



A graph depicting the effect of regime on probability of network centrality. Credit: lakhnis & Badawy.

"Once we collected our dataset, we build a network based on leaders' mentions of other leaders," Badawy explained. "In other words, a direct link in a mention network indicates that one leader mentioned another in his or her post. Using this network, we analyzed leaders' interactions with each other and their importance in the network."

The analyses carried out by Badawy and lakhnis yielded very interesting results. Firstly, they observed that the exchanges between world leaders on Twitter closely resemble their interactions offline. They also found that political regime is the main predictor of clustering between different countries on Twitter, a finding that is aligned with a philosophical construct known as the democratic peace theory.

"Our research shows that leaders form mention/retweet communities along regional lines and similar levels in political hierarchy," Badawy said. "We also found that the regime type plays a key role in the way Twitter communities are formed. Specifically, leaders from democratic states are more likely to engage with other democratic leaders."

In their analyses, Badawy and lakhnis also tried to uncover patterns in the 'popularity' of world leaders online. Their observations suggest that leaders from democratic countries typically play more

central roles on Twitter, while non-democratic leaders remain somewhat in the periphery.

The two researchers from USC are among the first to investigate patterns in how [political leaders](#) interact with one another online. Their findings, which have numerous interesting implications, could inform other research endeavors aimed at further enhancing our understanding of how politicians and government actors use social [media](#).

"So far, in our analyses we have treated both mention and retweet networks as static snapshots," Badawy said. "With more data across a longer time period, we could treat these networks as dynamic ones, which could further increase our understanding of leaders' interactions on [social media](#)."

More information: Networks of power: analyzing world leaders' interactions on social media. arXiv:1907.11283 [cs.SI]. arxiv.org/abs/1907.11283

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