The Agenda Setting in the Digital Age*
How We Use Media to Monitor Civic Life and Reframe Community

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ABSTRACT

World leaders and citizens alike use a mix of traditional (e.g. newspapers, magazines, radio, and television) and social (e.g. Twitter, and Facebook) media to redefine community in the digital age. Nations confront challenges from collectives that are asserting their voices into national and regional issues. This dynamic change is made possible by modern digital technologies that allow citizens to use a variety of media to find each other, gain social support, and articulate alternative agendas easier than at any time in history. This article, however, argues that traditional media still provide the main national agenda. But that agenda is supplemented, and in some cases even challenged, by alternative agendas persistently offered via social media. The Arab Spring is an example of how alternative agendas challenged the national agenda. This article presents the Agenda Community Attraction formula for measuring the traditional, social and personal agenda correlations. Given the changing dynamic between national and alternative agendas, social systems confront new challenges and opportunities – mainly the need to balance traditional national values with the need to allow a gradual social agenda to enrich individuals. This allows a national evolution that sensitizes and benefits national organizations. The result is gravitation toward a balance between the power of vertical, institutional society, represented by the Pyramid, and the ease and convenience of social media to convey information, such as mobile Papyrus paper allowed. This mixing of vertical power and horizontal challenge is creating a newer form of national organization, the emerging Digital Society. This new society requires more tolerance between leaders and citizens than at any time in history. Communication plays a major role, but not the only one, in this evolution, or revolution, as the case may be.

Keywords: The Agenda, Digital Age, Civic Life.

1. Agenda Communities

This article, drawing on the literature of agenda-setting scholarship, assesses the influence of both traditional and social media on audiences. It turns out that audiences are using both "types" of media to form pictures of civic life and their own personal agenda communities. This is an age when the digitization of information is allowing information to escape the powerful force of the Nile and flow in small streams into the rich countryside. Of course, this a metaphor but it would make a difference in Egypt, not just in Cairo. In
fact, it is making a difference everywhere, not just in the Middle East.

Journalists and agenda setting scholars have long understood there is a relationship between what media say on a daily—or even minute-by-minute—basis and the mental pictures of civic life absorbed by citizens. We assume that there is a relationship, that media tell us what to think about, as argued by American political scientist Bernard Cohen (Cohen, 1963). In the past four decades we have extended the observations that journalist Walter Lippmann made in his book, Public Opinion (Lippmann, 1946, originally published in 1922). Lippmann pointed out that we necessarily depend on mediated communication to learn about modern, urban society. Lippmann likened press coverage to the spotlights on a stage, shifting from character to character, from event to event. Modern communication scholars have come to call this the agenda setting function of media.

Like Lippmann, we have used content analysis to trace the changing topics, and like Cohen we have concluded that the press does tell us what to think about. But that is not the end of the story. Media do not alter our deep-seated attitudes easily and certainly not our personal values. The press—now a wide range of media, including social media—do define civic life for us. Agenda setting studies have found this true for many national systems, cultures, and political systems. There are more than 500 published studies of media agenda setting, a number of books, and thousands of excellent scholarly papers, including those done in Jordan (McCombs, 2014, , Mousa, 1992, 2010). Putting these studies together allows us to draw some conclusions about the relationships between media and the larger society. As traditional/vertical media decline in circulation and reach, there is a natural loss of authority of the leaders of political and social structures, and a gain in power and sense of community among citizens using social media to create new bonds of connection. So leaders and followers have to forge a new relationship with each other. We call this the emerging Digital Society. It poses challenges for all of us.

We are often surprised at the limits of media power. For example, the late Dr. Robert L. Stevenson, a UNC-CH international scholar, often pointed out that citizens living in East Germany before the Wall came down watched Western television and when freedom came they still found it difficult to adjust to the values of the capitalist West. In fact, decades later Germany is still working on the transition of older citizens to new ways of living and working. Younger East Germans found it much easier, emphasizing that relating to media agendas is constantly changing and that as the media world reinvents itself, audiences are adjusting, but at very different speeds. The German example is a world example. Older generations everywhere are like East Germans, dealing with a constantly evolving media world and therefore media agenda world. In this, the entire world is alike.

Once we thought that modernization could be accomplished by introducing modern media into different cultural contexts, with modern images of the dynamic economic, social, and political activities going on around the world. An example of this is Daniel Lerner’s The Passing of Traditional Society (Lerner, 1958). We thought that modernization could be accomplished within the minds of citizens in developing countries. But it proved more difficult, as in East Germany, and we can see that our media habits are learned as we become socialized into our own cultures; we stick to what we know. Robert Putnam’s book on social capital is a fascinating look at our willingness to contribute to the social good. But what is striking about this book is a topic scarcely mentioned in the text, but evident in some tables (Putnam, 2000). We stick to our original media with some incremental change throughout our lives. The tables reveal media change across societies, and that is true, but really because older
generations, with their use of a particular medium, are dying off. Societies are changing, but individuals are not particularly changing. This is true in the United States with the decline in circulation—since the 1920s in the United States—of daily newspapers (and many print media generally). Every day members of daily newspaper audiences die and are not replaced by a younger audience. In the United States, young people do not read newspapers, and few of them watch the evening television news programs any longer (Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2012).

We sometimes attribute too much power to social media. In the 2010 Arab Spring, Mohamed Bouazizi, a frustrated merchant in Tunisia, set himself on fire, making a record of it. In Egypt, You Tube provided a way to illustrate the tragic death while Twitter enabled organizers to bring thousands of people to Tahrir Square in Cairo, and elsewhere in the region. There were also demonstrations in Jordan and other parts of the Middle East and Northern Africa. These communication modalities can be traced in the emerging spring so clearly that we forget that the social media of change would not have been possible without ongoing tension with then-president Hosni Mubarak and his government. Eventually, regular media were involved with news and comment about political and social change. Jordan Spring of 1989 is an excellent example as it evolved before the coming of social media, but there were satellite TV and private weeklies, such as Shihan, which supported a change that started and spread to elsewhere started in the traditional south and spread elsewhere, before it was contained with measures that led to a democratization process, which brought an elected parliament and new liberal Press Law in 1993 (Mousa, 2012). Agendas of political change are not effective without emphasis by major media. Social media cannot influence change alone. In reality, though the leader changed the status quo persists in Egypt, and Libya is still in chaos. Change is still in the hands of people.

An easy way to visualize this is by reference to vertical and horizontal media. Those media that aim to reach large numbers of people, regardless of their economic or social status, are vertical. Daily newspapers and local and network television, for example, are vertical in that they reach down, as if shouting from the top of one of the great Egyptian pyramids at Giza. That is the way many of us think of the power of media. By contract, in the village of Giza merchants illustrate the way ancient Papyrus Paper was created by slicing off the thick green skins of the Papyrus plants, then creating thin strips of the pulpy white interiors that can be dried and woven, Scotch-plaid like, into roles of absorbent “paper.” Such paper was transportable when rolled up on scrolls. Papyrus paper emphasized messages on flat surfaces for those with special interests. Papyrus paper democratized information as would Guttenberg centuries later.

We all live in a richly mediated world, and we naturally assume that everyone is sharing a common agenda, which is true, but our access to the agenda very much depends on the media agendas we select to frame our civic, and personal, worlds. It turns out we have much more power than we realize, and many national leaders realize. Those who visualize a clear institutional world represented by the magnificently rising pyramids, have trouble realizing the world is moving toward a more personalized mix of personal messages, the ones more easily transportable by papyrus paper. What media produce has ramifications political and cultural for all of us. Social media are the horizontal media of our day.

1. Monitoring Civic Life

Newspapers, television, radio, and other traditional media perform a vital role in all developed societies. Editors and journalists frame public life with their selection of topics. In more regulated Western society,
the market plays a distinct role, and in more monitored and regulated nations, the government may influence selections, as in China for example. Whatever the circumstances, journalists make selections to frame public life, leaving citizens with the very logical choice of reading/watching these traditional media to gain an understanding of the collective values of that society. Obviously government and journalists are never unaware of citizen interests and so the daily news agenda is the result of significant segments of a society melding interests into a daily agenda of key public issues — sometimes vital, sometimes not.

Figure 1: Agenda Setting, Level 1

Many studies have documented the relationship between media issues and public awareness. Most of us use the term “issues” to label this evolving arranging and rearranging of news about events, issues, and personalities. U.S. scholar Maxwell McCombs, a pioneer in agenda setting scholarship, has called these issues “objects,” a more neutral social scientific label. Agenda setting studies usually combine two research methods, content analysis and public opinion polling. Scholars determine what the objects are in the studied media with content analysis. Then, a bit later, they measure the objects mentioned by the civic community during public opinion polling. The presumption is that, if the media cover an array of those same objects after citizens have had time to view/hear/see/absorb them. The presumption has held up in many situations, as McCombs has documented in his recent updated text on agenda setting (McCombs, 2014). Figure 1 is a simple illustration of major objects in the media at Time 1 (publication) with the major objects cited by audiences at Time 2 (after publication).

Recent research also has shown that citizens not only reflect the media objects, or issues, but also details about the issues in the way the media present them. Scholars have called this agenda setting level 2. McCombs uses “attributes” as a more scientific way to describe how the process works as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Agenda Setting, Level 2

Within the past five years, scholars have applied network analysis to agenda setting scholarship. This provides a way to see the actual relationship of objects and/or attributes within a medium’s message—the objects/attributes related to each other like a small constellation in space. This research is closing in on actual brain and mental functioning as well as cognition in the human understanding of symbolic meaning. Scholars call this agenda letting, level 3 (as shown in Figure 3). We can somewhat interpret the data to illustrate the process.
Many have reviewed the body of agenda setting scholarship and have concluded that it is evidence of media power, as it most certainly is. But one can argue just as strongly that it represents a sensible effort on the part of citizens who want to monitor civic life—and certainly that is advisable for all of us—to monitor traditional media as well as political and cultural systems. Within any social system, major media provide frames of the issues of any civic society. Thousands used to line up to read Izvestia, a USSR Communist Party paper, when it was posted on walls. Surely no one assumes Soviet citizens were seeing news as much as they were seeking key values and saliences. Citizens are the key to agenda setting. If there is no audience for a medium, there is no agenda setting.

3. General Mixing of Traditional and Social Media

We all know that there has been an explosion of media technologies in recent years, and there has been a decline in traditional media such as national television and daily newspapers, media which aim for large audiences, as if shouting again from the top of that Egyptian pyramid. In the United States, in retrospect, we can see that the period in which daily newspapers achieved their greatest market reach in terms of numbers of newspapers per citizen was in the 1920s when there were nearly 1.4 daily newspapers per citizen. Obviously, many citizens read more than one daily newspapers. That was the decade, the 1920s, in which network radio was born, growing into the dominant national news medium within a decade (Shaw, 1991). U.S. daily newspapers have declined steadily to about 1,400 today from a high of about 3,000 around the time of World War I.

Network television, delayed by World War II, emerged by the end of the 1940s and early 1950s, displacing the dominant network radio. Within a decade or less, radio had reinvented itself into more specialized stations to concentrate on sports, news, entertainment, western music, jazz, or other more focused offerings of
specialized audiences. In the history of mass media, the pattern has been clear for a long time: Mass (vertical) media rise, then decline in terms of mass audiences, transforming themselves into specialized (horizontal) media. If they do not transform themselves, they disappear. For example, silent films are not the same as sound films. Silent films required a distinct type of acting, with simple stories. Sound films displaced silent films within about five years in the United States after the 1927 “Jazz Singer.” Silent films disappeared as a profitable medium, and how many of us use typewriters except as a cherished relic in our offices?

Of course magazines, long a specialized horizontal media, remain, but those mass magazines that aimed for large mass audiences—in the United States, Life, Look, Saturday Evening Post, Collier’s, and many others—have been gone for decades. Newsweek is attempting a comeback after closing; U.S. News and World Report is gone; Time Magazine often struggles for circulation. U.S. magazines with large circulation, e.g. People (which has recently confronted challenges), are usually horizontal in appeal. People concentrates on some news events, especially if they involve celebrities. In other words, People is horizontal.

Other horizontal, for the most part, media include Twitter, Snapshots, Tumblr, You Tube, Facebook Google+ and AreebaAreeba. These media all carry major news from time to time, but usually these media reflect major events as they occur in vertical media. All of us can think of events that emerged first on these media, then evolved to major vertical media, but, in general, the exceptions prove the rule. Vertical media, operated by professionals who orient their stories to national government, events, and audiences still set agendas, although—in a 2008 study—there is just a hint that the ability of the vertical media may be in decline. The 1972 Chapel Hill, N.C., agenda setting study found that the correlation between media and audience on the presidential election issues to be .97, almost a perfect fit. A replication of that Chapel Hill study in 2008, forty years later, found the connection to be .87, still quite high. But would that slight decline result from sampling error or some other methodical issue, or is there some general decline at work between the major vertical media and national audiences? For example, see Coleman and McCombs’ article, The young and agenda-less? Exploring age-related differences in agenda setting on the youngest generation, baby boomers, and the civic generation (Coleman & McCombs, 2007). Time will tell. Meanwhile, Pew has examined the decline in vertical media audiences and also charted the use of various kinds of media by audiences differentiated by age (as shown in Figures 4 and 5).

How we use and meld media agenda communities depends on our interests and opportunities. These differ across time and space. They differ across generations.
Don’t expect your children to create and value the same communities as you do. They may; they may not. Indeed, they may live in personal communities, in which you may feel excluded. This is not new across generations.

If we are more influenced by media when we have more interest in the agendas of valued communities, it can be argued that our individuality will surface in the way we mix, or meld, agendas. Of course, we implicitly argue that media agendas are more than a collection of news stories. Media agendas represent the saliences (Carter, 1962) of value in terms of objects (and attributes) of the communities served by those media. The objects represented by a medium reflect a community. Because most societies are urban and complex, as Lippmann argued, we have no other way to obtain a comprehensive view of a particular community. Therefore, we argue agenda communities are communities. We could drive around Amman all day, stopping to talk to dozens of people, but we would not obtain a representative picture of all the activities of Amman. But as citizens, we can access a wide variety of media agendas and commonly do so on a daily basis.

We are interested in the civic community, and we are interested in more personal community. There is evidence that we attend to various media community agendas, then meld them into a more compatible community. In a replication of the 1968 Chapel Hill agenda setting study in 2008, we tested the idea that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—three major U.S. voter blocs—would meld agendas alike within a
party, and differently from the other parties (an independent bloc). In 2008, we content-analyzed the major event network news programs of key networks. See Figure 6. We argue that voters used traditional/verticals and social/horizontal media, but did not do so very differently.

We create pictures from traditional/vertical media and apply to the whole society, and we use social/horizontal media to sketch out our pictures of more personal community. As in everything else, the whole is greater than sum of its parts. Our agenda community pictures depend on how we meld the agenda communities. We know age makes a difference in the media that we use but we reflect our own values and the pictures we assemble of civic and social community.

4. Assembling Social Community, A Test

We can see if voters meld traditional/vertical and social/horizontal media to fit their own unique preferences. As a test of audience “power” in using media. We argue that voters might well mix traditional/vertical agendas, which tend to be oriented to news and facts, with social/horizontal agendas, which tend to be oriented to opinions as values. Political party preferences should make a difference. In 2008, as in
Voters who are interested in elections, scholar David Weaver has found, are more likely to seek information from traditional/vertical media. Weaver found that if there is high interest in an election, but low information about that election, voters have—as he put it—a high need for orientation (Weaver, 1977). These voters are more likely to use media and absorb the media agenda than voters with either low interest or high information.

Agenda setting, therefore, starts with people and their needs and interests.

Voters/citizens also have a large selection of media, both vertical media that concentrate on facts, and horizontal media that concentrate on perspectives. Voters/citizens also have their own interests, opinion, and voting history. One can visualize these three elements in Figure 7.

![Figure 7: The Voter, Beliefs, Vertical Media and Horizontal Media](image)

Voters, we theorized in our 2008 replication study, would obtain most of their information from vertical media (here we report on evening television news) and at least some of their information from horizontal media (here we use opinion makers), fitting these two news agendas into the web of their own personal preferences and histories. Here is one important point: There is no other way to obtain information about the election, or— we argue— any other public issues. All information must come from other people, direct experience, or a mediated source. And this is a closed system. If we can account for the influence of the vertical media, then we can actually estimate the influence of horizontal media and personal experience. The sum of the total experiences equals a unity of 1.

How? We devised a formula to predict how individuals might gather into more personalized agenda communities, and then we illustrate it with actual 2008 data. The formula is:

\[ ACA (\text{Agenda Community Attraction}) = 1 - [(AS1)^2 + (1-AS1)^2] \]

Therefore, if the correlation between vertical media and voters was .80, then the residual, unaccounted for
correlation would be 1-.80, or .20. These values need to be squared. Therefore, ACA = 1 – (.64 + .04), or ACA = .32. Vertical and horizontal media account for about two-thirds of voter choice, but the voters account for the remaining third. One might note that if the AS1 correlation were 1.00, the ACA = 1 – 0 or 0. In other words, you could predict voter issues completely by reference to the media agenda. Horizontal media or personal preferences would play no role. Can you imagine such a society? Yet many people still assume that vertical media have such massive power.

In the 1968 Chapel Hill agenda setting study, we found a high correlation between local media and voters in ranking the important issues, .97. We replicated this study in Chapel Hill in 2008, 40 years later, we content analyzed area media in 1968 – newspapers, television and other media – and conducted door-to-door interviews with a random sample of 100 voters (McCombs, 2014, p. 149). In the 2008 study, cited here, we interviewed in-depth 70 Chapel Hill voters over the June through early August period in the summer of 2008, when voters settled on candidates Barack Obama for the Democrats and John McCain for the Republicans. In this panel study there were 32 Democrats, 19 Republicans and 19 independents, according to their official registrations. All had voted in May Primary.

Because it was a panel study with distinctly different types of voters—those registering as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—we could match the fit between these party groups with both vertical media (evening television news) and horizontal media (opinion makers). We argue that voters have three ways to obtain information: vertical media, horizontal media (including talking to other people), social media sources, and many other media sources of information, or from direct experience, from voting their voting history, values, and preferences.

We included NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, and FOX (we also content-analyzed other media, not included in this analysis.) We focused on topics/objects, not attributes. At the same time we content analyzed a samples of news commentary from several major opinion makers in the United States, including Rush Limbaugh, Stephanie Miller, Jon Stewart, and others. Some are considered liberal and some conservative. None are neutral in perspective. We used content analysis to determine the topics over the nine-week during summer 2008 just about the time, at the end, when the Republican and Democratic conventions ratified their national candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, who by then had secured their places via primary elections. We interviewed a panel of Democratic, Republican, and Independent voters (selected from official voter rolls of those voting in the North Carolina primary on May 6, 2008). Interviews over the same nine-week period of time ran to an hour or more. We sought to find the major issues mentioned by voters, along with their media preferences. Strictly speaking, an agenda setting study first records media content then, later, matches voter issues mentioned in a survey, while this study conducted both content analysis and interviews during the same period of time. But results of the 1968 and 2008 studies demonstrated that major vertical media still pack power. The 1968 study, as we mentioned, produced media-audience correlations of .97, while the 2008 correlational match-up was .87, still high.

If we use partial correlations to test our Agenda Community Attraction model, we find that democrats, Republicans and Independents meld traditional and social media agendas differently. See Figure 8.

In our test, we found that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents did mix and meld agendas into different communities. Political party predicted differences in media use more powerfully than age and gender (which did not make much difference). Democrats related more to vertical and less to horizontal media. Republicans related more strongly to horizontal media than did Democrats and Independents, but did
relate to vertical media. Independents were somewhat in the middle. This is from the actual data. Where we could measure the voter correlation with horizontal media. If we had only used the formula to predict the horizontal values as an estimate, the data show that there would have been little difference. Our test did find evidence that all voters potentially are exposed similarly to all media—here television and opinion makers—but that these voters melded agenda community differently. The process seems to be something deep in human cognition and is so intrinsic that we combine “agenda melding” into a single word, *agendamelding*, to illustrate the force of cognitive processing. We may be exposed to the same media, but we use media to anchor ourselves differently. Audiences are more important to agenda setting than we realize. If media tell us what to think about, audiences themselves, perhaps unconsciously, decide how they will think about media agenda communities. Audiences are not passive.

Figure 8: How Democrats, Republicans and Independents Meld Their Agenda

5. National Stability?

Perhaps we do the same thing for larger social identification. If voters are relatively comfortable with their own sense of self identity (Democrats), they are more open to the traditional media that represent the larger society. If they have slightly more personal views (Republicans), they make somewhat more use of alternative social media. If they have a more developed sense of personal identity, yet are open to choices (Independents), they access social media even more. In other words, if we are open to change, we look at alternative agenda communities more closely.

Will this not work for national social systems? If the connection between citizens and government (via
vertical media) is reasonably high, then one can assume that the government must be doing things right in terms of citizen perspective. If the agenda setting correlation for objects is .70, for example, accounting for .49 of the variance, then the “missing” .30 accounts for .30, or .09 of the variance. This leaves (1 - (.49 + .09)) .42 of the variance about objects/issues in the hands of citizens. There is a balance between government (represented by vertical media) and citizens, with alternative agenda communities represented by .09. This means, we argue, that there is a strong link between government/vertical media and citizens, but also some reasonable challenge by alternative agenda perspectives.

If the agreement between government and citizens falls to .50, then the alternative values also equal .50, each squared to .25, with the citizens holding the dominant position in a social/political system. See Figure 9.

One would expect that audiences would meld vertical and horizontal agendas with their own experiences differently across groups and over time. Figure 9 demonstrates the hypothetical dynamics as the correlations decline with vertical media in a given social system. It represents agendamelding and civic balance at any point in time, the balance among vertical and horizontal media and personal preferences. As vertical media agendas go up and down, so do horizontal media and personal inputs. The system is self-contained. For example, if there is an increase in the attraction of alternative community agendas there is a decline in vertical media influence.

![Figure 9: The Dynamics of Agendamelding and Civic Balance](https://example.com/figure9.png)

As the media decline in their reach, personal preferences become more important. The figure suggests
there is a dynamic at work and that political/social systems are constantly in transition. On the left side of the model, we argue that systems with correlations that are reasonably high with vertical media suggest a relatively stable social system. But as the power of alternative community agendas rise, there is a transition period of instability. Protecting these alternative community agendas is what the U.S. First Amendment is about. If the correlation falls below .50, then the alternative agenda community is on the way to dominance. The English philosopher John Milton in his 1644 Areopagitica called for a diversity of information within a social system (Milton, 2006). Too much diversity would leave to chaos, and too little would indicate authoritarianism.

**The Emerging Papyrus-digital Society**

Around the world, we are evolving toward social systems in which historical power arrangements are less and less pertinent and predictive of social order. Once we looked to the top of the pyramid for guidance, whether it be for government, industry, education, or any other of our activities. These positions remain important, but it is possible for all the stones, metaphorically speaking, in the pyramid to find and communicate with others like themselves. Social media, for example, make it possible to find other perspectives as we found in the Arab Spring. More importantly than information, for which there is no longer any shortage, newer media allow us as individuals to find others like ourselves, individually via email, or in groups as with Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, among others. The historical direction of media as always been similar to that of human growth. Media—such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and now a large number of new media—are born, grow to maturity, and then decline.

Wikipedia has largely replaced Encyclopaedia Britannica, which is now online, as a principal source of authority. MOOC courses from Harvard and other leading institutions seems to be creating new opportunities and displacing older traditional educational institutions. Leaders, from presidents to colonels to professors, now work in a competitive informational environments. All of us live in agenda community competition, and all of us must be able to argue our personal agendas with the needs of our audiences in mind. Our audiences have alternatives. If presidents ignore this, they will need very large armies. If professors do this, they will find their students transferring to online courses.

One might visualize the process this way. See Figure 10. Audiences gather by their beliefs and values use both traditional/vertical and social/horizontal to blend the communities in which they feel most comfortable. The media provides the ingredients for this selection but the media do not control the outcome of the audience selection.

![Figure 10: Beliefs, Media Use, and Community Melding](image-url)

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From the audience point of view, traditional/vertical and social/horizontal media are intervening, not independent variables. This is a reverse of the way communication scholars—indeed all of us—normally think. Traditional/vertical of course remain powerful, so long as anyone is listening. Fewer of us are, as we attend to our own accounts on AreebaAreeba, Twitter, Facebook, Google, BuzzFeed, Vine, YouTube, Reddit, LinkedIn, Instagram, Tumblr, Delicious, Flickr, Tagged, FourSquare, LiveJournal, MySpace, Spotify, SoundCloud, Plaxo, Digg, WhatsApp, Viber, not to mention email among many other media. From an historical point of view, we are in a period of paradigm shift, certainly not for the first time in human history. And there is more to come

REFERENCES

الأجندة الإعلامية في عصر الاتصال الرقمي
كيف نستخدم الإعلام لمراقبة المحيط وأحداثه وتحديد موقعنا منها

دونالد شو1 وعثمان سليمان الموسي2 وكرير فارجو3 وميلاد مينوي4 وريتشارد كول1

ملخص

يستخدم الناس والقادة عموما في عصر الاتصال الرقمي في حياتهم اليومية، خليطا من وسائل الإعلام التقليدية (الصحف والإذاعات والتلفزيون) كما يستخدمون أيضا وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (الفيسبوك وتوتير) ليتعرفوا إلى محبيهم وما يجري فيه من أحداث ويعبروا عن ذلك تحديد موقفهم فيه. وتواجه الأمم تحديات من مجموعات تؤكدها وأصواتها من القضايا المختلفة في الإعلام. وتتحقق هذه العملية باستخدام تكنولوجيا اتصال رقمية تسمح للمواطنين بالتناسب والتفاعل وتسنيد الأهداف الاجتماعية في ظل غياب مسبوق بتاريخ الإنسانية. لكن هذا المقال يؤكد أن الإعلام التقليدي هو الذي يقدم الأجندة الوطنية ويرسم ملامحها. غير أن هذه الأجندة قد تعزز أحداث تقدمها وسائل الاتصال الاجتماعي أو حتى تتحدى مضموناتها. ويعطي الربح العربي إرثنا جداً للكيفية التي تحدث فيها أحداث التواصل الاجتماعي الأكيدة الرسمية. وذا يمكن هذا المقال تقدم معاناة الاتصال لأجندة المجتمع التي تنص الارتباطات بين الأجندة الشخصية والتقنية والإجتماعية. فالجماعات تواجه تحديات أو فرص جديدة، خاصة الحاجة لإيجاد التوازن بين القيم الوطنية التقليدية وإحداث تغيير تدريجي يقود إلى إزاء تلك القضايا. هذه العملية تؤدي إلى حدوث نمو فيد المنظمات الاجتماعية مما يحقق توازن بين وسائل الإعلام التقليدية. الهوية الإدارية، وبين ما تقدمه وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، ذات الطبيعة الأفقية. هذا الارتباط سيقود دورة إلى نشوء أنظمة إجتماعية جديدة بطلان رقمية. ومعه، فإن هذا المجتمع الجديد الداخلي يستدعي وجب تسامح أكبر من السابق في العلاقات بين القادة وشعوبها، والتواصل بعد ذاته يلعب دوراً مهماً في تحقق هذا التطور، ولكنه لا يستطيع أن يقوم بهذا الدور كله بمفرده.

الكلمات الدالة: الأجندة الإعلامية، عصر الاتصال الرقمي.

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