

## **Summary of the ANR project “Multiplatform Analysis of Online Political Expression” (AMULEX), (CÉDITEC/Université Paris-Est Créteil)**

AMULEX (Multiplatform Analysis of Online Political Expression) is a project funded by the French National Research Agency (CNRS) for 36 months starting from January 2024. The project brings together several members of CÉDITEC as well as colleagues from the Paragraphe laboratory at Paris 8 University and the Institute of Complex Systems-Paris Île-de-France.

AMULEX aims to analyze the argumentative forms of digital political expression by combining quantitative and qualitative methods, without detaching them from the socio-political context in which individuals operate. These include both online and offline forms, and the project takes into account the architecture of platforms. It focuses on comments generated by interviews of candidates for the French presidential election between February and April 2022 on four platforms (Instagram, Twitch, Twitter, YouTube). The comments come from a corpus of 160 interviews with ten candidates, ranging in duration from ten minutes to two and a half hours, conducted by private or public media, broadcast on television, radio, or online. The comments are located in online platforms of the media that conducted the interview as well as from digital spaces managed by the campaign teams of the interviewees, where transcriptions, excerpts, and sometimes the entirety of the interviews are disseminated.

### **Research Objectives**

#### **1. Capturing the critique of politics in digital comments.**

This involves dissecting the diversity of political critiques by analyzing both the functioning of platforms and the semiotic content of online comments. The contrastive corpus of commented interviews on four platforms will provide access to the expression of diverse socio-demographic profiles and highlight the argumentative or reactive, textual or visual modalities that different platforms preferentially give rise to.

#### **2. Socially and politically situate the digital expression of internet users.**

The second objective is to re-embed online political expression in the online and offline political and social experiences of individuals. Accordingly, the project seeks to determine whether political expression stems from a specific or shared relationship to politics in different spaces.

### **Arguments**

#### **1. The platform itself, through which internet users express themselves about content produced by media or political actors influences the forms and registers of this expression.**

This project starts from the argument that platforms (Instagram, Twitch, Twitter, YouTube) prefigure, but do not entirely predetermine them, the forms of political expression. Comment spaces are embedded in platforms that promote certain formats of action and interaction. This argument implies setting up a comparative analysis of the platforms mentioned above.

#### **2. The characteristics and timing of interviews and excerpts broadcast on the platforms in question differently stimulate the volume and subject of political critiques. The degree of comments' politization varies depending on the use of different platforms by the candidates.**

The volume of comments varies mainly depending on the interviewee, interviewer, time, and media of program broadcasting, and secondarily depending on the degree of asynchronicity between the broadcast of an interview and the moment it is available online.

#### **3. The authors of comments on Instagram, Twitch, Twitter, and YouTube handles of these media outlets have a more varied socio-demographic profile than those intervening on pages or accounts**

managed by a candidate's team. Socio-economic, age, and gender divides that structure discourse do not play equally across all platforms.

In addition to socio-demographic variables and appetite for political engagement, digital skills and information literacy also constitute a determining factor in digital political expression.

### **Expected Results**

1. Reassessing ordinary relationships with democracy and participation. The volume of collected critiques, the variety of commented programs, and the sociographical survey will determine to what extent the media outlets concerned serve as focal points and whether socio-demographic characteristics prevail over political preferences and the level of engagement when expressing a political opinion online.
2. Developing a model for analyzing digital political expression. The project aims to supplement classical models of deliberation and persuasion with other norms, based on alternative conceptions of democracy or emerging from the technical and material conditions of individual expression.
3. Proposing a typology of comments. The semio-discursive analysis of comments as well as surveys of internet users should allow for the development of a typology of comments articulated with the practices and sociology of the respondents.
4. Understanding the meaning and expressive practices of individuals. The sociographical survey aims to understand the meaning, motivations, and resistance exhibited by individuals when they leave paper trail, representative of a political idea or opinion, on digital spaces with varying degrees of publicity.

### **Methodology**

AMULEX articulates a quantitative and qualitative approach to digital data, taking into account the frameworks from which they were produced, with a comprehensive sociological approach, through the implementation of a questionnaire survey and interviews.

**Research Focus 1.** Quantitative and qualitative analysis of comments collected on the four platforms (co-responsible: Orélie Desfriches-Doria and Aude Seurrat) (M1-M36). This research focus concentrate on the analysis of over 700,000 comments (mixing texts, paratextual signs, images, and hyperlinks) collected between January and May 2022 on Instagram, Twitch, Twitter, and YouTube accounts of candidates and media outlets. We adopt a hybrid “quali-quantitative” approach. It involves associating a comparative semiotic analysis of the four platforms with a computationally equipped approach, allowing for both the processing of restricted sub-corpora and larger volumes. The software Prospéro and Gargantext will be used to navigate between “macro” scales, showing the overall structure of arguments produced in reaction to a category of interview, and “micro” scales. This splicing of approaches, in turn, will allow for both an analysis of statements and an understanding of the dynamics of interactions between comment authors.

**Research Focus 2.** Sociography of commentators (co-responsible: Alexandre Borrell, Stéphanie Wojcik) (M6-M30). The sociographical survey through questionnaire and individual interviews aims to more broadly understand the practice of online commenting in media and political spaces. This research focus consists of three stages.

1. Establishing a sample of commentators;
2. Development and administration of the questionnaire;
3. Statistical processing and interpretation of results.

### **Project Team**

- The project is coordinated by Stéphanie Wojcik.

### **CÉDITEC**

- Élodie Berthet, PhD student in SIC at Carism, Université Panthéon-Assas
- Alexandre Borrell, Associate Professor in SIC, Université Paris-Est Créteil
- Ibtihaje Chawki, PhD student, Université Paris-Est Créteil
- Agathe Cormier, Associate Professor in language sciences, Université Paris-Est Créteil
- Aude Seurrat, Professor in SIC, Université Paris-Est Créteil
- Gökçe Tuncel, post-doctoral researcher of the Amulex project, Université Paris-Est Créteil
- Stéphanie Wojcik, Associate Professor in SIC, Université Paris-Est Créteil

### **Paragraphe**

- Josquin Debaz, PhD in history of science and developer
- Orélie Desfriches Doria, Associate Professor in SIC, Université Paris-VIII-Vincennes-Saint-Denis
- Maria Ines Laitano, Associate Professor in SIC, Université Paris-VIII-Vincennes-Saint-Denis
- Waldir Lisboa Rocha, PhD student at EHESS, research engineer of Amulex
- Aymeric Luneau, PhD in sociology, research engineer of Amulex

### **Institut des Systèmes Complexes Paris Île-de-France**

- Alexandre Delanoë, sociologist, research engineer (EHESS), Gargantext project leader

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