September 25, 2022

*Manuscript:* *How Twitter divides the Dutch parliament: Social and Political Segregation in the following, @-mentions and retweets networks*

Dear editor,

# Please find enclosed a submission to *Information, Communication & Society* titled, ‘How Twitter divides the Dutch parliament: Social and Political Segregation in the following, @-mentions and retweets networks’.

Despite its relevance, research into the Twitter networks of MPs is rare. Our study is a quantitative study on segregation in Twitter networks of Dutch MPs. In our contribution, we study, for the first time, segregation *dynamics* with longitudinal network data. Moreover, we are the first to scrutinize how the different network layers Twitter offers (follows, @mentions, retweets) are *interrelated* and how this impacts segregation dynamics.

We bring together the online network literature with that on the political consequences of the digital architecture of social media platforms and their political use. To test our hypothesis, we use a combination of descriptive statistics and state-of-the-art longitudinal Social Network Analysis (i.e. RSiena). We find that Twitter relations with MPs of the same political party are substantially more common than with MPs of other parties. These segregation patterns are strongest within the retweet-layer and weakest in the @-mention layer, in line with the architectural reasoning that retweets are generally political endorsements whereas @-mentions are more a way to hold micro discussions. Party-based segregation is not the by-product of preferences to interact with similar others. Segregation patterns within the three network layers are interrelated and reinforce each other.

We have chosen to submit our manuscript to *Information, Communication & Society* because our work builds on previous work published in this journal and we believe the topic of our research, segregation in Twitter networks among MPs along party membership lines and social dimensions, advances the understanding of political communication practices, and hence may be of interest to the readers of the journal.

I will serve as the corresponding author for this manuscript. I have assumed responsibility for keeping my co-authors informed of our progress through the editorial review process, the content of the review, and any revisions made.

Sincerely,



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