



Department of Political Science

Course of Sociology of Communication

**EVOLUTION OF THE MEDIA AND THEIR IMPACT  
ON POLITICS**

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# INTRODUCTION

Over the process of human evolution, there has been a significant change with regards to the communication technology. Going down through history from the pre-digital oral and manuscript era, to the contemporary information internet and digitization age, the processes through which information is communicated has changed dynamically. Every age in the communication evolution process has caused disparities in societal dynamics and how arrange affects and power. In this respect the development of communication media reflects the advancement of human societies' and at the same time realises it.

The breakthrough in the evolution of this new media was the spreading of the Internet towards the ending of the twentieth century, called the Internet Revolution. It premediated transformation of traditional media such as prints, radio and television to a much more active, connected and real time communication platform. This change brought about democratization of flow of information where anyone who wanted to could disseminate information to the as well as reach out to a similarly large audience in record time. When the internet expanded, social media sites appeared and changed media dramatically. These interactive spaces of communication meant for interaction and sharing of content, changed the very process of the distribution of knowledge, wherein users became not only producers and profiles but also the broadcasters of content. This development resulted to a fresh shift of power struggle in media where forms owned by traditional media organizations started to get challenged by fabrications from users.

A contrast between the traditional and the new media shows not only the opportunities that modern communicational unencumberment has, but also the problems. Where there were once a select few in charge of deciding with the public should know and when they should know it, in new media the barriers have been erased thereby allowing for a more diverse source of information but also uncontrolled information. The end state is a media landscape one that is faster, more complex and potentially more polarising than has ever been previously experienced.

It is crucial to elucidate these distinctions to gain awareness of the new substantial shifts concerning societies' information processing and communicative practices.

In over whining the process of political transformation, communication media has also taken a new twist through technological advancement. The connection between media and politics is dated back as far as media has had a major impact on political agenda, in how they define the issues and how the people are to think about them. Also, it has never been so tight as it has become in the context of the digitalization of political communication, campaigns, and electoral battles. Currently, social networks are considered to be crucial in the election campaigns, as they provide politicians with the opportunity to communicate with voters without intermediaries – the mass media. They also become centers of political discourse which afford individuals a platform to air opinions, promote causes and form interactions with political officials.

However, effect of the new media is not just confined to political strategies during campaigns, it has also realigned political participation and even opinion making or opinion influencing within the community. The live and almost real-time characteristic of social media has allowed citizens easy access to political information at the click of button. But this new availability is not without inconveniences all the same. Opportunities in misinformation, fake news, and disinformation have cropped up persistently with consequential effects on democratic societies. Misinformation volatility is also capable of confusing the public, diminishing the credibility of organizations, and distorting the essence of the elections.

Incidentally, the present generation is highly polarized politically, and people are in more echo chambers, where they only get to hear what they want to hear in social media. It has helped fix polarisation within politics and made it rather hard for people to come up with ways that hail the middle ground. Consequently, the connection between the media, politics, and society is currently being undersigned as fluid, challenging essential and even posing vital query as to participation in the future of democracy and role of media.

In approaching these issues it is possible to only take into account the contemporary regulation of communication media. Freedom of speech and the fight against the circulation of dangerous content, including fake news, disinformation and hate speech is a great challenge for policy-makers. On the one hand, the availability and distribution of information on the Internet has been appreciated as a means of performing an act of opening and decentralization in society and for individuals. On the other hand this openness has been realised to reduce the ability to control the flow of information namely media information hence recent attempts to increase regulation and accountability of media.

Altogether, the electronic communication media, and particularly SNSs have revolutionized the media system and the nature of doing politics. The advantage of such a change, openness, availability, and, therefore, diversity of knowledge, can be seen immediately. Though, the problem is not without its challenges like spread of fake news, division in political agenda and the control of material shared. This work will work further to develop an understanding of these dynamics, assessing the historical growth of communication media, its relation to politics and the future prospects of engaging with this new media terrain. Through a critical analysis of these topics, the goal of this work is provide a scholarly perspective on the future of media political process, and democracy in digital age.

# CHAPTER ONE - EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA

## 1.1. From the predigital era to the internet revolution

The capacity for communication has been essential to the evolution and cultural advancement of humanity. Indeed, the search for suitable means and technologies to manage and control the communication process has characterized the history of every civilization. Each new communication tool, by shortening distances and communication times, has profoundly transformed culture and society, irreversibly changing the daily habits of an ever-increasing number of people.

Before the creation of the internet and the subsequent spread of social networks, humans communicated with each other in ways very different from what we see today, using, for example, animals or structured signals. Significant in this regard were couriers, carrier pigeons, and smoke signals. However, these methods had major limitations: the long waiting times for messages to reach their destination and the limited amount of information that could be exchanged. Over time, the exchange of ideas and messages became increasingly easy thanks to the creation of new technologies. Before the industrial revolution, the enhancement of mass media was quite slow, but starting from the invention of the printing press, news, produced with much more ease, began to be transmitted in very short times. In the present day, we find ourselves in an unprecedented situation in human history, with an abundance of available information tools and the breadth of their dissemination and accessibility.

The following is an analysis of the principal main means of communication over throughout the centuries, the methods, and the tools that have enabled us to stay in touch, starting with the printing press.

### • The Printing Press

A major milestone in the history of communication technologies was the invention of the movable-type printing press by the German Johannes Gutenberg in 1456. Printing methods had existed for centuries (such as incunabula, woodcuts, etchings, etc.) in both Asia

and Europe and were mainly used to reproduce written texts. However, a radical change was inevitable due to the strong progress of the available technical resources. Gutenberg was the first printer to combine the various technologies developed in the early phase of the industrial era to create a new printing technique that would spread throughout Europe: metallurgy for type casting, chemistry for producing new types of ink, and mechanization to support mass paper production. After the invention of the printing press, printed books almost immediately replaced manuscripts because they were cheaper and much more manageable. Between 1448 and 1454, Gutenberg printed one of the first books in history, the 42-line Bible, in Mainz. The printing press brought about substantial social and cultural transformations: beyond providing a physical embodiment for knowledge and language, it facilitated the global dissemination of information.

- **The Telegraph**

The telegraph is a long-distance communication system designed for data transmission using specific codes. The first major telegraph infrastructure in human history was created in revolutionary France in 1793 with the optical telegraph by the French inventor Claude Chappe, based on the transmission of optical signals over a distance. However, the most successful telegraphic invention was patented by Samuel Morse in 1837, a drawing professor at New York University. This device allowed the reproduction of the letters of the alphabet through a system of symbols composed only of dots and dashes and was the first device used for telecommunications. After its invention, the telegraph quickly spread worldwide, and governments for the first time had the ability to rapidly exchange information with all regions of the state and, with the laying of submarine cables, also with their overseas colonies. The traditional electric telegraph fell out of use following the invention of the telephone, which utilized electromagnetic waves to directly transmit the human voice.

## • **The Telephone**

During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, inventors and scientists introduced a new and more powerful instrument than the telegraph: - the telephone, with the ability to transmit the human voice over vast distances. In 1871, the first telephone was invented by Antonio Meucci, later perfected by Alexander Graham Bell in the following years. Thomas Edison, to whom we owe many other inventions, including the light bulb, also contributed to the perfection of the telephone with the invention of the first systems for recording and reproducing sound, such as the phonograph and the gramophone. For many years, the new instrument remained a privilege for the few. Initially, bankers, stock brokers, and railways intensely used the first telephone services. Only after World War I did the situation begin to change. The evolution of mobile phones has been rapid, especially in terms of size. In a short time, increasingly pocket-sized, thin, and light models appeared on the market. In 1993, the first "smartphones" appeared, allowing not only phone calls but also many other operations, including calendars, address books, clocks, calculators, notepads, emails, and games.

## • **The Cinema**

At the end of the 19th century, the first forms of cinema emerged, quickly establishing themselves as a true entertainment industry. The earliest cinematic technology, similar to modern-day devices, was built by the Lumière brothers, the inventors of the cinematic spectacle as we know it today. Auguste and Louis Lumière owned the largest European company of photographic products and together developed a system for recreating moving images. In a few years, around this technology for reproducing moving images, the first true form of entertainment industry developed, starting a process that spanned the entire 20th century and led to the current differentiation between the communications industry and the entertainment industry. The first films were only sequences of images, without sound. Over time, technological advancements led to the introduction of panoramic screens, digital film, and, in more recent years, 3D movies.

## • The Radio

Radio is the transmission of sound content enjoyed in real-time by multiple users in one or more geographic areas, equipped with specific electronic devices. The invention of radio is the result of a series of experiments conducted at the end of the 19th century that demonstrated the possibility of transmitting information through electromagnetic waves. First, in 1860, James Maxwell studied the wave nature of light, electricity, and magnetism. Subsequently, Heinrich Hertz studied and produced electromagnetic waves. Thanks to these Hertzian waves, Guglielmo Marconi and Nikola Tesla developed the wireless transmission system, ensuring the transmission of information over long distances. In 1920, the first radio broadcasts began in the United States, where the first radio station was born. In the following years, radio achieved great success, spreading worldwide. Radio was employed during the two World Wars as a tool for disseminating information and shaping public perception, given its capacity to broadcast messages promptly to vast audiences. Despite the emergence of television, many predicted a decline in radio's prominence, it continued to play a crucial role within communication networks.

## • The Television

Television came into existence at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its invention was the result of the work of many scientists and inventors, including Alexander Bain, but it was the Scottish inventor John Logie Baird who built the first truly functional television prototype in 1925. After a series of further experiments, the device manufactured by Baird was made available to the public, who could watch the first television broadcasts. Television spread worldwide, becoming the most effective and persuasive mass communication medium that humans have developed so far, contributing to a radical transformation of life habits and social relations in all countries of the world. In the present day, television has evolved and can be accessed through diverse modalities including terrestrial digital, satellite, cable, and web-based platforms.

## • **The Internet**

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that is publicly accessible. It now stands as the predominant mass communication medium, providing users access to a vast range of content and informational services. Its origins date back to the 1960s during the Cold War when the world was divided into two major spheres of influence (USA-USSR). In continuous alarm due to the Soviet threat, the American Department of Defense tasked ARPA with studying a network system capable of preserving computer connections between various American military bases in the event of nuclear war. Thus, a decentralized network called ARPANET<sup>1</sup> was born, designed so that each node could continue to process and transmit data if neighboring nodes were damaged. From the early 1960s, the ARPANET network changed and evolved until the early 1990s, when physicists at CERN, including Tim Berners-Lee, developed a system that became the Internet as we know it today, the World Wide Web. Thereafter, the internet expanded and spread globally following the 1994 authorization granted to commercial entities to connect to the network, along with the advent of personal computers. Today, the internet can connect people across the world without political, geographic, or temporal barriers.

## • **Social Networks**

The internet has fostered the development of social networks, new categories of real-time communication systems that have sparked a true revolution in terms of social relationships. Social networks are internet services typically accessed via the web that facilitate the management of social relationships and allow communication and sharing through textual and multimedia means. The history of social networks begins in 1997 when an American named Andrew Weinreich launched the site SixDegrees.com to facilitate relationship-building among people. The site is no longer active following its closure in 2001.

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<sup>1</sup> The ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) was the first packet-switching network and the precursor to the Internet.

A new step was taken by Friendster in 2002, whose success was immediate: three million registered users in the first six months. Soon, however, Friendster had to contend with Myspace, created by Tom Anderson and Chris DeWolfe in 2003. Myspace was notable for its popularity between 2003 and 2006, as it allowed users to fully customize their profiles and share music and videos. Also in 2003, LinkedIn, one of the first social networks dedicated exclusively to the world of work, was born. On February 4, 2004, Facebook was born, created by the then nineteen-year-old Mark Zuckerberg, and within four years, it expanded worldwide, reaching the top spot among social networks. Today, Facebook has more than 2.32 billion active users. Then came Twitter in 2006, a service that offers its users a personal page where they can post comments and messages. From 2006 onwards, countless other social networks have emerged, including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Owing to technological advancements, we can now effortlessly and immediately connect with anyone across the world. The various forms of communication, from writing letters to social media, have had a significant impact on human interaction. It is interesting to see how technological advancements have shaped and will continue to shape our methods of communication, connecting us in ways we never thought possible.

## **1.2. The rise of social media and transformation of the media**

The function of social media has proven to be one of the most revolutionary effects of people's ongoing focus on advanced technologies in our modern digital age. This has started as a mere site meant for friends and families to meet online morphed into an international community that alters culture in the digital era globally. Starting from the college dorm room to becoming the trends on the social networking platforms, the Readz<sup>2</sup> have dramatically altered the social connectivity and indeed the perception of the reality. Social networking has changed the ways of interacting with each other and at the same time introduced new opportunities for the commercial promotion and development. Marketing through sales has

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<sup>2</sup> Readz" typically refers to a digital publishing platform that allows users to create and distribute interactive content, such as magazines, brochures, and presentations. It helps publishers engage their audience with multimedia-rich experiences.

now been demonstrated by Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as a means that helps in expanding the market reach since customers are easily engaged. For example, TikTok has already received serious attention in the recent period and with the videos that can be viewed up to 60 seconds have been able to dazzle millions of users worldwide. What was once for fun is now a place where people can socialize with others who have the same hobby. However, various companies that want to sell their products and services must reach out to the largest possible audience.

Therefore, if you require assistance in building a community based on your brand, you can link up with a dependable TikTok growth service and gain more followers. Such services can provide guidance on how to step up your presence on the site, provide helpful strategies, and motivate you to enhance your bond with your audience. Social media continues to foster interaction and cooperation, breaking down geographic barriers and creating like-minded global communities.

Social networking is crucial in current society since it forms the identities of individuals as well as groups of people. Thus, users create virtual avatars to convey the image they want to others by sharing photos and videos, sending statuses, and creating profiles. It has made self-assertion easily achievable by providing the respective individuals a means to express and get heard by the international community. That is why social media enables the formation of true contact between app's users, as well as their storytelling, not only as a language of personality but also as the language of power and unity. These can allow the people to have their figure on the digital circles which would also increase the diverse opportunities of individuals within the modern digital society.

Over the span of a few years, social media influencers have become the driving force in the relationships between a brand and a consumer. Those who have loyal and trusting audiences in their social accounts act as effective advertisements for companies, and they have tremendous impact on consumer choices and trends. It suggests that Amazon sellers can take more benefits from the influence programs to the trustful customers through these key people, thus, building brand awareness and performing sales. By statistics influencer marketing today equals to a spectacular \$21. Huge global market of over 1 billion, which proves its relevance in today's advertising strategies. The influencer culture has brought some benefits to the

business exposing them to the consumers by using genuine means. Decision makers in companies should try to take advantage of influencers and build organic interaction with customers who will in the long run develop a preference for the brands or products hence increasing market sales in today's highly competitive world.

Social networks also offer people with the ultimate tool to become effective agents of social activism and change since it avails enhanced resources to plan, coordinate, and campaign on issues close to their hearts as well as the society's. Furthermore, they represent the opinion and voice of the minorities; they make people aware of different injustices experienced in society hence during certain events like the Arab Spring protests or Black Lives Matters protests. The different movements benefitted from the online social media giant to gain support, scandalize authorities, and make international solidarity group as well as support frameworks. Thus, social media has created an environment where lots of citizens can participate in global change initiatives through this form of activist work, which demonstrates the positive effects of the digital sphere in raising awareness of injustice and inequality. However, as beneficial as it may be for businesses and as popular as it may have become for communication among people, the social media has its challenges and risks.

Our society has been placed in the competition driven by the likes, followers, comments, and other form of validation. This has led to cyber bullying, poor body image, higher tendencies of contracting mental health issues, and trust deficit particularly because fake news is created and circulates faster in the social media, echo chambers that rather distort than improve the healthy democratic discourse. When it comes to the issue concerning the emergence of SNS<sup>3</sup> and its relation to the culture, people have realized that there is need for higher responsibility and monitoring. Society concerns and demands, and technological developments require enhancements in monitoring tech firms and their operations such as algorithm explanation, regulating content, and consumers' data protection. These policymakers have raised a concern that while freedom of speech is a constitutional right, it must be balanced with the responsibility to prevent harm, particularly in the context of digital platforms.

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<sup>3</sup> Social network sites

The future technologies could be the blockchain or the VR<sup>4</sup> technologies or the AI<sup>5</sup> are likely to significantly alter social media within the next few years. These consequences may influence the nature of social relations and communication, or even the ways of consuming contents online. Thus, we must accept them on the one hand and, on the other, remain aware of their presence from the moral, social, and cultural perspectives.

The positions and various behaviors generated by Social Network Analysis (SNA) have significantly reshaped the landscape of digital culture. In my perspective, the social media has highly enhanced the society by resulting into several changes within the society but has serious challenges that should be attended to. Therefore, democracy, diversity, and inclusiveness are not something that one has to surrender for further embracing the opportunities of those platforms' enriching applications, but rather to make people use them constructively, contribute to enhancing the development of digital literacy and, at the same time, require more responsibility from the owners of such platforms.

The adaptation and development of social media into digital platforms are an ongoing and evolving process that has significantly impacted the society's communication process and interaction with content. Starting with the applications like blogging and discussion forums it developed to social networking sites like Myspace and Facebook. The presence of platform like YouTube, TikTok, and Twitch has increased the popularity of utilizing video content and live streaming among audiences. Instagram and Snapchat especially have contributed to presenting most online content in a particular manner influenced the look of content.

Social networks apply complex algorithms that determine what content should be delivered to a particular user depending on his/her likes and activity. Consumers create a huge amount of data and as a result, social platforms can provide highly targeted advertisements, thus, making advertising campaigns more effective. It has enabled businesses to reach their desired target group in the most efficient and effective manner possible hence, increasing the RoI<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Virtual reality

<sup>5</sup> Artificial intelligence

<sup>6</sup> Return on Investments, it is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency or profitability of an investment.

The chat and comment features allow consumers to engage in real-time conversations not only with the content but also with other users. Online groups and communities allow users to find other like-minded individuals and allows for the online user to feel more included. These engagements promote interaction among the users, and this makes the users to continuously visit the platforms.

AI for moderation of content and the suggestion of connections; AI is used for enhancing the user experience through chat bots and virtual assistants. Some of Facebook's AR Filters<sup>7</sup>, Snapchat or Instagram lenses and Facebook's (Oculus) VR<sup>8</sup> experiences are generating new forms of engagement between users and the products. These technologies improve the user experience since the interaction loop is made to be more engaging.

Patreon and YouTube have user subscription features where the artists can directly make their content subscribers pay for it. The integration of social media and e-commerce is allowing consumers to buy online from the social media applications such as shopping on Instagram and Facebook. Therefore, the approach that applies the commerce to social media has created new revenues for all the content creators and the sites.

It is, therefore, the data collection, and personal data utilization that are as such the important points in the set, which gives the headache towards the interest of the user. Given the circumstance that passing the information through the social networks is relatively easier and faster the prevention of fake news and misinformation has been challenging. This is why actions must be undertaken that would guarantee that the social media platforms are handling these issues with the presumed responsibility in the utilization of the social media platforms that are available.

Technological advancement and the expectations of the end users continue to present the dynamics of the use of information and communication technology in social media. The existing tendencies of the growth of social networks is addressing issues concerning privacy, data authenticity, impact of the web content on users' mental well-being, as well as offering

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<sup>7</sup> Augmented Reality Filters are digital effects that enhance or alter images in real-time using augmented reality technology.

<sup>8</sup> Virtual Reality Experiences

users more personal and entertaining interactions. The willingness to introduce these changes will also be significant for the future of social platforms' evolution. It includes adopting the use of new technologies including blockchain in transactions and data validation besides exploring and experimenting the new materializations of specified narrative such as a story and the use of augmented reality.

Furthermore, the advancement of the influencers and User-Generated Content is not stopping as evident in the constant transformation of marketing and social networks' framework. The platforms are also getting more concerned how they can make both physical and virtual space welcoming to the spectra percentages of the population. Thus, one might predict that in the future issues of the social networks functioning artificial intelligence and machine learning will also have significant participation in enhancing the application features and more changes for improving the user satisfaction and innovations considering the best practices concerning the ethical and the sustainability points of view.

### **1.3. Comparison between old media in the dissemination of information**

The media has changed dramatically over the years. There is a major difference between the Traditional media and the new media. Traditional media is, therefore, any kind of information delivery platform identifiable through popular knowledge or recognition as an ordinary means of information transfer. Such channels have been around for so many years and the channel in most cases is known, accepted and sometimes appreciated by the customers. The traditional media is made popular by some few forms, and they include movie, television, radio and newspaper together with magazines. These are a few of the traditional medias:

**Film:** Cinema or film, which can be referred to in other manners as movies, entertainment films have a heritage of just over one hundred and a quarter year. The first films were in five colors even lacked dialogists; they were only picture makers revealing the storyline of the film. It seemed that the introduction of sound in the initial year of one thousand, nine hundred twenty-seven created a dynamic in the political aspect of the picture through the added dialogues and sound. The process of cinematography during the 1900's experienced

improvements in the technologies such as color films, wider screen format and special effects of which consist of CGI<sup>9</sup> to make the process of production of the movies more enhanced and imaginative. The distribution model of the film industry was originally systematically constructed around theaters where the undertakings that were involved was just presenting of the movies to the customers through big screen technologies. Nevertheless, live streaming has denied the significance of the traditional theaters which are known to be playgrounds for the movie lovers who find joy in cinemas with huge theaters accompanied by extra features of IMAX<sup>10</sup> and 3D. The industry is still young and moreover in Covid-19 pandemic it has started to produce cinematic ones for those who wanted to go to theaters and at the same time digital ones for those who didn't.

**Television:** Television or TV as it is more commonly known today developed in the early part of the 20th century and soon grew to become one of the most influential means of providing entertainment and passing information. At first, aired in black and white, the TV programs developed as color broadcasting started in the 1960s. Thus, analog television was substituted with digital one, which improved picture and sound quality, as well as offered choice of programmers and interactive options. Television content vary from the live coverage of events, as news and sports, to programmed channels that present dramatically acted sitcoms and reality shows. Networks are said to have depended on scheduled programs, times when fans would turn on the TV to watch their favorite programs. However, broadcast television still has the audience share for watching live programs and local news. The industry remains dynamic and is now considering other ways of developing the content such as 4K Ultra HD<sup>11</sup> and Virtual Reality.

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<sup>9</sup> Computer-Generated Imagery

<sup>10</sup> Image Maximum

<sup>11</sup> High Definition

**Radio:** With the onset of the century, radio broadcasting proved to be a most popular means to disseminate news, music, and other contents to the people. Originally aired over AM<sup>12</sup> and FM<sup>13</sup> frequencies, radio stations gave live feed to music shows, talk shows and sports. The currently adopted digital radio formats such as DAB<sup>14</sup> offered a better audio signal and a vast list of stations. Although the audience and popularity of radio broadcasting have always been high, the industry has been threatened by other kinds of digital media that can be listened to, including music streaming services such as Spotify, Podcasts. Station's strength is the localized programming, community involvement, and up to date information that radio delivers especially in the times of disaster or during events. The transition from analogue broadcasting to the digital platform has allowed stations to expand to a global market while at the same time retaining the public's confidence to provide entertainment and inform them.

**Print publishing:** Print media consists of books, newspapers, magazines, and almost every other composition on paper that can be dated back to the invention of the print media in the 15th century by Johannes Gutenberg. It broke the barriers in the general methods of social interaction by providing the necessary means for producing the written text in large quantities to disseminate knowledge and ideas in the society. Newspapers as a major outlet of news as it included publications that provided local, national and international news. Newspapers offered diversions and specific information based on concerns of fashion and lifestyle and on issues of science and technology etc. The printed books may be in different forms and genres and gave the readers an opportunity to learn more detail about fiction/novel, non-fiction and education. Nevertheless, print media still has its fixed readership who prefers it due to the format, non-bias news, and its analytically based contents. Publishers go on to seek new ways and means of making their print tangible by trying out new possibilities of print and electronic media simultaneously to meet the future challenges.

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<sup>12</sup> Amplitude Modulation

<sup>13</sup> Frequency Modulation

<sup>14</sup> Digital Audio Broadcasting

Thus, it is appropriate to state that film, television, radio and print publishing reflected significant changes and regulatory adjustments throughout the years in terms of approaching consumers and benefitting from technology advancement. Even though there are new challenges by the new digital media alternatives these mediums remain relevant in providing entertainment, informing and cultural expression.

“New media” is a term which not only allows for the constantly changing media about how it is disseminated, but also about the way it is formed. It can range from social media to streaming, online video, audio, and mobile among others. For instance, by the help of these new technologies, it is possible to exhibit one's opinions, entertain the world with creations, and so on within no time at all. This is quite different from the traditional media in the sense that it is very interactive, and the media users are free to converse with each other. It has turned into one of the most important resources in various aspects of human interpersonal communication including business and entertainment. New media can be defined as a concept in communication technology that has emerged and developed with the help of information technology, especially the internet. All ranging from online papers to online diaries, melodies, podcasts, the social aspect, and the streaming services. New media and the conventional media have slight differences; the latter categories the television, radio, and newspaper among others while new media is still expanding as new technology emerges.

Thus, new media can be a concept that can be best described as any media that become delivered digitally suddenly. Not only does it include new forms of content which have been developed exclusively for the internet and which did not have prior existence in the offline world like podcasts and virtual reality and so on, but also it includes the digitally available version of traditional media like newspapers and books and magazines and so on.

One of the distinctions of new media is the use of multimedia features like the inclusion of video and or audio creating shared and exciting content easily on different platforms. Unfortunately, this does translate to consumers facing a predicament where they are overwhelmed by the amount of content to choose from but are unable to search for the relevant topics. Perhaps, that is the reason why customization appears here.

Marketing using new media can target each individual consumer according to the need of the market. This approach can be achieved in many ways like using the history of interaction

between the user and the application or the user simply selects the preference. Customization not only aids a consumer in searching for material relevant to them but also improves that consumer's experience with the media. Thus, in this regard, developments in customization through algorithms in improving new media will continue engaging and satisfying consumers as the media grows.

Communication and information, as received through new media, have dramatically changed and opened doors to potential and possibilities. A few cases in point include the following:

**Blog:** Great instruments for speaking out and spreading the word for others to learn and to campaign. Newspapers and magazines are comparatively more conventional than blogs and possess comparatively higher interactivity apart from slightly superior dynamic aspects. Whenever it comes to transferring the information there are far superior options to portray with a blog.

**Email:** Due to its ability to make and receive messages in the shortest possible time, it has revolutionized communications. However, when used together with other internet-based media, for instance, Facebook and instant messaging, it fully integrates new media.

**Music and Television Streaming Services:** With personalities like Netflix, Spotify, Apple Music, among other programs, personalities have direct and unlimited access to what can be likened to an endless process. They operate and collect information to either perform or display materials that most likely correspond to your listening or watching preference.

**Social Media Networks:** Including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, amongst others, that make the creation, sharing, and consuming of multimedia relatively easy differentiates social media from the traditional media such as television and print where the viewers are compelled.

**Virtual and Augmented Reality:** These make the user play a certain role in a specially constructed environment and interact with the objects, and sometimes even characters. These

innovations can radically change many spheres of human activity including the healthcare industry, the system of education, the sphere of entertainment, and others.

**Websites:** These can make it easier for people to appropriate information content in real-time. They create an opportunity for businesses, organizations, and individuals to present their views, advertise their goods, or demonstrate their abilities to a connected network. Be it business sites or social sites, sites have changed the way we exist in the world.

Thus, new media might be described as an extremely abstract concept that encompasses various types of platforms that exist today, as well as their futures. However, despite their differences, they all share a common goal: to advance the degree of audiences' engagement, individualization, and interaction in line with their intended objectives.

New media has also revolutionized different callings and occupations, thus manufacturing new vocations in professions for instance, social media managers, digital marketing specialists, graphic designers, video editors, and content producers. As for the roles and competencies of the professionals in new media, it is imperative to emphasize that they ought to be well-versed in affirmative technologies, up to date with technological progress, and able to interact with the audience in a novel and captivating manner. In turn, new media is best described as the integration of mass communication practices into new technologies to not only generate, disseminate, and receive mass communications in the postmodern world.

Traditional media generally reaches a broader audience compared to new media even if calculated addressing is used. This widespread distribution was one of the vantages of using traditional media because the story aired on television or radio could reach many people. On the other hand, social media and new media targeting is more defining where messages can be targeted with reference to demography, region, and time. New media, which encompasses social networks, web search, and messages in electronic mail, has enhanced targeting, hence the messages will reach only the intended targets.

Another constraint associated with traditional media is time, influenced by factors such as press calendars and a rigorous process of writing press releases and the need to arrange

meetings with reporters. A story put forward for publication in September could take up to March before it is published. Contrarily, social media is timely as it can be published instantly, and results updated instantly. Likewise, new media supports the timely update and delivery of information, and hence is suitable for speedy and direct interaction.

After posting, traditional media products are generally considered fixed and it is almost impossible to make changes to them, for example, in the case of printed media, television or radio programs. On the other hand, social media and new media come across as elastic media and ever evolving ones at that. The posts are changeable; means, an author can edit or remove the post as they wish with the changes taking effect immediately. This control enhances the ability to timely deliver the message though the public's reaction cannot be fully controlled. The communication patterns in the traditional media are normally in the form of trickle-down, with the PR<sup>15</sup> professional distributing stories which are then picked by the reporter for broadcast and the public is left with only the news they can hear with no interaction. Being a two-way communication tool, it makes the public mobilized to contribute their opinion and requires a response from the brand making it compulsory for PR practitioners. New media also involves high levels of interaction and communication, where it is easy for the audience to click on ad or post comment, share and be directly associated with the brand. Air and print media are usually costly as compared to approaching new customers for advertising and other related purposes. It is also challenging to measure the ROI and know which advertisement creates leads, sales, or even revenue since most of the offline media are not digital. However, new media is cheaper than traditional media where the expenses involved such as the cost of placing the advertisement and acquiring customers are considerably low. It also enables you to view specific data such as clicks, views, conversions and engagement among other features, in a campaign.

It has been seen that both the conventional and new media have their own strength and limitations. It is observed that conventional media may work for creating awareness of local businesses or for a certain segment, though new media is more specific, has better control, measurable, and cost useful. The use of both traditional, social, and new media to market the

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<sup>15</sup> Public relations

show can take advantages of each kind of media; The spending and strategy used can be adjusted constantly to fit the best marketing plan. Understanding the strategies need to vary depending on the media used is a crucial element in achieving overarching goals.

## **CHAPTER TWO - IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA ON POLITICS**

### **2.1. Media and Electoral Campaigns**

Traditional communication has always been essential in electoral campaigning, serving as the primary link between candidates and voters. It helps to shape public perception, set the tone for political campaigns, and influence the outcomes of elections. This discussion focuses on the historical development, changes, application, issues, and ethics of media in electoral campaigns.

During the emergence of democratic elections, reporters and writers used newspapers and pamphlets as the main tools for transmitting campaign messages. These media provided a platform for elaborate policy debates, introducing candidates, and contestation among them. The advent of radio in the early 20th century and television mid-century transformed the landscape of political campaigning. Candidates could now reach a much larger audience more effectively. Notable examples include President Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous "Fireside Chats" on the radio and the first televised Presidential debate between Kennedy and Nixon.

Naturally, the campaigns for elections have significantly changed due to the existence of the internet and social media platforms. Given that presidential campaigns often entail the direct involvement of the presidential candidates, social media platforms – specifically Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are ideal for real-time communication and interaction with voters. Some of the uses include candidates and political parties use websites and blogs for posting important information and communicating with their supporters. Although new media have enhanced the communication field, print media such as newspapers and magazines, broadcast media including radio and television have not lost their significance, especially with the elderly generation and countries with restricted internet access.

Many cases of campaign events, rallies, debates, and policy announcement receive extensive coverage by the media. This coverage assists the voters in identifying with the positions of the candidates and the activities of the candidates. Television and radio spots and banners are an essential means for sending messages to the electorate, stressing one's achievements and questioning the opponent. This indicates that the media can engage in agenda-setting, where certain problems are highlighted at the expense of others. This determines the issues that voters look at as most essential, thus defines the political debate leading up to the election. Print and Television media through the Interview features and personal profiles assist in the creation and defining of the public image of the candidates. Positive coverage will always work to the advantage of a candidate, whereas negative coverage will always act against a candidate.

Deliberative and legislative discussions give candidates the opportunity to present their ideas and the responses of their opponents. They are important so that voters can gauge the competency level as well as the position of the candidates on different issues. Social media allows the candidates and their teams to engage voters, address their issues and urge them to turn up and vote. A mechanism to turn non-voters into voters featuring by the using of live videos and Q&A sessions and interactive posts could increase the voter turn out and vitality. Media plays the watchdog role, listening to and evaluating the campaign speeches, cross checks information and pressurizes candidates for their words and deeds. Media organizations and independent organizations involved in checking the facts are significant factor in keeping the electoral process clean.

To ensure that the public pays attention, the content must be of high quality and grasping for everyone's interest. This includes production of videos, infographics, articles, social media posts and anything else that could pass on the message of the campaign. Social media platforms also deserve to be used in any current and future campaigns. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok enable the candidates to connect with the masses, appeal to the youth and possibly create content that can trend, hence increasing popularity. Using data analytics in advertisement creates a method of reaching specific voters based on age, voter interest, and voters' previous voting records. This increases the effectiveness of campaign spending and guarantees that appropriate resources go to the right people. You

could also work with social media influencers and celebrities to further spread the campaign and have endorsement. Celebrities can aid in passing the message of the campaign to the audience because people might have confidence in the influencer's word. This is why managing the negative press is important, and using and effective strategies to create responses to crises is another necessity. This is from issues of scandal, responding misinformation, and overall clarity of communication during controversy. Some of the negative concerns inherent with social media includes the dissemination of fake news. Both the candidates and campaigns need to use resources to address the issue of fake news and inform the public about it and manage to reduce the spread of fake news. Media bias in society distorts the society's perception and influences the nature of electoral campaigns. This is a very important requirement in the exercise of democracy because it helps in presenting a balanced report. The society expects news organizations to give balanced reports, and, on their part, regulatory authorities should oversee practices which may threaten the balance. Challenges that can be associated with the deployment of data analytics and the specific sorts of advertising include the violation of voters' rights for privacy and the ethical utilization of personal data. Appeals should also follow data protection legal requirements and the privacy of the individual when applying such effectual tools. Controlling the amount of money to be spent on media by the political parties and candidates and ensuring that all the parties and candidates are given equal opportunity of using the media is important in ensuring that whichever party or candidate that wins has done so fairly and squarely. Governments should set the regulation that would ban excessive spending and monopolization of the media by political parties and candidates and permit a level playing field for the small parties and the independent candidates.

Throughout the historical pre-survey of political campaign strategies, Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign stands out in the digital campaign process. Social media, especially Facebook, Email marketing and the smart use of data were crucial in engaging voters, galvanizing support and securing funds where necessary. By adopting new technologies during his campaigns Obama was able to reach out to young people and others hence mobilizing a large pool of supporters. Thanks to Donald Trump, Twitter was used in a spectacular manner for direct messaging to voters in the 2016 presidential campaign and for

influencing news coverage. Particularly, multimedia communication through active usage of social networks along with appeals to advertise the campaign on the Internet and the participation in data collection and analysis contriconted significantly to the results achieved in the elections. The Brexit campaign in the United Kingdom also demonstrated the effects of sewer social media campaign and fake news. The two campaigns for the Leave and Remain groups fully embraced technology and this showcased an interactive exercise of new-age media in the electoral process. Thus, while media has been transformed in the face of a host of changes over many decades, media has been ever present as an element of electoral campaigns, serving to inform, engage, and influence the electorate as well as influencing the respective campaigns themselves. The given research emphasizes the perspectives of media tools and strategies during electoral campaigns, highlighting weak spots, and strong points, the importance of ethical approaches while observing new changes in the media environments. The effective use of both online and offline channels, along with nonmanipulative and more straightforward forms of reporting, will improve the situation in a democratic state and help people make informed decisions.

Campaigns strive to guide media elections to act in favor of their candidates by attempting to set the election agenda, frame it, and prime the public. The goal is to ensure the ‘message of the day’ is delivered through the media houses in question, the relationship between campaigns and the media is contingent and definitely not easy. Nonetheless, campaigns can rarely keep this control because of the abundance and variety of the contemporary communication channels.

Publicity through Television and Radio programs is one of the key activities that form campaigns in any election. These ads appeal to the people’s beliefs, values and emotions; they are driven by attention-grabbing pictures, horn sounds and taglines. Following the emergence of webs, candidates use websites, YouTube, Hulu, news websites and blogs to place the advertisements. The adverts vary in form, containing direct appeals by the candidate, and addresses by other people, as well as a kind of a documentary with real campaign footage included. The most effective type of negative ad appeals is the attack appeals, which portray opponents’ records and images and challenge their positions, although

they are criticized for their ability to mislead and denigrate the opponent. Several appeals are made via the use of visual and sound elements in an advert. These are close shots, camera positions, slow motion, cutting and color to create a purposeful impression. For example, the candidates can give such tones as pink, which illustrates the positive and good sides of the candidate, whereas the opponents may be depicted in black and white – which shows negative character traits of the opponent. Transforming technology can merge two images to make candidates relate them to unsightly personalities. Campaign debates are part of campaigns since they enable the voters to compare the candidates by themselves. They are aired on television and also available on social media such as YouTube. Contestants engage in numerous behind the scenes bargaining regarding the participants, time, subjects and contest structure. Candidates groom themselves for days and practice responses, combating the opposition's questions by appearing authoritative and charming at the same time. Campaigns act strategically in trying to control the narrative reporters and media bring out especially on issues of debates. Before debates, they keep the expectations low with regards to their candidate while building up the opposite candidate's strengths. Educationally, after debates, they attempt to persuade the journalists that their candidate was better. Public opinion may not be particularly influenced by journalists' debates but it is directed by assessments made by journalists.

Another factor that makes controlling media narratives difficult for campaigns is the fast and frequent flow of information in most cases and an abundance of media outlets. It is now common to find campaigns limiting one daily message and providing bite-sized chunks in their attempt to grab the reporters' attention. They perform greetings and photo opportunities, but this can turn into a problem if it seems fake.

## **2.2. Social Media as Spaces for Political Debate**

Politics have largely shifted from traditional forums, with social media playing a major role in politics and creating different forums that are different from old forums. In contrast to the 'masking' that used to be typical for the interpersonal discourse, platforms like Facebook and Twitter are closely associated with relational identity and everyday life. This

connection implies that people are always in touch with the opinion and actions of their network, which greatly determines how they engage in political discourses.

Another provocative aspect of social media on political discourse is the ‘spiral of silence’. This concept postulates that individuals are less likely to express their opinions as they assume that they have a minority opinion in their group. On social media, the role of opinion is more visibly expressed with regard to the status updates, comments and likes. As a result of the always being surrounded by others and their opinions, the continuous feedback received affects the realization of the variety of attitudes in their proximity. While this is helpful in some considerations, it also fosters difficulty and confusion and erodes people’s willingness to engage in political talk and especially in presence of the other party.

Social network sites have also become core sites for political discussion, especially by what scholars refer to as ‘third level’<sup>16</sup> sites; sites that are not inherently political, yet politics naturally emerges from ordinary discussions on them. While third spaces can be located in any electronic communication channel, they are generally not limited to government websites, political parties’ pages or feeds; they can also be found in discussion forums, lifestyle community pages or any other social media platforms e.g.<sup>17</sup>, Facebook groups, Twitter trending topics among others. In these spaces, political considerations come up organically, as part of people’s conversations about their lives.

Regular use of the sites weakens the inclination to discuss politics in other places like workplace, in social events, or even at home. This is particularly so where people self-censor due to their political beliefs differing from those of their friends. For example, the audience using, Facebook and spending much time there, may potentially become more receptive to the differences in opinions of other individuals, known in the ‘real’ world, and, therefore, tend not to discuss these issues in person. One is the novelty crisis which is brought by the nature of the algorithms of the social media that feeds the users with content that they are likely to hold as beliefs. This results in people being more ready to discuss politics on these

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<sup>17</sup> *exempli gratia*; for example

social media platforms because there is a perception of greater support, but they may not be ready to discuss these issues face-to-face due to the diversity of opinions. That is why in third spaces, 'polite talk' can be seen as political talk because it is intentional. Although such discussions could sometimes be as crude as those observed in the traditional political debate, they are often initiated and can be reciprocated, supported and developed by persons' own experiences. Where they do work is for democratic participation to bridge the personal/political divide. These discussions resemble typical public conversation, thus enhancing political participation and bringing it closer to society's everyday life.

Nevertheless, these dynamics do not influence all individuals within the context of the society in the same manner. Regarding the two avenues of communication, Pollach et al.<sup>18</sup>, (2012) observed that it is the politically active participants who use the two avenues of communication, either in agreement or in disagreement with other participants in their online and offline social network. These people cannot afford to be silenced in a 'spiral of silence' due to their political activities that arise from their core values. This means that social media can foster situations where many people cannot give their opinions on politics while also allowing others with various opinions to air them in public.

But at the same time the existence of third spaces presents several challenges. This might mean that the architecture and design of social media do not always facilitate the formation of analytically distinguishable and coherent communities. Second, due to the nature and temporal structure of interactions on the social media, when discussing patterns of interaction on Twitter, constant and person-to-person interaction is not very tenable. Nonetheless, risks of third spaces are less when compared to the benefits that they can potentially provide to democratization, particularly by making political talk more natural and part of the mundane. The same is true for social media which also mirrors some significant widespread tendencies, such as polarization and hatred between political parties. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, have effectively incorporated political talk into the everyday practices of many Internet users, thus forming conditions where conflicts may take place. According to the Pew

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<sup>18</sup> "Pollach et al." refers to a research study or academic paper authored by Pollach and other co-authors. The term "et al." is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase *et alia*, meaning "and others."

Research Center's report, the political debate is now routine in the lives of the users on social media platforms. But that is not the case for everyone. Amid the politicized users, a proportion of them, however, is thrilled with the opportunities that debate creates; however, 54% of users are significantly annoyed by the political interactions they encounter.

One of the greatest drawbacks of social media engagement as a political platform is the fact that it blurs the boundaries between the user's agency and the presentation of political content to such an extent that the user cannot avoid it even if they do not proactively seek it. This exposure is problematic because the friends and family of a user could be politically opposite, and the acquaintances could be politically different from friends and family, and so forth, hence, developing a cocktail that can easily boil over when any single group gets angry. These personal and political relations are intertwined in most cases, leading to the strife user experience in trying to decode these platforms. Over 40% of the social media users get overloaded by the political content they come across, and over 50% find the confrontation with people whose political views they do not share, as stressful and frustrating. This paper seeks to assess the overtones of political discourses on social networking sites, which are generally considered to be negative. These offerings have been designed in such a way that many users consider them to be full of anger and disrespect particularly regarding political discourse. It is also possible that many sites are not designed to produce strong, durable, and focused communities of communicants known as 'publics.' Due to the more dynamic structure of interactions on social media, especially on Twitter, it could be more challenging to engage in meaningful and consistent interactions. Nevertheless, third spaces hold great promise in terms of facilitating and mainstreaming everyday political talk as an effective democratization tool.

Social media also represents the social phenomenon of polarization and hatred between the different parties of the political spectrum. Social sites such as Facebook and Twitter have integrated political talk into users' daily internet experiences; this has led to social sites becoming social arenas where politics is practiced. This report of Pew Research Center shows the extent to which political discussion is now a norm in the use of social media platforms. But it is not an across-the-board affair. Though such users seem to find excitement in

argumentative exchanges and calls to action, most users report anger and unease with the tenor and content of the political communication they experience.

The problem with using social media as a platform for political discourse is that the content is inherently political, will be political and users is likely often not given a choice regarding the content they encounter. This exposure is rather tricky because users' audiences often comprise friends, relatives, fellow-workers, friends, followers, and other individuals, which may turn out to be an explosive cocktail of the opposed political outlooks. These social relationships merge with political ones many a time causing a lot of confusion when users of the various digital platforms are struggling to make sense of them. Over 40% of social media users report 'often' or 'almost always' feeling overloaded by the level of politics they face, and over 50% claim they find it stressful and frustrating to engage with people whose political views are different from their own. The tenor of political communication on social media is considered to be negative. These audiences regard these sites as immensely angry and very rude political discourse fora.

Nearly half users of social media blame the premium frontier for being more rude, civil, and less tolerant compared to other spheres of life in terms of political discussions. However, in the recent past, a good number of users have expressed their opinions on the perception that these discussions are only instigated of the general political climate environment and not on the social media platform alone.

To cope with the stress and frustration of engaging in political debates on social media, most users prefer to avoid such conversations whenever possible. But where this is not feasible, traditional users make conscious efforts to manage the type of content they come across on their feeds by altering their settings to limit the number of posts from users or by reporting and subsequently unfriending and blocking users whose political content they consider provocative. Up to 30% of social network users changed the settings of the news feed to hide someone's posts with political content, and 27% banned the user.

Thus, there are still apparent benefits to be derived from political discussions on social networks, most especially for politically active users. Users that tend to be involved politically are more likely to approach the social media as useful and important for political activities and discourses. They are more likely to comment, discuss or post about political

issues and more likely to see the social media as useful in bringing new voices into the political debate or as useful in getting people engage in issues that help them. Impatience with political conversations occurs on both the left and right, while independents are the only group of people that are less dissatisfied with the quantum and tenor of political content that people come across. Men and women are equally likely to become tired of the political material they see and to consider the tone of social media discussions more negative and less civil than that of other contexts.

It is important to recognize the role of Facebook and Twitter in political debate. The studies on both Facebook and Twitter reveal that while Facebook users follow people they know personally, and Twitter users hardly know the people they follow, both get an equivalent measure of exposure to political posts. This indicates that political discussions are present on different types of SNS<sup>19</sup> regardless the kinship or friendship ties between the followers and the followed.

Social media has become a key sphere of political discussion and a major channel for mainstream political communication in today's society. New media such as Facebook, Twitters, and blogs have changed the Face of political communication by allowing politicians and the political entities to go directly to the public without going through the media. This has given people more direct and real-time ways of expressing themselves and relaying political messages, which can be spread quickly and often unadulterated by the opinions of professional journalists.

A key aspect of the media's impact on politics is its ability to allow citizens to participate in discussions that were previously dominated by journalists and traditional media personalities. Social networking sites enable a much more active kind of discourse since people are able to interact with politicians and other political players, share ideas and even rally for different causes. This has created a more open political environment of interactivity and political opinions that can be changed at any moment. Nevertheless, the principle of interacting in social media is much more direct and has its obverse side. Though it facilitates the dissemination of information within the shortest time possible, it is considered to play a major

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<sup>19</sup> Social networking sites

role in the spread of rumors, whereby messages are forwarded without having to confirm the authenticity of the same. Also, ‘confirmation bias,’ whereby the users open a platform and are fed more of the same opinion as they are exposed to, results in a more polarized political climate. While traditional mass media remains important, it has had to adapt to the changes brought about by social media. What is new, is that journalists must vet the information coming from social media by fact-checking it and sometimes providing expert analysis for the public to ensure they get the whole truth. There is no doubt that the role of the journalists and mass media remains significant to guard political communication and to make sure that this function does not become merely an instrument of political manipulation and a PR<sup>20</sup> tool for political parties.

Thus, political argumentation on social media is not as simple as it can be presented, and it is composed of several positive and negative aspects. Facebook and Twitter provide a different form of political communication and distribution of information and knowledge but simultaneously contribute to the problems of free and pluralistic political discussion. These platforms are constant and omnipresent, so people are always engaging with the opinions of their circles, which either motivates or discourages them from engaging in political deliberation. However, third spaces within social media offer an important site through which to narrate the political and contest its isolation and marginalization. This has transformed political discourse by opening a whole new way of people’s political discourse through their social networks. However, it has its drawbacks, which political practitioners and journalists have to tread with significant precision so that the public does not lack information or get misinformation.

### **2.3. Effects on Political Participation and Public Opinion**

Personal values, political ideologies and political participation are complex in nature and can be significantly conditioned by the nature of political environment in a particular country. Studies indicate that self-generated attitudes have far-reaching implications, particularly within the context of a democratic setting; they suggest that people’s values shape their

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<sup>20</sup>Public relations

political which in turn define the political activities and attitudes of a society in any population. More specifically, there are the 'conservation' values, for which the respondents having the highest scores in right - wing political views are characterized by the scores in the security, conformist, traditional value. In contrast, people who have 'self-transcendence' values such as universalism and benevolence are more liberal. Nevertheless, the link between personal values and political orientations is less apparent in countries with low levels of democracy. This weakening may be explained by the low experience of people in processing political messages that directly connect values to voting. Consequently, the significance of the overall political situation in framing the manner in which values transform into political orientations and political activism.

Apart from the values, one more endowment that has significant impact on the opinions and especially on participation is the stability of distributional preferences of people in the sense of the shares of self-interested and fair-minded population. For example, studies reveal that individuals with higher incomes have a greater tendency towards self-interested attitudes than towards equality and this tendency is stable across time and therefore is not influenced by the changing processes of economic and social development. Besides, political orientations affect these distributional orientations; the Democratic party identifiers have gradually shifted toward the equality perspective. The consistency of distributional preferences means that they are well embedded in the public and influence the political actors' behaviors, which can be considered as the ways they participate in political systems. Another important determinant of mass political awareness is the level of public awareness of politics. Research shows that a number of factors, among them the mode of assessment of knowledge on politics through multiple-choice and open-ended questions greatly determines the perceived levels of political knowledge. For instance, changes to the technical details such as the multiple-choice questions' difficulty, the number and types of choices, may give a bias in the assumed levels of political knowledge making hence people's views regarding the general public will differ. This implication has the consequence that what people think they know and can count politically may be more a matter of how questions are posed than of the quantity and/or quality of knowledge people may possess. This has considerable implications for shaping the conditions under which survey techniques bring about the

context under which the observed effects on knowledge – and therefore, public opinion – are formed.

That is, while the link between personal values and activism is less transparent in less democratic societies, it is due to the fact that the avenues through which people can directly institute their political values are closed off to them. This decrease may be because of the limited political interactions and the options available to reduce political engagement. This evidently proves that among all the environments it is the political one that provides the limitation on the levels and ways on which the personal values impact on the political predispositions and active participation.

Therefore, from this analysis it becomes clear that, gender shapes the political activism and opinions especially in the aspect of corruption. However, some existing scientific works finds that there are no female officials involved in corrupting or, if there are, there are practically involved in corrupting activities only occasionally for several reasons, such as, respecting the legal regulation or simply there is no possibility to commit corruption acts. Some of these factors may change people's attitudes toward the role of gender in leadership, leading to greater trust in female leaders. As such this might impact on the political measures with regard to strengthening or altering the perception of leadership integrity and reliability.

Therefore, 'conduct,' along with corruption, is one of the closest antecedents of the affective-apathetic dimension of the population's attitude and their political participation. Research indicates that the environment can determine the probability of corruption: business organization, time management, directly observing others' behavior. Thus, it can be concluded that perceived levels of corruption and the culture of corruption affect citizens' input and decision-making. Knowledge of the factors that shape it can go a long way in setting policies that can minimize corrupt practice and encourage ethical endorsement of personalities to positions of political leadership.

Taken together, these variables – personal values, distributional preferences, religiosity, political knowledge, gender, corruption, political environment – jointly determine the individual's participation and view of politics. However, the interactions between different elements exposed the authors' multiple-directional approach to studying the ways people interact with the political systems and mapping the formation of the shared political opinion

in various politicized environments. This kind of knowledge is crucial for understanding the phenomena of political activism and the role of opinions as factors in the democratic management of society.

## **CHAPTER THREE – CHALLENGES POSED BY NEW COMMUNICATION MEDIA**

### **3.1. Issues of Fake News and Disinformation**

In the modern environment, it is crucial to address the issue of fake news and disinformation as they pose a significant threat today. These problems have not emerged solely from recent events, but these phenomena have been significantly enhanced by digital technologies in how information is processed, generated and shared. The consequences of such a change relate to people's perception, social relation, and even the efficiency and fairness of the democratic elections.

Fake news is a term that refers to any information that is considered to be fake news regardless of the form it takes. This includes fake news, biases, and satirical articles that many people end up perceiving as a real news article. False information is more dangerous than fake news because while fake news is meant to convey mistaken information, disinformation has an aim of deceiving the targeted audience. This is different from miseducation as there might be mere typo errors or misunderstanding that makes one relay information that is not correct, unlike disinformation where the information given is intended to cause a particular outbreak of feeling or reaction with the purpose of gaining, for example, political or financial influence.

The strongest effect of fake news and disinformation is viewed in the weakening of democracy. In democracy closed societies, the other important input to the political processes is the information and its quality determines the quality of the final outputs which will either be good or bad. This is especially so when misinformation is passed around and becomes the new norm then voting is affected. For example, in the recent past during the 2020 US Presidential election, there were rampant rumors that fraud was rampant in the voting system. Moreover, such myths disseminated by protractive personalities and through different media channels undermined the confidence in the electoral process and stoked the public agitation.

This disinformation campaign reached its climax in the insurrection at the capitol building in Washington DC on the 6 of January 2021 fueled by beliefs in falsehoods of the election.

Credibility of news is another factor because fake news is not only a problem of content but also of context, particularly the online space. Information can be distributed quickly and that the algorithms of the social networks where people are looking for things that gather attention therefore fake stories quickly spread. Such fast spread is made possible by the relative ease of mimicking genuine content through deepfakes and other AI mediums making real the fake and fake the real. The passive consumption of content together with the design of the social media platforms that enable quick sharing and engagement of the content deepen the issue as most users may not spare their time to validate the information they come across.

Other factors that also contribute to the continuous spread of fake news and disinformation include psychological factors. Key factors include confirmation bias; the preference of accepting information that already reflects one's belief system while disregarding facts to the contrary. Motivated reasoning sustains these beliefs, and thus it is hard to counter the problem of fake news. Moreover, knowledge resistance - individuals' unwillingness to admit facts they do not want to consider to be true - is another reason why traditional fact-checking paradigm does not work. Sometimes, efforts made to correct any misleading information may actually work to the opposite of righting those misconceptions.

This issue is prevalent across numerous fields, and analysis of fake news and disinformation is dispersed over multiple studies. Contribution Theories from disciplines including but not limited to communication, political science, psychological, and computer science are important, but the absence of interdisciplinarity Recommended strategies. For instance, computer science might analyze its spread through algorithms, political science would consider its effects on the voter turnout, and psychology would study the heuristics. Thus, the proposed directions require an integration of these various approaches to formulate better interventions against fake news.

Implicit and explicit effects of the dissemination of fake news and disinformation are not just short term; they concern societal impacts. There is a super spreader of fake news in the

systems, and this leads to more and more people becoming polarized since everyone is in their own bubble where they only get more information that supports their own beliefs.

This polarization leads to a split within the society where no side is willing to listen to the other thereby creating disagreements where none had been, and important issues are never agreed upon. In addition, trust in traditional media and institutions is dwindling and, thus, a person might switch to other sources which might include conspiratorial or extremist ones. To a certain extent, disinformation can provoke riots, has already happened in various conflicts and elections.

Therefore, to solve the problem of fake news and disinformation, we must draw not only upon the psychological and social approaches, but also the technological ones. There is a need for improving the people's media literacy, as well as raising their critical thinking skills, alongside the improvement of the existing methods used for evaluating fake news. This has made the social media platforms and news organizations to be more held accountable to fight for the spreading of fake news though there runs the risk of bias and censorship of freedom of speech. In addition, it will be critically important for creating better coordinated multi-disciplinary research that would allow for the enhanced understanding of the nature of these challenges, as well as for designing integrated strategies to address them.

It can be stated that fake news or black propaganda is anti-democracy and likely to destabilize societies and weaken even the strongest democratic systems. The continued occurrence of these problems due to psychological factors, technological factors and the scattered research field requires a collective and systematic effort. Through education, promotion of better detection methods, and interdisciplinary cooperation, society can repair the harm caused by this deceitful phenomenon and continue working on the approach of cultivating informed and well-protected public environment.

### **3.2. Political Polarization and Echo Chambers**

In today's discourse, two notions are widely discussed: echo chambers and political polarization. Both terms refer to situations where people and groups come to settings especially on social media and just get confirmed in their beliefs and are not really opened to

other or different viewpoints. All these dynamics bear deep consequences with regards to interpersonal relationships as well as the proper functioning of democratic institutions. Consequently, in order to combat these problems, we need to know how echo chambers and polarization occur, how they function, and what the consequences are in our society.

An echo chamber could be described as a social environment that is primarily a product of digital technology including social media in which users are primarily informed of things that they agree with. This selective exposure creates a feedback loop where a community is reinforcing one's idea without much critical evaluation. Social media algorithms exaggerate this effect due to the curation of content based on the reaction of users; therefore, by providing users with material that supports their beliefs and ignoring ideas on the opposite side. As a result, the existence of other points of view is barely ever experienced thus limiting people's perspective and, in many cases, a biased one.

The concept of echo chambers has been very much brought up regarding public spheres and democracy. Modern technologies were conversed by Cass Sunstein and Eli Pariser has explained how this phenomenon functions and its impact on democracies. Sunstein's metaphor of an echo chamber reveals the problem of magnification, in which people are locked within a loop of the same inputs that support the echo, while Sunstein's view of a privileged sphere is a concept that shares some characteristics with an echo chamber. This locking in of beliefs stops people from thinking outside the box or from changing their mind. Similarly, Eli Pariser's 'filter bubble' also agrees with Sunstein's assessment of how algorithms deliberately omit counterarguments to box users in echo chambers.

Many factors contribute to the development of echo chambers. One of them is selective exposure whereby people only listen and read those news and information that supports their beliefs because of confirmation bias. This psychological behavior makes people go for information that supports their opinions and avoid information that goes against their opinion thus isolating themselves from uncomfortable opinions. Also, increased use of apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram contribute firmly to creation of echo chambers because they allow users stick to persons with similar opinions thus protecting them from opposing views. The presence of these algorithms in the platforms is also important. Also, Algorithms

on these platforms enhance user's previous actions through showing material associated with their hobbies and blocking the opposite viewpoint.

In a way related to the idea of echo chambers is political polarization, which reflects the process of dividing society into two groups – supporters of different political views. As of recent years, and especially in the American political landscape, partisan apartheid is more manifested than before. Such a split is not only observed in politics but also in people's everyday life as individuals tend to categorize themselves according to political leanings. Political parties have shifted and developed increased ideological purity whereby the Democratic Party adopted liberal policies while the Republican Party supports conservative policies. Such a process known as ideological sorting contributed to an increased polarization concerning party identification and rule out any possibility of compromise between the partisans.

Media has the important responsibility to polarize and re-polarize political processes and phenomena. Thereby, partisan media together with social media amplify polarization by presenting news that is congruent with one's beliefs. These platforms are notorious for spreading fake news and inciteful news, this makes the users develop attention. Such platforms thus play a role in reinforcing the creation of echo chambers and reducing individuals' tendency towards cross-exposure to divergent ideas. Political identity has become more linked with personal identity and as such there is a tendency of favoring one's own group and hating or having less regard for the other group. There is so much more polarized hatred where people with opposing ideas are not viewed as common citizens or people who have different opinions but as enemies who want to harm one's way of life. Yet another, contributing to political polarization is political segmentation. Political affiliations in many countries are normally a function of geographical regions. For instance, the democrats who tend to have liberal political views are found in urban centers as compared to republicans, who tend to have conservative political views, and are found in rural areas. This geographic polarization reduces social contacts between the persons with divergent views, hence exacerbating political intolerance. Therefore, as the study indicates, polarization progresses to the next level, in which it becomes even harder to bring people together and facilitate understanding.

These consequences hit social and political processes of societies rather dramatically due to involving echo chambers and political polarization. In recent years, there has been an increase in polarization between the two major political parties and their supporters both in Congress and the presidency and more so in people's daily lives. One key consequence of polarization in legislative bodies are Proliferation of deadlock meaning parties are unable to find middle ground as regards policy decisions hence leading to stagnation and extreme poles. These developments are regressive in relation to good governance and the decline of the centrist political solution. In personal relationships, political discords result in confrontation; new caucuses of misunderstanding are established within families, friendships as well as in different communities. In some of the severest forms of polarization, it leads to radicalization and in some instances, political violence since people become more radicalized the more, they are prejudiced with extreme views from the echo chambers.

In addition, polarization has a negative impact on people's trust in other institutions of the society, namely the governmental and media ones. For example, when people believe that those in the other political camp are their enemies then dialogue is lost and people start to lose faith in the electoral process.

Regrettably, the decline of democracy is one of the biggest negative consequences of polarization. It is known that democracy is based on people's ability to negotiate and share information, on power to make decisions that will benefit everyone. This is because as stakes increase, political parties increase their levels of polarization and may end up caring only for their ideologies, and not for the electoral populace who they are supposed to represent. This polarization also leads to stress, anxiety and helplessness of the citizens as political conflict enters every sphere of society's life. In order to counteract the problems associated with echo chambers and political polarization several measures can be taken. There is one rather successful model – that is to persuade people to discuss regarding the situation with the counterparts from the opposite camps. In essence, offering the possibility of engaging in solid conversation, whether through other media or live, can lessen the effects of division. Media literacy is another important tool making citizens equip themselves with knowledge of discerning the content they consume and the kind of view that they are likely to get.

Some measures can be taken to counteract the problem related with polarization that include the approval of the ranked-choice voting or the non-partisan redistricting. Those reforms, make politician less likely to pander to either the extreme of their party or to the middle. Another kind of efforts that is relevant are movements aimed to reunite people with opposing political views in a community. As a result of working together and decreasing political isolation, community organizing can help the people forget their differences and aim on goals and objectives rather than political affiliations. To sum up, one can state that although echo chambers and political polarization are serious threats to democracy, they are not necessarily invulnerable. Analyzing three aspects of social life at once, the technology-human behavior-political identity, scholars and policy makers would be able to set the necessary measures for assertive political talk and for consolidating people's confidence in democratically elected leaders. Therefore, through using an approach that engages dialogue, media analysis, electoral reforms, as well as various community activities, one can neutralize effect of echo chambers and reduce political polarization in a given society.

### **3.3. Regulation and Freedom of Expression in the Digital Context**

Freedom of expression is one of the aspects of liberty, which allows the free flow of opinions, ideas and information. Critique of authority, freedom of speech, voicing out opinion and or challenging the existing norm and policies are core values of democracy and are or are facilitated by press freedom. But free speech is not absolute right and needs to be restricted to respect other right and as well as others responsibility towards society. Currently, the primary means of communication is the Internet and, particularly social networks, and websites, search engines. Despite the fact that these platforms have made it possible to contain a broader spectrum of public discussion and debate, the questions of managing freedom of speech and its possible limitations while necessary as well as the problems of its protection have been created.

In the past, international agreements have accorded freedom speech liberty a high value while at the same time acknowledging the legitimacies that need to be met in the protection of other interests. For example, the United Nations' General Assembly recognizes freedom of

expression an internationally recognized right through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the year 1948. In like manner, the European Convention on Human Rights which was signed in 1950 also recognizes freedom of expression under Article 10 also outlines circumstances under which the right can be limited for instance where it is likely to incite violence or endanger the national security or the security of others, to violate others' rights or harm reputations.

The protected right in the United Kingdom is Article 10 of the ECHR which was incorporated locally by the Human Rights Act of 1998 about the freedom of expression that also covers communication done on the internet. This is regulated by numerous acts regarding the people's online behavior. The Malicious Communications Act of 1988 prohibits the sending of messages that are grossly offensive, the Public Order Act of 1986 outlaws hate speech and the Terrorism Act of 2006 outlaws the communication of messages with information that favors terrorism. Similarly actual civil and criminal laws that govern defamation, harassment among other vices are also enforceable in cyberspace to uphold law and order as well as shield people from vice. The Competition and Markets Authority and the Advertising Standards Authority check people's online activities to see if they are legal in the UK. Nevertheless, the present mechanism has been criticized as it is said to have inadequate integrated coordination with little supervision from the authorities despite the fact that the internet companies mostly regulate themselves. In response, the UK's proposed Online Safety Bill to tighten regulations to target the problem of protecting the users from dangerous content. Though this bill was recently stalled in the parliament, it is still believed that it can be considered as a positive move towards enhancing comprehensive legal regime of the digital environment.

Due to the high importance of moderating the content of what is posted on Facebook and other social media sites, the social media companies are responsible for overseeing community standards which in most cases include elements of content that are prohibited no matter the legal significance. However, over the years, the UK government has issued a statutory code of practice that these companies need to adhere to with much emphasis directed to the fight against negative practices such as bullying and harassment. But with regard to the violation of law, the government still avails itself of existing laws only.

The question of moderating freedom of speech on-line became quite popular during the time of the former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, vitally as in the light of the presentation of the Online Safety Bill. The bill intends to maintain the freedom of speech while putting into consideration issues to do with user sovereignty along with the detrimental content a user may be exposed to. It proposes a framework to regulate three types of content: as the prohibited content, content that is prohibited for adult and content prohibited for children. However, there are concerns which have been raised on the bill and it has not moved smoothly and there is a continuous struggle in debating on what should and should not be allowed as a content that is legal but can be disadvantageous. The aforementioned changes came following a report by the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee in the year 2021 in the report titled the “Free for All? Freedom of Expression in the Digital Age,” where it examined the issues and dynamics affecting the free speech while at the same time addressing the problem of having the right means to regulate on the ominous contents in the social media platforms. The committee stressed that free expression is a defining characteristic of democratic society and at the same time pointed out certain obligations arising from this right. Contrary to the findings of the report, there seems to be considerable control from private tech firms especially social networks whose influence in the veteran voice was deemed excessive as they decided what information should be allowed or banned. The committee recommended that the government step up regulation of the platforms so as to protect freedom of speech from being overly curtailed. This committee made a number of recommendations as stated below: It suggested that the platforms should prioritize the detection and removal of illegal posts and at the same time fulfil a so-called ‘duty of care’ to prevent toxic communication. It also advocated for criminalization of material which is seriously derogatory to adults and enhancing provisions for protecting the children. Still, proceeding from the given report, the social players suggested that a special joint parliamentary committee to organize the digital regulation and liable for Ofcom’s<sup>21</sup> activities in this field should be set.

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<sup>21</sup> Ofcom is the regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries.

Another issue that was highlighted in the particular report was the design of social media in that most encourage users to post hostility or animosity towards others. According to the committee, platforms should assume ownership of their design features that shape users' behavior; some of the design solutions introduced aimed at discouraging uncivil behaviors. It also asked for improvements for protocols on teaching media literacy in schools to teach young people how to use the cyberspace safely and not partake in cyberbullying.

The committee also debated the issue of market competition especially in the digital market. It is reasoned that competition would get the platforms to pay attention to such concerns by users regarding matters of free speech and content that is harmful. The Competition and Markets Authority which was formed in 2021 created a new unit it called the Digital Markets Unit as the main enforcer of these competition regulations. The committee encouraged the government to enable DCU with more official sanctions to protect it from monopolistic tendencies by the leading technology giants.

According to the analysis and recommendations given by the committee, the British government reasserted its policy of preserving an open web with the freedom of the users; at the same time, guaranteeing the security of the users. Other strategies adopted by the government in its process of digital regulation are for instance the Online Safety Bill that addresses issues of Illegal content, Protection of children and User control. Government Lab has also focused on media literacy and role of technology like, age verification system to safeguard children from such contents. As of September 2022, the Online Safety Bill is still a proposed one, and the government has continued to address the ways in which they plan to tackle this issue. The bill has received a lot of controversy particularly in light of its effects on the freedom of speech where people might post content which may be legal but undesirable. While it spares no effort to ensure the safety of the users and meet its obligation in protecting fundamental rights as enshrined in the constitution, the government has always argued that their function is to implement a balance of freedom of speech.

This paper aims to identify some of the challenges that impact freedom of expression, especially in the digital age. Even though internet has broadened the possibilities of public discussion it has also created new opportunities for risks that should be managed. Thanks to

the analysis of the attempts made by the UK to find the right balance and regulate freedom of speech in combination with the necessity to shield users from risky content, the main tendencies in struggling with the challenges of the modern communication flow can be identified. Ofcom and the DMU as well as the legislative and regulatory processes such as the Online Safety Bill shows that the idea of freedom of speech in the online environment depends on the ongoing and future legislative and regulating initiatives. To this end, as the digital platforms expand and assume more significance, the overall regulatory frameworks relating to these technologies and devices should be updated to accommodate the existing rights and safety of people in the dynamic society shaped by these platforms. On a wider global standpoint, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provides for the relationship between freedom of speech and the other rights, among them right to privacy and right to one's reputation. The ECHR's Article 10 states freedom of expression, including through the internet; nonetheless, has legal restrictions for the interest of others, like security and order. Even free speech permits restrictions which have to be "necessary in a democratic society", or more correctly, those restrictions must be proportionate to the aim sought to be achieved. These restrictions are made to be reviewed by the judiciary to ensure the unauthorized use of the rights is not encouraged.

Thus, it is important to note that not all forms of speech are covered under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights this includes what people may refer to as hate speech. The Council of Europe describes hate speech as expression that promotes hostility or violence to others, especially on the basis of race or religion, as not protected under rights to 'free speech'. There are also cross-over between intellectual property and free speech as courts grapple with the ability of peoples to share information with the rights of owners to their content.

Another complicated matter is content regulation; however, blocking or filtering should be considered. Measures to block Internet sites must be unhidden, permitted only for some types of the prohibited content, and can be made only with the help of the authorized committees. This proclaims that when a filter that is too general is used an unnecessary amount of censorship is applied and free speech is limited. It is suggested that users should be given an information about what has actually been blocked, and it should be given a right to appeal on

certain decisions. Controlling freedom of expression for the benefit of eradicating some of the content that is propagated through the online platforms is a delicate balance that has to be struck between free speech and allowing the dissemination of hate.

This means that the use of the internet is an issue that is bound to face some certain legal challenges due to the fact that what is legal in one country may be illegal in another country. It becomes the responsibility of governments to come up with sound policies regulating security as well as hailing out unlawful content while at the same time not strangulating lawful freedom of speech. It is therefore important to find a balance between the two in the course of catering for the interests of the society hence the protection of individuals rights in the social media.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to explore the development of the communication media and their far-reaching impact on society, politics, and culture, and specifically, the impact that digital technologies and social media have caused. By examining the historical evolution of media, the place of communication in political campaigns, the issue of fake news and disinformation, and the overall effects of the digital place on freedom of expression and democracy, this work has shown the two-sided nature of our digital era.

The introduction was in chapter one that gave us a historical overview of how the quest to have better and faster ways of communicating that has always been the goal of humanity has led to the direction civilization has taken. Since the printing press to the internet and social networks, every innovation increased the capacity of spreading the ideas and helped restructure the social structures. The shift of the traditional mass media including radio and television to the interactive and personalized media is not only a sign of the technological advancement but also a change in how people consume information and communicate with each other.

The second chapter explored the interplay between media and politics, highlighting how campaigns are being changed in the electronic era. The traditional media still plays an important role in determining the perception of the masses, but the immediacy and reach of social media platforms has changed the dynamics of political communication. Politicians have now avoided the old gatekeepers, communicate with the electorate, and gather their supporters via online platforms. Simultaneously, the developments have come with their own set of troubles: the misinformation is spreading, the chance of being manipulated due to the ability to use microtargeted advertising, and the ethical issues that relate to the data-based campaigning. Drawing on the cases of landmark cases, including the Obama campaign of 2008, the use of Twitter in 2016 by Donald Trump, and the Brexit referendum, one could see that digital strategies have become determinants of politics.

The third chapter discussed the negative aspects of online communication specifically the proliferation of fake news, disinformation, and the development of echo chambers that

strengthen polarization. The evidence indicates that although social networks may be arenas of activism, debate, and amplifying the voices of the marginalized, they also divide the public sphere and damage trust in institutions. In addition to interfering with the electoral processes, disinformation campaigns have posed a threat to the stability of democracy, which has been experienced in recent world events. Further, the social media design architecture, which encourages maximization of engagement through algorithms, is prone to encouraging sensational and polarizing information over rational and fact-based discussions. This highlights the dire necessity of enhanced media literacy, regulation and collaboration across disciplines to protect democratic integrity. One of the prevalent themes in the thesis has been the conflict between the freedom of expression and the necessity of regulation in cyberspace. The international environment proves that the need to balance the safeguarding of the civil liberties and combating the damages of online communication is a necessity that societies need to realize. The discussion of policies and regulations, as seen with the European Convention on Human Rights and the online safety bill of the United Kingdom, demonstrates a challenge in maintaining safety, responsibility and inclusivity whilst not interfering with the fundamental right of free speech. The results of this thesis when combined can lead to a number of important conclusions. First, digital communication technologies are not neutral tools, they are actively used to structure social relations, political activity, and cultural practices by their design, algorithms, and business models. Second, even though digital platforms bring both opportunities of unprecedented participation, inclusion, and innovativeness, they also present societies with threats of manipulation, polarization, and loss of trust. Third, the presence of both traditional and digital media illustrates that instead of substituting each other, the systems do not act separately but mutually enhance and shape a new hybrid communication environment.

The value of the work is that it bridges gaps between the historical development of the communication technologies and their modern political and social implications, which allows conclusively looking at the threats and opportunities of the digital era. Placing the discussion of traditional media in the context of social media analysis and locating these discourses in the framework of democracy and regulation, this thesis contributes to the insight of how communication media can be both a force of progress and a possible threat. However, this

study is limited. The research relied on secondary sources mainly and although it used world examples, it did not involve any primary field research or quantitative study. Moreover, although the thesis made some comparative observations between established markets and the developing market, a more empirical study of these two contexts, in particular, would offer further insights on how digital strategies fit within the various conditions of socio-economic environments. As an extension of the current study, it might be possible to analyze case studies of local business, political actors, and digital campaigns in these settings to provide a more detailed image of the global-local dynamics of digital communication.

In the future, future technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, augmented reality and virtual reality will further transform the future of communication. Such innovations will not only transform the manner in which individuals consume content, but it will also change the way individuals interact with each other and institutions. As the issues of ethics, regulation, and inclusiveness will become more urgent as they become integrated into political campaigning, e-commerce, and daily life. The trick that will face policymakers, businesses and citizens will be to utilize the advantages of these technologies and reduce their risks.

To sum up, the online revolution of communication is a very significant opportunity and a very significant challenge. To fully reap the potentials of the digital age, societies need to invest in education and digital literacy, responsible governance of platforms, ethical innovation and the need to culture towards inclusiveness and civic participation. It is only through a combination of these dimensions that the digital communication can live up to its potential of being a real springboard of democratic development, cultural enrichment, and social advancement.

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