

# Democratic Fragmentation in The Digital Age: Bots, Fake News, And Social Polarization

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## Abstract

Active democracy has undergone significant changes in recent years, partly due to the proliferation of fake news, significantly generating social and political polarization. Furthermore, the use of bots distorts information, preventing citizens from accessing complete, detailed, contextualized, and memorable information about the events that underlie democracy. This study applies a mixed methodology, that is, qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative methodology uses grounded theory, analyzing articles published in Scopus and Elsevier from 2020 to 2024. The quantitative methodology uses a social media analysis that seeks to identify digital behavior patterns that increase polarization in society. The main results show that the constant publication of fake news and the predominant use of bots intensify ideological and effective polarization. In conclusion, it is determined that it is necessary to address this fragmentation with comprehensive strategies that combine technological regulation, on the one hand, and media literacy accompanied by information verification, on the other.

**Keywords:** Democratic; fragmentation; social polarization; fake news; bot; social media