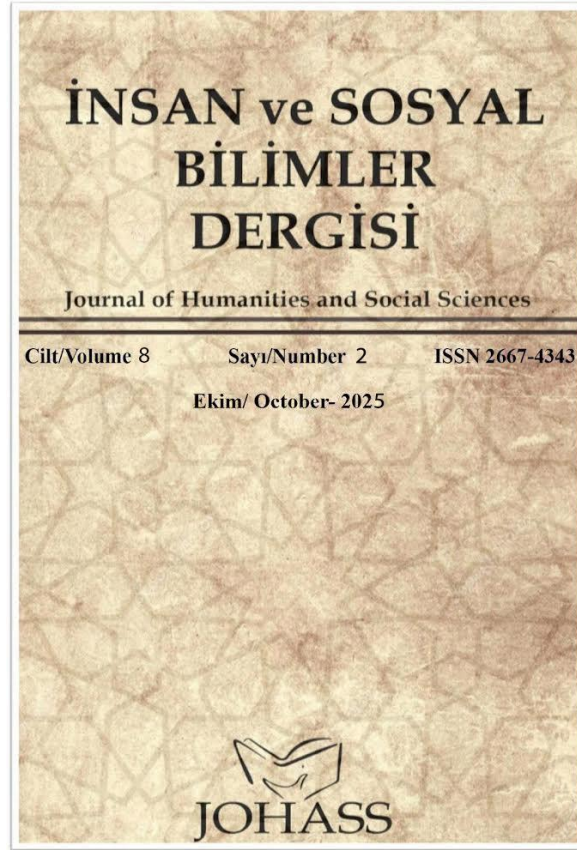


JOURNAL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (JOHASS)



<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/johass>

**Political Entertainment, Digital Interaction: A Systematic Review of
Politainment Studies**

Selçuk ÇETİN¹

*Yozgat Bozok University, Faculty of Communication, Department of New Media And
Communication*

Assistant Professor

selcuk.cetin@yobu.edu.tr

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-2110-0874

Article Type: Research Article

Received: 8.10.2025

Accepted: 26.10.2025

Published Online: 26.10.2025

Citation: Çetin, S. (2025). Political entertainment, digital interaction: A systematic review of politainment studies. *Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 126-147.

Political Entertainment, Digital Interaction: A Systematic Review of Politainment Studies

Selçuk ÇETİN¹

Yozgat Bozok University, Faculty of Communication, Department of New Media And Communication

Abstract

This study aims to reveal the general trends in the international literature concerning the increasingly prominent phenomenon of politainment within the field of political communication. Politainment refers to the production of entertaining content by political actors in an effort to reach voters, blending political messages with element of popular culture. The study focuses on academic publications to identify scholarly trends in the field of politainment. In this context, 17 English language articles indexed in Scopus, each of which includes the term “politainment” in its title, abstract or keywords and has received at least five citations were selected for analysis. These studies were examined through descriptive analysis, with a systematic evaluation of their subjects, data collection techniques, research contexts, platforms utilized, and key findings. In line with the study’s limitations, the finding suggest that most prominent research emphasized social media platforms especially TikTok, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) which are predominantly used for producing entertaining content to enhance political visibility. However, the communication practices observed on these platforms tend not to foster deliberative interaction with citizens; rather, they tend to reduce citizens to passive spectators. Few studies critically engage with the deeper implications of the politainment phenomenon.

Keywords: Political communication, Politainment, New media, Social media platforms

Research Article

*Received: 8.10.2025
Accepted: 26.10.2025
Published online:
26.10.2025*

¹ Corresponding author:
Assistant Professor
selcuk.cetin@yobu.edu.tr
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-2110-0874

Introduction

Politainment, a notable phenomenon in the context of political communication, is a portmanteau of the words *politics* and *entertainment* and denotes the transformation of politics into a new form of political communication shaped by entertainment. In other words, it can be understood as the interwinement of political actors, issues, and processes with the culture of entertainment. This phenomenon (especially shaped by the influence of mass media) has become increasingly prevalent with the widespread adoption of new communication technologies, finding its main avenue and reaching broader segment of society. The term can also be regarded as an overarching concept that merges *political entertainment* and *entertaining politics*. In this context, politainment refers to the usage of entertainment industry formats within the political sphere, where political actors employ these formats to enhance their public image (Nieland, 2008; Riegert & Collins, 2016).

The rise of politainment is associated with the increasing interwinement of politics and media. Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) explain the influence of media on the political sphere in modern democracies through the concept of *mediatization*, suggesting that this process transforms all actors involved, including not only politicians but also voters. Indeed, the authors (1999, p. 250) argue that modern politics no longer operates within its own autonomous boundaries; rather, it is increasingly shaped by the rules and interaction patterns of mass media. In their view, politics has become progressively dependent on the media, with numerous processes (from content production to agenda setting) now unfolding under the influence of media logics. This condition necessitates that mediatization be regarded not merely as a descriptive term, but as analytical framework capable of explaining the structural transformation of political functioning.

In contemporary media landscapes, the drive for ratings and clicks has become a dominant force in content production, resulting in the prioritization of emotional appeal, personalization, and dramatic framing in the dissemination of political information. In this context, media politics has transformed into a media performance rather than rational debate and information transfer. In fact, under the shadow of commercial media, journalists produce sensational and personalized narratives in their journalism practices rather than serving the public interest; political actors also adapt to this media logic and reproduce their messages in line with these formal and aesthetic demands (Brants & Van Praag, 2017, p. 399). John Street's (2018) article argues that contemporary politics has been reshaped according to the aesthetic

and performative logic of popular culture alongside the process of mediatization. The author evaluates the figure of the *celebrity politician* as a new form of representation in which politics is conducted through style and spectacle rather than content. Using the example of Donald Trump, he emphasizes that the media presents politics in entertainment formats and that political leadership is now established through performance, emotionality, and fan relationships. Thus, author interprets the phenomenon of *celebrity politics* as an indicator of the transformation of modern democracy along the axes of spectacle and personalization.

The evolving dynamics of mass media are contributing to a profound shift in the nature of political communication, gradually dissolving the traditional boundaries between distinct spheres of social life. Rather than being anchored in ideolog or substantive information, political practice is increasingly reshaped around the aesthetics of form, affect, and spectacle. Within this framework, politics becomes embedded in the visual and auditory logic of consumer culture, where processes of aestheticization and emotionalization play a central role. Political parties and ideologies are recast as brand identities, while political legitimacy is progressively framed through mechanism of celebrity culture and visual representation (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 8). This transformation affects not only politicians' media strategies but also citizens' ways of perceiving political reality. Political actors purpose to entertain and attract attention when transmitting their messages to voters; to this end, they adapt to the language of the media and follow popular trends. Thus, a new style of communication emerges that reshapes citizens' perception of political realitiy through emotions, entertainment, and visual culture. This situation leads to political communication being presented through entertainment formats and political processes being conveyed through simplified, personalized narratives and concise expressions (Dörner, 2002, p. 3). In fact, political actors are forced to compete with the entertainment culture of the media in order to attract the attention of citizens. Therefore, political actors are turning towards adapting to the forms of popular culture. Politics now has to share the same attention as sports, television programs, or other types of entertainment; therefore, political communication is increasingly embracing elements such as emotional appeal, visual intensity, and experiential participation (Van Zoonen, 2005, pp. 2-3).

The ascendancy of politainment has found renewed momentum with the widespread diffusion of social media platforms, which now serve as its primary conduit. The widespread use of social media by millions of individuals has undeniably contributed to the transformation of societies into consumer oriented cultures (Uydur, 2019, p. 261). The phenomenon also extends to political consumption, which has increasingly become part of the broader logic of

consumer culture. In the current media environment, political figures no longer limit their visibility to traditional outlets; instead, they actively participate in short-form video platforms and live-streaming channels, thereby rearticulating their political identities through entertainment oriented formats. Because, contemporary society is marked by the hegemonic influence of social media and algorithm driven system (Ertürk, 2022, s. 154). In doing so, politicians integrate the affordances and communicative logics of these platforms into their broader political messaging strategies. Against this backdrop, the present study offers a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on politainment and seeks to critically engage with its underlying tensions and politainment limitations.

Method

A systematic review of the existing literature on politainment will be undertaken in this study. Certain criteria were taken into account during the review process, and these criteria constitute the limitations of the study. First, the universe of the study consisted of articles on politainment indexed in the international database Scopus. Given that Scopus is among the leading international indexing databases, this study seeks to provide a representative cross-section of existing research on politainment. In the sample selection, only articles written in English and containing the concept of “politainment” in their title, abstract, or keywords were evaluated. The final limitation of the study relates to the number of citations. In order to reflect the general trends in the field, only studies with at least five citations in the Scopus index were included in the scope of the research. In line with these criteria, a total of 17 articles with citation counts ranging from 5 to 85 were identified. Data collection was finalized on June 30, 2025, considering the dynamic nature of the literature and the possibility of new publications; publications after this date were excluded from the study. The articles obtained were subjected to descriptive analysis to reveal the general outlook of the field; the findings obtained were critically evaluated in the results section to develop recommendations regarding the gaps in the field and future research directions. Within the limitations of the descriptive level of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

- In which years were the publications related to the subject written?
- In which Scopus-indexed journals were they published?
- Who are the most cited authors?

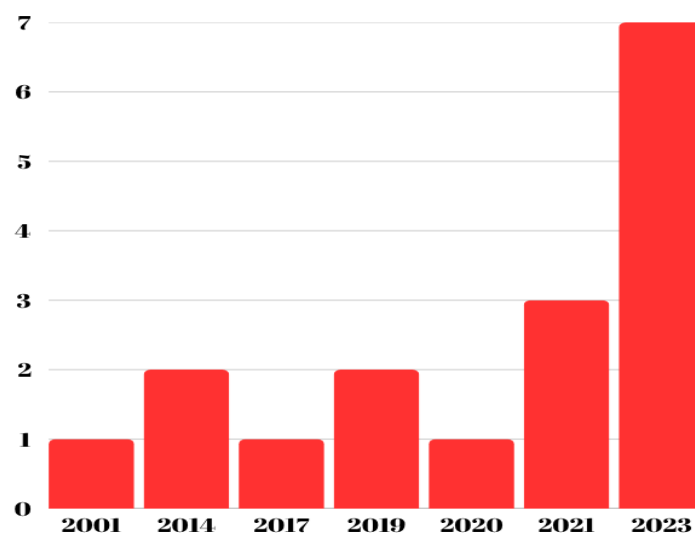
- What are the topics covered in the articles, the data collection techniques, the context, and the results obtained by the study?

Findings

This section begins by addressing the study's research questions, followed by a descriptive analysis of academic publications on politainment, organized by citation frequency from the most to the least cited. Each study was systematically reviewed based on key criteria, including authorship, publication year, citation count, data collection method, geographical scope, and, where relevant, the media platform analyzed. A summary table compiling these variables accompanies the analysis, which is further supported by an in-depth discussion of each study's core findings.

Table 1

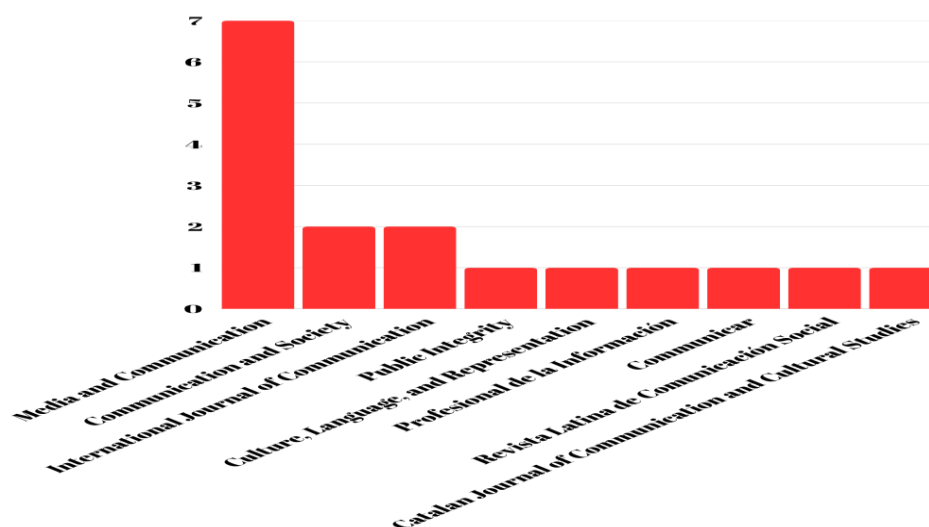
Politainment Publication Graph



Publications appearing in Scopus-indexed journals with at least 5 citations are concentrated in 2023. A total of 7 articles were written this year. While 3 articles were written in 2021, a total of 7 publications were made between 2001 and 2020.

Table 2

Distribution of Publications by Journal



The review of journals revealed that the highest number of publications, seven articles, appeared in the journal *Media and Communication*. This journal was followed by the journals *Communication and Society* and *International Journal of Communication*, each with two articles. Additionally, it was found that one article each was published in the *Public Integrity*, *Culture, Language and Representation*, *Profesional de la Información*, *Comunicar*, *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, and *Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural Studies* journals.

Table 3

The Most Cited Authors

Author(s)	Cite
Laura Cervi	158
Carles Marín-Lladó	116
Santiago Tejedor	97
Salome Berrocal, Eva Campos ve Marta Redondo	85
Fernando Garcia Blesa	42

Regarding the topic of politainment, based on the Scopus index, Laura Cervi stands out as the researcher who has received the most attention due to her high number of citations. Cervi's work in this field has created a high level of academic impact in terms of the citations

she has received, placing her in a position of authority as a researcher in the field. Carles Marín-Lladó follows Cervi as the second most cited author. Santiago Tejedor, Salomé Berrocal, Eva Campos, Marta Redondo, and Fernando García Blesa follow these two researchers.

In the following section, the study undertakes a comprehensive examination of the selected academic literature, aiming to uncover thematic patterns, methodological tendencies, and critical perspectives within the existing body of research.

Table 4

YouTube Usage by the Mayor of Madrid, Spain

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Technique	Collection	Context	Platform
Berrocal, Campos & Redondo	2014	85	Content analysis		Spain	YouTube

The most cited article was written by Berrocal, Campos, and Redondo. Published in 2014, the article examined a case study through content analysis. It is noteworthy as one of the pioneering studies examining the relationship between politainment and new media. The case studied is the viral speech given by Madrid Mayor Ana Botella before the International Olympic Committee in 2013. A total of 3,000 comments on 40 YouTube videos were examined by the researchers. According to researchers examining the phenomenon of politainment on Web 2.0, it has been found that users watch politainment content intensively. The main findings of the study show that politainment content is consumed by large audiences on the internet. However, it cannot be said that this consumption translates into active participation and production. Users are more in the position of *passive prosumers* who transform and repost content from traditional media. Participation actions (*like, share, comment*) involve superficial and momentary reactions. Prosumption is not real participation, but rather reactivity geared towards entertainment. In this context, although citizens intensively use content in the context of information consumption, they exhibit passive reactions in terms of content production and participation.

Table 5

TikTok Usage by Spanish Political Parties

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Technique	Collection	Context	Platform
Cervi & Marín-Lladó	2021	61	Content analysis		Spain	TikTok

The article written by Cervi and Marín-Lladó (2021), like the previous example, discusses the findings of a study conducted in the Spanish context. The study examined the usage of TikTok by Spain's five major political parties (PP, PSOE, Ciudadanos, Podemos, and Vox) using quantitative and qualitative content analysis. According to authors, TikTok is primarily known for its entertainment videos but increasingly regarded as a space for political discourse. According to the research findings, Podemos and Vox generated more engagement than other parties. However, it was determined that, Spanish political parties did not use the opportunities offered by TikTok effectively enough and mostly viewed the platform as a one-way communication tool. One of the study's most prominent findings in terms of politainment is that the content receiving the highest engagement is in an entertaining format. In fact, it is stated that the video receiving the most engagement was a post showing the leader of Podemos twerking (Cervi & Marín-Lladó, 2021, p. 9). Furthermore, the study found that only Podemos produced content that allowed for a degree of deliberation, albeit minimal. In this context, it is particularly noteworthy that Spanish political parties, in general do not perceive TikTok as a platform conducive to dialogic engagement (Cervi & Marín-Lladó, 2021, p. 12).

Table 6

Podemos' Usage of TikTok

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Cervi, Tejedor & Marín-Lladó	2021	55	Content analysis	Spain	TikTok

The article by Cervi, Tejedor and Marín-Lladó (2021), much like the previous examples, centers on a study conducted within the Spanish context. Utilizing content analysis, the authors, examine how Podemos engages with TikTok as a political communication tool. Notably, Podemos holds the position of being the most followed political party on TikTok in Spain. Accordingly, the researchers aim to explore the ways in which the party strategically employs the platform. The results indicate that Podemos adapts to TikTok's unique forms of expression. However, rather than focusing on entertainment, which is the platform's fundamental feature, the party prefers to use TikTok as a political showcase. The authors argue that the dual strategy of populist politics is applied in the case of Podemos, noting that the party constructs this medium as a discursive space dramatized between good and evil. This discursive structure encourages emotional responses and is considered a form of politainment. Additionally, the study demonstrate that Podemos aims to achieve harmony between the language of the platform

and the language of its young voter base. However, it may be inferred that the primary objective of these posts is to enhance visibility, rather than to foster genuine user interaction.

Table 7

Candidates' Usage of TikTok in the Peruvian Presidential Elections

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Technique	Collection	Context	Platform
Cervi, Tejedor & García Blesa	2023	42	Content analysis		Peru	TikTok

The article by Cervi, Tejedor, and García Blesa (2023) examines the usage of TikTok during the presidential elections in Peru. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis, the study investigates all TikTok posts shared by the presidential candidates throughout the campaign period. The primary aim of the research is to assess the extent to which the candidates integrated this platform into the electoral strategies, with particular attention paid to the types of content they produced. The findings suggest that candidates' visibility on the platform does not necessarily imply meaningful engagement with its interactive features. In fact, the study reveals a lack of intent to engage in any form of deliberation with followers. Instead, top-down, asymmetrical mode of communication appears to dominate. Within the context of politainment, TikTok is shown to serve primarily as a space for showcasing personal lives and reinforcing political image rather than fostering genuine political dialogue.

Table 8

YouTube Usage of the Four Parties Represented in the Spanish Parliament

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Technique	Collection	Context	Platform
Gil-Ramírez, Gómez de Travesedo-Rojas & Almansa-Martínez	2019	18	Content analysis		Spain	YouTube

In the study conducted by Gil-Ramírez, Gómez de Travesedo-Rojas, and Almansa-Martínez (2019), the phenomenon of politainment, which has historically gained visibility on television, was analyzed in the context of Spanish politics through its reflections on social media. The study, which examined the four political groups with the most representation in the Spanish parliament, found that the transmission on YouTube was not as intense as on television. Although the element of personalization is clearly used on YouTube, it was observed that party-centered emphases were maintained. For example, while leaders were highlighted in the intro images of the videos, party names were given more prominence in the titles. In general, it can

be said that there was balanced representation in the video content. It was determined that personalization was at its lowest level in the Partido Popular in parliament; in contrast, leader-focused content was at its highest level in Podemos (Gil-Ramírez et al., 2019, pp. 1559-1560).

Table 9

The Politics of Celebrity in the Case of Jesse Ventura

Author	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Schultz	2001	16	Theoretical review	USA	-

David Schultz's (2001) article stands out as one of the rare studies that examines the phenomenon of politainment within a theoretical framework and evaluates it from a critical perspective. Interpreting the entry of celebrities into politics as a result of postmodernism, Schultz also evaluates this situation as a reflection of entertainment and consumer culture (Schultz, 2001, p. 363). The author presents a critical analysis of entertainment politics through the lens of Jesse Ventura, a famous actor, wrestler, and television host who won the 1998 election in Minnesota. According to Schultz, Ventura used his public office and fame for personal gain, which posed a serious problem in terms of political ethics (Schultz, 2001, p. 363). While it is known that politics is not entirely free from the influence of the market, entertainment politics is not immune to this trend, especially in an environment where everything is commodified through American culture and mass media. Just like *Coca-Cola* or *Snickers chocolate*, there is a political sphere in which political actors are also commodified (Schultz, 2001, p. 369).

Table 10

Comparison of TikTok Usage Among Political Actors in Spain and Poland

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Zamora-Medina, Suminas & Fahmy	2023	15	Content analysis	Spain-Poland	TikTok

Zamora-Medina, Suminas, and Fahmy's (2023) comparative study of Spain and Poland examines how political actors utilize TikTok for digital persuasion, with particular attention to rhetorical strategies and personalization. While political parties in both context tend to emphasize logical appeals, individual leaders more frequently rely on emotional rhetoric. The

analysis reveals limited engagement with TikTok’s interactive features, indicating a persistence of traditional communication practices. Notable cross-national differences were also observed: Spanish actors predominantly employed critique-oriented, evidence-based messaging, whereas Polish content favored emotionally resonant appeals and a more leader-centric style.

Table 11

Transmedia Strategies of Cantabria President Miguel Angel Revilla

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Duránte-Stolle & Martínez-Sanz	2019	14	Content analysis	Spain	-

Duránte-Stolle and Martínez-Sanz (2019) analyze the use of transmedia narratives in constructing political personas within Spain’s infotainment driven media landscape. Focusing on Miguel Ángel Revilla as a representative case, the study demonstrates how elements such as personalization, emotional appeal, entertainment and topic trivialization are strategically employed across television, social media, and autobiographical content to reinforce a coherent politainment profile. In this process, viewers contribute to the co-production of the political actor's image through social media. Furthermore, the study highlights the weaknesses of transmedia political narratives. In particular, it was found that content across different platforms is repeated without considering the target audience and media characteristics; digital media, on the other hand, is largely limited to traditional, one-way information transfer. Consequently, audience participation is stated to be quite limited. As a political actor, Revilla has blended transmedia political communication strategies with infotainment elements to create a “show figure” image.

Table 12

Bassem Youssef and Political Satire

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Ibrahim & Eltantawy	2017	13	Content and critical discourse analysis	Egypt	-

In the study conducted by Ibrahim and Eltantawy (2017), qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used together. The research, conducted in the context of Egypt, examines how the political resistance that became visible after 2011 was represented in the media in the context of political satire. The authors note that Bassem Youssef developed a

new type of political satire through his YouTube program and that his videos have been viewed millions of times. Youssef, who later began producing a television program, mocks Egyptian politicians and satirizes mainstream media (İbrahim & Eltantawy, 2017, p. 2806). According to the authors, Youssef's *Al-Bernameg* is regarded as a new form of satire and illustrative examples of politainment. The program is seen as offering a compelling alternative voice within the political sphere, blending satire with political critique through and innovative media format. This new genre of televised satire is argued to have disrupted dominant Egyptian political discourse and traditional media culture by employing a range of compression or “jamming” strategies in both form and content. These include highlighting logical contradictions, exposing factual inaccuracies, exaggreation, rapid fire video editing, and sharp critisim (İbrahim & Eltantawy, 2017, p. 2817).

Table 13

Comparison via Television and Twitter in Spain

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Berrocal-Gonzalo, Zamora-Martínez & González-Neira	2023	12	Content analysis	Spain	Twitter-Television

The study by Berrocal-Gonzalo, Zamora-Martínez, and González-Neira (2023) stands out as investigation into the interaction generated by politainment content producers on Twitter, spesifically in the context of television programs. Focusing on Spain based television shows with a politainment format, the research analyzes tweets shared during the 2019 Spanish general election to determine whether Twitter functioned as an echo chamber for television content and how the platform contributed to the circulation and consolidation of political messages. A total of 7,059 tweets and 2,771 comments were subjected to content analysis. The study shows that the content production, promotional strategies, and communication practices of these television programs on Twitter were relatively limited and lacked originalitiy. Also, the behavior of prosumers was found to be insufficiently creative, active, or interactive, thereby hindering the emergence of a meaningful deliberative space on the platform. This in turn restricted the development of boht user-to-user and user-to-program interaction (Berrocal-Gonzalo et al., 2023, p. 163).

Table 14*Politainment Programs in Spain and Twitter Reactions*

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Berrocal Gonzalo, Zamora Medina & Rebolledo de la Calle	2021	12	Content analysis	İspanya	Twitter

The study conducted by Berrocal Gonzalo, Zamora Medina, and Rebolledo de la Calle (2021) examines the phenomenon of politainment in the context of the production, dissemination, and consumption of political content in different formats. The research examines the consequences of politainment in terms of communication dynamics: the decline in the quality of political information, the weakening of democratic quality, the strengthening of post-truth communication environments, and the transformation of politicians into media figures. The study also reveals that it is a pioneering initiative aimed at identifying the types of content that generate high engagement among audiences in politainment programs. To this end, a quantitative and qualitative content analysis was conducted on tweets and comments that generated the most engagement among prosumers (producers-consumers) based on three television programs in Spain that feature politainment content. Through comparative analysis, it was found that the programs promoted politainment content and that there were significant differences in online interaction levels. Although interaction levels were generally limited, it was determined that tweets using hashtags, containing visual elements, and structured within a framework of responsibility received higher levels of interaction (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2021, pp. 23-24).

Table 15*Politainment in the Context of Entertainment Games*

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Soto de la Cruz, de la Hera, Cortés Gómez & Lacasa	2023	11	Content analysis	USA	Fortnite

Soto de la Cruz, de la Hera, Cortés Gómez, and Lacasa's (2023) study focuses on Joe Biden's usage of the Fortnite platform during the 2020 U.S. Presidential election campaign. The research questions how entertainment based digital games can be evaluated as a political persuasion tool in election campaigns; it discusses the integration of such games into political marketing and propaganda processes. The study analyzes the persuasion strategies employed by the Biden-Harris campaign within the Fortnite universe using a qualitative methods. The

study points to the fact that the campaign's persuasion efforts integrated into the game largely relied on textual and methodological forms of persuasion, with these strategies predominantly operating within the framework of *target rules*. Furthermore, it was determined that visual, emotional, tactical, and social persuasion types were also used as complementary elements. Data obtained from text analysis shows that the campaign's efforts to link its political persuasion goals to in-game challenges were positively received. However, the failure to fully grasp the persuasion potential of the gaming environment limited the satisfaction level, especially among experienced and high-expectation Fortnite players. This exploratory case study was conducted using only a single example, and the authors emphasize the need for comparative studies using different examples. They also state that voters' perceptions of such digital game-based political communication strategies and the effectiveness of campaigns should be examined using quantitative methods.

Table 16

Political Messages in Comic Books

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Brantner & Lobinger	2014	10	Content analysis	Austria	Comic book

Brantner and Lobinger's (2014) study focuses on how political parties used comics in their election campaigns. Although there are comprehensive academic studies in the literature on ideological and political messages in comics or on social and political commentary through cartoons, it is noted that research on the use of comics as a strategic communication tool is limited. In this regard, the study examined the comics used in the 2010 election campaign in Vienna, Austria, and analyzed the discursive representations of these materials in the mass media. The findings reveal that actors in the media focused particularly on elements of violence and anti-foreigner themes in the comics. However, despite the high level of attention attracted by such content, it was found that no meaningful critical debate developed in the media regarding the use of comics for political purposes (Brantner and Lobinger, 2014: 248).

Table 17*Political Spectacularization*

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán	2023	9	Content analysis	Ukraine	Instagram

The study by Plazas-Olmedo and López-Rabadán's (2023) stressed that the spectacularization of politics is not a process confined solely to the news production monopoly of the media. The study pointed out that political leaders globally have incorporated spectacle oriented communication strategies into their broader media repertoires particularly on visual platforms like Instagram, during moments of crisis. Focusing on Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, the authors analyze 143 Instagram videos posted during two key phases of the Russia-Ukraine war. Employing a 5W1H framework, the analysis explores how Zelenskyy constructs a carefully curated public image through stylized video aesthetics, blending professional production with intentional elements of amateurism to enhance authenticity. The strategic use of visual techniques such as subtitles further supports message dissemination. The study concludes that Zelenskyy's media presence exemplifies key features of political spectacularization and politainment.

Table 18*Populist Radical Right and Emotional Politics*

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Grapă & Mogoş	2023	9	Content, discourse, semiology	Romania	Multiple

Grapă and Mogoş's (2023) explore how political actors operating within the logic of politainment seek to enhance their visibility and electoral appeal. Focusing on George Simion, leader of Romania's populist radical right party AUR, the study highlights the interplay between populism and politainment. Simion's transformation into a media figure examined through both discursive and stylistic dimensions, emphasizing how his public persona is strategically crafted to resonate with a broad audience. Methodologically, content produced on different platforms was analyzed in terms of populist communication forms and intensity; in this regard, a mixed-method approach was adopted. The research combines linguistic and content analysis with thematic coding and visual semiotics analysis. In terms of media coverage, 963 news articles published between May 13, 2015, and April 30, 2022, on three popular online news platforms-

Digi24.ro, Adevărul.ro, and Antena3.ro-were examined. In addition, 738 messages and 383 images shared on Simion's Telegram account between March 15, 2021, and April 30, 2022, as well as 116 articles published on Adevărul.ro between July 8, 2014, and April 30, 2022, were included in the discourse analysis. The findings show that the themes prominent in Simion's media representations are mostly confrontational (e.g., aggression, violence), scandalous, negative in tone, and emotionally charged. Furthermore, it was found that striking discourses belonging to everyday language, such as slang and mockery, are frequently used. Simion's discourse is shaped around images such as “celebrity populism,” “ideal candidate,” and “populist campaigner”; it is constructed through an emotional discourse based on values such as a unified vision of “homeland,” unity, patriotism, and Orthodoxy. At the same time, his discourse refers to founding figures and utopian visions of the past; the European Union and ethnic and sexual minorities are positioned as elements threatening the “purity” of the people (Grapă & Mogoș, 2023, s.148).

Table 19

Bolsonaro's Techno-Populist Politics via YouTube

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Di Nubila, Ballesteros-Herencia, Etura & Martín-Jiménez	2023	8	Content analysis	Brazil	YouTube

The study by Di Nubila, Ballesteros-Herencia, Etura, and Martín-Jiménez (2023) examines the transformative role of digital platforms in political communication, using the example of Brazil's former President Jair Messias Bolsonaro. The study underscores how Bolsonaro’s communication strategy, centered on bypassing traditional media through direct engagement on social media, aimed to both delegitimize conventional journalism and consolidate a dominant narrative space. By establishing active profiles across major platforms, these channels effectively assumed the role of official government communication outlets. Analysing 121 broadcast from 2019 to 2022, the study reveals that the content contributed to disinformation and perpetuated hostile rhetoric against democratic institutions. The authors frame this approach as a paradigmatic example of techno-populism, blending digital media logic with populist discourse.

Table 20*Comparison of Television and Twitter in Spanish Politics*

Author(s)	Year	Cite	Data Collection Technique	Context	Platform
Quintas-Froufe, González-Neira & Conde-Vázquez	2020	6	Content analysis	Spain	Television-Twitter

The study by Quintas-Froufe, González-Neira, and Conde-Vázquez (2020) reveals that television continues to play a central role in today's election campaigns and that political entertainment formats, in particular, have become a critical arena of interaction for candidates. The study examined ten television debates between Spanish prime ministerial candidates prior to April 2019 using a longitudinal analysis, assessing whether such formats have lost their appeal among viewers over time. It also examined the integration of these election debates with digital platforms such as Twitter, both during the broadcast process and the viewing phase. The findings show that viewers have maintained their interest in this format since the first broadcast in 1993 and that these debates are considered important milestones in television history. However, it was found that the public closely followed the candidates' efforts to increase their television visibility and convey their more human and emotional sides to voters through political entertainment formats (Quintas-Froufe et al., 2020, p. 85).

Result and Discussion

The aim of this study is to identify the general academic trends in research on politainment indexed in Scopus. According to the findings based on 17 articles examined in this study and analyzed in the Scopus database, which include the term “politainment” in their title/abstract/keywords and have received at least five citations in this database, the vast majority of research in the field of politainment focuses on digital platforms. Of the 17 studies examined, 15 directly or indirectly analyzed social media platforms. Among these platforms, TikTok (4 studies), YouTube (3 studies), and X (formerly Twitter) (3 studies) stand out. When examining the geographical distribution of the studies, the Spanish context stands out prominently: Eight studies focus directly on Spanish politics, while one study compares Spain and Poland. Other studies cover different country contexts, including the US (2), Peru, Egypt, Brazil, Austria, Ukraine, and Romania. In terms of data collection techniques, content analysis is the dominant method in 14 studies; one study uses content and discourse analysis, while another combines content, discourse, and semiotic analysis. The vast majority of these studies found that entertaining content adapted to social media language is used to achieve political

visibility in order to reach young voters. However, it was found that this content did not generate negotiation or dialogue with citizens; on the contrary, it reduced them to passive consumers. Only one study (Schultz, 2001) addressed the phenomenon of politainment within a theoretical and critical framework, pointing to the limited critical approaches in the field.

Based on the findings, it can be said that the phenomenon of politainment is increasingly taking on a social media-centered structure in the field of political communication, and that entertainment culture is significantly transforming the formal and content-related dimensions of political communication. Although politainment initially emerged in traditional media channels such as television, today its main focus has shifted to digital platforms. This transformation has led political actors to prioritize entertaining content in their visibility strategies, while also carrying the risk of turning citizens from active political subjects into passive spectators.

The findings of the study reveal that entertainment focused political content generally encourages populist rhetoric and creates engagement through emotions; however, it does not provide a suitable ground for democratic negotiation and critical political participation. This situation may pave the way for the commodification of political actors. Therefore, there is a need for more theoretically grounded and critical approaches in the field of politainment. It is particularly important to increase research that questions the long term effects of entertainment centered political communication practices on social media platforms on democratic participation, civic awareness, and the culture of public debate.

References

- Berrocal Gonzalo, S., Zamora Medina, R., & Rebolledo de la Calle, M. (2021). Politainment social audience and political engagement: Analysing Twitter conversations in Spain. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, 13(1), 23-42. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00037_1
- Berrocal-Gonzalo, S., Zamora-Martínez, P., & González-Neira, A. (2023). Politainment on Twitter: Engagement in the Spanish legislative elections of April 2019. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 163-175. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6292>
- Berrocal, S., Campos, E., & Redondo, M. (2014). Media prosumers in political communication: Politainment on YouTube. *Comunicar*, 43(XXII), 65-72. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C43-2014-06>
- Brantner, C., & Lobinger, K. (2014). Campaign comics: The use of comic books for strategic political communication. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 248-274. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2142/1068>
- Brants, K., & van Praag, P. (2017). Beyond media logic. *Journalism Studies*, 18(4), 395-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2015.1065200>
- Cervi, L., & Marín-Lladó, C. (2021). What are political parties doing on TikTok? The Spanish case. *Profesional de la información*, 30(4), Article e300403. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2021.jul.03>
- Cervi, L., Tejedor, S., & García Blesa, F. (2023). TikTok and political communication: The latest frontier of politainment? A case study. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 203-217. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6390>
- Cervi, L., Tejedor, S., & Marín Lladó, C. (2021). TikTok and the new language of political communication: The case of Podemos. *Cultura, lenguaje y representación / Culture, Language and Representation*, 26, 267-287. <https://doi.org/10.6035/clr.5817>
- Corner, J., & Pels, D. (Eds.). (2003). Media and the restyling of politics: Consumerism, celebrity and cynicism. Sage.
- Di Nubila, K., Ballesteros-Herencia, C. A., Etura, D., & Martín-Jiménez, V. (2023). Technopopulism and politainment in Brazil: Bolsonaro government's weekly YouTube broadcasts. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 137-147. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6470>
- Dörner, A. (2002, June). Politainment versus Mediokratie. In Thesenvortrag, Cologne Conference/Medienforum NRW.

- Duránte-Stolle, P., & Martínez-Sanz, R. (2019). Politainment in the transmedia construction of the image of politicians. *Communication & Society*, 32(2), 111-126. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.32.2.111-126>
- Ertürk, H. A. (2022). Yeni medya ekseninde ideolojiyi anlamak: filtre balonları ve yankı odaları. *Niğde Ömer Halisdemir Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Akademik Dergisi*, 1(2), 137-159.
- Gil-Ramírez, M., Gómez de Travesedo-Rojas, R., & Almansa-Martínez, A. (2019). Politainment and political personalisation. From television to YouTube? *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 74, 1542-1564. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2019-1398en>
- Grapă, T.-E., & Mogoș, A.-A. (2023). The spectacle of “patriotic violence” in Romania: Populist leader George Simion’s mediated performance. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 148-162. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6367>
- Ibrahim, A., & Eltantawy, N. (2017). Egypt’s Jon Stewart: Humorous political satire and serious culture jamming. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2806-2824. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/6359/2084>
- Mazzoleni, G., & Schulz, W. (1999). "Mediatization" of politics: A challenge for democracy?. *Political communication*, 16(3), 247-261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/105846099198613>
- Nieland, J.-U. (2008). Politainment. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of communication*. Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405186407.wbiecp047>
- Plazas-Olmedo, M., & López-Rabadán, P. (2023). Selfies and speeches of a president at war: Volodymyr Zelensky’s strategy of spectacularization on Instagram. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 188-202. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6366>
- Quintas-Froufe, N., González-Neira, A., & Conde-Vázquez, E. (2020). Spanish audience interest in televised politics: From electoral debates to politainment. *Communication & Society*, 33(3), 85–100. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.33.3.85-100>
- Riegert, K., & Collins, S. (2015). Politainment. In G. Mazzoleni (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of political communication*. Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118541555.wbiepc157>
- Schultz, D. (2001). Celebrity politics in a postmodern era: The case of Jesse Ventura. *Public Integrity*, 3(4), 363-376. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15580989.2001.11770886>
- Street, J. (2019). What is Donald Trump? Forms of ‘celebrity’ in celebrity politics. *Political studies review*, 17(1), 3-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918772995>

- Soto de la Cruz, J., de la Hera, T., Cortés Gómez, S., & Lacasa, P. (2023). Digital games as persuasion spaces for political marketing: Joe Biden's campaign in Fortnite. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 266-277. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6476>
- Uydur, N. (2019). Tüketim toplumu ve dondurmam gaymak film incelemesi. *İnsan ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2(1), 252-270.
- Van Zoonen, L. (2005). Entertaining the citizen: When politics and popular culture converge. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Zamora-Medina, R., Suminas, A., & Fahmy, S. S. (2023). Securing the youth vote: A comparative analysis of digital persuasion on TikTok among political actors. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 218-231. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6348>