[18] They are usually characterized with rapidly increasing amount of collected information that are varied and diverse in nature yet interconnects with each other.[19] Big data analyst is the specific analysis of big data set, which requires specific tools to exceed the traditional storage, processing, and computational power.[20] This is needed in order to contain, compute, and manage the atypical extensive amount of data that keeps increasing rapidly.[21]

Why is this important, to which the notion of social profiling being used for political campaign is problematic? Social profiling, is the act of identification, often

[17] Stefania Milan, "When Algorithms Shape Collective Action: Social Media and the Dynamics of Cloud Protesting," *Social Media + Society* 1, no. 2 (2015): pp. 2-3, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115622481.

[18] Youssra Riahi and Sara Riahi, "Big Data and Big Data Analytics: Concepts, Types and Technologies," *International Journal of Research and Engineering* 5, no. 9 (2018): pp. 524-528, https://doi.org/10.21276/ijre.2018.5.9.5.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

through the utilization of algorithm in a massive scale. This alone is not an international nor political issue, however, this is exceptionally relevant when this technological prowess is applied to political campaigns such as the US Presidential Election.

To contend, say a politician relies on social profiling for his campaign. In any marketing scheme there has to be a target demographic which is no different with political marketing. A political campaign commissions the person's policies, political focus, goals and the likes are usually tailored to a specific demographic that the politician seeks to persuade so they would be more inclined to vote him. However, with social profiling, this concept is taken up a notch. The implementation of this system makes it more than possible to target emotional reaction based on their activities in social media. Political campaign is then transformed from trying to persuade masses with relevant policies and strategies, to one of emotional relevancy, seeking to rile a fervor affection.

Another issue of importance is regarding democracy. In politics, democracy is difficult to define, no real consensus among scholars of social-politics regarding a single definition. However, there are some characteristics that are generally accepted by most, one of them is political freedom.[22] Political freedom in democracy and by extent, politics and international relations, is about individual freedom from political oppression and coercion.[23] In the issue of US Presidential Election 2016, there is an assumption that due to the extensive usage of big data social profiling is contradictory

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[22] Richard Roll and John Talbott, "Political Freedom, Economic Liberty, and Prosperity," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 3 (July 2003): pp. 75-89,
https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2003.0062.

[23] Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

to political freedom. Due to the effectivity of individual micro-targeting that is presented by social profiling and big data, along with the violation of privacy that occurred in obtaining said information database, there is a real discussion to be had that social profiling is violating political freedom of the citizens of America.

There is an inherent problem in discussing social profiling in international politics or any political science for the matter, it's still a relatively new concept to social scholars but in practice is a field that has been refined for years in other territories. Hence, to properly convey an analysis of this nature, the importance of using an anchor is undeniable. The 2016 United States Presidential Election is one of the most heated political events in recent history, especially within the confines of *new media politics*. One could even say this event is what popularize both the term and the activities, in one way or another. Moreover, due to the fact that it occurred a few years back, it is still well documented. Which is why this paper will not be using the most recent presidential election.

1.2 Problem Identification
1.2.1 Problem Description

Following the relatively short explanation on the role of *social profiling* in manipulating individual's perception through subtle means, it is asserted that in order to gain a user extended engagement in their platform, the *social media algorithm* would collect data of the customer to create a model of its user. The model would then be used to feed them contents they are more likely to relate with which would then result in the

user's interaction within the *social media* platform extensively and would see more advertisements in the platform.[24]

Hence the relation and its inherent problem with political freedom in the *new media* is if the system will give contents that their users might like and manipulate them into engaging with said subject matter and therefore ingeniously shape their beliefs for the sake of extended usage, will surely have an everlasting effect into a user's political perspective because they are now an effective and engaging composition in a more politically involved era.[25] Previous research related to this particular topic has shown that there are ways that the *social media* affects the political perspective of a person. One example is analyzed by Matthew Hindman, a well-known award-winning author, researcher, and associate professor of George Washington University analyzed the role of *fake news* and *disinformation* on *Twitter*. Within his research, it was discovered that inaccurate and false information spreads like wild-fire in said *social media* platform.[26] The main purpose of Hindman's analysis was to find out how fabricated information could be utilized by any parties to alter the general consensus in a group. His primary case study is used to explore the assumption within this paper, which is the United States 2016 Presidential Election. The result of his findings are mostly aligned with the first assumption, however there are other disconcerting discoveries that the research has unearth.[27] *Fake news* are all engaged by *Twitter* users very extensively to the point that

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Matthew Hindman, "Disinformation, 'Fake News' and Influence Campaigns on Twitter," Knight Foundation (Knight Foundation, October 2018), https://knightfoundation.org/reports/disinformation-fake-news-and-influence-campaigns-on-twitter/.

[27] Ibid.

in 2018, around 2 years after the 2016 election, the same fabricated news that were spread on the duration of the election, are still among the top 10 news and information engaged and circulated around *Twitter*. Moreover, the accounts that spreads the *fake information* are still active and even acquire a larger following than back in 2016 despite being proven to be bot accounts or semi-automatic accounts operated by automated programs.[28]

This implies that the *social media algorithm* of *Twitter* recommended these false articles to their users despite the fabricated nature of the information this news have. This is most likely happened because they contain a few keywords that is usually engaged by a great number of their users. This leads to *Twitter* to constantly deliver these fake contents to their user based on their preference of activities on the platform to extend their engagement time in *Twitter* and to make them return for more similar contents. This basically shows that the *algorithm* by chance, has affected the political mindset of their user base to keep the engagement from the individuals using the platform. In the example presented above by Hindman, the medium of the manipulation is false information, however; to shape an opinion, there is no need to use *fake news*. A carefully selected article can be used effectively to either emphasize or minimalize a point of view. They are selected by the *algorithm* again through the usage of keywords in either the article or the post bearing the news and suggested this information to users who are likely to engage with them usually out of support for the related piece of information.

This blatant manipulation of political thoughts for the sake of extensive *engagement* and *capitalism* is a violation of individual political freedom because the

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[28] Ibid.

practice of this deplorable system implies that a person's thoughts is not of his own, but made out of this political bubble in *social media*, through crafted out of contents we engaged with and people we relate with, while all of them were suggested by the *algorithm* of *social media*.

1.2.2 Research Limitation

Before continuing towards the explanation, there are limitations that should be placed and should be understood for. The analysis will be limited to the events of the 2016 United States Presidential Election; therefore, all events, subject, and object of studies will be limited to the particular time and other previous and following events that may affected the event and has been influenced by the event. The reason for choosing the 2016 election is based on a few things. The first one is as mentioned before, it is already a well-documented event and the information needed to research it are widely available and accessible. Secondly, is the fact that there is a different element that plays in 2016 election. Although in the 2012 election Obama had used similar method of big data strategies, in 2016 Trump hired the service of Cambridge Analytica, a private corporation, for utilizing their existing big data and social profiling system, an element of corporation and capitalism turn the 2016 election to be more interesting to research. Then there are actors of research, the actors that are discussed within this paper are Cambridge Analytica, Trump including his campaign team, Twitter, and Facebook. While Cambridge Analytica and Trump are two separate entities, they are often referenced as one in this paper due to the company's contractual obligation to Donald J. Trump to cooperate with their political marketing effort. Twitter and

Facebook are the main social media platform due to them being the main source and implementation of Cambridge Analytica's big data and social profiling system.

1.2.3 Formulation of the Problem

The reason *social media* such as *Twitter* and *Facebook* are the research focus is stated in the background of this paper. It has a few interesting aspects that is ideal for this analysis, the first one is that the overwhelming majority of their contents are from their users; individuals and institutions alike, secondly, they massively emphasize on users' interaction with each other, and the last aspect is their heavy reliance on *algorithm* to suggest contents to their end-users. Meanwhile, the particular timeframe of the 2016 US Presidential Election is chosen because as stated, it is one of the biggest political situations that propagates the utilization of *social media politics* and *social media activism* to the mainstream.

Established upon the exposition so far, the author would like to compose the research question of this paper;

"What is The Effect of Social Profiling in The US Presidential Election 2016?"

1.3 Research Purpose and Uses

Similar to what has been previously stated, the purpose and main focus of this paper is to figure out what is the effect of social profiling in the 2016 US Presidential Election. It is important because the ramification of political freedom of great many individuals all over the world can be influenced by experts of data analyst that have access to big data. This analysis would hopefully encourage further research in regards to the effect

of social profiling in international relations and politics as they becoming more mainstream and accessible than ever before.

1.4 Literature Review

The reality that *social media* has control over our opinions and to an extent; political perspective of the majority of their users is subtly manipulated by the *algorithm* of the platform is in fact disturbing if not outright absurd. They have become an entity of *capitalism*, a corporation that has no semblance of morality to be ever given the capability to do so.

Regarding the issue itself, there are many literatures that has dissected this very issue, questioned the method and morality of these social platforms. Previous analysis discovered many disturbing findings which has been adapted into this essay. To begin with, an expert in new media and digital cultures Stefania Milan has researched a topic that is similar to this paper regarding *social media algorithm*s, however she chose focus on one of the physical manifestation side of the discussion, protest born out of *social media* virality, or dubbed '*cloud protesting*', and also fixated into another social platform which is *Facebook*.[29] Her research so far is aligned with the initial assumption of this paper, in which the data has shown that companies have the interest to keep their users engagement for self-centered *capitalistic* purposes through positive affectivity, in which the users of social platforms are engineered to support contents through various social features such as giving likes, sharing post, or buy products. These actions in turn

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[29] Stefania Milan, "When Algorithms Shape Collective Action: Social Media and the Dynamics of Cloud Protesting," *Social Media + Society* 1, no. 2 (2015): pp. 1-10, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115622481.

segregates individuals from 'conflictive' engagement such as discussion and criticism, coupled with the interconnectedness of social platform, the aforementioned strategy has shaped the system into one that steers people into participating in collective actions that are supportive of each other with very rare criticism of each other. In turn, it has created a lack of political potency caused by the lack of debate and discussion. [30] The discoveries made by this research has been very helpful in many ways to cement the foundation of this essay, The confirmation of *social media algorithm* could affect political discourses and at the same time providing an observation on how the system works on gearing the masses opinion and actions.

Aside from positive affectivity, there are other ways to manipulate the mindset of a user-base. Michela Del Vicario and her team of researchers who are experienced in computer science have dabbled in this particular discussion. The band of experts focused on how misinformation spread through online mediums and how it manipulates the narrative and information processed by individuals, with the specific platform of *Twitter*.[31] This process of engagement creates some sort of echo chamber community, a homogenous group where confirmation bias is the norm and became some sort of uniter in the group, which leads into extreme polarization for most of the participant of the said group.[32]

This research has shown a similar yet distinct result from the first analysis. The similarity is that both paper reached the conclusion that the *algorithm* of *social media*

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Michela Del Vicario et al., "The Spreading of Misinformation Online," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 113, no. 3 (January 19, 2016): pp. 554-559, https://doi.org/www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1517441113.

[32] Ibid.

will finally result in the formation of a homogeneity in a group of user base, where individuals would usually follow the bias that exists in the community and would develop further into reinforce the already existing narrative in that group.

A researcher specializing in applied psychology, Gillian Murphy and her peers has analyzed the correlation between the aforementioned misinformation and false news with the human brain, specifically on how memory works.[33] Her findings shows that fake political information, articles, and news has an impact to how an individual memory works. The study exposed around 3000 people to falsified information which resulted in these individuals to 'perceive' those very same fake political news story as facts, something that actually happens in reality. It goes even further when it is discovered that the tested individuals also 'remember' extra details of the events such as detailed accounts of how it happened or exact moments of when those 'event' occurs.[34] This analysis is in all honesty, alarming, the fact that fake stories are commonly spread by the algorithm of social media has such an adverse effect to the human brain and could alter someone's memories to shape their political views, is already an infringement on individual political freedom.

As this paper has discussed prior research that has direct correlation with the main topic at hand regarding *social media algorithm*, it needs to be discussed the connection between the case study and the main issue of *social media algorithm*. A researcher and assistant professor from Lahore University of Management Sciences; Ussama Yaqub

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[33] Gillian Murphy et al., "False Memories for Fake News During Ireland's Abortion Referendum," *Psychological Science* 30, no. 10 (2019): pp. 1449-1459, https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619864887.

[34] Ibid.

and his colleague has written an analysis regarding the causality of *social media discourse*; in particular *Twitter*, with real world politics.[35] Their data shows that there is indeed correlation in the frequency of political discourse regarding the 2016 US Presidential Election within the confines of *Twitter* with public opinions regarding the event.[36] This analysis shows that there is indeed a real possibility that a popular discussion of politics in *social media* can affect many events in the real world, hence *social media algorithm* could influence political events by maintaining discourses in the platform.

The next literature to be reviewed is by Luco Buccoliero. A seasoned lecturer from Bocconi University, has published many works in his tenure. One of those works discuss how the United States presidential candidacy in 2016; especially pertaining Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton, has accomplished some form of political campaign and marketing in *social media*, specifically in *Twitter*.[37] His findings shows that the two candidates was able to captivate the public with the usage of *social media*.[38] Although differing in their overall strategies, their propaganda in *Twitter* has played a significant role in creating both public image and public support towards each respective target audience.[39] This research is a further confirmation that political

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[35] Ussama Yaqub et al., "Analysis of Political Discourse on Twitter in the Context of the 2016 US Presidential Elections," *Government Information Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (November 13, 2017): pp. 613-626,
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2017.11.001.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Luca Buccoliero et al., "Twitter and Politics: Evidence from the US Presidential Elections 2016," *Journal of Marketing Communications* 26, no. 1 (August 16, 2018): pp. 88-114,
https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2018.1504228.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

discourse and opinions in the realm of the *social media* could influence reality. Although this analysis is based upon deliberate attempts to do so, it reveals the potency of what could happen if opinions of the public is swayed through an internet platform.

After reviewing a few of these research that has supported many of the assumptions, it is clear that *social media* has an effect on individual's political freedom and potency, despite the need to draw the differences between prior research and of this paper. Previous research has focused on the effect of the *algorithm*s or its tools on human psyche and political view. It differs with this paper as the analysis will focus on how the *algorithm* works in *Twitter*. Although there are researches similar to that very notion such as the one by Stefania Milan, Milan's research is focused on the real-world physical result. This paper will instead focus on finding the effect and changes of US Presidential Campaign 2016 that is due to social profiling. What makes that particular election unique from the previous years, and why future presidential campaign will change because of it.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

When one view the study of international relations, one would usually refer to state-to-state interaction; and everything that entails with it such as high politics and military. Defining this subject is particularly difficult, one of the main reasons is how the study is ever expanding, however; one can understand it if they delve into the history of its development. Among the experts on this field, Professor Chris Brown of London School of Economics and Political Science, has described that while state used to be the central actors of IR studies, the 20th century saw a rise of the importance of

individualism in the subject.[40] Marked by the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the development after that was slow yet steady with the importance born out of individual protection against states and the increase of individual accountability.[41] This shows that individuals are now an important element of the field of study and since *freedom of speech* and *digital rights* are considered human rights in sources that will be stated below, means that this analysis is regarded a part of the international relations study.

The analysis in this research will be heavily influenced by the theory of social constructivism, specifically by John Gerard Ruggie. Historically speaking, constructivism is to many scholars, an 'answer' to the failures of both realism and liberalism in predicting and explaining the abrupt end of the Cold War.[42] The theory is even more prevalent after the Cold War with the rise of new issues that challenges traditional norms in international politics and relations theory, especially the notion that states and power are the central themes in the world of politics are being questioned although not entirely inconsequential.[43] For the students' of this theory, the main issue in post-Cold War era is identity and interest, such as the matter of average Europeans define themselves 'nationally' or continentally.[44] This bring us to Alexander Wendt who stated that generally, constructivist believes that the central tenets of international

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[40] Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 207-229.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998): pp. 29-46, https://doi.org/10.2307/1149275.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

relations theory is a social construct.[45] They are shared ideas, not of material, that builds

upon human social structures, these shared ideas are the ones that gave birth to identities

and interest.[46]

John G. Ruggie agrees and has also defined that in general, it is the consciousness

of the people that is important in constructivism, however; Ruggie believes that the

individuals are important to the foundation of international reality because they have

the capability to influence the social construct of a state, which is either done by those

who are in power, some sort of a cult of personality, or by the sheer amount of

individuals.[47] This is best explained through a simple example; a strong character such

as Martin Luther King jr. who led the change as an activist and spokesperson in the

United States on American civil rights and racism - an example of a strong individual

who could affect a state's social construct. Meanwhile MLK followers who are

numerous also plays an important role during the time to give pressure on the social

construct and finally influenced it. Nevertheless, Ruggie explains that the individual is

important in constructivism, is believed that the idealism on the level of individual

actors could affect the social construct of the state.[48] Same with policies, constructivist

beliefs that singular actors ideational factors such as culture and aspirations could lead

to national policies.[49] Constructivism is important for this research, mainly because the

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[45] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York City, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

[46] Ibid.

[47] John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): pp. 855-885, https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550770.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

theory gave way into researching political issues that are not state centered and held

beliefs that a human consciousness could have a profound effect into the larger picture.

This is very fitting with the starting assumption that in the issue of the 2016 United

States Presidential Election, the result of said election is by these individuals psyche

which is affected by *social media* and *big data* in order to maximize *user engagement*.

One concept for this research has tight connections with constructivism is *human rights*. Generally speaking, this concept is usually defined as something that the overwhelming majority should have.[50] Moreover, their implication is of great importance, and in most cases should override others such as laws, but there are exception to this, in extreme case for example, the human rights of a person who has planted a bomb somewhere in the railway, one could argue the human rights to live of tens to hundreds of other individuals trumps the perpetrator's human rights.[51] In international relations however, the definition of human rights depends on which believes, there is Natural Rights, Kantian ethical theory, Ideal Contract Theory, and a few others.[52] Human rights that are discussed in this analysis will be based on the Kantian's theory of human rights. According to Kantian's rights theory, every human being shares a pre-political maximum rights of freedom that are compatible with other's freedom.[53] There are two kinds of freedom in Kantian's theory, first is the practical

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[50] R. J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 9-11.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Nigel Dower, "Human Rights and International Relations," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 1, no. 1 (1997): pp. 86-111, https://doi.org/10.1080/13642989708406655.

[53] Luigi Caranti, "Kant's Theory of Human Rights," ed. Thomas Cushman, *Handbook of Human Rights*, September 8, 2011, pp. 35-44, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887035.ch3.

freedom where everyone's decision should not be fully motivated by necessitations, and the second is autonomous freedom or external freedom where human actions should not only be influenced by motivation.[54]

The subject of human rights is no stranger for constructivism, as a matter of fact; the concept is already intertwined with social constructivism. There are two reason; first, human rights have inspired multitudes of changes throughout history such as abolition of slavery and the end of apartheid, these changes to the social construct are a great deal of interest for constructivism.[55] Secondly, the biggest supporters of the concept of human rights gives an impression of not driven by self-interest nor any cost-benefit calculations.[56] With the addition of this paper's focus on individual rights in the digital sphere, this concept is suited as a tool of analysis.

The second concept to be discussed is *freedom of speech*. Synonymously used together with *freedom of expression*, speech is an old concept in the political landscape, long before its incorporation to the Human Rights Act in 1998.[57] Traditionally, this concept has its scope around *freedom of individuals* who wish to communicate their thoughts without fearing for repression such as censorship or retaliation from other individuals or groups, and there are topic boundaries to this discussion to reduce potential misuse such as slander, copyright violation, pornography, the right to privacy,

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Wolfgang Wagner, "International Relations Theories and Human Rights," ed. Anja Mihr and Mark Gibney, *The SAGE Handbook of Human Rights*, 2014, pp. 105-122, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473909335.n7.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Eric M. Barendt, *Freedom of Speech*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1-3.

and public security.[58] In recent years, some researchers has added that a new problem against *freedom of speech* is emerging and that is *disinformation*, 'cheap speech' and 'ill-informed speech' are being used to silence oppositions through harassment, this is especially true in the mass usage of internet with the utilization of malevolent tactics such as the deployment of artificial intelligence to flood opposing views with sheer numbers alone, drowning them to prevent the spread of the idea.[59] *Freedom of speech* truly is compatible within this analysis as the concept dictates that any individual has the right to express their thoughts without any external interference such as censorship or; something even more relevant with this analysis; without external influence, hence its usage in this thesis. However, the rapid development of digital media has brought upon new issues on the table, hence the rise of a new terminology, *digital rights*.

Digital rights, to put it in a very short and simplistic explanation, is an individual's human rights in the interconnectedness era of the digital platform.[60] There are two main distinct point in this concept, the first one of the two is the argument where internet access has become extremely pivotal to the modern age, access to the web should be treated more as a right, necessity, rather than considering it as luxurious goods, this is due to the fact that many facets of life has relied on this technology.[61] However, along with that ease of access there is another concern, whenever we use those services, we

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[58] Ibid, 74-112

[59] Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[60] Rosamond Hutt, "What Are Your Digital Rights?," World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, November 13, 2015), https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/what-are-your-digital-rights-explainer/.

[61] Ibid.

left behind personal data, *digital rights* believe that those data should not be misused and should be treated as private, but in reality, government and companies both collects your data. Moreover, they share and sell these data without the consent of other parties who are interested with our digital persona.[62] This concept is the central point of this research which shows that in the assumption of this paper, the *digital rights* of the users of social *media* are being violated with all their data collected and used for the corporation's personal gain, therefore it is highly relevant in identifying violations caused by social profiling towards individual rights.

1.6 Research Method and Data Collection Method

1.6.1 Research Method

The method of research used for this paper will be qualitative. The qualitative method is a research process that relies on data that is extracted in text or image data. It requires the researcher to have studied the related studies before diving into the research to be able to fully analyze the issue.[63] As for the specifics, due to the nature of this research which dives into the realm of the *world wide web*, the analysis will heavily rely upon *qualitative internet research*. This particular qualitative method is actually commonly used by many researchers who actively utilizes academic research databases such as proquest or jstor.[64] In addition to these typical usages, *internet research* is also used to classify research in social media platform such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*.[65]

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[62] Ibid.

[63] John W. Creswell and J. David. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), 186-192.

[64] Mike Allen, "Internet Research and Ethical Decision Making," *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, December 19, 2018, pp. 788-789, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n271.

[65] Ibid.

1.6.2 Data Collection Method

The primary method of data collection in this research will be textual analysis. It is a research method where the researchers perceive and interpret text which can be from journals, books, and advertisements.[66] The text that will and has been using for this research will mostly be obtained through the internet from trusted researchers, publishers, and institutions. There are secondary sources on this research, mainly through social media of the relevant people in the case study.

These data will later be processed through qualitative data analysis inductive research method. This method works by laying out the available data and compare it to the theory and concepts that are used.[67] In comparing the two elements, the analysis would find a pattern in the data that could be correlated to the theory's narrative to reach a conclusion.[68] For this paper's case, the data will be compared to constructivism and digital rights theory for the purpose of answering the research question and find a definitive conclusion.

1.7 Research Framework

Following the applicable regulation, this paper will be divided into four different parts with differing focus of discussion. The first chapter of this paper will be dedicated as an introduction of the paper which consist of research background, problem

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[66] Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis a Beginner's Guide* (London, England: Sage Publications, 2003), 1-4.

[67] David R. Thomas, "A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data," *American Journal of Evaluation* 27, no. 2 (2006): pp. 237-246, https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748.

[68] Ibid.

identification, problem restriction, problem formulation, research purposes and usefulness, and the research method of the analysis. The second chapter will be dedicated to laying ground most of the data and factual information that will be support the discussion of the third chapter. It will consist the position of social profiling in the United States and how it enters the realm of political marketing and the history of social profiling and data companies in the 2016 US Presidential Election. The third chapter will be the theoretical analysis of the case study using constructivism and digital human rights on United States Presidential Election 2016 to understand the effect of *social profiling* and big data on that particular event. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this paper, what is the answer that this paper obtains after the two previous chapter, this paper's importance and its shortcomings.