

## Political Communication, Media and Society

# The Century of Post-communication

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**Abstract:** The current paper is an attempt to highlight relatively new topics concerning communication in a social, political, and digital context. The aim is to introduce the term ‘post-communication’ as well as to analyze factors concerning digitalization, communication, change and achievements during the past decades. The terms digital escapism, digital nomads, digizens, homo digitalis, digital utopia, digital dystopia, digital liberal democracy, digital totalization, digital sociology etc. are explained. Opportunities for interdisciplinary studies from different scientific fields (political studies, sociology, rhetoric, media knowledge) are marked briefly.

**Keywords:** post-communication, digital sociology, digital liberal democracy, homo digitalis.

### Introduction

Management with minimal resource consumption can be considered as one of the main functionalities of power. This, in turn, implies a strong desire for our total consolidation. However, in order to survive – mentally, intellectually, socially and even physically, we must atomize, dynamically restructure and re-group, and it is the digital environment that provides us with an infinite amount of opportunities in this direction.

Being a potential communication power of a new type, the Internet offers one of its basic qualities – the principle of net neutrality. Thus, its experience as a kind of socio-technological structure of a fundamentally new order creates new individual, group and community functionalities and opportunities for action and counteraction.

Determination of globalization and the digital economy are among the major markers in the widely proclaimed progress of digitalization, as a major instrument of the imposed liberal paradigm, and in their turn have the potential to create negative trends, reactions and manifestations. On the other hand, the mantras of more and more so-called progressive-liberal propagandists lead to particularly unintelligent results, such as profanity, and to a new liberal socialism. The critical analysis of neoliberal discourse requires the systematic study and analysis of

the genesis and potential of these minority but especially effective contemporary ‘social collective farms’ – digital manifestations of ‘ideas’ and structures such as Social Justice, MeToo and other and similar associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and post-democratic proxies.

### **Brief historical observation**

The concept that is being observed is the interim change of technology and it is associated with digitalization, but it is not recommended to change the changes in the context in which it is discussed, implemented and lived. In the offline space, it uses a theoretical solution and our own perception of the media as the so-called Fourth power. The internet, virtually interactive and digitalized ‘national’, we cannot tell ourselves that we must be the media, and then increasingly use the opportunity to use influence, i.e. to be in power.

In this connection, questions undoubtedly arise regarding the potential transformation of the essence not only of political discourse in particular but also of the possibility of a peculiar change in the nature of the political itself, with a tendency to transform the political into some form of contemporary sub-culture. Here, the danger of mediating mobilization through virtual activity and the consequent lack of physical manifestation can be given as an example. In the late 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century, we were witnesses to and participants in the so-called ‘Colored Revolutions’ such as the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia in November 1989, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and the Singing Revolution in the Baltic Republics – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, etc., million protests, processions, night vigils and other forms of civic ownership of the idea of change throughout the former Eastern Bloc. The idea of continuing civic participation and mobilization through our digital existence has provided us with a new kind of activation, a new kind of empowerment, based on which we can also speak about the manifestations of new digital citizenship. Not in words and on paper, Pebut only in the new communication space, in this new environment of universality.

The questions is a matter of particular importance: Whether the possibility of creating new ‘centers’ of power in the face of ubiquitous transnational and global structures such as Facebook, Amazon, Apple, and Google, and China’s champions – Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent , we can interpret as an epochal event in human civilization? This new digital sprint is can make civilizational and revolutionary changes, but also leave millions behind. This, in turn, brings with it several dangers associated with the digital divide and the opening of a huge, not only information gap between individuals and entire societies.

## Research and results

On the other hand, the urgent need to build digital competence creates not only cyberculture, but also predetermines future participation in the exercise, sharing and redistribution of power, which in turn fills with content and the political approach to defining ‘civic participation’. Paul Ricœur spoke of the existence and potential of a ‘new semantic reality’ as early as the mid-1990s (Рикьор/Rikyor/Ricœur, 1994). [1] Alain Carpentier, for his part, defines the sociological approach to defining participation as problematic because of over-involvement – virtually any social interaction can be defined as participation (Carpentier, 2016). [2]

Study the process or examine the change? Very important issues in the applicable methodology used in social sciences to investigate phenomena related to the Internet environment. Multimodal content dominates the online environment, with interaction with the audience relying on a wealth of different expression systems. In addition, if so, the redefinition of concepts – individual, audience, organization, effective interaction – becomes a necessary necessity. We can speak not of communication, but of communicative interaction. The idea that everyone has the same rights and opportunities online is an idea of digital equality, which in turn is determined by two main factors: network access and basic digital literacy.

The ways of communication, of speaking, even of language change. Digital is another language. It is extremely visual. In fact, it is banal and monotonous, but especially effective because of its digital poetics – through imaginative communication, we achieve imagined connection and imagined nature. In the end, we achieve nothing more than digital loneliness.

The individual human being, in turn, has limited cognitive, communication and information capacity. Whereas, in the conventional school of the 20th century, we were taught to memorize, today we need to form in adolescents the skills to search, find and interpret information, process large databases, build digital competencies to prevent propaganda and false content, as well as knowledge about the need to use ‘new teachers and textbooks’ – AI communication, based on Data web, Intelligent web, Quantum computing, etc. Of course, the problematizing of whether we need to maintain our ‘subjectivity’ to be able to make ‘human’ decisions, or the process to be carried out unconditionally and necessarily by consulting the ‘network’, also obliges us with the ethical prerequisites for shaping the future. Because normal, it is imperative that we be present on the network. As of 2019, the World Wide Web provides access to more than 1 billion websites, and in 2020, forecasts concern forming a volume of information in the

World Wide Web exceeding the one generated throughout human history, which resembles some sort of collective cognitive surplus. But how often does the Internet provide us with the opportunity for ‘mass self-communication’ combined with everyday life communication visualization, which we only need with the sole hope and purpose of presenting individual identity?

What happens after mass communication and the everyday evolutionary digitalization of our daily lives? This text seeks to provide an interpretation of different judgments, about the question of what communication will be and what it will be after, beyond establishing the Internet as the primary communication medium, and whether the possibilities will be of a whole new order, ‘something more’.

Social sciences are debtors to society. The dynamics of the processes related to the change in everyday dependence on digital interaction, which changes the paradigm of reciprocity in general – not only at the level of communication, interaction, interactivity, but also at the analytical and interpretive, scientific, and hence at the level of explanation of processes and regularities, in order to create working and effective models for their management, are binding. Social sciences are at odds, and they are establishing an increasing inability to sustain the pace of the newly created knowledge about processes. The latter is becoming less and more fragmented, and the desire and justification to target and concretize the possibility of a comprehensive and conceptual justification is lost. The dynamics of change in small parts leads to fixation in thinking about the private and makes it impossible to study the general. Thus, it is possible to know more about the digital individual but almost nothing about the digital society.

Whether we call digital computing Cyber Sociology or Internet Sociology, this kind of activity is necessary. The prognosis problem becomes a determined failure. The new social base, built in the process of digital socialization, creates a common and specific (communication) noise, already based on ‘structural distraction’, ideas, which are presented by Ivaylo Dichev (Дичев/Dichev, 2009). [3]

It is no coincidence that we are witnessing peculiar societal phenomena, such as the unforgiving reality in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The trend towards a rapid and global transition to digital social platforms, coupled with the over-reliance on their ubiquity, undoubtedly falls under the shadow of an unjustified claim to progressive and universally and easily accessible digital freedom. Digital liberal democracy, so widely publicized, is capable of obscuring the criticality even of the greatest skeptics. Thinking of progress or logical development as almost completely deterministic and leading us to the only possible and

positive solution, paints the impossible pictures of a Digital Utopia. On the other hand, the present is being interpreted with the potential of realizing a Digital Dystopia, inherent in critical pragmatic skepticism, which fully justifies the scientific effort in realizing what is happening.

It is not only the dynamics of processes that make us think of a change in establishing it as revolutionary. Digital does not imply possibilities and benchmarks that orient human consciousness in an absolute, or at least civilizational and soothing, conservative universal order. Time coordinates are irrevocably re-defined by the omnipotence of nonlinearity. And when a person loses sight of a time when space is intangible, virtual, i.e. ideally, the danger of losing ‘life-sustaining’ reflexes and instincts such as fear becomes more and more real. Such disorientation also implies the need for further training, developing and acquiring new skills. In addition, this can only be done effectively if sustainable models validated by experience and efficiency exist. However, they are especially difficult to create in a timely manner, precisely because of the inability to be described, observed, realized, theorized about, and pragmatically written in the digital dynamics of the processes themselves.

Books have driven us to grow our imagination, words stimulate our ideas and fantasies, the radio has presented the world to us through word-drawn pictures, audio-visual images have provided our visual dreams, what does the digital give us? With the help of new technologies, a bigger emphasis are placed on creating a direct connection with perceptions at the brain level. In this way, the senses are circumvented, under the pretext of efficiency, completeness of perception and providing a ‘noise-free’ environment, and in fact their required delusion is realized. And once the imperfections of our senses have been overcome, the ‘perfection’ of direct intervention remains.

Content itself is absolute; it is no longer at the center of the effort – meaningful, purposeful, intellectual and explanatory. Technologies are increasingly providing the opportunity to recreate the universe out of everything, and for this reason the process of making an effort, performing a search, making a choice, expressing a preference, taking an adventurous risk, the need for initiative at the expense of communism is rendered meaningless.

Such a delusion of consciousness is not only unique but also impossible so far, it has the potential for dominance and totality in a new order.

The human race has traveled. He has made displacements, migrated in search of the better, the greater, and the more successful, in pursuit of happiness. Today we use terms like digital nomads, Digizens, homo digitalis. But often people were forced to move, to escape. And what is the modern process of escaping

– from oneself, from established order, or flight is not so much „from“ as „towards“. Digital escapism is a fundamentally different state of mind, compared to the adventurer of the discoverer, the courage of the possessor, the erotic romance of the minor, or the compulsion of the ostracized. It is no coincidence that migration is also one of the basic terms and processes in digitalization – processing large databases, storing them and moving them from one medium to another. A process aimed at preserving the tissue, the DNA of the digital society, but in another better place, in the desire for eternity.

The world of ones and zeros obliges us to always leave our virtual signature, digital footprint, everywhere. The rules are such, the technology is, nevertheless, not in that fleeting, imaginary, sweet romantic order, like leaving a trail in the sand on an even unfamiliar and pristine beach or surfing through the ocean waves. On the contrary, in this process, romance had been replaced by an extreme, usually unaware of the consequences of pragmatism. We voluntarily relinquish our independence, our personal data, our publicity, our freedom, and in fact, our transmission of identity. Thus, under new protection and guardianship, we are observed, seen, reported and recorded in log files. Moreover, we do it all with pleasure and calm, with perseverance, perseverance and conviction that there – on the Internet, we are and most of all we will be.

The boundaries of personal space have never been so vulnerable to the desire to destroy them. In this process, we refuse to accept technology as an intermediary. The desire for constant indulgence becomes one of the most commonly used ‘lifestyles’ in the digital. However, the so-called social networks are actually a semi-public environment. The paradox is that constant pursuit of togetherness is not about creating united and well-organized communities, but on the contrary, dynamic and fluctuating sets that negate the detrimental impact of the crowds. In this sense, the formation of mass culture, generated by the industrialization and development of conventional offline mass media, redefines itself into situational sets formed by demand and supply dynamics, conjuncture, fashion, but most of all – boundless and timeless transience.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Rheingold talked about smart mobs (Rheingold 2002) [4]. Today, there are virtual heterogeneous sets that interact with each other through an indirect connection, which does not give us a reason to define those using apparently obsolete instruments of terms such as crowds. In addition, *overinterpretation* [5] has replaced misinterpretation, *Hypersocialization* stands for socialization, modern forms of distraction and absence of critical perception of digital reality has led to cognitive impatience, a lack of social sanction of such *pseudo-communication*, etc.

## Conclusion

Summarizing, we can say that new terms gradually renew and enrich the terminology (for example digital escapism, digital nomads, digizens, homo digitalis, digital utopia, digital dystopia digital liberal democracy, etc.) and terms are used by researchers from different sciences. Additionally, studies cover current topics and some of them are on fields are Cyber Sociology and Internet Sociology.

Finally, there are reasons to formulate an assumption: a reaffirmation of the definition of our contemporary digital everyday life, a diagnosis of the daily modern inactivity combined with a kind of digital totalization through transformation, maintenance and creation of a new quasi-social order, which also define our digital status as quasi-public.

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