

## An Overview of The Role of Media and Social Networks on Politics

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### ABSTRACT

In the current era, with the increasing growth of technology and communication, media and social networks have not had an impact on the evolution of social and political life, especially in developed societies. The development of media communication, in addition to being the basis for the consolidation of communication between citizens, has also led to the socialization of politics. On the one hand, social media has played an important role in the political personality development and election campaigns of politicians, and on the other hand, it has been important in the discussion of the political development of societies.

Governments have used media and social networks to manage and influence public opinion. Nowadays, government agencies attach importance to the use of mass media in order to gain the satisfaction of the people and to inform the public about their functions and services through social media. In addition to providing good facilities for social and political life, social media has also brought consequences and concerns. Research shows that the role of media and social networks on politics increases with the passage of time and the number of its users also increases. The library method was used in the preparation and research of this article.

**Keywords-** Afghanistan, political development, social media development, politics, social networks.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of media and social networks and relationships based on electronic communication have greatly moved political and social activity in recent decades. From this point of view, this article tries to investigate the role and influence of media and social networks on politics. Therefore, at the beginning of this question, how do the media and social networks cause changes in the field of political life? In response to this question, the hypothesis is proposed that the media and social networks on the one hand increase people's political participation with effective fields and on the other hand these media criticize the functions of the government and official views. It challenges the government. According to the presented questions, an attempt will be made to test the proposed hypotheses by examining and explaining the opinions of scientists. In

this context, the discussed examples are the extent of citizens' use of social networks and its effects on politics.

In recent years, there has been a lot of research on the influence of media and social networks on politics. In the meantime, there are many researches such as the Effect of social networks on the political participation (2016), social networks and politics (2015) and the Mutual influence of media and politics (2017), The role of the media in the political and social development of Russia (1402) indicates the importance of the issue that communication and mass media are the main source of political life and the lack of use of media and social networks actually reduces people's political participation from politics and political and social life challenges. In this way, the media is considered a driving force in the process of development and prosperity of a society, and without the use of the media, it almost slows down the opportunity to gain power and exert influence on public opinion and the growth of society.

In the last two decades, Afghanistan has been using the tools of media and social networks in the direction of development and political participation, and in return, the media in this country has taken up the ups and downs.

## **II. THE IMPORTANCE AND CONCEPT OF MASS MEDIA**

Today's world depends on continuous communication or interaction between people who are very separated from each other. Today, we live in the whole world. We are aware of situations and events thousands of kilometers away, and electronic communication provides such awareness almost at every moment. Changes in information dissemination and information technology, like any aspect of industrial production, are part of the development of today's societies. Mass media such as news, magazines and television and virtual pages such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. are often considered in relation to entertainment and therefore are considered relatively unimportant in the lives of most people. Be made such a view is completely incorrect (Giddens, 2012, p. 483). In general, in addition to the fact that mass media has an important factor of socialization in a wide way, and especially it has also had an important factor of political socialization. In modern societies, the media are the main source of information for people about what is happening in their society and in the world in general. Governments of all types and forms not only pay attention to this issue, but also use the media to convey their views to varying degrees. All governments try to influence the media and some try to control them. There is no doubt that in totalitarian societies, the control of the media is for the continuation of the regime's dominance, and in addition, it is considered as an important factor of political socialization, very important and essential (Rush, 2013, p. 115).

In recent years, Facebook has had remarkable success and currently has more than two billion active users in the world (Harari, 2017, p. 114). If one day the dictatorial government blocks Facebook in its country or completely shuts down the Internet, how much it will bring negative results in social and political life. Can those who are not satisfied with the functions of the government organize demonstrations in the absence of Facebook without coordination? In a public demonstration that took place in Iran in 1402, the government of this country blocked or censored the WhatsApp and Facebook networks to prevent the continuation of the demonstration and its bad consequences. In fact, this proves how social networks have influenced the structure and political life today.

Decisions made by competent authorities about what to do to preserve native culture and produce new culture need media and social networks. From this point of view, the responsibility of cultural production (in the

society) is not only limited to the political work of the government, but the media and educational centers also obviously play a role in this field (Nash and Scott, 2014, p. 161). In addition, politicians show themselves to their audiences through the media, and personalities are more important than politics. In the social field, positional distinctions have become even more dependent on qualifications and cultural criteria than on economic and political power. According to this understanding of the "cultural revolution", the historical significance of culture is determined by changes in social structure (Nash, 1400, p. 47).

One of the indicators of political development is press freedom and the growth of mass media. Underdeveloped nations (proletariat-masses) suffer from all conflicts of lack of achievement. More than this, these conflicts intensify with the increase of international communication as well as the effort to reach the level of development. In today's age, when the media, radio, television and satellite shows the existence of the civilizations of developed societies to the people of undeveloped societies, how they have more prosperity with less effort, it is more difficult for them to bear this life (Duverge, 2015, p. 71).

In countries and societies where the press and electronic technologies are not developed, or where a large percentage of people do not know how to read or do not have the habit of reading, advertising is done through social networks. In this case, Facebook and WhatsApp are considered a good opportunity for communication. (Alam, 1390, p. 371).

Actors of the global civil society take direct action against the leaders by using media and social networks to influence the policy makers. And even some new social movements use the media and social networks to launch mass demonstrations (Sardarnia, 2017, pp. 83-84). In recent years, due to the advancement of new technologies that have facilitated other aspects of globalization, various possibilities for exchanging ideas between activists across borders and for awareness of global problems have greatly increased. New media and communications bring news of events and problems and possibilities of action in one region to other parts of the world to individuals and groups, and at the same time facilitate cross-border cooperation (Nash, 1400, p. 145).

## **III. THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC OPINION**

However, public opinion and ideology cannot exist without communication. Mass media, especially the effects of media information, have been the subject of many researches. There has been an interest in investigating the relationship between mass media and public opinion, and many thoughts have been directed to it. Modern technology has facilitated the development of mass media, so that information can be transmitted

cheaply over a wide area at high speed to reach a larger audience. For example, many Third World countries with high levels of illiteracy were deeply affected by the mainstreaming of the radio, simply because radios no longer required a central power source or cumbersome batteries. The development of communication satellites has created even more surprising developments, especially with its specific political effect that the dissemination of information through satellites cannot be easily controlled (Rush, 2013, p. 182).

During the election campaigns of Afghanistan, it has sometimes been seen that (especially during the government of Mohammad Ashraf Ghani) candidates have made extensive use of the media and social networks to promote their election campaigns, and they Candidates and their functions have made permanent advertisements. And even the governors, in order to have the public opinion of the people in their support, have hired dozens of people and forced them to work for their personal benefit by creating nicknames such as “Supporters” in social networks.

Although propaganda and influence on public opinion has been one of the oldest tools of political domination, which is implemented in various ways. But with the development of communication, the phenomenon of public opinion has taken on a more obvious and tangible aspect that can be observed. The difference between propaganda and ideology is its breadth and variety and lack of coherence. It is not necessary to rely on a particular worldview for advertising. You can advertise about the moral virtues of the political leader, the useful works or the wise policies of the government and the services it provides to the people. The higher the effectiveness of advertising, the more acceptable the government will be. Advertisements also originate from the government's attention to the people. A government cut off from the people or indifferent to the opinion of the people does not feel the need to advertise. But group governments and those who want to rule people's hearts do not underestimate propaganda. The way the Islamic government was formed by the Prophet of Islam is a good lesson for the current rulers. Before they talked about government, sovereignty or even the implementation of Islamic laws, they propagated the religion of Islam. When the civil society was influenced by these propagandas, the rule of Islam became possible easily and without resorting to violent methods (Naqibzadeh, 2012, p. 151).

Today, mass media, from written to audio and visual, provide appropriate advertising tools to the rulers to manage public opinion. Ready and ready thoughts are not always in the hands of those who want them. Rather, thoughts are exposed to attention through skillful advertising. There are various broad groups that advertise for the benefit of this or that thing, and their methods are sometimes obvious and direct, and sometimes hidden and suspicious. According to some scholars, the main purpose of propaganda is not the

political struggle between groups and social classes, but the creation of social integration and homogeneity. In other words, advertising is an automatic tool to reach the masses (Alam, 2010, p. 368).

The political process is the aspects of political behavior that is formed as a result of the creation and flow of power between individuals and groups in society through the flow of communication. An important element in the aspects of political behavior is the element of communication, so that one of the researchers of political science, Harold Laswell, introduces political science as the language of power and becomes the founder of the school of sociology of communication. According to McLuhan, communication is the mother of changes in human society. Human life is based on electronic communication devices. Manifestations of communication include means of mass communication, public opinion, advertising and advertising flow (Bakhshaishi Ardestani, 2015, p. 153).

#### **IV. ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

With regard to the purpose of “showing the changes in public communication through social media” and “explaining the way of using social media for government communication”, social media is a tool to serve politicians' election campaigns, increasing popularity. Famous people strengthen social movements, social activists and for governments to educate about urbanization and raise awareness about it. A policy or a product can hardly succeed without providing a smart message that is directed to the right audience in creative and innovative ways. New technologies and social media have changed the way people communicate and have challenged the traditional models of communication and conversation. Don Hind, a well-known writer on public domain and media reform and blog, says: There are positive signs that modern technology makes it possible to reconstruct some features of a society. In the past, the communication of ideas was defined to create a wider public space, and now it means engaging the audience in a constant conversation. According to scientist Hind: “Social networking sites have provided opportunities for people who mainly have political motivations to be able to find a match” (Lalana, B.T., p. 97).

Based on its evolution, media are divided into three categories of terms such as “old media”, “new media” and “social media”:

- 1- Old media: Old media or in other words “traditional media” include newspapers, magazines, television and radio, which had been involved in advertising and marketing for decades. It can be
- 2- New media: This stage of media is also called online media, it includes websites and electronic newsletters, which are more common in advanced economies and in electronic governance. More has been used. According to Krishna Sami: “Social

media now provide an “interactive, immediate, informative and intelligent platform for discussion”.

- 3- Social media: The development of social media has changed the way people access information. While old and new media are creating messages for their audiences, on the contrary, social media are busy creating discussions among people (Lalana, B.T., p. 99).

Therefore, the important features of social networks are as follows:

- Social media enables anyone to reach a global audience;
- Social media tools are available to everyone at low or no cost.
- Using social media is very easy and simple.
- The speed of influence of social media is higher than the old media.
- The product of social media can be modified and changed by getting ideas.

Social media allows audiences to interact with TV shows and characters in new ways: they can follow the characters' Twitter and Facebook profiles and their shows. Like them on Facebook, because they can see the events of future episodes as well as more behind-the-scenes information that is not available until now. Most of the radio and newspapers have online sites and they have mostly become weblogs (Lalana, B.T., pp. 100-101).

Social media has a significant position and influence in government affairs. According to the technological conditions, the governments are trying to bring the policies and services that they provide to the citizens to the public opinion and in this way to have the satisfaction and support of the people. On the other hand, to examine people's ideas and views regarding government activities. In today's conditions, the absolute majority of government agencies have and operate official Facebook and Twitter websites and pages.

For example, the British government recognizes social media as follows: “Along with other mass communication, it can help the government to communicate with citizens in their places; It helps to consult and participate and to be more transparent and reliable.” Public and social media, in addition to providing more facilities in the affairs of normal and political life, have also caused disadvantages and concerns:

## **V. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media is like a double-edged sword that can be used in the right way and can be used to exert pressure and violence. We examined the advantages of social media above, while the main disadvantages of social media are as follows:

1. Rumors and slander: While rumors and slander have been going on for centuries, social media platforms have fueled rumors in a wide way. Rumors on social media can destroy credibility. Worse, social media rumors can lead to violence.
2. Privacy: Privacy has become one of the hot topics in this century; because, the information we want to disclose is in digital form and is available online. In addition, a lot of information is collected about people without their knowledge or explicit approval. This issue is especially severe when using social media; because from time to time private information of people (without the person's permission) is published and distributed through virtual pages with pseudonyms, which, depending on the severity of the matter, harms the reputation of the person.
3. Fraud: Sometimes people engage in “identity theft” using “malware”: identity theft occurs when sensitive information such as usernames and passwords are extracted and used to create an alternative identity. Are used for example, sometimes fake users are created in the name of individuals and they attempt to disclose personal information of individuals.
4. Time wasters: In general, there is no doubt that social media are “time wasters”, and in popular culture this is defined as: “something that is attractive and addictive, but It keeps you away from doing the things that are really important.”
5. Addiction: Everyone is talking about addiction to social media, which certainly has become a concern. A study by Joan Davila and Lisa Starr found that frequent disclosure of problems to friends, especially about romantic disappointments, via texting, instant messaging, and social media was strongly associated with higher levels of depression. it's related to. In addition, the use of social media has had negative effects on people's mental health.
6. Cyber harassment: Cyber harassment occurs when “a person, using the Internet or other technologies, such as mobile phones, torments, threatens, harasses and embarrasses another person.” These include common text messages, rumors sent by email, and embarrassing pictures or vulgar videos posted on social networks. Internet harassment is not considered unreal because it happens “virtually”. Even worse, there is no safe place to escape it; because it can happen anywhere and anytime (Lalana, B.T., pp. 109-120).

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

From all the topics presented, it can be found that the study of the relationship between the media and social networks with politics, political life and political development has been a very current and active trend, and it can be said that it is one of the most acute areas of

research and study in political analysis. is included in. In this field of study, an increasing number of media and social network researchers, according to characteristics such as interactivity, simultaneity of communication, comprehensiveness, lack of central control and evasion of censorship, are suitable spaces for reviving the lost dimensions to influence political and social life. It is subject to the specific conditions desired by each researcher.

In general, three approaches can be distinguished regarding the political and social capacities of social networks, some of which are mentioned in the article. First, the approach is the importance of social media for the political development of societies and its effects on public opinion. Second, there is an optimistic attitude towards the impact of information and communication technology in the lives of societies, which has had a positive effect on the political and social participation of people. Third, it is a pessimistic attitude that supporters of this attitude believe that social networks are very dangerous for people's lives and have possible effects.

The most important aspect of the influence of social networks on the social and political life of people is the communication effect. Sociological studies on the political effects of social networks are based to a significant extent on the concept of communication change. This change occurs in a triangle whose three angles are "politics", "people" and "media or social networks".

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