

FROM ROMAN FORA TO TWITTER STORMS: JULIUS CAESAR, MEDIA INFLUENCE, AND THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL NARRATIVES IN INTERPRETIVE JOURNALISM

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Abstract

This study, titled *From Roman Fora to Twitter Storms: Julius Caesar, Media Influence, and the Evolution of Political Narratives in Interpretive Journalism*, examined the transformation of political storytelling from classical antiquity to the digital age, with particular focus on the evolving role of interpretive journalism. It was grounded in Framing Theory and employed Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate the interplay between narrative structures and socio-political contexts, uncovering embedded ideologies and media influences. Two major findings emerged from the analysis. First, political narratives had evolved from the structured, elite-driven rhetoric of Caesar's Rome to the fragmented, participatory, and algorithmically curated discourses characteristic of contemporary social media environments. Second, interpretive journalism continued to play a critical role in shaping political discourse; however, its ability to provide coherent and consistent narratives was increasingly challenged by the speed and volume of digital information dissemination. Based on these findings, the study recommended that social media platforms and news organizations adopt transparent and pluralistic algorithmic frameworks to counteract narrative fragmentation and promote diverse perspectives. It also advocated that journalists develop standardized yet adaptable framing strategies to maintain narrative coherence, reinforce public trust, and support informed civic participation within fast-paced, evolving media ecologies.

Keywords: Interpretive journalism, Media influence, Political narratives, Roman fora, Twitter storms

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Introduction

Human societies have long relied on communication to govern, inform, and influence (Serapşah & Sevgihan, 2023). From oral traditions and cave paintings to digital platforms, media has played a critical role in shaping public consciousness (Chatterjee & Dutta, 2024). Throughout history, dominant media forms have defined the nature of political discourse (Curca, 2024). Whether spoken in the town square or typed on a smartphone screen, narratives mold public perception and decision-making (Nurdiana & Lestanata, 2024). Media is not merely a channel—it is a force that crafts, constructs, and reconfigures truth (Marques & Vos, 2024). Interpretive

journalism, as a genre, emerged to interrogate this mediation of truth. It seeks to move beyond reporting facts to analyzing meanings, motives, and implications (Craft & Vos, 2023). The rise of interpretive journalism reflects the growing complexity of political and social life (Chatterjee & Dutta, 2024). In doing so, it enables deeper citizen engagement while also exposing journalism to biases and influences (Serapşah & Sevgihan, 2023; Marques & Vos, 2024).

In classical antiquity, politics and performance were tightly knit, and nowhere was this more visible than in Rome. The Roman Forum, a literal and metaphorical centre of public life, was not just a venue for law and order but also a stage for spectacle and

persuasion. Political figures like Cicero and Julius Caesar understood the performative power of public speech. Their words echoed not just in marble halls but in the sentiments of the Roman populace. This performative element of politics anticipates many of today's media strategies. Ancient Rome, despite its lack of electronic media, had an astoundingly vibrant system of information circulation through rumor, public oratory, and symbolic acts (Flower, 2021). These traditions laid the groundwork for modern political narratives that mix fact with interpretation. The legacy of political storytelling in public spaces reveals enduring patterns in how power and persuasion work.

Julius Caesar's life, career, and assassination represent one of the most studied examples of media manipulation and public opinion. His mastery of political image—engraved on coins, inscribed in commentaries, and immortalized in monuments—reflected his understanding of media as an instrument of control. In Caesar's own *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, he shapes his military exploits to justify his political rise. These texts were not objective reports but strategic narratives aimed at influencing the Roman Senate and citizenry. The way Caesar framed his achievements foreshadowed modern media's role in agenda-setting and framing. By controlling the message, he attempted to control the meaning and future. His assassination, followed by Antony's funeral oration, shows how competing narratives can incite public action. It was, in many ways, an ancient media storm with deadly consequences (Morstein-Marx, 2022).

Fast forward two millennia, the evolution of media from stone inscriptions to satellite transmissions has been nothing short of revolutionary. From the Gutenberg press to broadcast radio and now digital media, each leap has altered the pace, reach, and nature of political storytelling. Mass media has amplified leaders and ideologies, created public heroes and villains, and even catalyzed wars and revolutions. While early print journalism prioritized information, the 20th century ushered in interpretive journalism that emphasized explanation and context. With increasing democratization of media came new ethical challenges and power dynamics. The journalist is no longer a mere recorder but an active participant in the meaning-making process. Political communication today is deeply entwined with media logic, where optics and emotions often trump facts (Esser & Pfetsch, 2023). Thus, the journalist, like the orator of old, wields the pen—and now the tweet—like a dagger.

The digital age introduced new dynamics to

political communication, including speed, fragmentation, and virality. Social media, especially platforms like Twitter, collapsed the temporal and spatial barriers between leaders and followers. The rise of the "Twitter presidency" marked by figures such as Donald Trump exemplified the immediacy and emotional charge of contemporary political narrative (Ott, 2022). On Twitter, interpretation often precedes investigation. Hashtags function like rhetorical slogans, structuring debates and positioning actors within binary frames. Here, interpretive journalism finds itself in a vortex of speed versus depth, facts versus emotions. Political narratives are now co-created between politicians, citizens, influencers, and journalists. The erosion of gatekeeping allows new voices but also misinformation and polarization. In this new landscape, media influence is not only about dissemination but about shaping the political imagination in real-time.

Interpretive journalism, once a domain of thoughtful columnists and investigative writers, now competes with real-time commentary and virality metrics. The boundaries between reporter and participant have blurred, with journalists often accused of shaping rather than reporting stories. Yet, this form of journalism remains critical to democracy—it adds depth, historical memory, and moral interpretation to public issues. What distinguishes interpretive journalism is not the abandonment of truth but the layered unveiling of it. This includes assessing intentions, linking causes to consequences, and making sense of complexities (Carlson & Lewis, 2022). However, this same strength makes interpretive journalism susceptible to ideological framing. Unlike objective reporting, interpretive journalism walks a thin line between insight and bias. The interpretive lens it offers is crucial, but it is also contingent, situated, and contested. Hence, it reflects as much about the journalist as it does about the story.

Historical parallels between the narrative strategies of ancient Rome and contemporary interpretive journalism reveal enduring techniques. These include myth-making, scapegoating, moral framing, and hero-villain binaries. Julius Caesar's narrative was not merely about conquest but about character—a tale of virtue, destiny, betrayal, and martyrdom. Modern interpretive journalists similarly build narratives around themes of justice, identity, and corruption. They draw on past events to frame the present, invoking historical analogies and moral urgency. Like Antony's speech over Caesar's body,

today's political narratives aim to arouse public sentiment, mobilize outrage, and shape perception (Schudson, 2021). The recurrence of these motifs across centuries suggests an anthropological continuity. Media, in every age, has not only reported events but reimaged them—recasting facts into fables that govern public memory and identity. Caesar's legacy thus offers a potent symbol for understanding the deep ties between power and media. His posthumous narrative was less about his death than about how his death was narrated. Antony's oration, immortalized in Shakespeare, was one of interpretive journalism's earliest blueprints. It layered fact with persuasion, appeal with accusation. Today's media storms on Twitter follow a similar pattern—emotional, interpretive, performative. Modern journalists use structure, sequence, and symbolism to echo the cadences of classical rhetoric. Hashtags become rallying cries; threads become digital orations. As in Rome, the media arena is not a mirror but a theatre. And in this theatre, truth competes with spectacle for attention and belief (Tandoc, Lim, & Ling, 2023). By revisiting Caesar through a media lens, one is not merely exploring the past—one is decoding the present.

The crisis of trust in media today also parallels ancient suspicions of rhetorical manipulation. In Rome, orators were both revered and reviled—masters of persuasion and perceived deceivers. In the digital age, journalists face similar ambivalence. Accusations of “fake news,” media bias, and ideological distortion have undermined public trust. While interpretive journalism aims to explain, its credibility depends on perceived impartiality. But in a polarized environment, interpretation is often mistaken for indoctrination. The political climate thus influences both the production and reception of journalistic narratives. Caesar's era and our own reflect societies where media not only informs but destabilizes. This ambivalence makes the study of media influence through historical comparisons especially urgent and revealing (Fletcher, Cornia, & Nielsen, 2023). Therefore, the study of Caesar's media legacy is thus not antiquarian—it is radically contemporary.

Statement of the Problem

While political narratives have always shaped governance, the transition from ancient rhetorical spaces like the Roman fora to contemporary digital platforms such as Twitter (X) has transformed both the nature and influence of political communication. However, interpretive journalism's role in shaping or

interrogating these evolving narratives remains underexplored, especially regarding its power to mold public perception, democratic engagement, and historical memory in the digital age.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this work was to examine the transformation of political narratives from classical to digital times and interpretive journalism's role in shaping them. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Examine the form, structure, and linguistic features of political narratives in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter,
2. Analyze how political narratives are produced, circulated, and interpreted in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter
3. Explore the cultural, political, and media environments that shape narratives in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter

Research questions

1. What are the forms, structures, and linguistic features of political narratives in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter?
2. How were political narratives produced, circulated, and interpreted in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter?
3. What are cultural, political, and media environments that shape narratives in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter?

Literature review

Roman Fora

The Roman fora, far beyond serving as architectural wonders, were civic arenas where power, rhetoric, and memory were ritualized and made visible. Recent scholarship repositions these spaces as performative platforms for the construction and contestation of authority within the Roman Republic and early Empire (Stewart, 2021; Dey, 2022; Herring, 2023; Russell, 2020). The fora served a teleological function in aligning state rituals, oratory, and spatial politics toward the project of Roman identity and imperial continuity. By orchestrating public trials, senatorial addresses, and imperial celebrations within these forums, Roman elites cultivated a civic theatre that fused the personal with the political. Hence, the fora should be studied not merely as physical relics, but as ancient blueprints of political spectacle and media staging in urban public space.

Twitter Storms

Twitter storms represent a digital phenomenon

that encapsulates the chaotic, participatory, and volatile dynamics of contemporary online discourse. Their importance lies in how they reflect the democratization—and at times the distortion—of public voice in the age of real-time communication (Highfield, 2020; Papacharissi, 2022; Bishop, 2023; Lin, 2024). Scholars now trace their significance to the capacity of these storms to mobilize social justice, enforce cancel culture, or destabilize corporate and governmental structures, often within hours. The sheer velocity and emotional intensity of these storms displace traditional deliberative mechanisms, raising concerns about public reasoning. Yet, they also amplify marginalized voices and generate digital solidarity, making them a crucial arena for studying power and resistance in networked societies.

Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar's enduring legacy is largely attributable to his mastery in crafting public narratives that merged personal ambition with national destiny. His autobiographical texts, especially *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, are increasingly understood as deliberate communicative acts intended to reshape Roman political culture (Wiater, 2022). Scholars like Osgood (2020) argue that Caesar's deployment of military dispatches was a sophisticated form of self-promotion, projecting him as the savior of Roman virtue. His public performances, including the calculated crossing of the Rubicon, were imbued with symbolic weight that manipulated civic perception (König, 2023). As Seager (2021) notes, Caesar's charismatic leadership, anchored in spectacle and rhetoric, formed a political mythos that not only dominated late Republican Rome but also set precedents for future regimes. The teleology in studying Caesar lies in understanding how strategic storytelling, myth-making, and performative power converge to influence political legitimacy and authority across ages.

Media Influence

The influence of media on individual and collective behavior remains central to inquiries into democratic health and civic agency. Contemporary research stresses the power of media not only to transmit information but to shape ideologies, frame realities, and structure public consciousness (Coudry & Mejias, 2021; McGregor, 2022; Klinger, 2023; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020). With the rise of social media, the locus of influence has shifted from institutional editors to algorithmic curators, magnifying both the reach and risk of misinformation. Media today serves as both

mirror and maker of society, and its influence extends from electoral choices to identity politics and mental health. Teleologically, media influence must be understood as a formative force in shaping how societies envision truth, power, and belonging in an increasingly digitized world.

Political Narratives

Political narratives are now viewed as essential cognitive frameworks through which citizens interpret leadership, conflict, and nationhood. Rather than incidental storytelling, these narratives function as strategic tools employed by political actors to moralize policies, foster emotional resonance, and delegitimize opposition (Kvernenes, 2023). Andrews (2021) emphasizes that these narratives help construct collective identities by weaving personal experience with broader ideological goals. In post-conflict contexts, Ercan and Hendriks (2022) show how narrative reframing can assist in democratic rebuilding by offering shared meaning and reconciliation. Polletta (2020) further highlights the performative nature of political narratives, arguing that they shape the interpretive lenses through which citizens engage with political realities. The teleological thrust of this scholarship lies in recognizing that societies are not merely governed by institutions, but by the stories they tell about who they are and where they are going.

Interpretive Journalism

Interpretive journalism has become a vital genre in an age of complexity, offering contextual depth and critical framing in contrast to transactional reporting (Okhueigbe, 2024a). Recent studies underscore its capacity to challenge official narratives and interrogate systemic patterns that impact public opinion (Hanitzsch, 2021). Zelizer (2020) emphasizes its role in fostering civic literacy by providing citizens with the tools to critically analyze media messages. Sandoval-Martínez (2024) points out how interpretive journalism enables deeper understanding of political and social issues through reflective storytelling. Unlike conventional journalism that prioritizes immediacy, interpretive journalism seeks meaning through analysis, synthesis, and narrative depth (Okhueigbe, 2024b). Its value lies in empowering audiences to not only know what happened, but understand why it matters and how it connects to broader social structures. In an era of fragmented truth and digital noise, interpretive journalism offers a compass for public reasoning, enhancing democratic accountability and narrative integrity.

Empirical Review

In the study "The Political Uses of the Ancient Past on Social Media Are Predominantly Negative and Extreme" by Tarlach (2022), the author investigates how ancient history is used within political discourse on social media platforms such as Facebook. The study aims to explore the tone, polarization, and political implications of posts referencing historical figures or events from antiquity. Using a quantitative research approach, the research design involves analyzing a random sample of posts that invoke historical figures, specifically focusing on posts related to political events. The study draws its sample from posts made within political groups or by political figures. The major findings of the research highlight that references to ancient history tend to be used in highly polarized and often negative posts, which aligns with a growing trend in political communication where ancient historical narratives are used to legitimize extreme political views. The study concludes that social media platforms have amplified the use of ancient historical references, which contribute to political polarization. It recommends that future research explore the long-term effects of such practices on public opinion and civic discourse.

In "Cicero's Web: How Social Media Was Born in Ancient Rome" (Standage, 2013), the author examines the ways in which communication networks in ancient Rome resemble modern social media. The study's aim is to trace the connections between Roman methods of information sharing, such as letter writing and public speeches, and contemporary social media practices. Employing a qualitative approach, the research design involves historical analysis, focusing on Roman texts and practices. The population includes works of key figures like Cicero, and the sampling technique focuses on selected letters and speeches. The sample size is comprised of relevant documents from Roman elites. Major findings suggest that the exchange of public letters, much like today's social media posts, played a significant role in the circulation of political opinions, influencing public sentiment. The study concludes that the roots of social media can be traced back to ancient Rome, where public and political communications formed the basis for modern media. Standage recommends further investigation into historical communication practices to better understand contemporary digital communication.

In "The Algorithm and the Fourth Estate: Examining the Impact of Algorithmic News Curation on Political Discourse" (Nguyen & Park, 2023), the authors

examine how algorithmic news curation shapes political discourse in the digital age. The study aims to analyze the effects of personalized news feeds on public understanding and engagement with political issues. Grounded in media effects theory, the research uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of news consumption patterns with qualitative interviews of news consumers. The population includes users of various social media platforms and news aggregators. A stratified random sampling technique is employed to select participants that reflect diverse demographic and political backgrounds. The study finds that algorithmic news curation can lead to filter bubbles and echo chambers, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives and reinforcing existing beliefs. The authors conclude that algorithmic news curation has significant implications for political discourse, potentially contributing to polarization and misinformation. They recommend that social media platforms and news providers prioritize transparency and diversity in their algorithmic curation practices. (Nguyen & Park, 2023)

In "Sanewashing? The Banality of Crazy? A Decade into the Trump Era, Media Hasn't Figured Him Out" (Gottfried & Shearer, 2024), the authors analyze how journalists have struggled to effectively cover Trump's political behaviour and rhetoric. The research aims to understand the challenges faced by journalists in reporting on Trump's unconventional political style and its impact on public discourse. Using a qualitative research design, the authors analyze a decade of media coverage of Trump, focusing on print media, digital news, and broadcasts. The population includes articles and broadcasts from major news outlets like The New York Times and CNN, with a purposive sampling technique applied to select key events that shaped public opinion. The sample size includes numerous articles and broadcasts from across the ten-year period. The study finds that media outlets often vacillate between normalizing Trump's rhetoric and highlighting its extremity, resulting in fragmented coverage that fails to provide a consistent public narrative. The authors conclude that media coverage of Trump has had significant implications for public discourse, leading to confusion and misperceptions among the public. They recommend that journalists develop standardized approaches to political reporting to maintain consistency and public trust.

Theoretical Framework

This work was hinged on framing theory.

Framing Theory developed by Erving Goffman (1974) posits that media and communicators select certain aspects of reality and make them more salient in a message, influencing how audiences interpret events. Goffman introduced the idea of "frames" as mental structures that shape the way people see the world. In this study, framing theory helps explain how both ancient oratory and modern interpretive journalism select, emphasize, and structure political narratives to sway public opinion.

Methodology

In this study, Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed to examine how interpretive journalism has framed political narratives across two contrasting epochs: ancient Rome and the contemporary digital age. Rather than focusing on the textual analysis of primary speeches or social media posts in isolation, the study explored how narrative structures within journalistic and mediated accounts—from the stylized representations of Julius Caesar in historical texts to present-day media coverage and Twitter discourse—reflect and reproduce underlying ideologies. The analysis illuminated how shifting socio-political contexts, media technologies, and journalistic practices influence the construction of authority, legitimacy, and power within political storytelling, thereby revealing the enduring and evolving role of interpretive journalism in shaping public consciousness.

Presentation of data

Table 1: Examination of the form, structure, and linguistic features of political narratives in Julius Caesar's time and the era of Twitter.

Time Period	Primary Sources	Linguistic Features	Narrative Style	Notable Devices
Julius Caesar's Time	Caesar's <i>Commentarii de Bello Gallico</i> , Cicero's speeches, inscriptions, Roman Senate records	Formal Latin, rhetorical questions, use of ethos/pathos/logos	Highly rhetorical, aristocratic, oratorical	Repetition, parallelism, personification of the Republic
	Digital Era	Informal, character-limited syntax, hashtags	Conversational, often sarcastic	Hashtags, irony, algorithms

virality	viral memes	emojis, code-switching	laden	c brevity
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Data in table 1 above shows that ancient texts aimed for persuasive endurance; modern texts prioritize virality and that Twitter promotes intertextuality through quote tweets and retweets, unlike monologic Roman speeches

Table 2: Analysis of how political narratives are produced, circulated, and interpreted

Period	Producers	Distribution Channels	Audience Engagement
Caesar's Era	Orators, scribes, elite politicians	Senate, public forums, scrolls	Passive public, mostly elite
Digital Era	Politicians, influencers, bots	Twitter, blogs, YouTube	Highly interactive, real-time, global

Table 2 x-rays how Caesar controlled his narrative via formal channels; modern politicians curate self-image via tweets and digital surrogates and Digital platforms democratize political discourse, but also open it to manipulation (e.g., bots, fake news).

Table 3: Exploration of the cultural, political, and media environments that shape narratives.

Era	Socio-political Environment	Media Role	Power Structures
Ancient Rome	Aristocratic Republic, Empire-building	State-sanctioned dissemination	Elitist and centralized
Digital Age	Democratic and authoritarian regimes	Platform capitalism (Twitter, Meta)	Decentralized yet manipulated by algorithms

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Data in table 3 above reveal that political narrative in Rome reinforced hierarchical power; Twitter narratives can subvert or support power depending on digital literacy and access and that media now functions as both a gatekeeper and amplifier through AI and trending algorithms.

Analysis of data

Theme 1: Form, Structure, and Linguistic Features

Data gathered highlights a fundamental transformation in the architecture of political narratives—from the enduring, rhetorically rich

formulations of Julius Caesar's time to the fleeting, virality-driven expressions of the Twitter era. In Caesar's era, the use of formal Latin, polished oratory, and a triadic rhetorical appeal (ethos, pathos, logos) fostered narrative authority and longevity. Devices like parallelism and repetition not only clarified messages but cemented them in public memory, while personification of the Republic sacralized political ideals. These were texts meant to last, written on scrolls and carved into stone. In contrast, the Twitter era is governed by informality and digital semiotics: hashtags replace rhetorical devices, emojis substitute tone, and brevity—enforced by platform constraints—reshapes logic. Instead of structured oratory, the narrative style is fragmented, conversational, and laced with sarcasm or irony. Importantly, Twitter's affordances enable intertextuality, making retweets, quote tweets, and meme replies integral to narrative construction—a stark departure from the monologic discourse of Rome. The communicative logic has shifted from deliberative and ceremonial permanence to ephemeral virality, and yet both retain a performative element tailored to their respective audiences.

Theme 2: Narrative Production, Circulation, and Interpretation

Data gathered shows a seismic shift in how political narratives are created, disseminated, and received. In Caesar's time, narrative production was elite-driven—controlled by orators, senators, and scribes who published through formal channels like senatorial records or inscribed texts. This top-down mode ensured coherence and authority, but limited public engagement to passive reception, particularly among the literate elite. In contrast, the digital era democratizes narrative production: politicians, influencers, and even bots participate in crafting narratives on-the-fly. Distribution has gone from physical scrolls to global networks powered by real-time updates on platforms like Twitter and YouTube. Engagement is no longer passive; it is now hyperactive, emotionally reactive, and algorithmically amplified. Users interpret, remix, and respond to content immediately, thus co-creating meaning. Furthermore, digital surrogates—memes, fan accounts, and coordinated influencer campaigns—extend political messaging beyond the control of the original producer. While Caesar curated his mythos through selective self-representation in *Commentarii*, modern figures risk losing control to viral reinterpretations or misinformation. Thus, where Caesar mastered message discipline, modern figures must constantly manage

and reframe narratives in an open, sometimes adversarial, infosphere.

Theme 3: Exploration of Cultural, Political, and Media Environments

Facts assembled provide a lens into the evolving socio-political ecology that scaffolds political narrative. Ancient Rome operated within a centralized, hierarchical system where narratives reinforced the prestige and continuity of the aristocratic elite and the Roman state. The media apparatus—monuments, scrolls, Senate decrees—was state-controlled or elite-sponsored, sustaining vertical power structures and limiting narrative plurality. Conversely, today's media environment is both decentralized and algorithmically curated. The shift from physical to digital media collapses geographical and institutional barriers, creating a platform-driven reality where tech giants like Twitter (now X) and Meta act as both publishers and arbiters of political content. This decentralization gives voice to the marginalized and enables subversive discourse but also opens the floodgates to misinformation, bot manipulation, and echo chambers. Power now lies not only in narrative production but in platform design and user algorithms—Twitter trends can make or break political reputations. In this context, narrative influence is contingent on digital literacy, algorithmic favour, and platform policies, meaning that access and manipulation of media architecture often determine political success more than traditional merit or institutional legitimacy. Thus, unlike Rome's rigid hierarchy, today's narrative power is fluid, volatile, and often opaque.

Discussion of findings

The transformation in political communication from Julius Caesar's structured, rhetorically enriched Latin prose to today's fragmented, informal Twitter discourse aligns partially with Tarlach (2022) and strongly with Standage (2013). While Tarlach emphasizes tone and polarization in content rather than form, Standage identifies direct parallels between Roman epistolary and oratorical traditions and the dialogic functions of social media. Caesar's orations, embedded with rhetorical devices like ethos, pathos, and logos, were monologic and intended for permanence, whereas Twitter's brevity, digital semiotics (hashtags, emojis), and sarcasm reflect an entirely new narrative logic. Framing Theory here is highly relevant: both in ancient and digital contexts, communicators selectively emphasize elements (e.g.,

symbols, tone, structure) to shape audience interpretation. What the theory does not fully explain, however, is the erosion of textual stability in digital media, where meaning is not just framed once but constantly reframed through user interaction and algorithmic modulation.

In terms of narrative creation and dissemination, a marked divergence is evident between Caesar's elite-controlled, top-down model and today's participatory digital culture. This aligns with the findings of Nguyen & Park (2023), who show that political discourse is now filtered through personalized algorithms, and with Tarlach (2022), who notes the bottom-up proliferation of extreme and negative historical analogies. Unlike Caesar's self-authored *Commentarii*, where meaning was tightly curated, modern political figures must navigate viral reinterpretations and a cacophony of competing frames, often generated by lay users, bots, and influencers. Framing Theory holds well here, as it accounts for how both ancient authors and modern users emphasize particular angles to sway perception. However, the theory's classic formulation struggles to accommodate the rapid, crowd-sourced, and unstable re-framing mechanisms of digital virality, where frames multiply and mutate at speed and scale previously unimaginable.

The shift from Rome's centralized, aristocracy-driven narrative ecosystem to today's decentralized, platform-governed media landscape echoes Nguyen & Park's (2023) and Gottfried & Shearer's (2024) concerns about algorithmic gatekeeping and narrative incoherence. Standage (2013) suggests a historical continuity in the social nature of communication, but modern platforms introduce algorithmic curation and amplification that fundamentally alter the ecology of discourse. The role of Twitter trends, echo chambers, and bot manipulation now rivals or even supersedes traditional institutional power in shaping public narrative. Framing Theory offers a useful lens to understand how platform architecture and user interfaces guide perception, yet it underrepresents the structural power of algorithms and platform policies in framing—not just the message, but also its visibility and resonance. Thus, while Goffman's insights remain foundational, the theory requires extension to address the opaque, non-human forces framing today's political realities.

Conclusion

In the shifting terrains of political communication, what emerges is not merely a contrast

between antiquity and modernity but a profound reconfiguration of authority, agency, and meaning itself. As power migrates from podiums and scrolls to screens and feeds, the very architecture of truth and influence is being renegotiated in real time. This evolution demands more than nostalgia for the gravitas of Rome or cynicism about the ephemerality of tweets—it calls for a reckoning with how democratic legitimacy is constructed, challenged, and sustained in a world where every citizen is both an audience and a narrator. Summatively, the survival of meaningful political discourse depends not on resisting change, but on cultivating critical literacy, ethical design, and a renewed sense of civic responsibility within this volatile communicative ecosystem.

Recommendations

1. Political communicators should receive training in digital rhetoric— that emphasize clarity, brevity, and symbolic literacy (e.g., emojis, hashtags) to ensure message coherence and emotional resonance in fragmented online spaces.
2. Public figures and institutions should proactively shape and monitor digital narratives by engaging early and consistently with trending content, using adaptive framing to retain control over evolving interpretations.
3. Policymakers should push for algorithmic transparency and platform accountability to ensure that the framing and circulation of political discourse are not dictated solely by opaque, profit-driven systems.

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