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Innovation vs. normalization: Politicians' Twitter use at the early majority stage of its diffusion in the Korean assembly

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to answer to the question of whether new media innovate/replicate the existing pattern of political communication by looking into Korean politicians' Twitter, relying on data collected at the early majority stage of its diffusion in the Korean Assembly. This study reveals politicians who represented an educated district and were prominent in traditional media were more likely to adopt Twitter. Opposition party members and representatives of a high-income constituency had more followers, as well as utilized Twitter more actively. While those who were experienced and prominent in legacy news media had more followers, those who represented an educated district had fewer followers. These findings suggest that, at the early majority stage of its diffusion among Korean politicians, while Twitter enhanced politicians' chances to contact with voters, it reproduced the existing pattern of political communication in terms of political leverage. Twitter in Korean politics can be seen as both innovation and normalization rather than clearly one or the other.

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