



# THE EXTENT TO WHICH TIKTOK HAS BECOME A NEW PLATFORM FOR POLITICAL EXPRESSION:

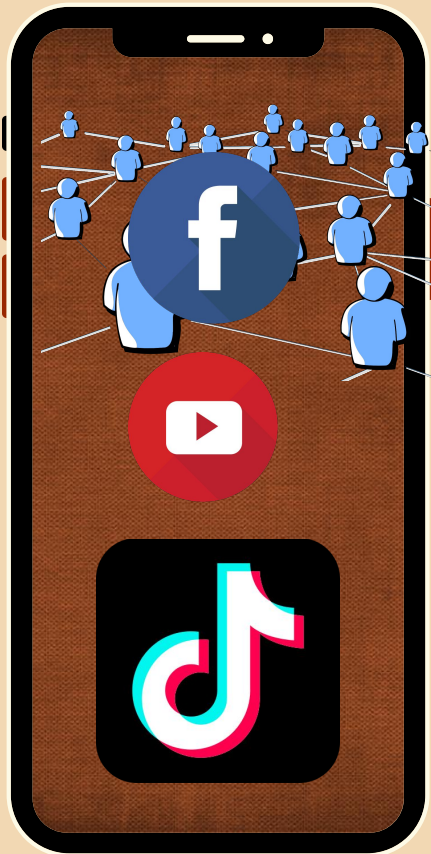
**An Analysis of US Public Opinion, Social  
Media, Celebrity Endorsements and  
Youth Voting Behavior**

Arcadia University Thesis Presentation

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Politics, Government, and Law  
Media and Communications

# INTRODUCTION



**Topic:** Tiktok has a function in society to act as a platform of political identity and expression. It has positives and negatives, I am to find out if its growth is correlated to youth voting behavior and politics.

**Research question:** How does the consumption of mass media and the exposure of social networks like Tiktok influence youth voting behavior and public opinion in modern elections and act as platforms for political expression?

**Thesis Statement:** The scholarly literature on social identity, celebrity endorsements, groupthink, and youth voting line up with the current role of the social media app Tiktok in US Elections as a public opinion influence and platform for political expression.

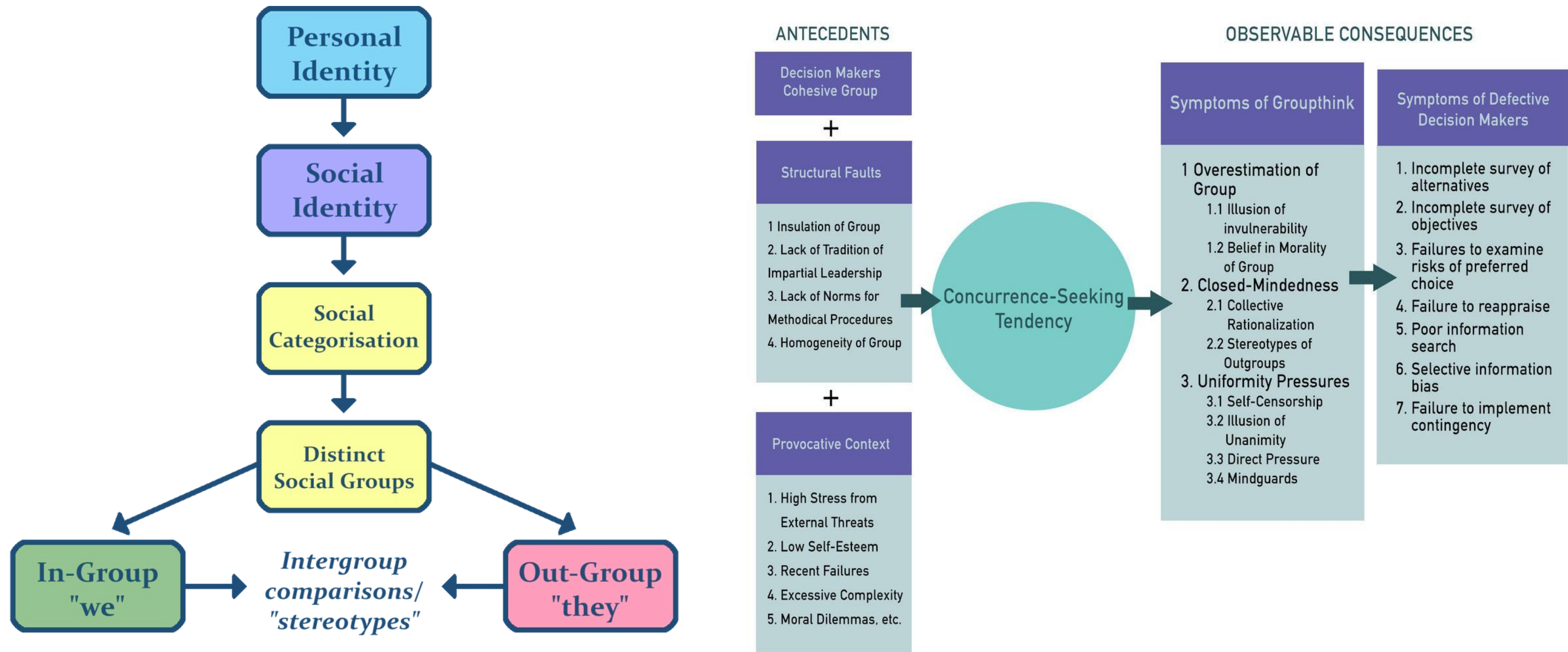
# LITERATURE REVIEW

- Scholars discuss....
  - How political ideology typically is formed
  - Groupthink (echochamber)
  - Social Identity Theory
  - Celebrity endorsements
  - Youth voting patterns
  - Media's role in politics





# ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK



# METHOD: PROCESS TRACING



	Intrac's Process Tracing Steps	My Process
Step 1	Identify the change or changes to be explained	Evidence of Tiktok's growth in political influence
Step 2	Establish the evidence for the change	Testing my framework
Step 3	Document the processes leading to the change	My timeline of events
Step 4	Establish alternative causal explanations	Correlation, not causation
Step 5	Assess the evidence for each causal explanation	Conclusion



# METHOD FRAMEWORK APPLICATION

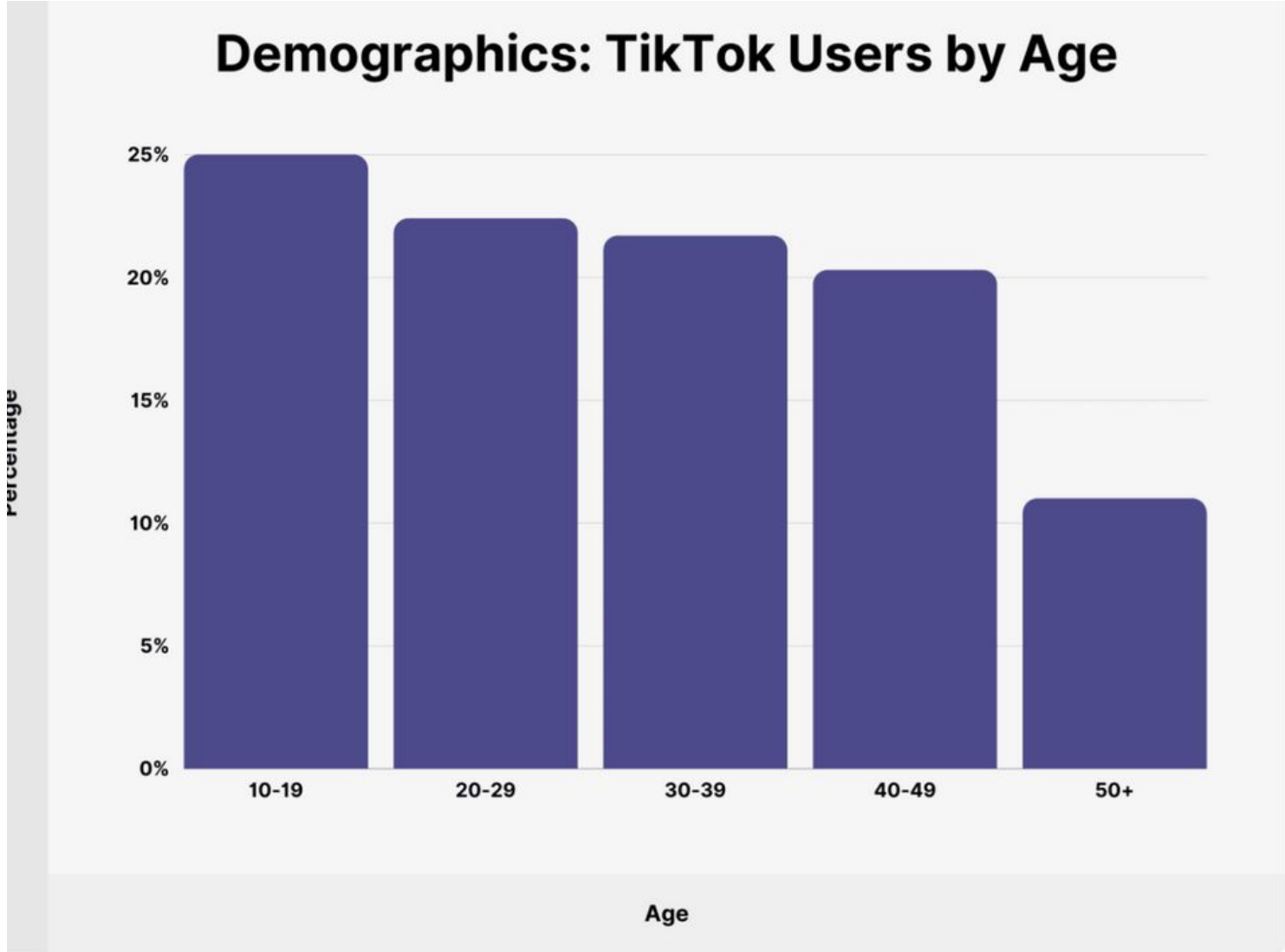


Test if framework applies:			
Groupthink	Is dissent avoided? Is concurrence-seeking occurring?	Are group members acting and making decisions with their group in mind?	Is conformity happening?
Celebrity Endorsements	What is the celebrities' following on different social media apps in relation to others? What is that celebrity net worth?	What was the reaction to the endorsement?	How does this compare to other candidates?
Influence of media	How many people are being reached? Is the response positive?	Is there a clear demographic being targeted?	How does this compare to days without social media?
Social identity theory	Are people being categorized into groups? Is there a clear in and out-group?	Are people feeling lost without group identity? Is relation to a group affecting self-identity?	Are there links between the group and the individual's thoughts and actions?



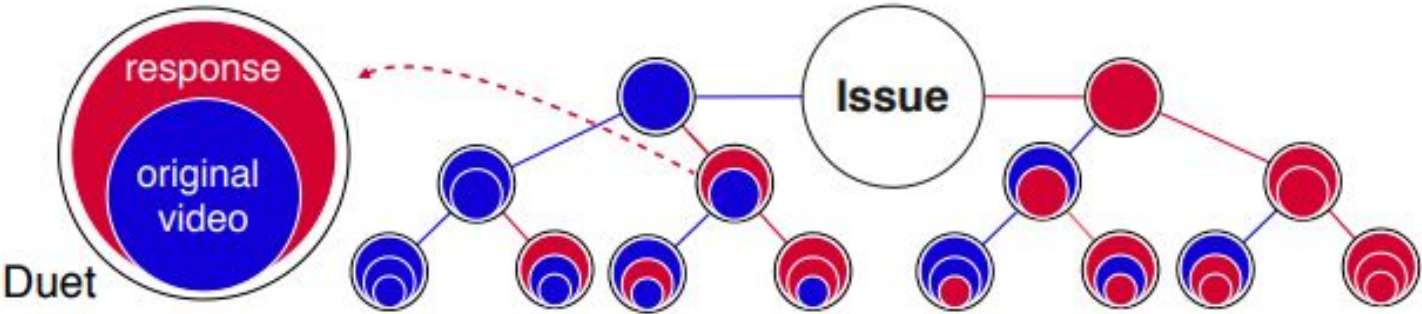
# ANALYSIS

Celebrity	Tiktok Followers	Twitter Followers	Instagram Followers	Candidate Endorsed	Main Platform Used to Endorse	Rank of popularity based on followers
Kylie Jenner	38.1M	39.7M	324M	Biden	Instagram	Most followed American on Instagram
Dwayne Johnson	51.9M	16M	308M	Biden	Youtube	#6 on Instagram
Ariana Grande	26.7M	N/A	303M	Biden	Instagram	#7 on Instagram
Taylor Swift	11.5M	90.3M	205M	Biden	Twitter	#15 on Instagram #6 on Twitter
Mike Tyson	2.7M	5.7M	18.1M	Trump	Interview	N/A
Ted Nugent	No verified account	No verified account	377K	Trump	Interview	N/A



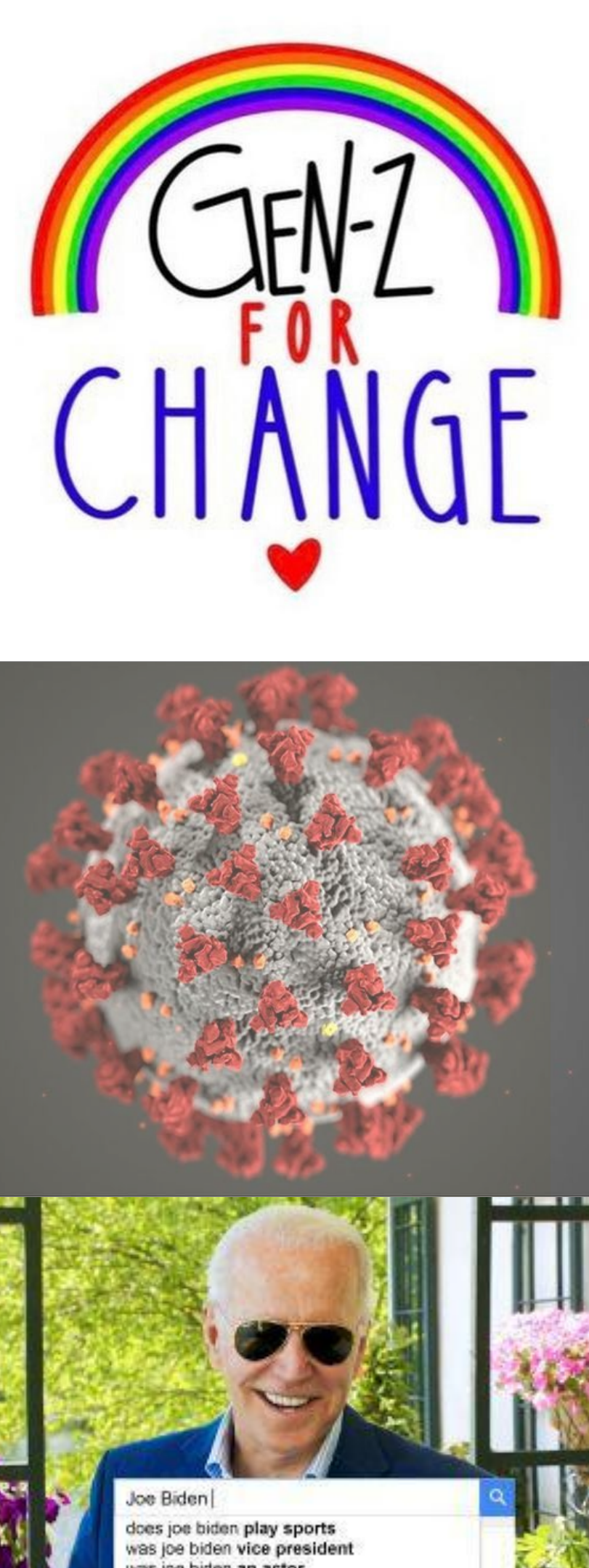
	Videos	Users	Likes	Shares	Comm.
<i>Republican</i>	3,987	1,957	15,533,963	817,728	500,514
<i>Democrat</i>	1,959	1,249	10,663,139	392,468	257,199

Hashtag	Tiktok	Instagram
#Biden	15,400,000,000	1,300,000
#Trump	21,300,000,000	16,000,000
#2020election	739,000,000	320,000
#probiden	35,400	249
#protrump	14,200,000	47,100
#uselection	114,500,000	127,000
#uspolitics	131,400,000	111,000



**Figure 3: Communication tree for TikTok duets.**





## PROCESS TRACING

# TIKTOK



### MARCH 2020: COVID 19 PANDEMIC BEGINS

People all over the world find themselves stuck at home with Tiktok as socialization

### 2017/2018: TIKTOK

Musically morphs into Tiktok and grows to reach a global audience

### MAY 2020: BIDEN'S SUPPORT FOR TIKTOK AND MEDIA

Biden stands against Trump's Tiktok ban and completes entertaining media like the Wired Autocomplete interview

### JUNE 2020: RALLY CONFUSION

Tiktokers are able to influence Trump's rally in Oklahoma

### SUMMER 2020: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tiktok spreads the message of BLM and conversations are started through trends

### SEPTEMBER 2020: VOTER SIGN UP

David Dobrik signups up over 100,000 young people to vote

### OCTOBER 2020: TIKTOK FOR BIDEN

Gen Z urges people to vote for Biden on Tiktok

### SEPTEMBER 2021: 1 BILLION USERS

1 Billion accounts around the world are made on Tiktok

### FALL 2020: CELEBRITIES ENDORSE BIDEN

Celebrities like Taylor Swift and Lady Gaga endorse Biden over Trump

### NOVEMBER 2020: BIDEN WINS

Biden defeats Trump in national election for presidency





# CONCLUSION

- Tiktok does in fact have a role in society and is increasing leverage in the realm of politics
- People are becoming active in government and taking part in discussions and voting
- It could even be argued that Tiktok helps contribute to free and fair elections and the spread of democracy within the nation
- But the opposite can as well that it is influencing people's minds like never before and could be hard to predict the future

