New Public Sphere and Public Discourse in the Context of Globalisation[*]

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This paper explores the concept of the new public sphere and public discourse in the context of globalisation. It starts by analyzing how globalisation has affected the emergence of the new public sphere and the role that digital technologies have played in it. The influence of the new public sphere on public discourse during globalisation is discussed, along with how it has affected accessibility, citizen engagement, and power dynamics. The paper also examines the various issues that the new public sphere during globalisation brings to the forefront of public discourse, such as the increased spread of false information, polarization of opinion, marginalization of oppressed groups, cultural appropriation, privacy concerns, surveillance, censorship, and the digital divide. It concludes by arguing that the new public sphere and public discourse during globalisation can be beneficial but should be managed carefully to ensure it is a positive force for society.

Keywords: public sphere, public discourse, globalisation, digital technologies

Introduction

The theory of "Public Sphere" proposed by Habermas refers to a theorization of the physical spaces in which individuals come together to discuss, debate, and negotiate matters of public concern (Habermas, 1989). It is an attempt to understand the formation and transformation of public opinion and the impact of mass media on public discourse. Developed in the 1960s and 1970s, this theory is the cornerstone of critical studies of communication and media. Jürgen Habermas (1989) is credited with initiating public sphere theory when he wrote about the "bourgeois public sphere" in the 18th century. He argued that the emergence of the public sphere in the period of the Enlightenment allowed for the formation of public opinion through the exchange of ideas, opinions, and arguments. This sphere was defined by the free exchange of ideas between members of society, who came together in public forums such as coffee houses and salons.

In recent years, the concept of the public sphere has been challenged and revised, as new communication and media technologies have enabled a proliferation of public forums and spaces. Public sphere theory has been extended to analyze the impact of the Internet, social media, and mobile media on public discourse and

communication. These technologies have created a new "digital public sphere", which has opened up new possibilities for the formation and transformation of public opinion. It recognizes that the environment of the digital public sphere is different from that of the traditional public sphere and that the technologies of the Internet and social media have stimulated new forms of communication and public participation. It is argued that these new media have enabled individuals to engage in public discourse in novel ways, allowing them to become more active participants in the formation of public opinion. The emergence of the new public sphere theory shows that the public sphere is not a static concept, but rather an ever-evolving concept that is constantly being reshaped by new communication and media technologies. It provides important insights into the role of communication and media in the development and dissemination of public opinion, and is an essential tool for understanding the implications of the digital public sphere for democracy.

In his essay "Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" (1962), Habermas argued that the public sphere was a "network of communication" formed by "public opinion" which was used to "regulate the authority of rulers." Habermas claimed that the public sphere is a vital part of a healthy democracy, as it allows citizens to engage in meaningful dialogue, debate, and collective decision-making. In recent years, however, the traditional public sphere has been replaced by "new public spheres" in which the process of public opinion formation has been altered due to the emergence of new communication technologies. As Habermas noted that the new communication technologies are not only transforming the structure of the public sphere but also change the very nature of public opinion(1989). The new public sphere is characterized by a more horizontal structure, which allows a wider range of voices to be heard and provides more opportunities for participation in the public debate. Additionally, the new public sphere is more open and accessible, allowing for greater transparency and accountability. Thus, the new public sphere presents a more vibrant and diverse forum for public opinion formulation.

With the rise of transnational media, the proliferation of digital technologies, and the increasingly interconnected nature of the global economy, globalisation continues to shape the world and public discourse is becoming more important than ever. Globalisation is defined as the process by which people, goods, services, and ideas are increasingly brought together in a global network (Mooney & Evans, 2007). The impact of globalization on public discourse lies both in the content that is discussed and how it is discussed. The development of transnational media has had a significant role in this, with news organisations and other media outlets now providing a global platform for the discussion of issues. Furthermore, the proliferation of digital technologies has made it easier for people to access and share information, enabling them to engage in public discourse from anywhere in the world.

The increasingly interconnected nature of the global economy has led to a world where political, economic, and cultural issues are intertwined, making it difficult to separate them and focus on one particular issue. This has made public discourse more complex, with people engaging in debates around a range of topics, rather than just focusing on one particular issue. Furthermore, as the world has become more globalised, public discourse has become more polarised, with people on each side of an issue increasingly unwilling to compromise or engage in meaningful dialogue. The implications of public discourse in a global world are far-reaching. Public discourse can shape public opinion, influencing the way people think about global issues and shaping their attitudes and beliefs. As such, public discourse must be conducted inclusively and democratically, ensuring that

all perspectives are heard and taken into consideration. As former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "In the globalised world of today, the choices we make and the policies we pursue must take into account the interests of all nations and all people" (Annan, 2000, p. 3).

New Public Sphere and Impact of Globalisation

The emergence of digital technologies in our contemporary society has expanded the possibilities for public discourse, creating a new public sphere of real-time, interactive communication (Gillespie, 2010). This digital public sphere is underpinned by the shared use of communication technologies to facilitate online conversations, which are then shared with a global audience. This enables a dialogue between citizens, bureaucrats and corporate interests, which is not possible in the traditional public sphere. The Internet, social media, blogs, and forums are among the key vehicles used to facilitate this discourse. This digital public sphere is not confined to the artificial boundaries of geography, and global citizens can come together to express their views and make their voices heard (Garnham, 2000). The emergence of the digital public sphere has resulted in the establishment of several prominent digital platforms, such as Wikipedia and YouTube, which have enabled a broad range of civic participation drives and political mobilisation initiatives (Vaidhyanathan, 2011). These platforms have helped digital citizens to express their views on a variety of topics, ranging from climate change to economic policy (Keen, 2011). The openness of the digital public sphere has also permitted citizens to engage in direct contact with public officials and corporate representatives (West, 2005). This has contributed to a greater level of transparency in the public sphere, allowing citizens to hold public officials to account for and challenge existing paradigms of governance (Keen, 2011). The expansive power of digital technologies in transforming the public sphere cannot be understated. Through the formation of virtual communities, the public sphere has been democratised and opened up to wider public participation and engagement.

Globalisation has had a tremendous impact on the transformation of the public sphere. Citizens are increasingly exposed to global trends, standards, and policies. This shift has allowed for the emergence of a "new public sphere", which is characterised by its ever-increasing global scope and digital nature (Tarnoff & Diaz-Lara, 2020). This new media landscape is constantly changing and evolving, as new technologies become available and new media channels come out. This has resulted in an increased demand for more diverse, intercultural, and global content (Tarnoff & Diaz-Lara, 2020).

Social media offers a new platform for public discourse, allowing citizens to participate in and contribute to discussions in global conversations. People now have a newfound ability to converse, debate, and express disapproval in ways that traditional media outlets were unable to do. Examples of these social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. On the one hand, citizens now have access to a wider range of information thanks to the global nature of media sources that enable them to participate in debates from around the world. On the other hand, because international media channels frequently cover the same issues and ideas, this has also had the effect of "homogenizing" public discourse. This has led to a "lack of diversity in public conversations", as citizens can often only access one "global" perspective (Tarnoff & Diaz-Lara, 2020). Furthermore, the increase of uncensored fake news on social media networks can cause the spread of misinformation, further contributing to a distorted public discourse. Citizens must strive to remain critical of the sources they access and seek out alternative perspectives to truly benefit from the new public sphere.

Public Discourse and Impact of Globalisation

Role of Digital Technologies in Public Discourse

The development of digital technology has dramatically changed how people communicate and consume information. People can now converse with others virtually, through various digital platforms, such as social media, blogs, and forums. The increased accessibility and reach of digital technologies have significantly increased the scope of public discourse. People can share their opinions and beliefs with a wider audience than ever before. They can interact with those who share similar views or challenge those who may have the opposite. Social media platforms, in particular, have had a major impact on public discourse. For example, Twitter has become a significant hub for public discourse and has become an important tool for taking part in discussions about political issues.

In addition to providing a platform for conversations, social media can also be used to spread information. Digital technology makes it easy to share news quickly. This has enabled people to stay informed about important issues and to be more engaged in public discourse. This has offered greater opportunities for public involvement, as anyone can easily create and share their thoughts on various topics.

Impact of Globalisation on Public Discourse

The rapid advances in technology, transportation, and communication have allowed people to connect and collaborate across borders, creating a more globalized public discourse. The Internet, for example, has facilitated a much faster exchange of news, ideas, and opinions than ever before. As Jürgen Habermas noted, "The public sphere is a space of communication in which citizens can engage in rational discourse and form opinions… the public sphere is a space of communication that is open to all and allows for the free exchange of ideas" (Habermas, 1989, p. 8). As a result, public discourse has become more inclusive and diverse, which has allowed for more meaningful and constructive conversations.

Globalisation has made it possible to engage in conversations with people from different cultures and backgrounds, offering insight into different ways of looking at the world. However, globalisation has also had some negative effects on public discourse. One of the main concerns is the rise of "echo chambers", in which people only talk with those who share the same views and opinions. This can lead to the formation of narrow and polarized public discourse, which can make it difficult for people to form meaningful conversations and debates about important issues. Another concern is the spread of misinformation, which can be spread quickly and easily through social media and other online platforms. This can result in the formation of false narratives and lead to the dissemination of false information.

How the New Public Sphere Has Impacted Public Discourse During Globalisation

The new public sphere has provided more space for public discourse and has allowed for a greater diversity of voices and perspectives in the discussion. This has been beneficial for both the public and the media, as it has encouraged a more open exchange of ideas and discourse. One example of how the new public sphere has impacted public discourse is the increase in the amount of public participation in discussions. The internet has made it easier for people to communicate, share their opinions, and participate in debates. As David Weinberger noted, "The internet brings us a sense of publicness that wasn't there before. The internet gives us

the opportunity to voice our own views, to see what others think, and to form our own collective view of the world" (Weinberger, 2007, p. 16).

In addition, the new public sphere has offered increased access to information and data. This has created a more informed public discourse, now that people can now access a wider range of facts and evidence to support their arguments. As David Weinberger further noted, "The internet allows us to access more information and data than ever before, giving us the opportunity to make more informed decisions and conclusions" (Weinberger, 2007, p. 16). Finally, the new public sphere has also called for a greater degree of collaboration. This has provided an increased level of collaboration between different groups and individuals, since people can now work together to form a more unified opinion and approach to the discussion.

As Jürgen Habermas noted, "The internet provides a space for the public sphere to form, allowing for a more collaborative approach to public discourse" (Habermas, 2006, p. 37). Overall, the introduction of the new public sphere has had a significant influence on public discourse during globalisation.

Expansion of Accessibility

The expansion of accessibility due to the new public sphere of public discourse during globalisation has had a positive effect on society as a whole. According to the World Bank, "Globalisation implies the opening of domestic markets to foreign competition and the more efficient allocation of resources that this generates" (World Bank, 2017, para. 2). This has entailed an increase in the availability of information and news, allowing people of all nations to have access to information that was not previously available or accessible. The ability to access news and information from around the world has allowed citizens to participate in public discourse on a global scale. This has been beneficial to both individuals and society. Individuals have been able to access information and share their opinions and views on various topics, while society as a whole has become more educated on different topics and more aware of global issues. This has brought about a greater understanding of the world and its various cultures, allowing for a more unified global community. In addition, the expansion of accessibility due to the new public sphere has amplified the sharing of knowledge, ideas, and perspectives. Furthermore, this has enabled people to learn from each other, providing opportunities for collaboration and innovation. This has been especially beneficial for developing countries, which have had access to knowledge and resources that were previously unavailable.

The new public sphere has also enabled the facilitation of communication and collaboration between different countries and cultures. This has helped people to connect, regardless of their geographical locations, leading to an increased sense of solidarity and global understanding. This has been beneficial to all countries, as it has enabled them to work together to achieve common goals. This has led to an increased understanding of different cultures and ideologies, as well as a greater appreciation for diversity. Therefore, the new public sphere has been a positive force in the global community.

Increase in Citizen Engagement

The increase in citizen engagement is partly due to the increased use of digital tools and platforms that enable citizens to share their views and ideas and interact with each other and their political leaders. The first major impact of the new public sphere on public discourse is the emergence of a much larger range of voices in the global arena. Whereas before, only a few elite voices had a say in public discourse. This increased

engagement in public discourse has empowered citizens to shape political discourse in a way that was not possible before. Another influence of the new public sphere on public discourse is the appearance of a new type of citizen activism known as "networked civil society" (Bennett, 2007). Networked civil society capacitated citizens to have a much greater impact on public discourse, as they can mobilize, organize, and engage with political leaders in a much more effective way. This type of citizen activism has also helped citizens to engage in public discourse on a much larger scale, as now they can connect with people from all over the world and share their views.

The emergence of the new public sphere has also enabled citizens to participate in decision-making more profoundly. This is because they can provide their perspectives and ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue with political leaders. This has assisted citizens in having a much greater approach to the outcomes of political decisions, as their input is now taken into consideration more seriously than ever before.

Changes in Power Dynamics

The new public sphere is the result of an array of communication technologies and media, which have enabled people to communicate and interact with each other in new ways (Giddens, 1991). This has led to a shift in power dynamics; it has created a new form of public discourse that is more democratic and open to participation from a variety of different perspectives (Schudson, 2003). The new public sphere has enabled people to engage in public discourse more easily and effectively, as they no longer rely solely on traditional media to communicate. This has given individuals and groups more control and influence over what is discussed in the public domain (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). This has allowed a wider range of voices to be heard in public discourse, as well as for more marginalized and minority groups to have a greater say in public debates (Giddens, 1991). The increased access to communication technologies and media has also helped people to form social networks and express their views in a more public way (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006). This has resulted in a more diverse and open public discourse, which has enabled different perspectives to be heard and considered (Schudson, 2003).

The emergence of the new public sphere has enabled people to connect and interact with each other on a global scale, which has sparked new forms of public discourse (Giddens, 1991). This has offered a more open and democratic public discourse, which is more reflective of the views and opinions of different cultures and societies (Schudson, 2003). Overall, the new public sphere has created many changes in the power dynamics of public discourse during globalisation (Giddens, 1991).

Challenges due to the New Public Sphere on Public Discourse During Globalisation.

Increased Spread of Misinformation

With the development of the public sphere, and the ability to easily share information on a global scale, misinformation, and false news can spread quickly and easily. The internet and digital media have created an abundance of opportunities for the dissemination of information to an international audience. This has led to the spread of false and misleading information at a rate unprecedented in history. The increased dissemination of misinformation issues due to the new public sphere on public discourse during globalisation has been a concern in recent years. The speed and relative ease of sharing information on the Internet and on social media has made it difficult for individuals to accurately assess the content that they are exposed to. Not only does this

make it difficult for individuals to trust the information they receive, but it can lead to a situation in which misinformation and false facts can spread rapidly and be difficult to control. This can have dangerous implications, as it can conduce to the spread of rumors and the creation of false narratives that can have negative consequences.

Citizens' access to uncensored information has kept up with their capacity to express their opinions (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). There is a greater amount of information being spread in the public sphere, both true and false, which leads to an increase in confusion and misunderstanding, as people are not always able to differentiate between fact and fiction. Individuals must take extra caution when consuming information and use reliable sources to validate facts.

Polarization of Opinion

Due to the abundance of opinionated content, people can easily become isolated in their echo chambers, which further polarizes opinions and prevents discussion between opposing viewpoints. A new public sphere has been created by the internet where anyone can access it and express their opinions (Rosen, 2012). As a result of the platform that this new public sphere has provided for global communication and the exchange of ideas, opinions on specific topics have become even more divisive. Castells (2008) points out that the intensity and breadth of public discourse have significantly increased as a result of this globalisation of communication. With more communication comes more polarization of opinion on a range of topics, including politics, religion, and the environment. As the availability of information has increased, more extreme opinions can be formed.

The emergence of social media platforms has made it easier for people to express their opinions and even spread false information that can influence people's opinions on certain topics (Garrett, 2019). It has been discovered that people are more likely to spread false information quickly than they would spread facts, leading to more extreme views (Jagatic, et al., 2007).

Marginalization of Oppressed Groups

The public sphere can be a powerful tool for marginalized groups to demand representation and recognition, but it can also be a platform to harass and silence these groups. Globalisation has led to a shift in the public sphere, especially through the Internet and the rise of digital media (Zhao, 2018). This change has led to a proliferation of minority voices in public discourse, however, there is a high risk that oppressive messages can be disseminated in the process. In a heavily mediated public sphere, the marginalized can be exposed to oppressive messages and excluded from the mainstream public discourse. This marginalization perpetuates structural inequalities that lead to the continued disempowerment of marginalized groups. This, in turn, contributes to inequality and the inability of marginalized people to access the same tools and resources available to other social groups.

The internet has given marginalized voices a platform to be heard, but they don't get the same attention as more well-known voices. The fact that there are few rules to stop oppressive messages and behaviors online makes this situation worse (Zhao, 2018). The speed and fluidity of online discourse can also make it difficult to take into account nuance in some conversations (Zhao, 2018). As the discourse is frequently one-sided, it can further marginalize oppressed groups because it reduces opportunities for understanding and cooperation

among various social groups. Minoritized groups' access to the same resources and opportunities as other groups may be hampered by a lack of policies and consideration for their voices.

Cultural Appropriation

There is a danger of misunderstanding in cultural appropriation as ideas and images travel across cultures. Cultural appropriation is the adoption of particular aspects of one culture by individuals from another culture. As a result, individuals from different backgrounds and cultures are exposed to a wider variety of cultural references and aesthetics in a globalized context. People from the United States, for instance, who might not have had traditional exposure to certain facets of Indian culture, can approach it via the internet, movies, music, and other facets of popular culture.

This access has made the idea of cultural appropriation more ambiguous. People all over the world are getting better at appropriating various facets of other cultures and applying them to their cultural contexts, whether through fashion or art. This kind of appropriation occasionally leads to a cultural exchange that is advantageous to both parties. However, cultural appropriation can also result in situations of cultural dominance, where the appropriated culture is not given due credit.

Privacy Issues

This new public sphere has altered the definition of privacy and made it challenging to uphold privacy (Solove, 2004). As a result of this change, there may be retaliation caused by public scrutiny, potential exclusion, and cyberbullying. People might be subjected to criticism, public shame, and accusations of guilt, for instance, as a consequence of criticism published in public media outlets. Concern has been raised due to public scrutiny and lack of legal protection for personal information. Because of this, it's crucial to consider whether privacy must be compromised for public discourse to grow.

Surveillance

There could be privacy concerns as a result of governments and corporations having access to a lot of citizen data. Attention to surveillance that results from the new public sphere on public discourse has grown significantly. Social media and the Internet are interconnected to create a new public sphere, which establishes a communication context for the public and fosters the development of public discourses (Fuchs, 2015). Despite this advantage that more people can participate in public discourse and express their opinions than ever before, there is a potential that it will be misused by those in positions of authority, leading to an enhanced surveillance system that could be used to watch over and manage people.

Censorship

Censorship is a pressing problem in the public sphere today, especially given how quickly globalization is progressing. Social media platforms and other digital environments are significant sources of information, expression, and communication for people. These digital environments raise several censorship concerns despite being viewed as a force for democratization. For instance, aggressive measures to censor the speech of their user base can be taken to curb the spread of "fake news" in public. Governments may also intervene to restrict political discourse, which could result in the suppression of dissenting or unpopular opinions.

The issue of censorship also raises several ethical problems. Censorial policies "reduce pluralism and weaken democracy," leading to "the potential for certain internet users to be silenced by the majority". This

issue is particularly pronounced in the modern public sphere in which there is a need for ideological variety and vibrant public discourse. The emergence of the new public sphere has raised a range of censorship issues requiring urgent attention from policymakers, scholars, and citizens.

Digital Divide

Social networking sites, blogs, and the internet have all helped to establish a new public sphere that has enhanced the global exchange of ideas and viewpoints. However, this has led to issues of access and the widening of the Digital Divide. People without access to the Internet or technology, such as those in poor areas or developing countries, are being shut out of the new public discourse, thus silencing their voices in global conversations. Yong (2021) suggests, "the Digital Divide is a major barrier to participatory democracy, as it deprives people of the right to voice their opinion."

Moreover, the Digital Divide also creates economic disparities, which further exacerbates the issues facing developing countries that are already struggling. This is an important problem that needs to be addressed, as it is an obstacle to social and economic progress in developing countries.

Conclusion

In the context of globalization, the new public sphere has had a significant impact on public discourse. The introduction and development of digital technologies have facilitated information sharing and access, giving people a platform to engage in public conversation. Additionally, globalization has expanded the scope of public debate and given the discussion of ideas a worldwide perspective. The propagation of false information, the polarization of thought, the marginalization of oppressed groups, privacy concerns, and the digital divide are some of the obstacles that the new public sphere has presented to public debate.

Further investigating the influence of the new public sphere on public discourse should be the main goal of future research. This includes examining how digital technologies have affected public discourse, determining whether access to information has improved or worsened it, investigating how cultural appropriation and societal surveillance have impacted it, and evaluating the influence of the digital divide on public discourse. Future studies should also look into possible solutions to the problems that the new public sphere is thought to provide for public discourse.

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