Undergraduate Thesis

COMPUTATIONAL PROPAGANDA AS INFORMATION WARFARE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE 2014 AND 2018 BRAZIL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Computational propaganda, due to technological advancement, is a recently-established approach to political manipulation occurring online. This propaganda aims to disseminate information while influencing public opinion simultaneously, creating opportunities during high-stake political events. Elections became one of the primary instances of how computational propaganda can be implemented, which can be traced back to the early utilisation of botnets in the 2014 Brazil presidential election through Twitter. Meanwhile, the implementation of computational propaganda in the 2018 Brazil presidential election was seen significantly through WhatsApp. This comparative study between the 2014 and 2018 Brazil presidential elections aims to show how computational propaganda was implemented in each electoral campaigning process. This highlights how presidential candidates utilised Twitter and WhatsApp the most to deliver their political messages and the consequences of such implementation.

Keywords: Elections, Computational Propaganda, Social Media, Brazil Election, 2014, 2018, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Comparative Studies

ABSTRAK

Propaganda komputasional, karena kemajuan teknologi, adalah pendekatan baru yang dibuat untuk manipulasi politik secara online. Propaganda ini bertujuan untuk menyebarkan informasi dan mempengaruhi opini publik secara bersamaan, yang kemudian dapat menciptakan peluang selama acara politik berisiko tinggi. Pemilu menjadi salah satu contoh utama bagaimana propaganda komputasional dapat diterapkan, yang dapat ditelusuri kembali ke penggunaan awal botnet dalam pemilihan presiden Brasil 2014 melalui Twitter. Sementara itu, penerapan propaganda komputasional pada pemilihan presiden Brasil 2018 terlihat signifikan melalui WhatsApp. Studi perbandingan antara pemilihan presiden Brasil 2014 dan 2018 ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana propaganda komputasional diimplementasikan dalam setiap proses kampanye pemilu. Ini menyoroti bagaimana calon presiden paling banyak memanfaatkan Twitter dan WhatsApp untuk menyampaikan pesan politik mereka dan konsekuensi dari implementasi tersebut.

Kata-kata kunci: Pemilu, Propaganda Komputasional, Media Sosial, Pemilu Brasil, 2014, 2018, Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, Studi Banding