The Role of the Digital Media Platform "Facebook" in Providing the Public with Information About the Economic Challenges Facing the Transitional Government in Syria

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دور منصة الإعلام الرقمي "الفيسبوك" في إمداد الجمهور بالمعلومات حول التحديات الاقتصادية التي تواجهه الانتقالية في الحكومة السورية

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Abstract:

In light of technological advancements and rapid transformations, digital communication and media technologies have profoundly influenced the media landscape both internationally and domestically. This development has significantly benefited the media and communication sectors, as digital media now plays a pivotal role in content creation and disseminating news and information about current events. These technologies are essential pillars for the success of news organisations and facilitate effective communication with their audiences, particularly concerning the economic challenges faced by the Syrian government, which resonate with public interests. This article also seeks to illuminate the role of social media platforms, specifically "Facebook," in conveying information to the public regarding the economic challenges of the Syrian government through a content analysis methodology employing media and social media monitoring techniques, with a particular focus on the Facebook platform.

Keywords: Social media platforms, economic challenges, the Syrian government, Facebook.

الملخص:

في ظل التطور التكنولوجي والتحولات التقنية المتسارعة أسهمت تقنيات الاتصال والإعلام الرقمي في تشكيل المشهد الإعلامي علي الساحة الدولية والعالمية نتيجة الاستفادة من التطور التكنولـوجي فـي مجـال

الإعلام والاتصال، حيث أصبحت وسائل الإعلام الرقمي تؤدي دوراً مهماً في صناعة المحتوي وتزويد الجمهور بالأخبار والمعلومات ذات الصلة بالأحداث الجارية، كونها تشكل إحدى أهم الركائز الرئيسية في نجـاح المؤسسـات الإخباريـة وتحقيـق التواصـل الفعـال مـع جمهورهـا، ولا سـيما الموضـوعات المتعلقـة بالتحديات الاقتصادية التي تواجه الحكومة السورية التي تثير اهتمام الجمهور .

كما تهدف هذه المقالة إلى تسليط الضوء على دور منصات التواصل الاجتماعي وتحديداً "الفيسبوك" في إمداد الجمهور بالمعلومات حول التحديات الاقتصادية التي تواجه الحكومة السورية، من خلال منهجية تحليل المضمون، ومراقبة المعلومات الواردة عبر وسائل الإعلام ووسائل التواصـل الاجتمـاعي، لاسـيما منصة الفايسبوك.

الكلمات المفتاحية: منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، التحديات الاقتصادية، الحكومة السورية، "الفيسبوك".

1. Introduction

Digital and social media platforms have significantly transformed contemporary lifestyles. They have influenced various aspects of individuals' and groups' lives by offering a virtual reality that simulates the real world, through which psychological and physiological needs can be fulfilled. These platforms have cultivated a robust environment for discourse, enabling individuals to articulate opinions on matters concerning current events and to engage with content of personal interest.

Culturally, initiatives have aimed to profoundly change political, economic, and social ideas and values. These changes are aligned with contemporary technological patterns and the requirements imposed by media algorithms, particularly regarding the rapidity and immediacy of information dissemination in various formats, including text, audio, images, or a combination of all three. The interactive multimedia feature allows users to like, comment on, and share posts and has significantly expanded its reach to a vast audience. This capability ensures that no individual within the digital community is marginalised and provides them with the fundamental right to access information, thereby fostering a democracy of knowledge. furthermore, it facilitated the participation of members within this community in content creation, the exchange of opinions, photographs, and videos, as well as discussions regarding these materials. This engagement has resulted in establishing public spaces for expression that were previously inaccessible through traditional media. Consequently, it has played a pivotal role in shaping virtual public opinion on significant issues, including those often marginalised, thereby influencing actual public sentiments, fostering social responsibility, and facilitating participation in political and economic decision-making.

According to Dr. Shaimaa Al-Hawari and Dr. Mahmoud Muhammad, digital media constitutes a conducive environment for enhancing the coverage of contemporary events and facilitating participation in digital content creation. This phenomenon is attributed to technological advancements and rapid technical transformations that leverage interactive media, along with the capacity for live broadcasting and the swift dissemination of news and information in various formats, including text, audio, and visuals. Consequently, this development affords the viewing audience a broader scope for influence and interactive engagement with the content presented through these platforms. This was particularly evident during the live coverage of the Israeli incursion in southern Lebanon, where audiences and users of these media actively engaged, sharing photographs, video clips, and news extensively (Al-Hawari & Muhammad, 2024, p.208). Consequently, social media is vital for acquiring information and disseminating experiences during crises and challenges, encompassing wars, conflicts, natural disasters, environmental catastrophes, health emergencies, political instability, and economic hardships. Furthermore, this platform assists individuals in adapting to such conditions and developing effective strategies to improve their situations. This phenomenon has been observed in various nations worldwide, facing major economic difficulties, such as high unemployment, inflation, and recession. For instance, several European countries experienced repercussions from the financial crisis, resulting in fewer

economic opportunities and rising poverty levels. Similarly, Venezuela notably saw its economy decline sharply in Latin America, which led to a critical shortage of essential goods (World Bank, 2021). This reality pertains to the economic crisis in Syria and to the current transitional government, which has encountered numerous internal and external economic and security challenges since the downfall of the Syrian regime. Many of these challenges have emerged as a direct result of the civil war that lasted more than eleven years, leading to the collapse of agricultural and industrial sectors, along with extensive destruction, displacement, and economic destabilisation. As a result, rebuilding and ensuring basic services that uphold the rights of all societal members while also reinstating stability and security for citizens have become more challenging due to the weak Syrian currency and the economic sanctions imposed by major nations, including the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, and the League of Arab States, on the Syrian government since 2011 (Andronik, 2018). Furthermore, the Caesar Act has targeted individuals and companies that supported the former Syrian president, impacting various Syrian industries, particularly those involved in infrastructure, military support, and energy production. The law also targeted numerous Iranian and Russian entities that supported the former regime during the Syrian civil war (The Carter Center, 2020). Taking into account the information presented, we will explore how social media platforms, particularly Facebook, facilitate the dissemination of information to the public regarding the economic challenges faced by Syria's transitional government. particularly in regions with restricted Internet access or insufficient digital resources literacy.

1.1 Research Questions

This article addresses several research questions regarding the role of the Facebook platform as a source for disseminating and acquiring economic information for its users, regardless of the accuracy and reliability of that information. These problematic questions relate to the following:

1- To what extent is Facebook regarded as an effective platform for disseminating information regarding the economic policies of the Syrian government challenges?
2- What kinds of economic information about Syria are often shared on Facebook?
3- What is the level of engagement among Facebook users with posts discussing the economic challenges and policies of the Syrian government, as measured by actions such as liking, commenting, and sharing?
4- What are the sentiments of Facebook users regarding public discussions about economic issues and the economic policies of the Syrian government policies?

1.2 Methodology

A content analysis approach was adopted to achieve this objective and address the questions mentioned earlier. A media monitoring tool, "Brand24'', analysed digital content on the Facebook platform over three months, specifically from 29 October 2024 to 29 January 2025. This analysis encompassed a total of 92 days, during which data pertaining to posts and comments regarding economic challenges, particularly those related to the Syrian state, were collected and examined across various platforms, with a particular emphasis on Facebook.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study is significant as it offers valuable insights into how social media enhances awareness of economic issues. This knowledge can improve the quality of information available to citizens and support policymakers in making informed decisions.

2. Literature Review

The scientific literature underscores Facebook's role in news coverage of current events and in informing the public. It also classifies how audiences interact with information about the economic challenges facing Syria's transitional government. Attia

(2025) studied the influence of digital content on Facebook, particularly focusing on calls to boycott products linked to Israel following the Al-Aqsa Flood operation. In light of these events, he evaluated how this content affected Egyptian youth's perceptions of popular boycotts. The findings revealed a statistically significant link between the exposure of the studied Egyptian audience to social media discussions advocating for boycotting Israeli-supportive products and their attitudes towards these campaigns.

Muhammad (2024). aimed to explore public awareness regarding the effects of algorithmic systems on news content distribution on Facebook and its link to user interaction. The findings showed that while participants are very aware of the algorithms managing news content on Facebook, they do not fully grasp the human interventions that can shape these content decisions. Similarly, Yahya (2024). sought to analyze how social media platforms influence Egyptian public opinion in the digital era, uncovering that these platforms play a crucial role in shaping public sentiment and guiding the masses toward particular views and ideas, irrespective of geographic barriers. Ahmed (2022). examined the dynamics of live broadcasting by news channels on Facebook and how users perceive the available interactivity. The study found a significant correlation between users' perceived interactivity and their feelings of social presence during live news broadcasts on the platform.

Muhammad (2022). explored the factors shaping Saudi youth's engagement with electronic journalism and its various forms, as well as the effects of this engagement. The findings highlighted variances in audience interaction levels concerning topics relevant to the study sample, depending on the content type. Saleh (2022). examined user engagement with political news on social media, investigating the factors influencing participation trends. His results showed that social media's news values significantly boost engagement and interaction rates. Likewise, Abdul Ghaffar (2022). sought to uncover the mechanisms and types of audience interaction with socially focused reports on Arabic foreign channels' digital platforms. The study found a notable correlation between the presence of interactive tools and how users engage with these reports.

Furthermore, Nechushtai et al. (2023). investigated how platforms utilising algorithmic systems, like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, aid American users in finding news. Their findings pointed out variations among individuals in the sample regarding political views on the subjects discussed, emphasising that professionally produced news on specific platforms, especially Fox News, significantly shapes public political perspectives in their news search information.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Facebook is a social media platform for publishing news and information about current events through interactive media. It allows its users to communicate, interact, participate, and exchange opinions and ideas on issues of common interest.

Social media platforms are becoming like digital news sites and significant media outlets for covering current events, particularly those concerning the economic challenges faced by the Syrian government. These platforms employ text, audio, and images to provide the public with interactive mechanisms for searching relevant content, allowing them to stay informed about the latest developments. Additionally, they are crucial in promoting public engagement with the content presented through these platforms.

Furthermore, social media has emerged as the most expeditious and efficacious method for disseminating news and information in real-time, thereby establishing itself as the primary preference for the public in search of news pertinent to them during periods of crisis (Al-Harthy, 2023). According to Sabri (2022), digital media focuses on generating news content and its transmission to the public directly from the location of the events, utilising text, audio, and images as communication mediums (Sabri, 2022, p. 202).

2.2 Facebook user engagement.

The communication patterns and modalities present on Facebook significantly influence the audience's responses to news content disseminated through digital platforms, which are underpinned by artificial intelligence algorithms. These patterns and modalities fulfil additional roles, determined by the audience's symbols, patterns, and meanings, enhancing user communication and interaction. This is particularly evident in interactions concerning topics related to the economic challenges faced by the Syrian government via the digital media platform, "Facebook." (Salem, 2023, p. 14)

Moreover, the effectiveness of the interaction relies on digital platforms adopting policies and practices that align with the audience's needs (Hurst et al., 2018, p. 133).

Furthermore, the interaction process necessitates the use of multiple tools and various communication methods, aiming to achieve both long-term and immediate objectives. This approach is consistent with the principles of synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication (Ibrahim, 2023, pp. 618-619). It involves the dissemination of information from a credible source to the public, as well as facilitating public feedback and dialogue. This creates an environment for citizens, also referred to as users on Facebook, to express their concerns and share their experiences, thereby fostering a sense of community and collaboration problem-solving.

2.3 Modalities of Engagement on Facebook

There are numerous modalities of interaction on Facebook, each facilitating different forms of engagement among users. These modalities include:

1. **Engagement through admiration:** This involves expressing approval for published content, such as texts, images, or videos, by using the "like" button (Bonjma, 2024, p. 70).

2. **Engagement through comments and discussions:** This interaction involves fostering a dialogue among users about content that captures their interest on the digital news pages they follow, thus enabling the development of diverse opinions. It also constitutes one of the most significant forms of public interactive participation (Mohamed, 2023, p. 249).

3. **Engagement through participation (share):** This form of engagement refers to users contributing to the dissemination of news content provided through digital media platforms, supported by the symbols and interactive communication mechanisms available on these platforms.

4. **Engagement through polls and surveys:** Facebook offers tools for creating polls and surveys, allowing the government to gather public opinion on specific economic issues. This interactive approach promotes participation and aids the government in assessing public sentiment and prioritising areas of concern. (Karpf, D. 2016).

5. **Engagement through Live Videos and Question-and-Answer Sessions:** Live video broadcasts enable government officials to communicate directly with citizens, offering updates and addressing inquiries in real time. This approach fosters transparency and cultivates trust, as citizens can directly observe and listen to their leaders (Gunter, B. 2019).

6. **Engagement through Private Groups and Forums:** Facebook facilitates the establishment of private groups wherein individuals may engage in more concentrated discussions. These groups can be devoted to specific economic issues, thereby enabling comprehensive conversations and support among members. (L. Smith, A. 2020)

Using various interaction methods, Facebook emerges as a powerful platform promoting discussion and engagement. It effectively facilitates conversations about the transitional government's economic challenges in Syria.

2.4 Insights into the Economy Discourse on Facebook

Numerous topics arise on "Facebook", concerning the economic challenges that the transitional government in Syria faces, including:

- Rebuilding the nation and delivering fundamental services that ensure the rights of all sects.
- The shortage of foreign exchange reserves and the depreciation of the Syrian pound against the dollar have affected the fair distribution of wealth.
- The poverty rates have risen due to the economic sector's collapse, triggered by the drop in energy production.
- The offering of comprehensive assistance to families impacted by the Assad regime in order to facilitate housing development.
- The restoration of stability and safety for millions of individuals in the country.
- The ongoing civil conflict has led to a decline in the nation's export figures, resulting in significant setbacks for the agricultural sector.
- The disbanding of security services and the abolition of anti-terrorism legislation.

3. Empirical Study

Within the research framework examining how Facebook functions as a platform for sharing economic information, a field study was conducted to investigate its role as a tool for disseminating insights regarding the Syrian government's economic challenges. This study is significant as individuals search for trustworthy and precise information amid a complicated media landscape.

The study's objectives are to understand how the public, particularly the Syrian public, interacts with the economic information circulated on Facebook and to assess how this information affects their feelings towards economic challenges. The study was conducted in areas that experience significant activity on social media platforms, and various users were targeted.

3.1 Data Collection Tools:

The media monitoring tool (Brand24) collected data and analysed content related to economic challenges. The media monitoring process includes tracking and analysing content published on social media platforms and various media outlets. It involves searching for keywords or hashtags circulating on the researched topics, collecting and processing them statistically, and providing statistics and graphs that help understand general trends and measure the extent of engagement with important topics.

The settings for the media monitoring tool were established over a 92-day period spanning three months, from 29 October 2024 to 29 January 2025. This timeframe was chosen as it encompasses two significant political phases in Syria: the period preceding the regime's fall on 8 December 2024 and the subsequent phase, marked by the arrival of the transitional government power.

3.2 General participation statistics

The monitored data indicated the following:

- The results confirmed that 39 mentions related to the economy in Syria were received on Facebook, compared to 15,700 mentions across all platforms. This relatively small number suggests that these topics did not generate much discussion on this platform.
- The results indicated that Facebook's reach on topics related to the economy in Syria was 123.8 thousand, compared to an overall reach of 205.8 million.

3.3 Details regarding public sentiments:

- The results showed that the positive mentions reflecting users' feelings of optimism towards these topics related to economic challenges in Syria came at a rate of (3), or (8%), of the total mentions across the various platforms.

- The results revealed that negative mentions, reflecting the public's dissatisfaction with topics related to economic challenges in Syria, accounted for (6) or (15%) of the total mentions across various platforms.
- The results indicated that the number of neutral mentions reflecting the public's feelings of impartiality and their reactions to these topics was 30 mentions, comprising 77% of the total across various platforms. This distribution suggests that most interactions were neutral, demonstrating the public's lack of a strong emotional response to topics related to the economy in Syria on the Facebook platform. However, it is essential to note that the negative percentage of 15% highlights the presence of concern or dissatisfaction among some individuals, necessitating further analysis to understand the underlying reasons and explore ways to improve overall impressions.

3.4 Main topics and patterns that were the focus of the discussion.

Discussions on the Facebook platform during the covered period centred around the following topics:

- **Political and Economic Transformations.**
1- Discussions about the new leadership in Syria and economic reforms featured users engaging with posts concerning the new governor, Ahmed Al-Sharaa, and his focus on rebuilding the state and the economy.
2- The diplomatic initiatives the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia undertook focused on removing sanctions imposed on Syria to facilitate the nation's reconstruction and promote economic recovery.
- **Historical comparison:**
  The results revealed a significant interaction with historical economic comparisons; for instance, David Miller's 2010 statement (facebook.com) about the economic situation in Syria referred to it as a "thriving economy" and a diverse society.
- **International Relations**
- The results indicated a strong interest in diplomatic developments, particularly the visit of the Syrian Foreign Minister to Qatar (facebook.com), which focused on initiatives to revitalise the economy.
- The findings revealed considerable interest in meetings with Arab and European Union leaders in Riyadh to discuss Syria's future and the sanctions imposed upon it.
- The results highlighted Russian President Vladimir Putin and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's exchange of views on Syria's sovereignty (facebook.com).
- **Economic Reform Initiatives:**
  The results showed high user engagement with posts about privatisation plans (facebook.com), indicating public interest in economic restructuring efforts.

3.5 Temporal Engagement Patterns:

- **Highest Engagement Periods:**
  Upon examination of the temporal engagement patterns, it is observed that the highest levels of engagement are characterised by specific periods. On December 31, 2024, four mentions were recorded, reaching an audience of 25.6 thousand users. This substantial engagement at the end of the year may be attributed to celebratory activities associated with the holiday season.

  Furthermore, the results indicate that the number of users participating in economic discussions peaked at six mentions on January 12, 2025, coinciding with a reach of 23.5 thousand users. This trend suggests a growing interest at the beginning of the new year, possibly spurred by a significant political event, most likely the immediate aftermath of the regime's fall in Syria and the establishment of the transitional government By January 21, 2025, we noted (2) mentions alongside a reach of (22.7) thousand users. This slight decline in participation compared to previous periods suggests that distinct trends in

participation are emerging, reflecting heightened interest during these specific times. This situation necessitates a more thorough study to determine the factors influencing these trend patterns.

3.6 Key Insights

Media monitoring results revealed that Facebook discussions about the economy account for only 0.25% of overall mentions across all platforms. Nevertheless, these discussions predominantly focus on political issues and economic reforms. As a result, participation was limited yet concentrated, suggesting that the public may have overlooked other important relevant aspects.

3.7 Sentiment Trends Assessment

When studying the sentiment trends of Facebook users regarding the economic challenges in Syria, sentiment analysis techniques were employed to ascertain whether opinions were positive, negative, or neutral based on the content published on this platform during the relevant period. This can be illustrated as follows:

The high level of negative sentiment was recorded at a rate of 15%, compared to the overall figure of 7%. This suggests that the public may be feeling anxious or upset about these issues due to the adverse events or socio-economic challenges in Syria, combined with a fear of what the future may hold, stemming from their lack of familiarity with the transitional government, its plans and methods, which remain largely unknown to the Syrian people.

The findings showed that positive sentiments (8%) marginally surpass the overall data rate (7%). This suggests that the public harbours some hope or optimism regarding Syria's economic future, though this optimism is tempered by concern and does not represent a thoroughly positive image.

The results indicated that most discussions maintain a neutral tone, concentrating on realistic developments and political changes. This is significant because a neutral tone suggests that the media and publications are endeavouring to present an objective and unbiased image. This may assist in providing the public with accurate information about current developments and enabling them to make informed decisions.

The results indicate that the data reflects a combination of negative and positive sentiments, maintaining a balance of neutral discussions. This underscores the necessity of monitoring current conditions and comprehending public sentiment, which may provide valuable insights for guiding future policy strategies.

3.8 Content Quality Assessment

Content quality assessment, in general, facilitates the evaluation and understanding of the standard of content produced and disseminated across various media platforms. This includes the accuracy of information, objectivity of analysis, depth of discussions, and clarity of messages conveyed. Through systematic monitoring of the information relevant to the study, alongside a thorough analysis of the assessed content, the content quality assessment can be articulated as follows:

Firstly, the findings revealed that discussions on Facebook are generally more detailed and focused on public policies compared to other platforms. This indicates that Facebook users prefer content that offers comprehensive analyses and insights into public policies, reflecting their substantial awareness and interest in political issues. Furthermore, the findings showed that conversations predominantly revolve around international relations and economic recovery initiatives. This implies that Facebook users are concerned about how these matters impact their daily lives, encouraging policymakers to incorporate them into their messaging. Additionally, the findings highlighted significant engagement with specific posts related to economic initiatives and diplomatic development. This suggests a strong public interest in these topics, which could allow organisations and governments to engage with society.

The results from the content quality assessment can help content creators develop strategies that focus on topics of public concern, thus enhancing the quality of discussions and driving better engagement with audiences. Additionally, these results promote conversations

about policies and laws. While Facebook accounts for a minor part of public discourse about the Syrian economy, it offers a venue for more extensive discussions centred on policy issues—including laws, procedures, or governmental decisions affecting economic management and the associated social and political issues in Syria—showing a clear difference in sentiment compared to discussions on other platforms.

4   Discussion

The analysis of the collected data indicates that Facebook has emerged as a powerful tool for news dissemination and information sharing in today's digital landscape. This platform is particularly valuable for acquiring comprehensive insights that foster discussion and interaction, especially regarding economic issues. In the context of crises and economic hardships facing countries like Syria, Facebook facilitates information sharing among individuals.

To address the central research questions of this study, we first examined the effectiveness of Facebook as a source of information about the economic challenges faced by the Syrian government. The data reveal that Facebook is indeed regarded as a significant platform for disseminating information concerning these economic challenges. Although it constitutes merely 0.25% of total mentions across all social media platforms, the extensive audience on Facebook underscores its potential to facilitate in-depth discussions on economic policies and reforms. This finding suggests that Facebook represents one of the most effective mediums for such content, as user interactions can amplify the platform's advantages and enhance engagement with decision-makers.

Next, we explore the types of economic information shared on Facebook. The analysis indicates that economic content falls into several categories. First, discussions about political and economic changes are prevalent, where users engage in conversations regarding new leadership and proposed reforms, reflecting their strong interest in political shifts and their implications for the economy. Second, there are conversations centred on diplomatic efforts to enhance international relations and lift sanctions, showcasing a shared concern about how these policies affect the economic landscape. Additionally, reports on current economic indicators, such as GDP and unemployment rates, are frequently shared, which are vital for understanding the current economic environment. Lastly, personal stories illustrating how economic crises impact individuals' everyday lives provide a relatable perspective on citizens' hardships, further enriching the discourse.

The next research question addresses the level of engagement among Facebook users who post about the Syrian government's economic challenges and policies. The results suggest that engagement is somewhat limited but targeted, with a modest total of 39 mentions. Despite this limited number, the posts related to economic challenges demonstrate considerable user engagement through likes, shares, and comments. Such interactions indicate that an attentive audience actively contributes to discussions, thereby underscoring Facebook's role as an essential platform for social communication and exchanging ideas.

Finally, we analyse user sentiment regarding public discussions about economic issues and the policies of the Syrian government. The findings reveal a varied landscape of sentiments. Neutral mentions accounted for the largest share, at 77%, indicating a state of uncertainty among users. Conversely, negative mentions comprised 15%, reflecting concerns and dissatisfaction regarding the economic climate and government policies. Nonetheless, at 8%, positive mentions suggest a glimmer of hope and optimistic expectations for reforms and diplomatic initiatives. This indicates that, despite prevailing challenges, the community has potential for optimism.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored Facebook's role as a source of economic information concerning the challenges confronted by the Syrian government. The findings demonstrated that Facebook serves as a significant platform for the dissemination of economic insights and for promoting user engagement and discussions on critical issues.

Users perceive Facebook as an effective channel for understanding economic policies. The analysis revealed diverse economic content, from discussions on political changes to personal stories illustrating the impact of economic crises.

Although user engagement with economic posts is somewhat limited, the interactions indicate a dedicated audience. The sentiment analysis revealed a blend of uncertainty and optimism concerning potential reforms.

Despite its limitations, this study highlights the platform's vital role in raising awareness and encouraging public engagement in shaping discourse on economic issues in crisis contexts. Future research can further assess the reliability and accuracy of information shared on Facebook and other social media platforms. Such studies should analyse sources and evaluate their credibility to ensure discussions are informed by trustworthy information, thus aiding in forming opinions based on accurate facts. The findings emphasise policymakers' need to recognise social media's influence in addressing economic challenges.

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