Communicative
Civic-ness

SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Bridgette Wessels

Communicative Civic-ness

Communicative Civic-ness explores how political culture shapes social media interactions in civic participation, arguing that social media usage is informed by context-specific civic and political culture.

Drawing on cutting-edge research, the book develops a new robust theoretical and conceptual framework on civic engagement and participation, comprising:

- contextual ethos of civic communication;
- political culture and civic communication;
- use of social media in private and public spheres;
- design of social media.

It critically addresses issues within the concept of political culture and develops the concept of 'communicative civic-ness'. This concept seeks to aid a better-informed debate about the capacity of social media to support the pluralistic discussions that underpin deliberative democratic processes.

This book appeals to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as academics with an interest in areas including (but not limited to) sociology, political science and media studies. It will also provide useful information and understanding to third sector organisations and policy-makers regarding forms of civic participation.

Bridgette Wessels is Professor of Sociology and Social Inequalities at the University of Glasgow, UK. Her research focuses on the development and use of digital technology and services in social and cultural life. This includes digital services and communication in the public sphere, everyday life and civic life, social and digital inequalities, as well as specific areas such as tele-health, mobile communication and privacy in digital communication.

This page intentionally left blank

Communicative Civic-ness

Social Media and Political Culture

Bridgette Wessels

For Michael

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Illustrations

Figures

Table

Acknowledgements

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book examines how social media features in established and emerging forms of civic engagement and participation in contemporary Western democratic societies within a globalising world. Ever since Athenian democracy in the 5th century BC, questions have been asked about how people engage and participate in civic and political life. This question, alongside debates about democracy, highlights that there is a range of different ways that people can engage with, and participate in, democratic life. There is a long-standing concern about the level and quality of engagement and participation and the ways that engagement and participation can be organised, and the characteristics of that concern have changed over historical time. In the current digital and networked society, there is a perceived crisis in, and fragmentation of, political culture. The transition from an industrial society to a digital networked society means that many forms of civic engagement from the industrial period no longer seem relevant. The rise of digital communication in the context of a globalised economy and an information society has generated various senses of civic life and different ways of connecting with others. Furthermore, the neo-liberal agenda has led to a weaker, less-centralised and directive role for government, which has resulted in people believing that government no longer represents them – either their own personal troubles or wider public issues. This raises questions about where and how such issues can be expressed, discussed and acted upon. A sense of civic culture is relevant within those spaces and instances, because it offers the possibility of people interacting and acting together in terms of values, affinities, knowledge, practices, identities and debates, which may (or may not) lead to various types of action being taken to address these issues.

As John Dewey (1939a) famously wrote, society is made in and through communication, a point that is referred to throughout the book. This book develops this notion, arguing that civic engagement and participation are also made in and through communication. The extensive use of social media by individuals and organisations today is creating ways for people to identify a range of relevant issues, share these across networks and find ways to mobilise action around their concerns. Given the current situation of a

weakened role of government, political and social inequalities and the rise of issue politics, new types of social networks are emerging which seek to address a range of civic concerns at local, national and global levels. In this context, a communication medium that is interactive, networked and social enables people to engage in various ways and participate in shaping the instances of communication and any related social action. These requirements are fulfilled by social media. In overall terms, social media facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas and other forms of expression through digitally supported networks. There are a number of different social media platforms with a range of features; however, generally speaking, social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based communication applications which entail users generating content and service-specific profiles, and which facilitate online social networks. Social media are used for personal, civic and commercial purposes and have been taken up and used in a variety of contexts of civic communication and action. This book explores the civic contexts in which social media have been used, in order to assess the way that social media are enabling citizens and civil society at individual and group levels to engage in both civic participation and democratic processes.

The book examines contemporary kinds of civic engagement and participation that include more traditional forms of engagement, such as community action groups and campaigning groups using social media. It also reviews how engagement and participation are being organised by social movements, individual appeals, campaigning networks and protest movements. These types of activities may address civic issues but, more typically, they focus on issues that are not being fully considered in established sites of civic engagement. There has been a significant rise in groups that are self-organising and seeking to highlight issues in global public arenas to mobilise opinion and action. Examples of this include the '38 Degrees' campaigning portal, organisation of actions in the 2011 London riots using Twitter, human rights responses to events such as the 2011 Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity in Mexico, and protests such as Occupy Wall Street and Spain's 15-M movement. There is now a vast array of social and cultural arenas, networks and media platforms all creating spaces for individuals to describe and share social, political, cultural and economic concerns, and facilitate various levels of participation and engagement. These are much more numerous and diverse than in the pre-digital era. However, this increase in opportunities does not mean that civic engagement and participation overall have increased. It indicates that, first, there is a greater diversity of types of engagement and participation, and, second, it demonstrates that the meaning of 'civic' is also changeable and culturally shaped by particular communities or political issues.

These developments are integral to contemporary political culture because they form part of, and express the relationship between, people and their governments. Political culture is a complex and highly contested concept,

but it includes the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in a political system. Since the standard idea of political culture as defined by Almond and Verba in 1963 does not capture the richness and dynamism of culture, this book develops their concept through the idea of a lived political culture. Lived political culture means the way political sensibility is created by people interacting civically, culturally and politically. By viewing the established and new forms of civic engagement and participation that feature social media from this perspective, it becomes possible to acknowledge the grounding of civic concerns in both online and offline worlds, to analyse the communication and political aspects of civic participation by taking values, cultures and contexts into account, and focusing on the relationship between citizens and citizen networks, and between citizens and governing and civic organisations.

This book asks what the roles – and alignments – of social media are, in relation to the culture of civic participation in political contestation and negotiation. It explores how the characteristics of social media are interacting with lived political culture – that is, how people engage and participate in civic life. Although the notion of engagement is distinctive from participation in analytical terms, these often merge and are interchangeable in civic life. Engagement refers to the ways that people connect subjectively with an issue, whereas participation suggests more concrete action in civic activity. However, people both engage in and enact the activity of communication, so the distinction is often blurred in the context of social media. It is, therefore, important to consider how engagement and participation vary in civic networks and in civic communication.

One key aspect of civic culture is the way it relates to the public sphere and how events and knowledge are reported and shared within broader collectives, communities and groups in a mediapolis. This book argues that the development of a more networked organisation of civic life and the increased use of social media to raise awareness, connect and mobilise people around a civic issue, has ushered in a communicative civic-ness. This is a dynamic and networked form of engagement and participation which, in the environment of contentious politics and political inequality, means that the use of social media within connective social movements may not result in progressive social change. Instead, the development of communicative civic-ness means that formal politics and its political processes need to address the issues that people are engaging with and develop new ways for people to participate in a democratic life that is rooted in the everyday, in the personal and political, in the private and the public, and in affect as well as reason. It means finding spaces for discussion and deliberation, and for a type of practical intelligence – phronesis – that will inform civic and political engagement and participation in an open and inclusive way. Social media and networked and connective communication cannot achieve this by itself, so the question of the character

of engagement participation in democratic politics remains. This also extends to questioning how government hears, listens to and relates to its citizens. Therefore, social media may also be an important feature in communicative civic-ness, since both government and citizens are having to find better ways to understand and communicate with each other. Only through richer and more dynamic relations between governments and citizens can political culture flourish as part of people's lived experiences.

Outline of the chapters

Chapter 2, 'Engagement and participation: forms and practices', introduces key debates about the characteristics, processes and practices of engagement and participation in civic and political life. The main aspects of this are: (a) levels of engagement and participation, and (b) the relationship among public, private and civic life in shaping engagement and participation. The concepts of engagement and participation and the ways they materialise in practice are complex and varied. The chapter concentrates on society-wide practices and structures of engagement and participation, such as different types of democracies and democratic processes. This focus on the relationship between public and private life highlights the ways that individuals interpret and reflect on their own concerns, as well as relating to wider political and civic issues. The levels of engagement and participation and the relationship between public, private and civic spheres are all important for understanding the use and effect of social media in contemporary political culture.

Chapter 3, 'Voicing issues: the public sphere and the media', examines the media and communication environment in which social and civic concerns are being voiced in contemporary society. Traditional and new media are discussed in relation to the public sphere and the mediapolis, with a particular emphasis on how the more personalised use of new media, such as social media, fits into this. This creates a need to understand the relationship between private and public spheres in everyday life and the way these relate to new forms of civic communication. Interaction between the public and the private is understood in relation to communication, in accordance with Dewey's (1939a) assertion that society exists in and through communication. Media are discussed as 'communication media', where communication is viewed as a distinctive kind of social activity that involves the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms through the implementation of various resources. Social media introduce a new dynamic to communication, because they are part of many people's everyday communication practice and enable people to engage in civic, as well as personal, communication. Because of the role that communication plays in the public sphere, and its ability to span public and private life, changes in the media are raising fundamental questions about participation and patterns of association in civil society. There is, therefore, a need to investigate who can engage with, and

participate through, communication in the public sphere, and a need to recognise that the media are central to the practice of democracy (however that is defined). The media, individuals and networks all constitute forms of communication, and the interplay between these factors is facilitating new types of civic participation.

Chapter 4, 'Digital media, social media and communication', discusses how the influence of digital media (including social media) within the overall media landscape is based on the way they span across – and are distinctive from – both face-to-face communication and mass media. One aspect that exemplifies the positioning of digital media is social media, which are at once both personal and public, and are a form of mass self-communication. As well as being part of contemporary personal communication, social media are also used by civic institutions for civic communication, by those acting in the political arena for political communication, and by those in the commercial sector for marketing or other related purposes. A wide array of social media platforms such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, discussion forums and messaging services involve the use of either images, audio, text and raw data, or a combination of these. Social media use for civic communication is also distinctive because of the characteristics of patterns of communication between citizens and civil society groups, and communication between citizens and political and civic institutions. This networked communication amongst people and organisations in the public sphere raises questions about how this communication is used by citizens, organisations and networks.

Chapter 5, 'The design and use of social media in forms of participation', focuses on how the design of social media affects the way they are adopted and used. Social media's design influences the type of communication that can take place, even though people often adapt technology in unexpected ways and find new ways to use it. Their design shapes the kind of communication that can take place within particular communication networks, such as individualised, community-based or crowd-based relations. For example, Twitter involves 140-character messages that operate at an individualised level (whether via an organisational or individual account). Social-graph media, such as Facebook and Com-me-Toolkit, are configured using various social media that enable a broader, community-based communication and engagement. The power of the public is mobilised via crowdfunding social media. The design of human-computer interaction (HCI) is also influential in shaping the kinds of relations that can be formed through this communication, such as individual followers on Twitter, or community-based forums and/or groupings on Facebook. A further design consideration is the way that algorithms shape user experience and influence the way in which content and contacts are computationally modelled. Together, HCI and algorithms feature in the design of social media, which determine how users can use social media in a range of civic contexts.

Chapter 6, 'Political culture: communication and ways of relating', explores the concept of political culture in more detail, in regard to the debate about understanding the mediation of civic participation through social media. Previous approaches to social media have tended to focus on either: (a) notions of engagement, including whether more engagement leads to improved participation and, if so, what kinds of participation; or (b) how the boundaries between public issues and personal troubles are connected and communicated via social media. However, applying a political culture lens to considering the role of social media in civic and political engagement and in forms of participation can reveal insights into the link between communication and culture. In order to understand the ways in which people engage in political culture, there is a need to critically review how Almond and Verba (1963) developed this theoretical concept. Although they recognised a relationship between personal orientations and political systems, they did so through a functionalist framework rather than any consideration of the cultural dynamics in which that relationship is forged. To address this gap, the chapter discusses the active formation of civic agency and how communication and symbolic meaning feature in the ways that people relate to each other in civic life. This includes various forms of communication and media usage, which raise questions about moral practices in the ways that people relate to each other as they engage and participate in civic and political culture.

Chapter 7, 'Contexts of civic communication at the local, national and global levels', develops the argument that civic engagement and participation and the use of social media are, to some degree, context-specific. The kind of issues that emerge in civic discussions vary in relation to context and community; they vary in the way that people organise to respond to issues at local, national and global levels; and they vary in the ways that people adapt and use social media. Context refers to the type of issue under question, the characteristics of the mode of engagement and participation, how the communication is conducted, and features of the participants and the ways they organise themselves. Furthermore, these actions and practices are shaped to some extent by the political culture in which they are enacted and, in turn, they have the potential to influence the dynamics of political culture. This notion of context supports Goldfarb's (2012) assertion that political culture should be understood through the ways people act in association with each other and the meaning of those associations. This chapter discusses examples from local activist groups and locality-based community action, protests and mobilisations for social change, global social movements and issue-based social movements.

Chapter 8, 'Contexts of civic communication: campaigning, citizen journalism and general social media use in civic life', extends the discussion in Chapter 7 by considering other types of social action within the civic sphere and exploring how social media fits into these. This chapter also supports

the claim that civic participation and the use of social media are, to some degree, context-specific. The kinds of issues that arise in civic discussions vary in relation to their context and community, and this is reflected in the ways that particular community, protest, social movement and other types of civic action coordinate their communication. Political culture in contemporary society involves online campaigning networks, participatory journalism, non-governmental organisations, and more general types of civic participation. These types of activity include the use of social media and, as shown in Chapter 7, their context and the social relations of that context shape how social media are used. This chapter discusses online campaigning, participatory and citizen journalism, and the ways that people use social media to engage in civic life.

Chapter 9, 'Networks of social media and civic engagement and participation', introduces the idea of communicative civic-ness, which emerges from an exploration in Chapters 7 and 8 of the ways that social media are used in various types of civic and political culture. The term 'communicative civic-ness' is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10 but, before that discussion, there is a need to critically examine the concept of political culture in assessing the use of social media in civic life. The previous chapters show that the social relations of particular contexts of civic and political action shape the use of social media, and that these contexts comprise a range of actors including activists, participants, professional and citizen journalists, community groups and campaigning groups. Each of these actors has traditionally featured in civic life, which has required various types of communication. This chapter discusses the way that political culture has addressed forms of participation in order to identify new aspects of civic communication and engagement, and also critically considers whether mainstream politics needs to change in order to engage more meaningfully with people's concerns and values. In response to deficits in mainstream politics, this chapter discusses how social media can be used to foster affect by creating engagement, and it outlines new forms of connective organisation which are emerging with the upsurge in contentious politics.

Chapter 10, 'Communicative civic-ness: framing communication, civic engagement and participation', draws on the previous chapters to develop a framework for shaping theoretical and conceptual ideas that can offer insights for understanding and analysing civic participation in the digital age. It focuses particularly on the relationship between the use of social media and engagement in political culture. This conceptual and analytical framework will enable an assessment of the relationship between social media and political culture, as well as the significance of that relationship in the wider dynamics of participation. The concept of political culture is developed into the idea of lived political culture to reflect the diversity, networked and highly mediated late-modern world. The chapter then provides a new conceptual framework to depict civic participation, which consists of three

interlinking dimensions: (a) hybrid engagers within the social relations of civic society; (b) the 'communication, engagement and participation complex' of lived political culture in the digital age; and (c) seven distributed nodes of communicative civic-ness. Together, these dimensions constitute communicative civic-ness, which is understood as the ways in which hybrid engagers connect, engage and participate with civic issues. The dynamic, networked framework has seven distributed nodes that support civic sensibility and action in a world of social and political inequality. In a context where formal neo-liberal politics is no longer connecting with citizens and has reduced its role to merely protecting the market, the use of social media within a civic context has become a way for people to express and share concerns, and to organise communicative and social action. Thus, political culture becomes a lived political culture that reconnects personal and public concerns with everyday life negotiations.

Chapter 11, 'Conclusion: communicative civic-ness', pulls together the various threads of the main argument and identifies the key issues that need to be addressed. It asserts that, although commentators have gained some knowledge about how individuals and organisations use social media, little is understood about the relative alignment and quality of their communication practices in fostering civic participation. The chapter stresses that it is crucial to understand the existence and degree of communication gaps, whereby digital voices are not connecting with organisations, in order to take action to reduce the risk of absence or deficiency of civic debate and attendant democratic processes – a concern raised by Papacharissi as far back as 2002. Social media have the potential to take forms of debate in a number of directions in relation to different civic networks and organisations. Some of these may reinforce classically conceived democratic processes, while others may threaten those processes. This book assesses this potential, and explores the design issues of technology in shaping communication. The development of a new framework of communicative civic-ness seeks to aid a better-informed debate about the potential role of social media to support pluralistic discussions that underpin deliberative democratic processes, and identify ways to achieve that outcome. The new conceptual framework presented in this book will allow scholars and researchers to evaluate the emerging issues of civic participation in the digital age more clearly, and to identify when social media are transforming into civic media.

Engagement and participation

Forms and practices

Introduction

To assess the role of social media in political culture requires addressing the characteristics of participation in civic and political life. Social media are a form of communication that features in the ways in which people can engage and participate in civic life and in political culture. The way the form is integrated into daily life means that it is situated within both personal and civic life and, because of this positioning, people experience a lived political culture as something crafted from everyday life, a form of civic culture and politics – as widely defined. There are two concepts embedded in this lived political culture: levels of participation and types of engagement. The term 'engagement' refers to the ways in which individuals are interested in an issue and/or event. Engagement relates to participation; however, participation tends to refer to the practical actions which individuals carry out to take part in an issue and/or event. This distinction becomes blurred in social media communication because it can involve both engagement and participation simultaneously. The concept of participation and the way it materialises in practice is complex and varied. This chapter introduces the main debates around the characteristics, processes and practices of participation. Key aspects of this include: (a) levels of participation, and (b) the relationship between public, private and civic life in shaping participation. When considering levels of participation, the focus is on society-wide practices and structures of participation, such as different types of democracy and democratic processes. The focus on the relationship between public and private life highlights how individuals interpret and reflect on their own concerns, as well as the ways they relate to wider political and civic issues. Levels of participation and the relationship between public, private and civic spheres are also both important in understanding the use of social media in contemporary political culture. This chapter therefore discusses these issues to lay the basis for considering social media and political culture.

Participation and forms of democracy

Social media are a key feature of the ways in which people engage and participate in social and political life. Ordinary people of all ages and genders are increasingly using social media – there are currently approximately 2.51 billion social media users worldwide (www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/). These platforms feature in social networks that are integral to contemporary society and, as such, are part of civic and political life (Castells 2002). Thus, the analysis of social media and political culture needs to assess the significance of any relationship between levels of participation and the ways these relate to certain institutionally shaped processes of participation. One area of social and political life that articulates the notion of participation is that of democracy. Although the concept of democracy infers a general idea that people should participate in the organisation of social life, there is nonetheless a range of views about what this actually means. It is evident that even a basic notion of democracy raises questions about how participation might be understood. At the most fundamental level, there are three forms of democracy: direct democracy, representative democracy and semi-democracy.

Direct democracy involves people deciding on policy initiatives directly, and this is not a common form of democracy. Athenian democracy in the 5th century BC is an example of direct democracy, but it was not inclusive, as women and slaves were not allowed to participate. Other examples of direct democracy include citizen law making in Switzerland, which developed in the 13th century AD. In the 1800s a 'statute referendum' and a 'constitutional amendment initiative' were developed, which enabled Swiss citizens to vote directly on initiatives and is still in use today. Other instances of direct democracy include some public participation initiatives that rose to prominence during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency in the United States (US), as well as examples of public participation in some American states today, although support for these varies across issues and states. Some recent examples of direct democracy using online communication systems include the US 'Direct Democracy Online' initiative, or open source and collaborative governance.

Representative democracy is based on the principle that elected officials are chosen to represent a certain group of people. This type of democracy developed in relation to mass societies, where participation is at a large scale across populations with inclusive citizenship rights, which means that they have political, social and cultural rights. Representative democracy is conceptually associated with representative government as a political system. Representative democracy is considered efficient, because it enables a small number of elected individuals to rule on behalf of a large number of citizens.[1]

Semi-democracy refers to stable states that have both democratic and authoritarian features and operate through dominant party systems, which

means that there are opposition parties and freely held elections. The dominant party can, and often does, however, maintain power through unfair electoral campaigns or election misconduct. There has been a demise of authoritarian governance since the late 1980s, such as the military dictatorships that existed in Latin America and in Africa before that time. However, the transition to a genuine representative democracy is often difficult and there is a tendency for such states to resort to semi-democratic arrangements.

These different types of democracy show that there is a relationship between types of participation and the processes of participation. This leads to questions about what level of participation is required to ensure a functioning democracy and this, in turn, requires an assessment not only of what constitutes a functioning democracy, but also how to define good democracy.

In terms of levels of participation, the debates largely centre around notions such as practical levels of participation, minimum levels of citizen participation and high levels of popular participation. For example, Dahl (1971) seeks to identify ways to maximise democracy through processes that will enable participation in practical terms, whereas Schumpeter (1942) does not consider citizen participation to be essential for democracy, while Rousseau (1988 [1762]) argues that every citizen should participate in political decision making. Therefore, in terms of understanding the role of participation in democracy and the level of participation required in a democracy, there are different views. For instance, some commentators believe that citizens play a very limited role in decision making, so there only need to be low levels of citizenship participation. Schumpeter (1942) asserts that the only form of citizen participation required is voting for their leaders. Likewise, Dahl (1971) states that citizen participation is best organised through the mechanism of elections, with voting comprising the main participatory action. However, he also argues the need for processes that will maximise democracy, proposing the concept of 'polyarchy' – where power is held by a number of people – as a more realistic theory of participation than populist approaches that advocate full participation (Michels 2004). Dahl seeks to identify the conditions that are necessary and sufficient for maximising democracy in a practical way in the 'real' world. He believes this will happen through a system of polyarchy that maximises popular sovereignty and political equality. In polyarchical systems, elections play a central role in maximising democracy, because voters choose both leaders and policies.

The arguments made by Schumpeter (1942) and Dahl (1971) show that the role of citizen participation is seen in an instrumental way in democratic processes. For these writers, citizen voting serves the political process because it informs who will become the political leaders, and what issues need to be addressed via particular policies. They argue that extensive amounts of participation are not desirable. Schumpeter (1942) takes an elitist stance, asserting that the masses are incapable of doing any more than voting for their leaders because ordinary people do not have sufficient knowledge

to make informed judgements about policy and political issues. Dahl (1971) extends this argument, maintaining that there could even be dangerous and excessive levels of citizen participation in political affairs. These perspectives rest on an assumption that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds favour authoritarian ideas and might, therefore, undermine consensus about the norms of democracy. Commentators who take this elitist stance fear that mass participation in politics could, consequently, lead to totalitarianism, so argue that democracy should be limited to elections. The act of participating through the mechanism of voting enables the political system to function and means that ordinary people's lack of knowledge and mass participation will not undermine the norms and functioning of representative democracy. Sartori (1962) neatly summarises this approach by arguing that people 'should react and not act'.

However, this elitist perspective is only one opinion about what levels of participation are needed to support a vibrant democracy. Indeed, writers such as Rousseau (1988 [1762]), Zolo (1992), Arendt (1963) and Pateman (1970) consider that these types of approaches have a limited view of participation and, to some degree, also a limited view of democracy. In contrast to the elitist viewpoint, they assert that, in order for a state to function, every citizen must participate in political decision making. Although Rousseau's concepts of participation and democracy emerged from ideals of small-scale peasant-based societies with economic equality and economic independence, his ideas nonetheless form a basis for understanding democracy in modern society. In *Du Contrat Social* (1762), Rousseau outlines a political system in which citizens decide to be free by making the laws that rule them. The *social contract* is the basis of this system and relies on people looking beyond their own individual interests in order to work together to develop policy and rules (Rousseau 1988 [1762]). The consequence of this is that people will be governed by the rules they make themselves, so participation in the political process is important because it ensures freedom for everyone. Rousseau believes that citizens developing rules and policies in cooperation with each other is the expression of the 'general will', which is an important concept in considering the ways that high levels of participation – both in terms of numbers of people participating and in substantive actions – contribute to democracy by creating an open, accountable and legitimate government.

Rousseau (1988 [1762]) states that the 'general will' differs from 'the will of all', because the general will aims to create a common good and is expressed in law, whereas 'the will of all' is simply the aggregate of every individual's own desires. A further distinction is that the 'general will' refers to people in their sovereign capacity, in contrast to the 'will of all' which means people in their individual citizen capacity. In practical terms, it is difficult to distinguish between the two definitions because both are demonstrated by popular vote. However, despite this lack of clarity, Rousseau argues that the general will is different in kind because it expresses a policy that is acceptable to all, so is

legitimate across a population where citizens have differing views. Rousseau argues that participating through the social contract creates a wider reflection on issues and consideration of others, thereby meaning that popular participation does not result in a rule of the majority without minority representation. He writes that the social contract shapes people's actions by forcing them to act in a fair manner to each other and to be active citizens in the public sphere. By working together to develop rules and policies in this way, people learn to see beyond their own interests, and it is through this process that they learn to be well-rounded public, as well as private, citizens (Rousseau 1988 [1762]). Thus, even though Rousseau's work is from an earlier date, it suggests a richer notion of participatory democracy than the purely instrumental view put forward by Schumpeter and Dahl.

Participatory democracy extends the idea of participation beyond voting in elections to participating in all aspects of decision making in political and social life. For instance, Pateman (1970) argues that participation should encompass areas such as working life, and contemporary Scandinavian workplace democracy (Andersen and Hoff 2001) is one example of this approach. Such participatory theories rest on the premise that democracy involves everyone, so people need to be actively engaged in democracy and active in its realisation – in other words, citizens themselves become the agents of democracy, instead of political leaders or others in leadership roles. From this perspective, participation does not serve the narrow democratic instrumental function of voting for a government, but has an expressive role in which the act of participation itself has value and is a value in itself. This means that high levels of participation are desirable and, in fact, required, because participation is a way for individual citizens to believe and express the notion that they are part of a political system. This sense of participating in something in relation to others creates the conditions for focusing on citizens' collective interests.

The dynamics of participatory democracy involve three aspects that shape and foster participation. First, there is an educational aspect, because participation contributes to personal growth by making individuals become public citizens. Mill (1861), like Rousseau, asserts that the role of participation is to turn people into civic-minded citizens, arguing that the best way to learn about democracy is through participating at a local level. The second aspect of participation is that it acts as an integrator, helping people feel that they belong to a community. Third, participation serves to ensure good government, because individuals behave as public actors, creating rules and government from a collective basis. Furthermore, by participating in a range of issues and areas of social life, citizens gain a wider understanding of social, economic and cultural issues, enabling them to make better political decisions and to understand political decisions at a national level (Pateman 1970).

These debates indicate the ways that participation is understood in relation to democratic processes with an artificial boundary between the two

positions – one that argues for a limited form of instrumental participation and the other that advocates higher levels of expressive participation (Michels 2004). It is artificial in the sense that these constructions do not capture the dynamics of participation or the dynamics of democracy. Levels of participation vary in different social and political contexts in relation to a range of issues and citizenship-government relations. In short, the ethos and characteristics of a political culture also shape and inform both patterns and levels of participation. The dichotomy between the instrumental and expressive is not clear-cut either, since neither is mutually exclusive. Writers such as Thompson and Hoggett (2012) argue that participation in political and, indeed, civic life involves a mixture of expressive and instrumental thoughts, emotions and actions. Furthermore, as Pateman (1970) notes, certain educational and social conditions are needed to underpin even low levels of participation in the form of voting. Here, participation serves to ensure good government because individuals act as public citizens in creating rules and electing government from a base of collective disinterested citizens. Further-more, by participating in a range of issues and areas of social life, citizens gain a wider understanding of social, economic and cultural issues that enables them to make better political decisions and to understand political decisions at a national level (Pateman 1970).

Another question that these debates raise relates to assumptions about the amount of people participating. Michels (2004) argues that there are two main approaches to political participation and democracy. The first approach views participation as playing a marginal role, as in representative democracy, and it focuses on political leaders. It considers participation to be largely instru-mental, without any educative or social function. In this type of democracy there is not a strong relationship between participation and good government. Furthermore, mass participation at scale is not desirable. The second approach views participation as an essential feature of democracy, as in parti-cipatory democracy. This focuses on citizens and considers participation to be expressive, having both educative and social functions, and ensuring good government through participation. In this context, mass participation is desired and is seen as contributing to vibrant democracy.

So, it is clear that debates in the pre-digital age centred around ways to enable participation at scale and how to address the difficulties of commu-nicating at a mass level. These issues remain in the current context, but the development of digital platforms and social media networks is challenging some of these previous assumptions about large-scale communication and participation. However, even if the affordances of digital communication and services feature in the changing dynamics of communication and participation, there are still concerns about how any new patterns of communication and participation can feed into democratic processes (Norris 2011). Nonetheless, *levels* of active participation (i.e. involvement in decision making) and *scale* (in terms of numbers participating) are still key issues in debates about

participation, in either representative or participatory democracy. Further, the link between engagement and participation is under-explored in terms of the role that communication plays in the dynamics of participation and democracy.

The collaborative turn in political and civic life

A defining term in modern and late modern democracies is that of 'participation'. In the political sphere, the idea of participation refers to the ways that citizens actively participate in policy making – voting or membership of a political party comprising the two main forms of participation. However, from a period that started in the 1940s and ended in the 1980s, a more collaborative approach was developed in relation to decision making in government policy. Although relatively short-lived, this development (described below) illustrates the ways that institutions sought to foster participation and embed it into a set of processes. Although supported by legislation, it was only somewhat successful, which raises the question of whether participation can be engineered in a deliberate, top-down manner, or if it also requires an openness to voluntary and bottom-up approaches.

The political context of the US in the 1930s and 1940s provides a clear example of this collaborative turn, characterised by a range of participatory approaches which Almond and Verba (1963) term as a 'participatory explosion'. The US federal agencies during this period wanted to glean citizens' views and preferences in order to inform their policy decisions. The idea of producing a more collaborative approach was based on the development of the New Deal programme, which sought to address poverty in the US during the 1930s (Koontz et al. 2004). The Administrative Procedure Act, passed by Congress in 1946, stipulated a minimum standard of public involvement in the administrative decision-making process. This and several related acts[2] aimed to increase inclusionary activity in contrast to the earlier collaborative focus of the law in the 1940s, because they intended to give citizens a participatory status as well as genuine decision-making power (Stenberg 1972).

However, actual participation by members of the public varied widely and was generally low. Golden (1998) argues that this was partly due to the fact that people found the policy and participation processes unclear or even obscure. The resulting lack of individual participation meant that corporations or well-organised lobby groups could inhabit that space instead to influence policy, drowning out other citizens' perspectives. This imbalance was recognised and addressed in developments in American participatory approaches in the 1960s. In the US and in many other democratically developed countries there was a move to make policy making more explicitly participatory. However, this ideal of significant levels of citizen participation was not realised – on the contrary, people felt a pervasive sense of apathy and

alienation. Despite further initiatives during the 1970s, it still remained difficult to foster extensive participation in policy-making decisions.

The idea of participation changed during the 1980s with the rise in new neo-liberal approaches to policy and government. The move to public-private partnerships, market mechanisms to deliver policy programmes and services, and new forms of public administration resulted in loose coalitions of commercial and non-profit providers. This decentralisation and privatisation created an environment in which the implementation of policy initiatives was guided through governance processes, rather than being under government control. This governance involved the collective action of a variety of participants who each held some control over the decision-making process (Milward and Provan 2000). This triggered the emergence of more non-governmental forms of governance collaboration along two dimensions: (a) inter-organisational and network arrangements with a reduced role for government; and (b) the role of non-governmental actors in fostering and engaging in public participation processes (Koontz et al. 2004).

The drive for non-governmental actors to develop public participation has produced a range of approaches. Some of these can be viewed as manipulating participation, or participation as therapy – neither of which generates any meaningful involvement in decision making. Other approaches can be classed as informing, consulting or placating citizens – that is, types of tokenism which give the impression of listening to citizens but, in fact, do not feed their concerns into decision-making activities or policy agendas. There is some evidence of methods that are more genuinely participatory, however, such as partnerships and delegated power and citizen control processes, which give individuals a degree of power. These approaches form part of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation and are still evident in the contemporary landscape of the 2010s. Nonetheless, even with this decentralisation, the development of a more flexible governance system and initiatives such as introducing participatory budgeting, participation has still not increased in an inclusive and transparent way (Corbett 2013). Furthermore, the disparity in access to resources for participation also reduces transparency in participatory processes and this consequently undermines trust in democratic processes. Therefore, the collaborative turn and its development into a range of participatory initiatives has not generated high levels of democratic participation. This suggests that there is a need to understand, first, what the dynamics of engagement are and, second, whether these dynamics relate to specific instances or ongoing processes of active participation.

Participation and the social dynamics of civic life

All the various forms of democracy require citizen participation in order to function. Furthermore, democracy needs an appropriate level of participation to sustain the validity it draws from a sense of 'the consent of the people' as

a basis of political order (Held 1996, p.ix). Therefore, for democracy to hold legitimacy, there needs to be a level of citizen participation that is itself embedded within some form of civic engagement. Political participation is often a mix of intentionality, habit and ritual which is both shaped by, and shapes, civic life. Although there is a strong commitment to democracy in Western states, there is also an absence of strong engagement and participation in democratic processes. Long-term trends suggest that this lack is evident across all levels and types of engagement. For instance, voter turnout at elections is declining, sustained loyalties to political parties are weakening and trust in government is reducing (Dahlgren 2009). There is a similar pattern in civic engagement, with fewer people being involved in community organisations on a voluntary basis. Citizens also feel powerless to effect change or foster social development using existing democratic institutions (Putnam 2000). Despite these worsening trends, low levels of participation are not new and have never reached the ideals proposed by progressive writers and thinkers such as Rousseau (1988 [1762]) and Pateman (1970). In order to address the problem of low levels of participation in democracy, Dewey (1939b) (who is very much a civic optimist) argues that it is important to understand active citizenship in sociological terms. Walter Lipmann, who is more pessimistic about participation, also acknowledges the need to recognise the social dynamics of participation.

In social terms, levels of political participation and the difficulties in increasing them are located within structural, social and cultural issues. In structural terms, the processes of extra-parliamentary activity that seek to influence political decisions and legislation occur within established political structures. This means that those people who have the cultural capital to organise and lobby successfully have an advantage over those who do not. Not all citizens have the necessary skills or are in a position to lobby successfully, therefore formal citizenship on its own does not guarantee genuine or progressive inclusion and equality. A number of social and political exclusionary mechanisms can act as barriers to participation in democratic processes, as well as creating obstacles to greater social and political equality. Studies such as *Power to the People* (White 2006) assert that it is very often not individual or personal apathy that creates disengagement with democratic processes. Rather, citizens do not feel that the processes of formal democracy offer them enough influence over political decisions. They are also concerned that the main political parties are too similar to each other, which limits the range of policies they can engage with. In addition, there is a perception that political parties lack moral principles. Another concern relates to the organisation of electoral systems so, for example, the United Kingdom's (UK) current electoral system is believed to result in unequal and wasted votes. There is also a perception amongst citizens that the broad range of political parties' policies they are asked to vote for do not match or express their own varied and differing concerns. Many people feel that they

lack sufficient information or knowledge about formal politics and that voting procedures are inconvenient and unattractive. The *Power to the People* report echoes many other commentators by noting that although these issues are not new, it is important to understand which social factors in the early 21st century are fostering today's considerable disengagement and lack of participation.

The Power to the People (2006) report argues that a new kind of citizen has arisen in established democracies. This has been brought about by the structural transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society – and one could argue, into the information society (Wessels 2010b). Developments into a post-industrial and information society have wrought two main impacts on the issue of disengagement. First, a larger section of the population is now better educated, many are more affluent, and people expect to have greater control over most aspects of their lives, being less deferential to those in power. In many ways, people are not as tightly tied to bonds of place, class and institutions as they were in the industrial period. Second, the process of de-industrialisation and its attendant neo-liberal globalisation has produced marginalised groups and individuals who experience various levels of social exclusion (Steinert and Pilgram 2007). People in these marginalised groups live in poverty, have low levels of education, poor living and working conditions, and experience multiple deprivation through low incomes. Therefore, they have few material or social resources for participation, they consider mainstream politics irrelevant to them and feel powerless to raise their concerns. As Schlozman, Verba and Brady (1999, 2012) point out, another feature of marginalisation and inequality is that organisations seeking membership or donations actively engage the wealthiest groups in society, meaning that poorer communities and individuals become even less influential and represented. They argue that this participatory disparity is a result of inequalities in education and income.

These issues extend into the development of consumer society and the information society (Wessels 2014). The evolution of consumer society from within the post-industrial period fostered a social consciousness that is less shaped by industrial-era socio-economic and class-based interests and more by lifestyles and personal interests. The rise of an information society based on a digital communication infrastructure also ushered in new perceptions that are shaped through this networked communication. Individuals and groups in society appropriated the global communication structures to create new realities in terms of networked communities, networked organisations and networked individualism (Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002). The rise of consumerism generated a form of participation based on lifestyle choices and identities signified by possessions and activities. These types of sensibilities create networks of choice, which are not just related to consumption but also address a range of social and political issues – for instance, concern for specific issues and ongoing matters such as the environment,

women's movements and human rights. In contrast to industrial-period organisations, these new groupings are not particularly class based, but instead express the expansion of middle-class mores and the rise of service and professional occupations. These types of engagement confirm Hay's (2007) observation that some people who are estranged from traditional politics are extensively involved in other political activities, and may view their non-participation as a political act. In this context, various types of participation are emerging, including activism, local action groups, social movements and protests. Digital media are often cited as a tool that enables greater participation (Barney 2004), since social movements and activist groups use it for various campaigns addressing political and social issues outside mainstream politics (Castells 2002).

Current uncertainty about the quality and character of participation in civic life is resulting in further debates about political culture, as scholars seek to understand political culture in this diverse, networked and highly mediated world. For instance, in 2011 Verba commented that his study with Almond had not paid enough attention to context and institutional structures. He also noted that their study had not taken the diversity of cultures into account, so did not account for the way that local culture interacted with a broader sense of political culture to generate certain types of civic participation and distinct political understandings (Verba 2011). Goldfarb (2012) picks up on some of these points and agrees that culture is important. He states that the sociological insights of Putnam (1995a), Fine and Harrington (2004) and Eliasoph (1998) show the importance of considering the significance of 'humans in their associations' when discussing political culture (Goldfarb 2012, p.29). He further argues that the workings of political culture can be explored by examining human cultural and political interactions – that political culture can be observed, appraised and reinvented through the variety of interactions in people's patterns of association.

There are therefore three issues challenging the ways that people engage with democratic processes, which together reduce levels of participation. First, many people feel marginalised and do not believe that democracy represents them. Even in contexts of more participatory approaches, they often believe that taking part in consultations or public events will not change their situation. Second, some people are socially excluded and think that the way politics is organised, including existing political party structures, is not especially relevant to them. In these contexts, people feel that formal democracy does not offer them any influence, equality or respect. Even though political parties are trying to adapt to a new type of electorate, they continue finding it difficult to connect with the electorate in a meaningful way. Furthermore, the rising diversity of society means ever more variation in the ways that different groups relate to politics and democracy. For example, women, black and ethnic minority communities, those on low incomes and young people have different perceptions and experiences of

democratic processes. There is a sense that what has traditionally been under-stood as political participation does not align with how people are actually reflecting on what is important to them or to others. The third aspect is the way that issues and concerns are raised and shared. Here, the use of digital media contributes to the changing forms of political communication, including the increasingly blurred boundaries between political and civic communication. These three aspects highlight the importance of considering the dynamics of political and social life.

Lived political culture: the dynamics of political and social life

The organisation and characteristics of political participation are shaped by social life. The development of political participation in Western industrial societies is embedded in the rise of large urban populations and the changes that factory-working life brought to social relations from those in the previous rural, feudal society. During the industrial period, social relations changed from agrarian-based local communities to a city life that revolved around the demands of wage labour and the market (Polanyi 1957; Tronto 1993). This change meant that a separation between community and personal senses of political issues was lost and a formal, rational sense of politics developed in its place. This represents a change in how politics is understood. In early Greek civilisation and the writings of Aristotle, politics was embedded in the tight relationship between public and private issues, with politics seen as a form of civic humanism. However, with the rise of industrial capitalism, this civic humanism was replaced by a modern natural law approach. This type of politics is characterised by its regulatory and legalistic foci, seeking to address the negative and damaging aspects of industrial capitalism's pursuit of private gain. It is very different from the tradition of civic humanism and has a contrasting view of human nature. Those with an Aristotelian tradition view people as political animals, whereas those with a natural law perspective see humans as competitive beings who need society to survive. This means that individuals have to agree on a common system of law that will allow them to pursue their own aims, but in a way that protects everyone against a Hobbesian notion of a war of all against all (Manning 2013).

   Scottish Enlightenment writers, most notably Hutcheson (1694–1746), Hume (1711–1776) and Smith (1723–1790), sought to ensure justice in what they saw as the world of strangers that had been created through indus-trialisation. These commentators developed a sense of politics that was abstract and based on a commercial form of exchange. As Teichgraeber (1986) argues, the Scottish Enlightenment focus on the impersonal forces of the market and the belief that commerce could secure social order and integration meant that the Scottish Moralists took a 'de-politicised view of individual morality and a de-moralised view of politics' (Teichgraeber 1986, p.10). They argued that people's needs and security could only be met

through commerce and exchange, not by an individual's own labour. According to this view, commerce and exchange generate links between self-interest and social benefits for wider society, which means that politics needs to manage and mediate that relationship in order to ensure justice. The character of politics is therefore legalistic, regulatory and administrative. This differs significantly from civic humanism, which describes a sphere in which humanity's 'deepest practical and moral concerns find resolution or fulfilment' (Teichgraeber 1986, p.10). In contrast, the view based on commerce and exchange reduces politics to the regulation of social life without any moral value or purpose beyond ensuring a stable environment for the market to function in (Manning 2013). So politics in this sense is no longer concerned about the development of character and virtue of citizens who are law-abiding or active contributors to the common good of society. Manning (2013) argues that this reduced natural law version of politics still shapes our sense of politics today.

Politics based on natural law also generates questions about the characteristics of public life. In addition, considering the public world of the market and politics also means thinking about the private sphere and the world of the household, which is seen as a counter to the public world of strangers, corruption and vanity (Manning 2013). Women were viewed as the mainstay of the household, and women and the private sphere became the site of a timeless home that provided nurture, sympathy, benevolence and reproduction. As moral life shifted from sentiment to reason, it was in the private area of the home that sentiment and morality came to be shared and fostered. As Lash (1977), Aries (1962) and Berger et al. (1974) argue, the family became a site of intense intimacy, emotionality and romantic love in response to the impersonal, bureaucratised modern state. Berger et al. state this clearly: 'the private sphere has served a kind of balancing mechanism providing meanings and meaningful activity to compensate for the discontents brought about by the large structures of modern society' (Berger et al. 1974, pp.185–186). This distinction between public and private worlds emerged during industrialisation and remains intact in contemporary life. Elias (1969, 1982), a theorist of changes in civilisations, writes that in what he termed the advance of civilisation, human lives are increasingly divided between an 'intimate and private sphere' and a 'public and rational sphere'. Elias argues that this split is a highly normalised part of taken-for-granted life.

The distinction between the public and private, and the meaning of politics developed by industrial society and formalised through the writings of the Scottish Enlightenment remain evident today. Politics in contemporary society has a strong focus on issues such as law and order, interest rates, taxes, inflation and employment. As Manning (2013) contends, these reflect *homo economicus* and represent the Scottish Moralist argument that politics centres around the regulation and administration of social life. However, if one understands politics in the wider sense of civic humanism then it includes

more than just regulation and administration and involves the affective aspects of engagement and participation as well. Papacharissi (2015) asserts that affect – emotional impact – is an important part of public life, energising the rituals of public, civic and private life, which is not generally taken into account when discussing political participation. If politics is understood in wider terms as civic humanism and if the affective aspects of engagement are recognised, it becomes clear that the dynamics of participation are embedded within civic and cultural life. This possibility is recognised by commentators and researchers working on young people's attitudes to politics. There is a general perception that young people are not interested in politics; however, as Manning argues, this claim is based on a narrow conception of politics as merely regulation and administration and something entirely rational. In fact, studies of young people's activities and discussions show that they are interested in political issues in the broader sense, that their interests are an integration of public and private issues, and that they often engage with politics through affect (Loader et al. 2016). This reveals an understanding of politics in civic and civil terms that is wider than conventional narrow understandings of politics based merely on the market economy or domestic and social policy.

A further consequence of an artificial distinction that places politics within a rational public sphere and consigns personal concerns to the private sphere is that it does not take into account the ways in which people make sense of both private troubles and public issues (Mills 1959). As first-wave feminism noted, the personal *is* political, and people discuss both public and private issues in their everyday lives. They debate a range of issues and question ethics, values and morality as they engage with and participate in social and cultural activities, as well as economic and political life. In these contexts, the characteristics of political practices are reflexive and embedded in social life. They can be seen as 'phronesis' – a type of wisdom or intelligence that means acting virtuously in practical ways that will enhance other people's characters. This type of practice re-moralises politics by bringing it back in touch with the lived experiences of everyday life, as well as politicising ethics, values and moralities.

In modernity and late modernity this type of political consideration and activity can be defined as reflexive. It is socially situated in the loosening of social ties and boundaries that force individuals to create and recreate their lives from their own interpretations and resources. This means identity, the crafting of a lifecourse and social values, which are more open than in traditional or early modern society (Giddens 1991). Alongside rising individualism, this requires greater deliberation and reflection at the personal level. Archer (2003) defines reflexive deliberation as 'the mental activity, which in private life, leads to self-knowledge: about what to do, what to think and what to say' (Archer 2003, p.26), going on to say that reflexivity is the way that people craft a life from their own social situations. This also suggests that

reflexivity has some level of critical capacity in the ways in which people make a social life, especially in societies that are not bound by tradition. Phronesis as a form of practical intelligence or wisdom points to the virtue of someone knowing how to make judgements in particular contexts. This sense of wisdom and context is different from a Kantian notion of a fixed morality based on rules. Therefore, phronesis plays a role in reflexive practice and process in ethic-political considerations and practices. As Holmes (2010) suggests, reflexivity is emotional as well as social, involving a person's inclinations, feelings, moral and ethical considerations, as well as their perceptions of risk. This book argues that reflexivity is enacted within civic society and everyday culture, as well as in political culture.

The dynamics of participation extend beyond the domains of both the public and private spheres and individual reflexivity, because these are all embedded within broader social and cultural life. Although politics and civic society can be seen as distinct aspects of social life, their meaning and position in social life is shaped through culture. The term 'civic' refers to senses of the public that are visible, relevant and accessible to many people. The etymology of the word lies in the Greek word 'civitas', which refers to a city-state and the Latin word 'civcus', meaning citizens. Talking about the civic and civic-ness carries within it senses of public good and engaging in activities such as community voluntary work, which is often referred to as being civic-minded. Individuals and groups participate in various types of social activities that bridge personal and public concerns. Some of these, such as citizens participating in local health boards, school committees, community councils and planning partnerships, are more civic-focused because they operate within a state remit. Other types of activity, such as participating in voluntary work, form part of civil society, because they are actions carried out by independent citizens, not within an authority related to the state. In Lord Beveridge's 1942 report, he argues that voluntary action undertaken by citizens not under the direction of any authority-wielding state power is one of the distinguishing marks of a free society. These types of engagement and participation in civic and civil society draw on senses of personal and public concern within phronesis. There is a sense of helping others and working together to find solutions for community problems, as well as individual concerns and, as such, there is an element of altruism in participating in civic life.

Notions of civic mindedness change over historical time and can be understood differently in various cultural contexts. It is particularly difficult to define the boundaries of civic life, since it is porous and tightly interwoven with political, cultural and economic life. For example, charity work is usually viewed as engaging in civic life in the US and UK, whereas in Sweden it is understood in terms of personal and individual action (Dahlgren 2009). Almond and Verba state that active democracy in the US after the Second World War lay in civic culture, and argue that levels of political and

public participation need to be understood in terms of the quality of social bonds throughout society. They assert that the second wave of democratisation (c.f. Huntingdon 1991), the Cold War and changes to post-industrialisation all threatened social cohesion and trust in political institutions. Robert Putnam is also concerned about these issues, stressing that the weakening of social ties at that time (and into the present individualised society) has resulted in lower levels of civic and civil participation. These writers point out that facilitating participation not only depends on democratic processes, but also on the quality and level of participation that emerges from cultures of civic and civil society. Therefore, the various US initiatives that attempted to increase participation (described earlier in the chapter) have not translated into a more inclusive civil society and vibrant democracy.

In assessing levels of participation and the health of democracy, Merkel (2013) notes that there has been a perceived crisis of democracy over many centuries, most recently during the 1970s and 1980s. The main proponents of this were writers on the left such as Habermas and Offe, and those on the right like Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki (1975), whose concerns were picked up during the early 2000s by Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Colin Crouch (2004). Mouffe and Crouch triggered a Europe-wide debate about 'post-democracy'. Left-wing writers argue that there is a crisis of democracy based on their own normative ideas and perceptions of a bygone Golden Age of democracy. However, there is a lack of consensus on this, while findings from empirical research on democracy paint a more nuanced picture which depicts constant challenges to democracy. For example, Dalton (2004) observes a general decline in trust for political authorities, while Pharr and Putnam (2000) find that the performance of democratic institutions has weakened. So, these scholars identify current challenges to democracy but do not accept that it is in crisis. However, other writers such as Pippa Norris (1999) challenge these positions, questioning whether there is a genuine decline of trust in democracy, writing that it is normal for feelings about democracy to change over time, as there are 'trendless fluctuations in system support' (Norris 2011). She distinguishes between a crisis in democracy and the possibility of a democratic deficit, arguing that any sense of such a deficit is probably related to increased citizen criticism or cynicism, negative reporting by the media and subjective perceptions arising from these that the performance of democratic governments is weak. These debates help to focus on some of the dynamics of political engagement and democracy; however, there are several concerns about the quality of the debate. First, the theory-driven approaches lack empirical evidence to support the claims being made. Second, the empirical research tends to be based on what can be considered rather superficial survey data, and only provides a partial picture of the context. Given these caveats, it is important to note that the state of democracy and levels of participation and engagement are not static – they are contested and changing in form and content, as well as in ways of engagement.

Conclusion

In order to assess the role of social media in political culture, this chapter has discussed how the way that politics and participation are defined affects assessments of levels of participation and crises in participation and in democracy. The definitions based on natural law notions of politics fail to take into account the wider meaning of politics in terms of morality, virtue, practical wisdom and civic humanism. Furthermore, they do not fully recognise phronesis within people's everyday personal and public life, or the ways that civic and civil culture open up spaces for reflexivity and participation. The interactions between personal and public interests indicate that political culture is something that is 'lived', since people actively interpret issues within the contexts of their own lives and in relation to the lives of others. This reveals the inter-relationship between engagement and participation which is often blurred in terms of communication. This is particularly so in the use of social media, as the following chapters discuss. The link between engaging and participating in something requires having access to a range of resources, such as being able to participate practically, having the knowledge of how to participate, having relations with people and the means to communicate. These are all shaped by the cultural context and the diverse ways in which people might participate. Although people might perceive the rise of social media in civic and civil life, as well as in public and private life, as being participatory, it might not be seen as such from a natural law perspective. Furthermore, differing levels of participation may introduce new nuances in terms of insight and action.

Notes

1 Representative democracy is conceptually associated with the political system of representative government, which evolved from the French and American revolutions of the 18th century. These populist uprisings ushered in the need for a system to enable people to elect lawmakers as their political representatives, who would be accountable to those citizens in their government activities.
2 This focus on participation was formalised through a series of acts passed by Congress, such as the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act and the 1966 Demonstration and Metropolitan Cities Act, which underpinned legislation pushed through by the Office of Economic Opportunity. This sought to ensure that policy and programmes would be developed, conducted and administered in ways that facilitated high levels of participation. The 1946 Administrative Procedure Act required federal agencies to publish draft proposals and provide public opportunities to comment on these drafts as part of the policy-making process. They also required opportunities to be provided for groups to represent their views. All this particularly aimed to encourage widespread participation by groups who were usually under-represented in such processes.

Chapter 3

Voicing issues
The public sphere and the media

Introduction

The space where communication about political and civic issues takes place is in the public sphere(s). The history of the media shows that their various forms and social relations are embedded in – and feature in – the communication spaces specific to any particular environment (Wessels 2010b). In other words, the characteristics of communication are created though the interaction of types of media forms, distinctive sets of social relations and specific kinds of communication models. Each of these generates different ways for people to participate in communication, express their views and have their voices heard. This chapter argues that communication media – print, analogue, digital and oral – are interacting with society in symbolic and increasingly digitally networked ways in configuring the public sphere(s). These configurations shape the ways that opinions can be expressed and heard across public arenas that consequently comprise forms of interaction with political culture and in democratic processes.

Discourse and praxis in the public sphere

A public sphere started to develop in early modernity through the rise of the middle classes and the establishment of a range of printed texts including news pamphlets, newsbooks (https://hridigital.shef.ac.uk/newsbooks-project/), newspapers (www.europeana-newspapers.eu) and novels (Dooby 1997). The main point of reference for debates about the public sphere is Habermas's book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), which discusses the development and decline of the bourgeois public sphere. It does this by considering the interaction of changes in social, political and cultural life and philosophical understandings of society, and the ways that these shape the structure and spaces of public discourse and communication. He raises key issues such as the relationship between public and private spheres, the rise of expression of public opinion and the consequences of the development of mass society for a rational-critical debate. The forms of interaction and the

characteristics of representation are two aspects that inform various types of communication and types of participation between individual people, and between individuals or groups of people with those with the authority to govern. Habermas (1989) identifies the relationship between spheres of interaction and debate and spheres of representation in shaping the levels and senses of public performances, engagement and dialogue. These range from ruling elites' non-inclusive staged performances to various levels of public engagement and participation within a public sphere.

Habermas (1989) argues that there was no public realm in terms of interaction and debate during feudalism, but instead there was a space of representation. In that period, aristocrats displayed their power through a range of symbolic dramas played out in a public space. However, this space did not have any sense of publicness in terms of inclusion, interaction or debate because it comprised performances that noblemen put on in front of the people, rather than any acts on behalf of a public (Goode 2005). The character of this limited public realm during the feudal period was shaped through its social relations, because the entity of a 'public' did not yet exist and there was no distinction between public and private spheres. This changed with the rise of trade and finance capitalism, alongside the development of civil society. One of the central tenets of civil society is an ideology that 'private autonomy' will help to create a publicness characterised by an interactive engagement by people in public affairs and public interests. A range of changes in the social relations between economic, political and religious life during that era resulted in people still remaining subjects of the gentry but becoming increasingly seen as part of a public. The term 'public' at that time indicated a shift from feudal ties to a situation of a depersonalised state authority. A further development during the mercantilist period resulting from the struggles between economic production and trade was the emergence of a new private sphere, which started to act as a check on the power of the state.

It is in these struggles and developments that one sees the emergence of the bourgeoisie. This class became an independent entity and built a civil society that was based on private commerce. In this context, economic issues were of central public interest and the state's authority rested on the strength of the economy. The well-being of the bourgeoisie therefore rested on the state's taxation policy and legal statutes as well as military initiatives. Because, on the one hand, the society now confronting the state clearly differentiated a private domain from public authority and because, on the other hand, it turned the reproduction of life into something transcending the confines of private domestic authority and becoming a zone of public interest, that area of administrative contact became 'critical', in the sense that it provoked the critical judgement of a public making use of its reason (Habermas 1989).

Critical reasoning could be enacted in that period through the availability of printed material, so the development of the printing press was key. A combination of political, economic, cultural and technological developments

created a publicly available media, one that was characterised by regularised printed communications addressed to unspecified recipients. These recipients were mainly the bourgeoisie and intellectuals, but nonetheless a communication space had been created that presented news as a general interest within an emerging sense of regional and national networks of interconnections and interdependency – it was a move away from localised economic self-sufficiency and cultural horizons. This was the first step in the development of what Anderson calls 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1991), that is, a sense of community at the level of a nation-state. During this period, political journals containing information about taxes, commodity prices, wars, foreign trade and so on became popular. Habermas (1989) comments that news became a commodity during this period and there was an economy of scale in producing news for a larger market of readers. He also notes that the state and state organisations started to recognise the power of the printed word.

However, as Goode (2005) argues, the development of the printing press did not just reproduce a 'representative publicness' in which the printed word disseminated state-led opinions and news to a passive public. The distance between the state and the bourgeoisie, alongside the emergence of a civil society, generated a more critical stance from the public about the state and those in authority. This was manifested within the printed media in the form of critical opinion pieces and articles, which were frequently viewed as learned articles. The publication of these articles in the daily press fostered a wider critical sensibility, thus the press did not directly attack the establishment, but generated a stance that questioned accepted conventions about the position of the state and other institutions, such as the Church, in society. It did this by challenging the power and status of the state and Church, particularly addressing the interpretative authority of both these institutions. The press provided another space where independent views on literary, philosophical and pedagogic issues could be aired. In some ways, as Habermas (1989) expresses very eloquently, this bourgeois public sphere comprised a 'world of letters', which was a precursor to a more political public sphere.

Although there was some ambiguity about this world of letters, it did create a space for the bourgeoisie and other elite intellectuals to think through and debate a range of issues, and to reach some consensus on what a 'good society' should be, and what policies were in the public interest. It provided the freedom for a particular elite within a broader public to shape a sense of humanity and carve out a sense of 'authentic subjectivity'. In social terms, the development of individual and personal subjectivity was seen as an important aspect in underpinning and enabling a just polity. As this sphere developed, it sought to take an egalitarian approach to public debate – one which we would not consider inclusive today, as it mirrored the society of the time, so did not allow any woman, or any man without property to participate. Nevertheless, a new public sphere was emerging, which comprised private individuals and was centred around the idea of selfhood and

the self as a sacrosanct entity. It was envisaged that this sense of selfhood would support the way that such a public sphere could act, particularly in stopping any abuses of power by those in authority. There was, therefore, a particular mix between the political aspect of the public sphere and a personal subjective element which, together, created an individualistically invigorated political public sphere.

The purpose of this political public sphere was to ensure the protection and integrity of the private sphere (Goode 2005) – and this reveals a conflation of the political and the human. In concrete terms, this meant that the bourgeoisie thought of itself as a universal class based on the meritocratic ideals of a free market. Although this idea was open to extensive criticism – Marx, for instance, understood the bourgeois class in negative terms – instead of wanting to seek out and create itself as a new locus of power, it sought to neutralise power in order to facilitate the development of civil society. Underpinning this was the belief that everyone had the right to participate in society, regardless of their status. In order to realise this inclusive vision, privilege, social constraints and public interference had to be removed from civil society, which could be achieved through a constitution framework based on freedom of contract and *laissez-faire* trade policies. Thus, the bourgeoisie, which claimed to stand for reason and justice, sought to challenge state secrecy. As Habermas (1989) notes, this challenge to the authority of the state and its power not to disclose information was rationally conceived and was combined with critical public debate. This saw the emergence of a 'new critical reasoning' in the political public sphere, especially in Britain, which was an early developer of parliamentary reform and press freedom, shaping the notion of a 'Fourth Estate' of the realm – largely journalism – which was willing to confront state authorities. However, both a free press and a Fourth Estate emerged at varying times in national contexts, for instance developing more slowly in France and Germany than in the UK (Goode 2005).

One element that contributed to the growth of the press was the development of expressions of public opinion. The word 'opinion' derives from the Latin '*opinio*', meaning 'rumour', and is associated with the Greek '*doxa*', meaning 'to think' or 'appear', so its etymology suggests that it involves judgements based on presumption rather than reason. During the 18th century opinion lacked critical reflection, validity or publicness; however, Habermas argues that the rise of the public sphere enabled a corresponding increase in critical reasoning (Goode 2005, pp.11–12). Habermas's belief in the redemptive power of debate and discourse is open to criticism, though, and the idea that rational debate can improve society and influence positive change is still being questioned today. As Goode (2005) argues, there is a general sense of cynicism about whether 'just talking about things' can make any real difference. Goode (2005) notes that terms such as a 'talking shop' and the 'chattering classes' are generally used pejoratively, adding that 'actions speak louder

than words' is a popularly held sentiment. This criticism brings out a distinction between the discursive aspects of the public sphere on which Habermas concentrates, and the lifework aspects of the public sphere, as analysed by Negt and Kluge (1972, 1993). Habermas's focus on the bourgeoisie as a universal class and the discursive dimension of the public sphere means that his perception of the bourgeois public sphere is not tightly grounded in substantive life interests. In contrast, Negt and Kluge (1972) argue that praxis – that is, practice, rather than theory or debate – must be regarded as a key element of the public sphere, since productive activity also contributes to the public sphere. They consider praxis to be inclusive because it encompasses material and cultural production as well as political action, and they believe that praxis in the public sphere will be emancipatory.

In this way, Negt and Kluge's (1972) discussions about the public sphere and Habermas's work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) helped to turn the focus onto communication and opinion forming. Praxis in itself, however, can also be problematic. Habermas widens the focus of debate through his ideas about 'communicative action', which involve the possibility of switching from action to discourse if agreements or understandings break down, and which is helpful in steering between action based on class and that arising from abstract discussion. This is particularly useful in addressing what praxis means in a diverse society where there are a range of interests, identities and positions all trying to find a voice in the public sphere, and where a call to action may not recognise that some people have a divergent vision from the dominant status quo or may even be adversely affected by the proposed practice. These issues can make any call to praxis politically ineffective as well as morally suspect. This conundrum is demonstrated by grassroots campaigners and direct action groups in two ways:

- Campaigners who do not engage in dialogue with the public because they do not want to.
- Campaigners who are ignored by the media and other institutions in the public sphere, meaning that they cannot engage in dialogue with other groups and discourses in the public sphere even if they want to.

Negt and Kluge's points about praxis and Habermas's ideas on discourse highlight several questions about the character of participation in and through the public sphere. In particular, as Goode (2005) notes, a model of the public sphere built either solely on discourse or on praxis does not offer a progressive framework for an engaged and participatory public sphere. The complexities of the public sphere are recognised by the Marxist-inspired scholar Nicholas Garnham, who asserts that Habermas's argument does take into account some of the complexities of the public sphere. Garnham states that Habermas's approach recognises the 'link between the institutions and practices of mass communication and the institutions and practices of

democratic politics' (Garnham 1992, p.361). Furthermore, he notes that Habermas also acknowledges the importance of civil society organisations that are independent from the state and the market in shaping participation in the public sphere. Garnham (1992) argues that this is an important caveat to the neo-liberal view which posits that information and culture is a 'privately appropriable commodity' rather than a 'public good', and which takes a dichotomous view between the private interest and public good, without recognising the role of civil society as a third actor in the public sphere. In fact, considering the role of civil society means questioning assumptions about the extreme of either a totally state-controlled public sphere or a thoroughly marketised public sphere, to open up the component parts of the public sphere in a more diverse way. Garnham (1992) argues that Habermas's work creates a deeper understanding of the dynamics and rela- tionships between communication and politics in the public sphere than many media-centric studies of the public sphere do, thereby revealing that the public sphere is wider than any narrowly defined understanding of it.

   Garnham (1992), writing at a time of widespread media deregulation in the UK and globally, stresses the importance of Habermas's assertion that the character of the relationship between mass communication and democratic politics influences and shapes political culture. He argues that this relationship is part of a public sphere that, in normative terms, needs to be open to critical debate in order to achieve and sustain an open and accountable society. Although Garnham (1992) criticises media-centric approaches to the public sphere, he nonetheless recognises the role of the media and asserts that Habermas's under-emphasis on mediated communication was an oversight. This is an interesting argument and can be pursued further, given the rise of mass media – especially new media and social media – since the 1990s. During the period of mass communication and analogue media systems, the problem was how to enable universal access to information and news. This issue persists today, even though new media and social media have reached high levels of market penetration. Inequalities in the digital era are couched in terms of digital divides which are produced by unequal patterns of access to digital technology and services, distribution of high-quality broadband and levels of digital literacy skills, all of which undermine people's capacity to participate in the public sphere (Wessels 2013).

The dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in public spheres

If the public sphere is to serve as a space of debate and praxis, then important questions about democracy and social accountability arise, to understand which people are able to take part in it. These ask how material inequality affects the ways in which people can participate, and thus questions the inclusivity of the public sphere. Nancy Fraser (1990) contests the assumption that everyone can participate as equals in the public sphere and that social

inequality is extraneous to the interaction. Fraser does not accept the formal principle of 'participatory parity', observing that informal, and sometimes subtle, modes of domination and control are present in public deliberation. She argues that subordinate and under-represented people are often further disadvantaged because they do not have the skills or experience to engage in any type of public debate. For example, those who experience some level of exclusion are often not *au fait* with prevailing conventions within the discourse, they are less likely to be listened to and respected, and they may not have the necessary cultural capital to engage in such arenas. Gender also plays into these inequalities. Research (Fraser 1990) has shown that women find it harder than men to be vocal and listened to in public meetings and debates. Thus, Fraser (1990) challenges the assumption that social inequalities are absent from public deliberation, pointing to the need to address the influence of such disparities on participation. She contends that this failure to acknowledge the impact of social inequalities on participation in public debates actually reinforces the position of dominant groups. She therefore concludes that it is better to acknowledge and address inequalities directly, which links to Habermas's work on communicative ethics.

In relation to this debate, Goode raises the important point that attention needs to be paid to the rights and responsibilities of all participants in public deliberation, that dominant groups should be mindful of those in more vulnerable positions, and those in more disadvantaged groups supported to engage (Goode 2005). He points out that current understandings of equality and inequality need to be challenged in order to develop an open and democratic process. Goode also notes that, although there is a strong connection between socio-economic status and ability to participate in the democratic process, there is no simple correlation or linear process about this, with many differences in degree and in kind. For example, some people cannot get hold of the basic resources required for participation, such as access to information, media and education, while other issues – largely gender-related, such as lack of access to childcare and free time – inhibit participation in the public sphere. Furthermore, some individuals are in positions of power where they have more leverage to influence the debate – all of which reduces participatory parity. Although it is important not to disregard distributive justice, Goode argues that, first of all, it would be most beneficial to aim to increase opportunities for parity by providing universal education and public information services. He maintains that an individual's socio-economic position does not determine their ability or inclination to participate, so it is important to understand what specific resources are needed to increase levels of public discussion.

Fraser (1990) works within this type of approach, challenging the idea that the development and proliferation of many competing publics represents a move away from greater democracy rather than a step towards it. She disputes the assumption that a 'single comprehensive public sphere is better than multiple publics' (Goode 2005, p.42), stressing the need to establish

new discursive realms where people can find their own voices, clarify indi-
vidualities, and build interests and solidarities. This frequently involves
developing constructions of identities *vis-à-vis* an accepted sense of 'us' – in,
for example, the idea of a 'national interest', because those kinds of prevailing
concepts may well serve the interests of dominant groups to the detriment of
others. This means that subordinate groups require alternative, subaltern
spaces for deliberation. However, this does not translate in any straightforward
way to subaltern spaces being any more democratic and egalitarian than the
dominant arenas. As Fraser (1990) writes, subaltern publics can 'function as
spaces of withdrawal and regrouping' but they can also act as 'bases and
training grounds for agitational activities that are directed at wider publics'
(in Goode 2005, p.42). This is not seen as an 'either/or' situation – instead,
the potential for emancipatory action arises from the dialectic between both
these functions.

   Keane (1995) picks up on the difficulties of claiming that there is a unitary
public sphere, arguing instead that the public sphere is made up of numerous
overlapping and linked public spheres. These spheres are present on a
micro-level (including individualised networks), a meso-level (networks
around national bodies and global organisations) and a macro-level (networks
such as global social movements and international media). Keane (1995)
continues by arguing that this characteristic opens up the public sphere to
fragmentation and 'bunkering in'. This term means people choosing not to
discuss issues openly across a range of perspectives but, instead, just discussing
things with like-minded people. This creates a fragmentation in discussion
and communication, where people only address certain topics, and do not
relate topics and issues within these topics to wider debates. It also creates
disconnection of communication, in which the focus of those engaging and
participating in communication create an internal, inward-looking and self-
referential debate that is divorced from wider social and political issues – the
'echo chamber effect' (Sunstein 2001). Both of these factors undermine
deliberation and open discussion. Habermas (1989) acknowledges that the
public sphere includes a diversity of associations and spaces for debate, and
that this multiplicity is one of its characteristics. However, he suggests that it
can only function if the opinions that arise from each of the different con-
nections and discussions are directed towards each other and the same
centre of power. This assumes that such associations are open to all, have fluid
networks of members and cut across interest groups – but there is little
empirical evidence to support this notion. Fraser (1990) engages in the debate
from a different angle, arguing that it is important for distinctive publics and
groups to delineate their separate interests and constituents from the dominant
discourse. She feels that this does not sit well with a totalising ethic of
inclusivity which may be able to embrace diversity in both debate and in
social life. However, she does recognise that a certain ethic is created
through a shared or connective sensibility, which acts as a foundation on

which to build dialogue, discussion and conversation. Fraser argues that the public sphere needs to be a kind of inclusive auditorium surrounded by a range of anterooms – some of which are open and inclusive, while others are reserved for particular groups and topics that require consideration and clarification before joining the more open debate.

Both Habermas (1989) and Fraser (1990) are seeking to understand how a public sphere can accommodate a range of perspectives, interests and identity positions in a coherent, yet open way. Both theorists are working within a framework that places pluralism at one end and parochialism and separatism at the other. This dilemma is not easily resolved and is, to some extent, reflexive of public discourse itself. Nonetheless, as Goode points out, any theorisation of the public sphere in both normative and sociological terms needs to acknowledge subaltern public spheres and 'spericules', which are particularistic public spheres (Gitlin 1998). Goode argues, as do Liebes and Curran (1998), that there is a recognition of diversity within debates about the public sphere. However, the many voices within a diverse public sphere may not be connecting in the same way or at the same time. This is especially pertinent in the contemporary dynamics of politics, with an increase in both more nationalist and internationalist discourses and activity. Over and above the dynamic of nationalism and post-nationalism is the reality that nation-states are finding it harder to act as – or even claim to be – 'political control centres' in terms of classic liberal and leftist models of democracy. This is because the way that political processes can act are being affected by neo-liberal globalisation, multinational corporatism and the development of identity-based, localised, diasporic and issue-focused social movements. This more diverse and contested world, in which power has shifted to global organisations and groups of specific individuals, creates a complex space for public deliberation – not only the 'who' and the 'what', but also 'where' to anchor meaning in those discourses and debates.

Reflexivity within the public sphere

One way to think about these dynamics and tensions is to view the public sphere as a reflexive space, one which enables critical thought about and attention to disciplinary mechanisms and hidden injuries that might well be circulated and targeted through the work of the public sphere. Considering the public sphere reflexive widens existing prescriptive ideas about what counts as public or private, and the relationship between these spaces of social life. Furthermore, it enables an appreciation of discourses that question or address areas of social life which might not previously have been explored. These discourses particularly raise awareness of the sorts of abusive situations that are a feature of existing relations of social power and domination, such as exploitative employment practices, domestic violence, pornography and the use of chemical pesticides. These issues not only raise

ethical concerns, but also provide examples of the malleability of boundaries between the public and private, since they affect both realms in different ways. For instance, concerns about an environmental issue may be expressed at both public and private levels. This moves attention towards moral philosophy, in terms of conceptions of 'ethics' (or the good life) and the ability to generalise any particular issue out to a wider context.

One way to address these questions is to counter some of the shortcomings of the bourgeois model by taking a civic-republican approach. While the bourgeois model suggests that the common good is revealed through public discussion, the civic-republican approach asserts that the common good is, in fact, generated through dialogue. Senge (2006) states that dialogue encourages people to explore issues freely and creatively by listening to each other and suspending their own views to open up the debate. This is a deliberative approach to democracy (see Cronin and De Greiff 1996), but it is important to note that there is a tendency in Habermas's and some other scholars' work to conflate the ideas of deliberation and the common good. This is most often seen in the assumption that deliberation must be *about* the common good, which expresses an implicit standpoint of an 'us' in deciding what will be good for 'us'. This notion of a common 'us' frequently takes that sense of 'us' to be the one expressed by dominant groups. This perpetuates the power of dominant groups in social relations, putting less powerful and less well-defined groups at a disadvantage.

Goode (2005) views Habermas's conception of the public sphere as one in which opposing or challenging ideas can be aired and disputed through rational-critical debate – not one where the aim is to reach consensus. This requires pursuing a greater parity of participation in the public sphere, so that the various, and sometimes competing, visions are visible and openly addressed. This reflexive process enables a critical and engaged interaction which can clarify any mystifications shoring up instances of false consensus. Habermas considers the public sphere to be a lived social space where ideology critique is enacted, rather than a critical theory in itself. This is sometimes missed in Habermas's work, despite his emphasis on reflexivity. Even though Latour (2004) criticises and – to some degree – caricatures Habermas's work, it is nonetheless possible to see a similar concern for a reflexive open and inclusive approach to deliberation within his own description of public sphere dynamics. Latour's 'constructivist cosmopolitics' of a shared world has the similar energising potential of a bottom-up cosmopolitanism (Goode 2005, p.47). Here Silverstone's (2006) concern with the politics of 'the other' addresses the role that the media play in discourses about the public sphere or spheres. Silverstone questions how far the public sphere – as a single space of political and social communication – allows for pluralistic reporting and engagement. He takes a mediapolis approach to the public sphere, defining mediapolis as a 'mediated public space where contemporary political life increasingly finds its place, both at national and

global levels' (Silverstone 2006, p.31), which has material impacts on social life. Silverstone (2006) raises the question of how a public sphere and a mediapolis can work to foster relationships between neighbours and strangers: relationships that are respectful and encourage debate, rather than create distrust and lack of respect. He argues that this can be judged through the practice of 'proper distance', that is, media representation that is close enough to create identification with the subject under focus, yet far enough away to facilitate respect. Silverstone asserts that proper distance can create public engagement with the information and stories represented, and an identification of the publicness of the issues reported.

Media, communication and the public sphere

Habermas's work considers the role of the media, both in terms of its structural transformations, and the characteristics of the public sphere. He was, of course, writing before the Internet (a global system of interconnected computer networks) and World Wide Web (WWW) (a system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed via the Internet) were developed, became commercialised and turned into a key part of everyday communication repertoires, organisational media practices and traditional media institutions. One of his key points is that the character of communication via media channels is mediated.

Silverstone (2005b) recognises the ways that different media interact with social and cultural life to shape experience. He defines mediation as an uneven dialectical process between media institutions (the press, broadcast radio and television, and the WWW) and the dissemination of symbols in social life. Silverstone uses the term 'dialectic' to explain how the processes of communication interact with the social and cultural environments that support them, and the relationships that individuals and institutions have to that environment and with each other (Silverstone 2005b). This creates a 'mediapolis' in which questions of public culture and personal interest are articulated and mediated. This approach takes lived experience into account and recognises the point that the media frame social life, which can either facilitate collective action or fragment understanding to undermine individual and community expression. For Silverstone (2006), this means understanding how mediated communication features in the ways that people frame and share perceptions of themselves and 'the other'. He believes there is a moral dimension to communication, arguing that the practice of communication should involve the 'proper distance' as described above, to bring people close enough together to understand each other, whilst also far enough away to ensure respect for one another.

Silverstone's interpretation addresses the gap in Habermas's assessment that mediation includes a distinction between two binary opposites – 'action', which is mediated by non-discursive steering media, and 'unmediated

discourse'. Although Habermas acknowledges that speech is a form of mediation (he took a linguistic turn, but not a post-structuralist one), he does not fully pursue the issues inherent in generating transparent communication. There is, therefore, a need to consider how mediation shapes public communication. This reflects the more general tendency for communication studies to focus on Socratic ideals of one-to-one dialogue and reciprocity instead of many-to-one – and possibly many-to-many – forms of communication. Even though dialogue in face-to-face contexts allows individuals who are co-present to monitor and read the communication directly and in person, this does not necessarily undermine the value or quality of other forms of communication, particularly since the ideal of interpersonal dialogue is frequently seen as 'good', in contrast to mass communication, which is seen as 'bad'. It is necessary to go beyond this over-simplistic type of normative stance in the age of mass and digital communication. For instance, there is a need to challenge the assumption that mass channels of communication are 'bad', since public service broadcasting and digital communication give more people increased access to information and opinion. Of course, this might not be factual, high value or good taste but, as Castells (2001) argues, the medium does not determine the content distributed across its networks.

   Thompson takes a pragmatic view, arguing for the need to be realistic about possibilities of dialogical public deliberation and participation. Thompson (1995) criticises the logocentrism of much analysis of the public sphere, whilst retaining a focus on a democratic imagination and examining power and legitimacy in society. Even without taking the dynamics of the media into account, he considers the ideas of participation and democracy to be problematic (see Chapter 2). The ideal of an open and public dialogue is partly based on the Greek 'agora', which was infused by notions of lexis and praxis – words and deeds. The Greeks sought to develop reciprocal speech relations amongst an elite (slave-owning male citizens) that was directly situated in, and related to, the context in which decisions were made within their small city-states. However – and this point has been debated at length – modern and late modern society are characterised by the scale and complexity of decision-making processes which impact on how participation can be organised. As Thompson (1995) states, modern 'communities of fate' are large and complex, and the consequences of political and economic decisions are diffuse. This means that the classical model of democracy based on reciprocal speech relations is not appropriate for the contemporary period of mass society or mass and digital media. Thompson (1995) acknowledges that individuals could take a greater role in decision making in some areas of social life, and that increased participation in these processes might support the formation of public opinion. However, he contends that it would be difficult for participatory opinion formation to be adopted at the level of national and international politics or at the senior levels of large-scale civil and commercial organisations. Instead, Thompson

(1995) suggests the need to look for – and advocate – a greater diversity of channels of diffusion and to concentrate on developing processes of account-ability, in order to constrain such powerful organisations and hold them to account.

Thompson (1995) therefore critically engages with the practicalities of participatory models of democracy – and, although he distances himself from technocratic elitism and describes himself as a reluctant realist, he notes that democratic theory has been concerned with the limits of democratic participation for some time. There are a number of long-running debates about the issues involved in participation, such as time constraints, efficiency and expertise, expert knowledge, and citizens' rights to a private life held in balance with an over-politicised society. Thompson adds attention to the media – primarily the mass media – to this list, observing that a dialogical model cannot account for:

1   The precise nature of mass-mediated communication.
2   The role of the mass media in social life.
3   The way that the mass media constitute interaction between citizens and decision making.
4   The way that the mass media constitute interaction between citizens as co-participants in processes of public opinion formation.

In general terms and, in relation to point 1 above, Thompson (1995) notes the emergence of 'mediated quasi-interaction'. This suggests that whereas face-to-face speech occurs in a common locale and can support reciprocal speech relations, communication media enable social relations and interaction to be disembedded from any shared spatial or temporal contexts. With regard to point 2 above, the mass media feature in connections between people and institutions in which individuals are marked by absence, rather than pre-sence (Thompson 1995). Communicative technologies allow citizens a degree of connectivity with physically absent actors and social processes, and this connectivity shapes people's experiences and choices to a certain degree (point 3). These technologies enable a worked-through linkage between locally situated worlds, and the world 'out there'. This is part of the possibility of creating new distantiated relations through the circulation of symbols, which can be interwoven into any lived or mediated experiences.

The Habermasian public space underplays the role of quasi-interaction and, in so doing, fails to address possibilities for a 'democratic connectivity' or the degree to which the media shape democratic imaginations and possibi-lities (point 4 above). It is important to note that when mediated interaction disembeds dialogue and counteracts (to some extent) the consequences of distance, mediated quasi-interaction does not simply negate absence or abolish distance. Media channels interpret, engage in, and constitute new modes of interaction by their own visibility. In each media form and

context – whether mass media, media organisations, algorithms or social media – there are layers of interpretations. For example, in mass media there are specialist roles for selecting, processing and producing the vast networks of symbols and information. Selective visibility prohibits the emergence of a communicative transparency because the mass media do not serve simply as a window on decision making, and the scope of discursive testing is limited to supply and demand factors. It is through the various channels of media producing visibility that feelings of trust and mistrust circulate. In this context, 'trust' refers to a balancing act between acquiring knowledge and understanding the decision-making process, and investing in the integrity, acumen and expertise of decision makers. Thus, drawing on Giddens's notion that trust is related to absence in time and space, there is no need to express trust in contexts where actors and activities are continually visible. This means it is a form of 'blind trust' (Goode 2005, p.95). The key problem for contemporary democracy, therefore, is not how society presents or, via communications media, represents itself, but rather, 'how we communicate with the absent' (Goode 2005, p.95).

This concern with trust reflects how the processes of democracy and legitimation interact in a highly mediated world. Thompson (1995) highlights the range of different connectivities that are engendered by mediated quasi-interaction, which include affective engagement such as feelings of love, hate, sexual attraction and intimacy – often towards public figures – as well as rational responses. Thompson's (1995) sociological and pragmatic account (as opposed to a post-structuralist, anti-foundationalist and political abstracted account) considers the condensations, aestheticisations, ellipses, spectacles and intensities of mediated communication as aspects that all need to be addressed and resolved. However, Goode (2005) counters this by arguing that such issues constitute the texture and fabric of public life and that the media enable communication amongst citizens. This sense of reality goes beyond Habermas's, to view the media as facilitating the development of identities which draw on discourses of nationhood, ethnicity, class, gender, style, taste, subculture, opinion, political affiliation, interest groups, status group, and identification with public figures. The way that the media are embedded into social life feature in people's relational lives and can foster intense antipathy as well as identification. Given that democratic citizenship depends on membership, and that large-scale modern publics are imagined communities, it is only possible to directly communicate with a fraction of all citizens, so there is a need to use the media to communicate with publics. Further, in a globalised mediascape, it is increasingly – although differentially – possible for citizens to selectively opt in or out of specific imagined communities. The ways that the media arena acts as a Fourth Estate in democratic processes and allied discourse ethics is therefore extremely complex (Habermas 1984, 1987).

In relation to this concern, Thompson (1995) finds common ground with radical democratic media theorists who argue that a pluralistic and decentred

public sphere is needed to support democratic life. They assert that there needs to be a public service media for this to happen – that is, public service media institutions which are funded, but not governed, by the state. These act against the commodification of the media and they are especially relevant in democratic processes because they also seek to navigate the gulf between specialist decision-making spheres and citizens. In the analogue period of mass media (continuing into the digital era) this means that specialist functions of interpretation and selection accrue to media personnel, which gives the media the power to shape public opinion. Thompson (1995) and other public sphere media theorists (e.g. Harrison and Wessels 2009) do not fully consider the emergent possibilities of the digitised landscape for the public sphere, because mass media were dominant in an analogue era that privileged mass media at the expense of the many interactive, niche and DIY media. The development of digital communication interacts with, and changes, these dynamics because it is an open, interactive, networked form of communication (Castells 2009).

Debates about the role of the media and communication in the public sphere continue in line with developments in the digital age, as the Internet and WWW have given rise to a range of innovations in digital communications. These communications are socially shaped, culturally informed and embedded within wider social change (Wessels 2010b). Given that social change can also involve changes in cultural, political and economic domains, the way that digital communication features in the public sphere means that it is embedded in the social contexts of communication (Wessels 2014). As with most technological developments, the Internet and WWW generate both optimistic and critical appraisals, which are also seen in debates about digital media and the public sphere. One set of responses argues that the Internet could support a more participatory democracy and engaged public debate, whereas another set of responses suggests that it encourages a 'bunkering in' of communication, a disconnection from social life and a greater encroachment of market logic into people's social and personal lives. More specifically in relation to the public sphere, Dahlgren (2005) observes that the idea the Internet could revitalise democracy and, possibly, political participation in second modernity coincided with what many call a 'crisis of democracy' – although, as noted in Chapter 2, democracy and participation are in a continually dynamic relationship, so the notion of such a crisis is, itself, contested.

Grossi (2005) addresses the dynamics of democracy in the digital age through two related assumptions:

1   That the processes of democracy, public sphere(s) and communication flows have undergone systemic socio-economic and politico-cultural change.
2   That the emancipative dimension of democracy, the discursive nature of the public sphere and the participative value of linguistic-communicative practices therefore need to be reassessed and understood anew.

He argues that these two assumptions must be reviewed to take the impacts of digital communication into account. Digital communication is embedded in changes to the public sphere in late modernity – in flows of both top-down political communication and bottom-up discursive practices. These are part of the development of public alternative issues, senses of multiple belongings and a range of new rights. It is difficult to map out fully the way in which this type of public sphere works; however, a key element is that it – or its constitutive parts – is communicative. Communication can be seen as participative and as having agency (Habermas 1981), because it is the foundation of vital worlds. Communicative agency, to varying degrees, forms an emancipative fabric in two ways. First, it is different from the instrumental agency of systems as communicative agency sits as a dominion-free communication. Second, communicative agency tends to be oriented towards achieving agreement, understanding and reciprocal recognition in its relational role within vital worlds, and it favours integration via solidarity (Privitera 2001). Although this (Habermasian) position can be criticised for its emphasis on deliberation, it is still evident that communication within democratic practices is part of civic culture. Increasingly, individuals' digital communication in networks – via social media platforms such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter and so on – features in their everyday discussions at home, at work, in their communities and social interactions. Although discussion in this context may not have the characteristics of a Habermasian style of deliberation, it is, nonetheless, an important aspect of 'the dynamics of reciprocity', where communication can 'generate and reinforce the parameters of civic culture' (Dahlgren 2005, p.159). This is significant because civic culture informs, shapes and impacts upon political situations.

Thus, bearing in mind that democracy is in a constant state of flux, then the way that digital media feature in its dynamics is shaped by both these social fluctuations and through the communication itself. Digital communications have certain distinctive characteristics which interact with the public sphere. Furthermore, these technologies and the socio-cultural context of the contemporary public sphere shape the communication flows that express, inform and generate particular kinds of engagement. Indeed, Grossi (2005) argues that democracy, the public sphere and communication flows are at the centre of contemporary society from the point of view of a 'reflexive modernity' (Beck 2000). In other words, the way that the culture of modernity makes modernity 'its own theme', in the sense that 'questions of the development and employment of technologies' (in the realms of nature, society and the personality) are being eclipsed by questions of the political and economic 'management' of the risks of actual or potentially utilised technologies. Grossi (2005) suggests that interpreting processes within reflexive modernity – and making them accountable – relies on a triangle made up of language, public discourse and political communication. He argues that these are at the centre of collective practices which have a participative and,

possibly, a democratic value that can hold some of these practices to account. Grossi (2005) comments that we should pay attention to communication flows across the processes of democracy, the public sphere and the communication environment in the current social context. Recent developments such as social media, alongside social change such as the development of transnational individualised societies, the mediatisation and dis-intermediation of the public sphere and transformations in politics, are all reconfiguring the patterns and meanings of participation.

Conclusion

This history of the public sphere and forms of public discourse reveals ways in which participation is further contested. There are some enduring themes in discussions of the public sphere, including issues around equity, openness, access and individuals' and groups' capacity to engage. Another prevalent theme is how communication features in the public sphere(s) and what conditions are needed to enable mediated communication to facilitate public discourse. Questions about how to engage in public debate have been asked, from the inception of the bourgeois public sphere up until today, which are based in the mediapolis of a globalised media sector. The different rationalities about proximity and scale of communication raise certain issues in relation to the character of public discourse, including which topics can be voiced and how to balance the public and private aspects of participation and communication. There have certainly been criticisms about the lack of inclusivity in the public sphere historically, and the way that the media can mediate issues in ethical ways. The rise of digital communication has emphasised each of these themes because it creates a different communicative relationship between people and amongst people and institutions. However, whether these relations are emancipatory and progressive in terms of equality and inclusiveness or not depends on the social relations of digital and social media and its use in political culture. I will explore this question in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Digital media, social media and communication

Introduction

The development of an information society based on digital technologies and services (Webster 2003; Castells 2001; Mansell and Steinmueller 2002) produces new types of communication and, therefore, a new communication environment. Digital media have contributed to past and ongoing changes to this environment (Wessels 2014). The influence of digital media within the overall media landscape reflects the way they span across – and are distinctive from – both face-to-face communication and mass media. One specific aspect of digital media's positioning is social media, which are at once personal and public, and a form of mass self-communication (Castells 2009). In addition to this personal practice, social media are also used for civic communication by public and third sector institutions, which is termed 'civic media' (Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), http://civic.mit.edu/). Furthermore, they are used for political communication by those in the political arena, as well as for marketing or other related purposes by commercial actors. There are a wide range of social media platforms – such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, discussion forums and messaging services – that involve the use of images, audio, text and/or raw data. A major concern about the ways that personal channels of communication such as social media are being used and adapted to raise, share and debate civic issues, is how much publicly accountable debate these media allow (Sarikakis and Wessels 2018). This feeds directly into questions about the role that social media play in civic and political communication.

Digital media and social media in communicative practice and experience

Social media are a type of digital media that form part of a wider communication technology and services framework. There are a variety of definitions of digital media but, as a baseline and commonly held definition, digital media cover a range of media that are encoded in a machine-readable format.

Digital media are created, viewed, distributed, modified and preserved on digital electronic devices. Examples of digital media include computer programs and software, digital imagery, digital video, digital games, web pages and websites, social media, data and databases, digital audio such as MP3s, and e-books. As noted in Chapter 3, digital media are often distinguished from print media, such as printed books, newspapers and magazines, and other traditional or analogue media, such as pictures, film or audio tape, by commentators.

Social media are based on digital media, which enable the creation and sharing of information, ideas, popular culture, personal news, news more broadly, and other forms of expression via online communities and networks. There are a variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services (see Chapter 5 for examples), nonetheless these services all share certain common characteristics. These include:

- Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications.
- The content of social media is produced by users (often called user-generated content). This includes user-generated content created through text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions.
- Users create service-specific profiles for the websites or apps that are designed and maintained by each social media organisation.
- Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups.

Social media use web-based technologies, desktop computers and mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablet computers to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organisations can share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online. They extend the way in which Web 1.0 Internet sites created substantial networked, real-time, and interactive communication between businesses, organisations, communities and individuals (Castells 2001), by deepening individuals' capacity to interact and communicate from within their social networks.

Digital and social media have extended beyond personal and corporate usage to become a key aspect of civic and political engagement (www.media. mit.edu/groups/civic-media/overview/). Socially engaged scholars and action researchers working at the Civic Media Lab and in Comparative Media Studies at MIT argue that digital and social media can be designed and used for social change. They assert that any communicational-informed changes occur in the dynamic relationships between communities, ecologies of media and technology, and the natures of information and power. They suggest the need to focus on the relationships between media, types of civic participation, and the dynamics of social and digital inclusion within a public sphere

environment (www.media.mit.edu/groups/civic-media/overview/) in order to understand social media features in civic life.

Therefore, to understand and assess the role and value of social media in civic and political communication, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the forms that digital communication can take amongst citizens, between citizens and civil society groups, as well as between citizens and political institutions. The development of digital technology in communication and media services has transformed the media landscape from an analogue mass media broadcast framework to a digitally networked structure. This has not just entailed changing from one type of technological system to another, but has reconstructed relationships between people, organisations and content:

- From highly controlled organisational access to a limited amount of content to wider access to a greater amount of content.
- From one (sender) to many (receivers) to a many-to-many (who can be both senders and receivers) relationship.
- From content that is created by producers and consumed by audiences to content that is created by both producers and consumers.
- From a hierarchical structure to a networked infrastructure.
- From single broadcast channels via specific equipment to multiple platforms and a range of media and communication devices.

Changes in media production and consumption and the increased use of digital communication services are two key drivers of wider changes to the communication environment (Wessels 2014). This entails a move from engagement characterised as being part of a media audience to that of being a media user. This is significant because it challenges communication theories based on a sender and receiver model (Shannon and Weaver 1963) or the notion of a two-step flow process of communication (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). These approaches assign varying degrees of influence to media effects, whereby audiences are seen to have limited levels of interpretation. Such media-centric approaches have been criticised for their relatively determinist approaches by those working with notions of hegemony and encoding-decoding models of the media (Hall 1973), as well as by audience studies scholars (Ang 1985; Livingstone 2005), who argue that audiences are active. Theorists using an encoding-decoding model assert that audiences have some level of interpretation, but because media texts are ideologically encoded and decoded, there are limits to differences in interpretation. Audience studies approaches go further, to argue that texts gain their meaning from the way that audiences interpret them. Although these acknowledge that people have some agency in how they interpret texts, they still position individuals as part of an audience.

This has changed in the new media environment, however, with individuals being seen more as users than audience members. Although the term

'user' comes from the design community, it has been taken up and used by scholars in Internet studies (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006). This term is significant because it suggests that individuals are not just active or passive members of an audience, but active agents in using digital technology and media. This approach focuses on the ways that people use digital media for activities such as online shopping, gaming and communicating. This is further extended to the production of content, since digital media enable users to create, as well as consume, content. Although media stories and content are engaged with in terms of what is expressed through text, image and sound, the move to digital media positions individuals differently from analogue mass media by giving them a more active role as users of digital communication and media services. It is, however, important to bear in mind that users have different roles and characteristics within a range of communication activity (Wessels et al. 2013), which shape the ways they may use the media.

The position of users in relation to digital media services is further characterised by the fact that they are also within a network, rather than in a bounded organisational structure. Given that social media are based on digital technology, their communicational and organisational forms are based on networks (Castells 2001, 2009). These networks allow for multiple connections that are not organised in any hierarchical way (although algorithms order the structure of sites and the way they appear in search lists), and they may – or may not – connect with formal media or political organisations. Therefore, they offer the possibility of an open and free communication space that is available to everyone, provided they have access to digital media and the skills to use it. In theory, this communication form and space overcomes some of the concerns about the public sphere's lack of inclusivity, since it is a popular medium of communication. As mentioned in Chapter 2, ordinary people of all ages and genders are increasingly using social media – there are currently approximately 2.51 billion social media users worldwide (www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-net work-users/).

Users within these networks create their own connections and networks in which they consume, share and create various types of content. As noted above, the purpose of an instance of communication will shape who communicates to whom in what networked configuration, using whatever particular content is relevant to that communication. Thus, friends may share personal content about a personal event such as a birthday, whereas civic activists may share campaign content with other activist groups or social movements. The malleability of digital technology means that the medium itself does not determine or structure the communication in any specific way – instead, its networking logic means that people can create their own connectivities and content as well as positioning themselves in an audience and consumer role. However, although there is extensive use of social media for personal communication, this does not necessarily translate into creating

public dialogue – whether at the level of everyday discussion in relation to 'phronesis' (see Chapter 2), or at a wider civic or political level within a reflexive kind of public sphere (see Chapters 2 and 3). So, although the networked character of social media enables many people to engage in a vast range of communication via one or more networks, it is not clear how the networking logic features in civic and political communication within the dynamics of a public sphere or spheres.

Although there is a lack of understanding and clarity about the way that digital media (including the various types of social media) act in the public sphere, they are, nevertheless, an emerging feature in political and civic communication. One of their characteristics is that they involve a proliferation of different platforms, channels and forms, which are not only being used by individuals and groups, but also being adopted by the traditional media sector within the new landscape (see Chapters 8 and 9). In particular, the rise of social media as part of the growth in media platforms is resulting in a destabilising of civic and political communication, because they make it hard for organisations to control the messages being expressed (Dahlgren 2005; Coleman and Blumler 2009). In addition, such communication is diverse, since it covers a wide range of local, national and global issues and perspectives – which does open up areas of interest but also makes it difficult to develop a coherent space for debate. These factors affect how individuals and organisations communicate with each other to shape the public sphere, and how they engage in civic life, which underpins and informs democratic debate.

Social media are a key component of this destabilisation because they have the potential to facilitate the creation of novel forms of civic society through digitally supported social networks (Dahlgren 2013), which are part of a new political culture (Castells 2004a). Silverstone (2006) reinforces the significance of this by arguing that social media are part of a mediated public space where contemporary political life finds its place at local, national and global levels. Silverstone recognises that the media are a significant element of how individuals make sense of social life, form political discourse and engage in action. However, he points out that it is impossible to know whether social media will either enhance the possibility of collective action or, conversely, fragment understanding and undermine public debate. The evidence to date suggests that social media can do both – fostering civic debate by forming a 'Fifth Estate' (Dutton 2009), but also narrowing down, fragmenting and constricting dialogue. This happens within the specific connections people make in their social media communication, and by the way that search algorithms create personalised 'filter bubbles' (Hodgkinson 2008; Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012). This networked communication based on social media amongst individuals and between people and organisations in the public sphere therefore raises questions about the quality of communication between citizens, organisations and networks (Mercea 2012). To consider the quality of communication in terms of the way it can contribute to debate within the public

sphere and its political and civic cultures, there is a need to consider the characteristics of political communication and the social relations that underpin it.

Political communication

The study of communication within political systems, between political parties, and between political actors, media organisations and citizens is well established and began in the pre-digital era of mass analogue media and print. Although there are varying approaches within this field of study, political communication can be broadly defined as 'an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public' (Norris 2001, p.73, cited in LeDuc et al. 2009). This communication process includes actors at all levels within the political sphere. Norris (2001, cited in LeDuc et al. 2009) argues that this process operates downwards from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally across linkages among political actors, as well as upwards from public opinion towards authorities. This differs from political communication research, which tends to be based on a transmission model of communication focusing on production, content and effects. Thus, research on production looks at how messages are generated by actors such as political parties and interest groups, which are transmitted using direct channels including political advertisements and publications, and the indirect channels of newspapers, radio and television. Attention is paid to its content, concentrating on levels of political reporting, the ethos of television news, any partisan balance in the press, the coverage of election campaigns and specific events, the agenda-setting reporting of policy issues, and the representation of social minorities in the news media. Effects research focuses on the impact that mediated messages such as advertisements and news have on political knowledge and opinions, political attitudes, values and behaviour. Political communication is a key part of electoral and policy-making processes. However, as Norris notes, structural developments have altered the process of political communication – especially in the move from post-war trends of a mass media comprising print newspapers, radio and television broadcasting towards digital communication.

Some of the emerging trends and characteristics of political communication (broadly defined) include the development of a pre- or proto-political domain that focuses on any topic or theme and gives expression to common interests, social relations and identities. This is widespread across the socio-digital landscape and entails the use of many types of self-publication mechanisms – such as websites, webcasting, discussions and chat rooms. Even though these might not be explicitly political, they form the basis for a civic discourse that may potentially move into a more traditional political arena. There are also shifts in the journalism domain of political communication, including news articles, editorial sections and opinion-forming

material. The main actors in this online space are: (a) major news organisations including newspapers, CNN, the BBC, and state-sponsored media such as Russia Today; (b) Internet-based organisations, which do not usually have their own reporters, such as Yahoo!; (c) alternative news organisations such as Indymedia and MediaChannel; (d) online opinion magazines such as Slate and Salon; and (e) one-person current affairs-oriented weblog sites (bloggers). In this new, more diverse environment, some journalism leans more towards an activism that blurs the boundary with alternative activist domains, while others largely comprise personal opinion and commentary. These developments move the journalism domain into more participatory directions, but also raise questions about the absence of traditional criteria such as seeking objective truth, applying journalistic rigour, and ethical reporting.[1]

Digital communication and social media are now used regularly in other areas of political communication. In the traditional advocacy domain, established organisations and groups utilise digital media to promote their political values and goals, with the aim of shaping public opinion and influencing decision makers. These include parliamentarian political parties, corporate and other organised interest groups – such as unions – and major non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Pressure groups and mobilisation campaigns which emanate from, or have strong links to, established power centres, also form part of this grouping. The alternative activist field, which is made up of less established extra-parliamentarian civic networks with more grassroots foundations and which has less hierarchical structure, also uses social media. Political expression is more interventionist and, at times, more militant (at both extremes of the political spectrum) than before, and new social movements and single-issue activist groups – which often build alliances with each other – are typical of this domain. Social media are also used to mobilise protest in events such as the Arab Spring and riots in UK cities in 2011 (Howard and Hussain 2013; Lewis et al. 2011), which can be seen as individualised connective action in which individuals come together to support a particular issue (Bennett and Segerberg 2012) that enables people to voice their concerns and desires outside established democratic processes (see Chapter 9 for more details about connective action). In another sphere, e-government enables interaction with citizens through a range of digital channels, including social media. These can be civic discussion sites, e-petitioning or e-voting sites, but currently tend to be websites providing information about social services and governmental administration rather than two-way channels of political communication.

All of these trends and examples suggest that the growing use of digital and social media is changing the characteristics of political communication. At the same time, media use is also being shaped by the way that the sphere of political communication is changing – and particularly the range of actors who are involved in political communication. This is part of broader changes at the level of the public sphere and in terms of an information culture.

Digital media, the public sphere and a global information culture

As discussed in the previous chapter, the public sphere is being shaped and modified in relation to social and political changes and developments in media technologies. Before considering the role and use of social media in the public sphere, this section will situate digital communication more broadly within the dynamics of the public sphere, political engagement and communication practices. The flows within each domain and between the domains are part of political culture, and the development of digital communications features in these flows and domains. These forms of communication are influenced and developed by social relations, which has resulted in digital technology, platforms and services becoming pervasive within society (Mansell 2012). This includes the communicative relations that are being shaped through the structures and characteristics of the media technology. In general terms, the development of digital communication provides extra opportunities for social communication – in particular adding mediatised relations to face-to-face encounters. These mediatised relations are different from relations in the analogue mass media era, which were characterised by a one-to-many model of communication. In contrast, digital communication transcends time and space and its networked flows of communication circulate people's concerns, which may include their relations with institutions, organisations, places, goods and objects (Wessels 2012b).

Lash (1999) characterises these dynamics as being part of a global information culture, which sits within a third modernity.[2] He considers the rationality of third modernity to be reflexivity, which is at once grounded in space and society, and circulated within a global information culture. Lash's argument is based on the idea of networked groupings, from the perspective that the global information culture is one in which humans, objects and texts lose their respective ontological distinctions to become entities in networked assemblages. Lash (1999) sees both an object and its circulation as part of the global information culture. Thus, human beings and computational algorithms act, and have agency, in processes of imagination and communication within a range of social practices. Therefore, human and digital forms of agency are negotiating the balance of how much each features in, and is influential in, shaping communication and socio-cultural forms and practices. In empirical and philosophical terms, humanist social values are still a key element of communication, culture and society (Wessels 2012b). Nonetheless, Lash (1999) highlights the ways in which digital technology and computational logics are part of – and have agency in – the circulation of communication and content. Although Lash focuses on circulation, he still recognises the significance of community, history, place, nature and language as all comprising aspects of modernity[3] that act in a particular way in a global information culture. He asserts that these form a fabric of index, haptic space, tactile culture and memory that ground the networked circulation within a global information culture. The elements of this fabric are found in the interstices

of global information culture as memory and raw material, by being either a *de facto* position or a resource for information culture. This dynamic of circulation and grounded realities also feeds into communication – personal, social and civic – because the communication of issues and representations is both widely circulated and specifically grounded in mutually supported ways. This means that there is a relationship between grounded issues and circulated representations in communication, and that these are configured in specific ways in relation to each communicative context.

This is seen in the way that digital communication is characterised by many-to-many interactions based on a networking logic. Castells (2007, 2009) argues that digital media, and social media in particular, mark the rise of a new form of socialised communication, which he calls 'mass self-communication'. He brings together notions of mass and personal communication, asserting that digital and social media-based communication is a form of mass communication, for two reasons. First, it has the potential to reach a global audience through peer-to-peer networks and Internet connections, and because it is multimodal, the digitisation of content and use of advanced social software (software that is open source with free downloads) means that content can be reformatted in almost any form and distributed via wireless networks. Second, in terms of personal communication, content is self-generated, its emission is self-instigated and directed, and its reception is also self-selected by many individuals communicating with many others. Together these two aspects – communication at mass levels and personal communication – create the new phenomenon of mass self-communication.

Castells's (2007) new communication realm relates to Lash's global information culture because a digital networked infrastructure, a digital language and users as 'senders' and 'receivers' who are globally distributed and globally interactive create communication contexts crafted out of the circulation and the grounding of objects and meaning. Castells also notes that even if a medium is revolutionary, it does not determine its content or influence its messages – although it can provide the possibility for unlimited diversity in communication and relatively autonomous origins of communication flows. However, these are informed by a fabric of social interests which, together with the use of digital media, reconstruct global and local production of meaning within public minds across time and space. Social media are a potentially powerful force in communication – both as part of a global information culture and as part of digital communication; however, it is the social and cultural forms in which they are embedded that shape and negotiate their power and determine their level of influence.

Communication, politics and popular culture

These changes in communication are interacting with broader social changes in what can be called an information society or a networked society (Wessels

2014). There is some debate about the precise nature of this social change but, in overall terms, it signifies a move from a society based mainly on patterns of industrial production and consumption to a globalised economy largely driven by a strong consumerist ethos from the Global North. The rise of a digitally supported networked society, combined with rapid innovation cycles, is feeding into the process of globalisation. These macro-level changes interact with meso- and micro-level shifts, which include a weakening of industrial class-based relations, the decline of nation-state control of economic policy and the decreasing power of national political parties (Barney 2004). These types of social organisation are being replaced by a more individuated and individualised society in which political issues are often identity based or relate to wider global issues such as the environment, women's movements, human rights and wider global inequalities (Wessels 2014). These changes are materialising in ambivalent and contradictory ways within social relations, leading to individuals and groups positioning themselves along a continuum of personal and public concern. Individuation pushes people to seek meaning in a context where symbolic institutions such as churches, political and cultural organisations, and workers' organisations are becoming less influential in society. The media are an exception to the decline of symbolic organisations, as individuals draw on the symbolic aspects of traditional media, as well as using social media to develop their own networks, communities, interests, symbolic worlds and lifestyles (Wessels 2014).

These processes of individuation and individualisation, combined with the wider progression of globalisation, are also contributing to cultural and political de-massification. In late modernity, industrial class-based relations are being undermined by this development (Adam et al. 2000), while mass society has also transformed into social relations created through niche lifestyle consumption approaches and the attendant production patterns that support them. These trends mean that traditional class-based political parties and other mass parties are experiencing a crisis of identity and rationale. They have lost much of their purpose of political and cultural representation, their ability to support welfare service policies, and to negotiate workers' rights within a trade union framework. In this context, traditional political communication spaces such as political and class-based broadcasting to mass audiences via analogue television, radio and printed pamphlets are also being undermined. Not only has the technology moved from analogue to digital, but social and political interests are now based on – and located within – postindustrial and information society social relations. In this emerging context, the relations and patterns of political interaction have changed, along with the relationship between political, civic and personal communication.

One of the developments in public – including political – communication is the growth of an 'audience democracy' (Manin 1997). Audience democracy refers to the move away from traditional political party democratic practices,

towards personality politics which has occurred since the early 1990s. Personalities are favoured over parties, media performance is seen as more important than policy programmes and political manifestos, and perceived senses of authenticity are valued over competence (de Beus 2011). de Beus (2011) argues that Manin's (1997) development of the term audience democracy is similar to Edelman's notion of symbolic politics (Edelman 1985, 1971). This idea notes the change from politics having an instrumental purpose to a more dramaturgical form of politics that is expressed through spectacle. The role of the media features strongly in audience democracy, since politicians use the media to engage with people by utilising certain symbols and rituals to persuade them to identify with the politicians' message. This helps to generate connections between political personalities and individuals. Thus, audience democracy creates a 'direct' personal relationship, one that is 'in-mediated' because it refers to a shared political message created by political public relations (PR) agencies, the media and citizens. It is also neo-plebiscitary, as it gives the impression that members of the audience are invited to join in a debate and can vote to approve or reject any proposals. Audience democracy is 'spectatorial' in that it uses media rituals and events to express political issues in a dramatic form for a public comprising spectators.

This development is happening in a social context in which political relationships are filtered by media systems and flows of political communication. Digital communication plays a distinctive role in both the trend towards individualisation and audience democracy, because networked, instantaneous, interactive, many-to-many instances of communication support the personalisation of social life. This increases people's choices, thereby loosening any cooperative or solidaristic ties that are felt to be unsatisfactory and producing a movement towards communities of choice. In this context, new associations, groups and movements are still formed, based on shared interests, issues and concerns, which are stronger or weaker at different times and last for certain periods. These new configurations may re-aggregate on less obvious grounds – not necessarily on established institutional bases. They are no longer strictly mass groupings, but can be understood rather as 'transnational individualised societies' which form an intermediate dimension between nation-states and global society.

The combination of social change and communication change in the development of new relational networks generates a reconsideration of representation systems and their links with social belonging, political activism and civic engagement. As many theorists have noted, late modernity has brought about a disembedding of social relations – across spatial, temporal and social links – that transcends nation-state borders (Giddens 1994; Fraser 1992, 2006). Social media support these trends because they are global in reach and enable personal communication between people and places. In principle, this should result in cultural interaction which is personalised, leading to

fragmentation and even tendencies towards 'bunkering in'. In practice, however, the flexibility of the Internet means that this more personalised framework is not necessarily becoming fragmented in this way. Such forms of communication may be local, national or global, shaped by particular interests and networks, or they may bring people together in social movements, for example, around 'anti-globalisation' sentiments. Digital media and social media enable social groups of audiences, fans, tribes and friends to form in ways that integrate offline and online worlds. These worlds include many of people's interactions in social and cultural life, and these experiences also shape the ways they view and engage with politics, or, at least, the political spectacle of democracy.

These types of formations develop in the sphere of political spectacle by recognising each other as 'users' of a collective participatory process, in which 'infotainment' is just as much part of the language of politics as show business (Gianpietro and Sfardini 2009). Commentators identify a trend towards what is termed the 'entertainmentisation' of both the public sphere and politics. This is seen, for instance, in media intrusion into politicians' private lives, and the rise of personality-based politics, journalistic practice and reporting. Stanyer and Wring (2004) note that matters which were once considered personal are now covered in both the 'quality' and 'popular' press. Reigert's (2007) research highlights how participative technologies and viewer voting in popular television programmes means that participation in television has similarities to political engagement and, indeed, politics often draws on these techniques as well. Furthermore, TV programmes such as *This Week* (UK) and *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* (US) use humour and parody as an integral part of political communication to strip away the artifice and inconsistencies of official political discourse and challenge politicians' authority. In so doing, they offer a pleasurable entry into current political topics, thereby contributing to the evolution of mediated political culture. Social media are also part of this dynamic, especially in the way that boundaries between the private and public are being redrawn. This type of negotiation, alongside concurrent changes in the media and communication environment, is altering the political character of communication. In this context, personality plays a significant role in election campaigns, which can even lead to a perception that certain senior politicians are key players in national, and sometimes global, soap operas (Stanyer and Wring 2004, pp.1–2). Karvonen (2009) deepens this argument by writing that contemporary politics is represented as entertainment, celebrity culture and popular culture, which is linked to ideas about deliberate over-simplification or appealing to the lowest common denominator in society. This is not occurring to the same degree in every country, but general trends such as media hyper-competiveness with a lightly regulated press, weak legal rights of individual privacy, the rise of political marketing and political spin are all creating the global context for entertainmentisation.

It is generally felt that this move towards politics as entertainment is negative, and a form of 'dumbing down' (Lilleker 2006; Franklin 2008). However, some commentators, such as van Zoonen (2005), suggest that linking politics with popular culture makes it more accessible – and, in the sense of accessibility, more democratic. She asserts that politics can be made more pleasurable through forms of popular culture that encourage engagement in politics, arguing that personalisation and dramatisation can serve as a resource for political citizenship, because they help to convey politics in a reflective way. This makes people think about what citizenship means and how they can enact politics (Dahlgren 2009). In addition, there are certain similarities between political engagement and pop cultural fandom. Van Zoonen (2005) explains that fans invest emotional involvement and symbolic valence in the objects and subjects of their engagement in fan culture and, likewise, symbolism and emotion are also traits of citizenship. Political parties express symbolic values and people forge alliances with political positions for emotional, as well as rational, reasons. She also points to structural similarities between fans and publics because both involve shared values and a willingness to engage in collective actions. She does not suggest that fandom and citizenship are the same but, rather, that the model of fan cultures can provide understandings of some of the mechanisms of politics, such as emotional intensity and imagination work. She argues that popular culture can process and communicate collective experiences, emotion and knowledge, whilst offering opportunities for people to negotiate their views and opinions on contested values as well as explicit political issues. Lunt and Stenner (2005) cite *The Jerry Springer Show* as an example of an emotional public sphere. Dahlgren (2009) argues that popular culture can, therefore, act as a form of meta-deliberation which adds to – but does not replace – other forms of expression, different registers and emotional spectra to the more traditional forms of news and political communication.

One area in which popular culture and political engagement interact is the way that young people participate politically. A commonly held perception is that young people do not engage in politics (Vromen et al. 2016); however, Coleman (2006, 2007) argues that they are not, in fact, abandoning politics, but rather the political system has abandoned and/or excluded them. For example, Coleman (2006) points out that the way parliamentarian politics is represented on television is off-putting to many and is part of the reason why young people disengage from politics. In contrast, his study of *Big Brother* (2006) shows that young people do have the capability to follow news, to reflect critically on politics and participate in elections. Coleman avers that the reason many do not do engage with mainstream politics is because they feel outsiders in someone else's story and believe themselves to have little political efficacy. However, the young people in his study found inclusion and engagement in the spaces created by *Big Brother*. In this programme, young people can engage with – and vote on – a range of issues such as

bullying, sexual identity, morality and trust, inequality, racism and so on (see Coleman 2006). These are political issues, but the way they are considered in formal political processes frequently undermines the way that young people feel able to engage with them.

Coleman's (2006) research reveals the limitations of what politics is considered to be in general terms. He argues that formal politics frequently overlooks the challenges and concerns that people experience in their daily lives – such as ethics, identity, justice, taboos and social power relations, as well as topics that are not in their immediate local or everyday sphere, but are national, international, regional or supra-regional. Coleman observes that not only are the topics on the political agenda out of step with young people's concerns, but they are often represented in a way that does not resonate with them, and are played out across traditional forms of communication, which are distant from younger generations and new media cultures. He proposes the need for 'enhanced double transparency', which means that politics must become more visible, compelling and accessible (for young people) and that, at the same time, politicians need to know more about young people and become better anchored in the realities of their lives. He asserts that this would involve further decentralisation of political communication – and, perhaps, also political power.

These are challenging ideas which – to some extent – bring the issue of popular culture and politics under the rubric of cultural citizenship. This perspective underscores the democratic potential of popular culture, whilst recognising that this may not always be realised. Popular culture is accessible and easy to engage with, so has the potential to join people together, making them feel welcome and offering them a sense of belonging. It also provides a space where people can express and share their hopes and dreams for society, and process their fears. In ideal terms, 'cultural citizenship is the process of bonding and community building, and reflection on that bonding, that is implied in partaking of the text-related practices of reading, consuming, celebrating and criticising offered in the realm of popular culture' (Hermes 2005, p.10).

Communication, media networks and civic spaces

The Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) – now often termed digital communication – are highly integrated into people's lived experience. The technology, its devices, user interfaces and services are pervasive and are used by individuals, organisations, civic groups and communities. Although there is still some inequality of access, skills and digital literacy (see Chapter 2), digital communication is, nonetheless, a common feature of everyday life (Wessels 2010b). In the early days of the WWW there was much debate about a distinction between online and offline life, but it is now widely accepted that people's lives involve an integration between them both

(Wessels 2010b). Digital communication and technology have been domesticated and assimilated into normal routines, including household tasks and social networks (Berker et al. 2005).

Digitally supported social networks allow for instantaneous all-way communication in real time. As Dewey (1939a) argues, society is created in and through communication – and hence a combination of social and technical developments is interacting with changes in communication. Digital communication enables users to generate and develop socio-digital networks which are pervasive and varying in their characteristics. Dahlgren (2009) adapts Nieminen's (2007) framework to identify the following types of networks:

- Associational networks, such as friendships, hobby or voluntary groups, based on active choice.
- Societal networks, which have a more definitive character and involve socialisation and membership in a community or professional body. Choice is involved, although membership often derives directly from social circumstances.
- Issue- or interest-based networks, which aim to influence decision making, e.g. politically engaged publics.
- Imposed networks, which address people and define them as members of nations or other large bodies – for example, as citizens – that accord specific rights and obligations.

Dahlgren (2009) argues that most people's lives are lived in and through these types of social networks, increasingly with the help of digital communication and services. Some networks are actively sought out, created or joined, while others are imposed on, or simply grow up around, people. One of the guiding principles of Internet culture is that it offers unrestricted spaces for alternative voices to speak up and be heard.

Although the Internet is designed in an open way and regulates itself, barriers to it still exist, as previously discussed in Chapter 2. These include obstacles such as a lack of access and the wider digital gaps sitting on top of existing divides (Wessels 2013). Furthermore, an individual's socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation can all influence which networks they engage with. Other power dynamics affect which communities can inhibit or shape the way the Internet is used, for example migrant populations and poorer citizens of the Global South. Putnam's (2000) argument that social capital is a manifestation of an individual's network is important here, because it suggests that the better connected a person is, the more likely they are to participate offline and online as an active citizen. Dahlgren (2009) agrees with this, explaining that well-connected individuals are more able to act as a 'hub', meaning that they are also likely to have more influence in a network. This dynamic captures the importance and power of any network

in terms of each participant's personal connections. Equally, how a person operates on the Internet is important for gaining connections and belonging to networks. This relates to the ways in which senses of the political can emerge within social settings across all four networks described above, but especially the third type – issue- or interest-based networks – which seems most tightly linked to civic agency.

Castells's (2009) notion of mass self-communication provides a good sensitising concept to help think through the ways that social media are interacting with political culture. Castells argues that interpersonal communication must be differentiated from societal communication because the former entails designated sender(s) and receiver(s), whereas the content of communication in the latter can be diffused across wider society. As Thompson (1995) notes, this definition of societal communication is often referred to as mass communication. Whereas interpersonal communication is interactive (meaning that a message is sent from one person to another with many feedback loops), mass communication is usually one-directional, although it may include some limited interactive features. In the main, traditional mass media such as books, newspapers, films, radio and TV are one-directional, because they are channels of one-to-many communication. The Internet has changed this pattern, since it has the capacity to send messages from many to many people in real time or at a chosen time, and it has the ability to use point-to-point communication, narrowcasting and broadcasting. Haythornthwaite (2011) notes that social media foster three types of communication: (a) individualised, (b) community, and (c) crowd-based communication. For example, the micro-blogging service Twitter operates at the individual level, communicating via 140-character messages. Social-graph media, such as Facebook and Com-me-Toolkit, are configured using platforms that enable community-based communication in varying ways. The power of the individual in a group can be mobilised via crowdfunding social media, as seen in Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential election campaign, for example. This shows how social media can be used and adapted in relation to the purpose and characteristics of the intended communication practice.

Although mass self-communication has the potential to reach a global audience, for example, by posting YouTube videos, social media, tweets, blogs with RSS links to a number of web sources, or messages to massive e-mail lists, Castells (2009) argues that it is also self-communication because the message is self-generated. He observes that the definition of potential receivers is self-directed and the retrieval of specific messages or content from the WWW and other electronic communication networks is self-selected. These types of interactions complement, rather than replace, others, since all three forms of communication – interpersonal, mass, and mass self-communication – coexist and interact. Castells states that it is novel for the articulation of all these forms of communication to be combined into a

composite, interactive, digital hypertext that includes, mixes and recombines a whole range of cultural expressions conveyed by human interaction in their diversity. This includes technological developments, changing organisational and institutional structures of communication, the cultural dimension of the process of multi-layered communication and the ways that communication expresses the social (and power) relations that underpin a multimodal communication system.

Despite some inequality of access and other aspects of the digital divide, social actors and citizens around the world are using this new communication capacity to advance their own projects, to defend their interests and assert their values (Castells 2012). The corporate and public sectors are using multimodal communications to interact with customers and citizens, while ordinary people are also using these new forms of communication. Multimodal communication uses text, aural, linguistic, spatial and visual resources in the creation of messages. Both this type of communication and the way in which the media are user-generated are resulting in a contestation of power amongst the various controllers of communications, citizens and groups, as well as public and NGO sector actors in civic and political contexts. These contexts also include personal or issue-based concerns that extend a more narrowly defined understanding of politics. This contestation over which voices can be heard is expressive of communication and communication change. Castells argues that a new field of communication is emerging through a process of multi-dimensional change, which is shaped by conflicts rooted in the contradictory structure of interests and values that constitute society.

Conclusion

Social issues and concerns are being expressed and shared within society in new and diverse ways. Some of these may be viewed within a narrow definition of politics, whereas others may be expressed through popular culture, civic fora or protest. The rise of social media within the digital media framework is a key feature of these trends, because it allows people to express and share their concerns via a range of communication networks. Although media forms do not determine the content or subsequent social or political action, these new forms of communication are different from analogue mass media forms of political communication, so enable people to create and shape novel forms of civic society (Dahlgren 2003). This communication dynamic is part of a new political culture that is being expressed and understood through a range of social and cultural forms such as popular culture, everyday life, individualised social life and issue-based politics. Silverstone (2006) reinforces this point, arguing that social media are part of a mediated public space where contemporary political life finds its place at individual, national and global levels. Silverstone (2006) recognises that the media are a

significant factor in helping individuals make sense of social life, form political discourse and engage in action. The characteristics of social and digital media interact with the circulation of content in a global information culture and with an array of social networks – whether personal, civic, popular or political. People are finding new ways to engage with issues, using social media and networks beyond the traditional political sphere, and this has the potential either to increase the possibility of collective or connective action, or to fragment and limit understandings and undermine public debate. Silverstone (2006) asserts that we do not yet understand social media's potential to foster deliberative democracy – in terms of both the characteristics of social media tools and any attendant new forms of social networking – to produce political discourse and action. It is, therefore, important to consider how both of these aspects shape the formation of civic communication and political discussion, and how, if at all, social media develop and are shaped into civic media – both by design and through use. This is discussed in the following chapters.

Notes

1 Although it should be noted that not all journalism is open – as seen for example in post-Soviet countries (Miazhevich 2011).
2 Third modernity sits beyond 'sociological theory's high modernity and rationality of The Enlightenment and cultural theory's deconstructive turn and anti-rationality of the other' (Lash 1999, p.1). Lash considers the rationality of third modernity to be reflexivity, which is at once grounded in space and society and circulated within a global information culture.
3 What Lash calls 'second modernity', which he defines as holding a cultural logic in world systems built on nation-states, manufacturing, and institutional structures based on the social or on society (Lash 1999, p.13).

Chapter 5

The design and use of social media in forms of participation

Introduction

Communication is a key feature of engagement and participation and it takes many forms. Some of the characteristics of participation are created and shaped by the configuration of the participants who are communicating and by the forms of communication they choose to use. The design of the communication media used is a key aspect of these different forms of communication. These diverse designs of communication media, along with various forms of communication, enable different types of interactions to take place within participatory action. Some elements of this communication, such as communication technology (Mansell and Silverstone 1996), are formally and explicitly designed. Other elements, such as one-to-one interpersonal communication, group communication and mass media communication, are shaped by their specific social forms. Individuals, groups and media organisations utilise a range of social forms of communication. They also use the design features of specific communication tools to craft their communication. It is, therefore, important to consider the design of social media and differing forms of communication, in order to understand how social media feature in engagement, participation and in shaping political culture.

Social media and communication in civic and political culture

As Castells argues, social media are a means of personal communication that is networked and at scale. Social media are defined as: 'Internet-based platforms that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, usually using either mobile or web-based technologies' (Margetts et al. 2015, p.5). These platforms take many forms, including blogs and micro-blogs such as Twitter and Weibo, and social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Tuenti, Instagram, Snapchat, Mixi, Cyworld and Orkut. There are content-sharing sites like YouTube, reddit, Pinterest and Delicious, as well as social bookmarking sites such as Digg, reddit and Delicious. Others are specifically designed for civic activists, for example, Avaaz, Kiva, Moveon and

mySociety, while some support activities that produce online resources, like Wikipedia and Baidu Baike (Margetts et al. 2015).

The malleable design of social media's different platforms and devices enables people to use them in various creative ways. This creativity is located in spaces where literacy skills, social practices and cultural sensibilities of use interact with the design of these tools and platforms. This means that users need a level of digital literacy, which is embedded within the multimodal character of the platforms and communication forms – in other words, social media literacies are electronic, aural and image based (Giroux 2012). In the same way that platforms and devices differ, so do the communication networks. Because of their potential for self-expression and creativity, social media are becoming a significant part of contemporary civic and political culture. In general terms, civic communication is often issues based, relating to policies, events or circumstances at local, national and international levels. It involves citizens as well as local government, public service broadcasting and non-governmental organisations. Traditional dialogue between citizens and these organisations is undertaken using various channels, some of which are driven by the organisation (e.g. polling and media reports), and others led by citizens and grassroots groups (e.g. voting and protesting). Both parties use social media differently, since they offer new ways for voices to be heard and because their networked structure has the potential to foster new forms of civic communication and participation.

Social media provide an immediate and global way to express and share civic concerns, for instance through signing e-petitions, organising protest marches and mobilising opinion across self-forming networks. One of the advantages of using social media in this way is that communication is faster and more flexible than traditional, non-digital communication channels which are unable to respond so rapidly and specifically to civic issues (Lewis et al. 2011). For example, Twitter was used to coordinate action by the Arab Spring pro-democracy movement in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Jordan in 2010, and is consistently used by the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement. Instagram has been used in other contexts, such as the photographs that amateur photographer Devin Allen posted of people protesting about the murder of Freddie Gray in Baltimore in 2015, to raise awareness of police brutality and racism (Crider 2015). In that case, the mainstream media picked up these pictures and *Time* magazine even used one of Allen's images on its front cover. Social media posts therefore comprise a source of data – not only photographs on Instagram, but also words and images on sites such as Tagboard, which aggregates hashtagged posts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Vine and Flickr. Storify acts in a similar way, by enabling people to search, collect phrases, hashtags and other terms from across the World Wide Web, for example:

- #handsupdontshoot
- #blacklivesmatter
- #ericgarner
- #ferguson
- #wecantbreathe
- #shutitdown
- #freddiegray

Other examples of social media posts include, on Twitter, DeRay McKesson @deray and the founders of #BlackLivesMatter, who are on @aliciagarza and @opalayo.

Social media are used to raise awareness, garner support and mobilise action at the level of public opinion and popular protest. People can participate in this by following an issue or movement online, which engenders a sense of connection to a movement or cause. This is also true for people who are at a distance from the issue, or unable to join in the activities physically in person. In this way, social media supports the development of transnational communities and networks of support. For example, in 2014 when people protested in Missouri, US, against the shooting of black citizen Michael Brown by a white police officer – referred to as the 'Ferguson Uprising' – people in the Middle East who had been sprayed with tear gas explained to the American protesters online how to treat the effects of this gas. The point that people can easily follow an issue from a distance, just by 'clicking', raises questions about their level of commitment. There is concern that this type of online activity does not constitute any real engagement or participation, because individuals are able to feel that they are participating and acting through online processes such as posting a hashtag or taking part in an online petition, without taking any real-life action or showing any additional commitment to a cause. This type of online activism has been derided as 'slacktivism' (Morozov 2011) and 'hashtag (#) activism' (Giroux 2012). Some commentators, such as Crider (2015), argue that engaging through social media is a relatively convenient way for people to appear to participate, by expressing outrage about and/or support for an issue, without actually having to contribute any further involvement. Nonetheless, others recognise its power to motivate people to organise collectively together around an issue and to spread information rapidly.

In order to assess how social media are used and what types of participation they engender, we need to consider their specific contexts of use in relation to the design of particular media platforms. The way that social media are designed determines the ways they can be used and the kinds of communication they facilitate. However, digital technology is fairly flexible (Wessels et al. 2012; Dittrich et al. 2014), and users can shape the affordances of the technology design to meet their own personal communication needs.

Social media design

In order to understand the way that social media design shapes communication, there is a need to clarify the scope of this form of communication technology. Kaplan and Haelein's (2010) definition of social media is useful here because it mediates between the broader notion of use and the more detailed design characteristics. They define social media as 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content' (Kaplan and Haelein 2010, p.61). This definition points to the way that social media are designed for: (a) the particular configurations of communicating users; (b) the specific characteristics of the content that can be communicated, in certain formats and ways; and (c) the experiential sense of connection that the communication creates.

Haythornthwaite (2011) argues that social media's design is one aspect of (a) the particular configurations of communicating users. She identifies the three main forms of communication that are encompassed within social media: individualised communication; community communication; and crowd-based communication. Accordingly, she notes that the micro-blogging service Twitter operates at a mass individualised level, as its design enables people to share 140-character messages and images. On the other hand, while still at a mass scale, social-graph media such as Facebook and Com-me-Toolkit are configured to facilitate community communication using an array of media modalities. She argues that the power of the crowd is mobilised via crowdfunding social media, which provide an example of crowd-based communication. A well-known early example of this is Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential campaign.

In terms of (b) the specific characteristics of the content that can be communicated, in certain formats and ways, social media are a form of 'user-generated media' (UGM), since its users generate both the communication and the content. Social media are designed to enable users to connect to each other in order to share content, document relationships and indicate interest in user-generated topics. Users create messages, images or status updates and circulate these via social media services to other users who are connected to the same platform. This formula encapsulates the general principle of UGM, which is modified within each individual service to provide specific functions. Different forms of UGM can be categorised in line with each service's aims and focus along a spectrum, based on the type of connection between users and the ways that information is shared. For example, interest-graph media (Ravikant and Rifkin 2010) encourage users to form connections with others based on shared interests, regardless of whether they personally know the other people or not.

In relation to (c) the experiential sense of connection that the communication creates, the micro-blogging service Twitter shapes an experience in

which users share short status updates with a network of 'followers' in a largely one-way relationship (Gorrell and Bontcheva 2014). In this way, a single individual or organisation can attract large numbers of followers who are interested in what they have to say, but these followers are not required to participate in any way by responding to the tweet. The experience of social-graph media is different, since it encourages users to connect with people they feel they have real-life relationships with, as well as connections formed via a range of online interactions. For instance, Facebook provides a way for users to keep in touch with people who are remotely located or to share information with friends and relatives who see each other regularly. Typically, short contributions are shared which outline current events in users' lives or link to something on the Internet which they think others in their network might enjoy. These updates are combined into a time-ordered stream for other people to read. Professional networking services (PNSs), such as LinkedIn, aim to provide an introductions service in the context of work, where choosing to connect to a person or organisation implies that you are providing a degree of recommendation for them, as a career advancement contact for others. PNS forms of social media tend to attract older users (i.e. 25- to 55-year-old users) than interest-graph or social-graph media (Skeels and Grudin 2009).

Crowdsourcing platforms such as Zooniverse identify a particular project, which members of a crowd undertake tasks in and upload data onto the site. Crowdsourcing is defined as a process 'where individuals or organisations solicit contributions from a large group of unknown individuals (the crowd) or, in some cases, a bounded group of trusted individuals or experts' (Bowser and Shanley 2013, p.45). Craglia and Shanley (2015) comment that one of the features of crowdsourcing is that some contributors get paid while others do not, depending on the project rationale and ethos. They also observe that the characteristics of the contributions vary – from comprising specific tasks (of varying complexity), such as mapping in www.openstreet map.org, or providing innovative ideas more generally as in www.atizo.com. They also note other types of resource-based contributions including donating money (www.kickstarter.com), time (www.timebanking.org), or computing resources, for instance (http://folding.stanford.edu). Crowdsourcing is usually based on a data collection and analysis algorithm that is centrally designed by researchers, and quality assurance methods are often put in place (Craglia and Shanley 2015).

There are, of course, variations across social media services, but the well-established Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Zooniverse examples given here are exemplars of the different user configurations and ways of sharing content. However, communication is more than both a network of users and the content that users create and share. It also encompasses feelings of connectedness, because it provides a ritual that cements sociability, as well as a communication system that transmits information (Lyon 2001).

Communication media therefore also involve a sense of presence and richness alongside social activity, in which those communicating undertake presentation and disclosure work.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) seek to classify social media by building on the notions of social presence, media richness and the social process of self-presentation and self-disclosure in social media communication. They draw on Short, Williams and Christie's (1976) theory, which focuses on the ways that media differ through their respective degrees of 'social presence'. Social presence is understood in relation to the degree that the acoustic, visual and physical aspects of the media communication facilitate communication between the partners. This is influenced by factors such as the deeper level of intimacy that interpersonal communication enables, compared to mass-mediated communication. Another feature is the immediacy of the communication, i.e. whether the medium is asynchronous or synchronous. Social presence is usually lower in mediated than interpersonal communication, and in asynchronous communication such as e-mail than in synchronous (real-time) communication such as live chat.

The related concept of 'media richness' proposes that communication seeks to increase understanding, to varying degrees, by reducing uncertainty and resolving ambiguity. Daft and Lengel (1986) argue that different media possess varying levels of richness, which they quantify as the amount of information that the media can transmit within certain time intervals. The better the quality of the information transmitted through a particular medium – which may involve the quantity and timelines of the communication – means that some media are more able to resolve ambiguity and uncertainty than others. Drawing on the work of Goffman (1959), Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) raise the issue of self-presentation in interaction and communication, which they relate to the notion of disclosure. In everyday life, self-disclosure is part of the process of developing relationships. It is seen in the digital world in the way that people present themselves in forums such as personal web-pages, as well as through mobile phone applications such as Snapchat and Instagram (Schau and Gilly 2003). This presentation involves some level of personal disclosure, such as thoughts, feelings, likes and dislikes, which may be real or faked, but act to support the image being presented and the purpose of the communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) build on these aspects to identify characteristics of social media that are based on social presence and self-presentation, as shown in Table 5.1.

Kaplan and Haenlein's categorisation shows that collaborative projects such as Wikipedia and blogs are low in social presence because of the comparatively static way they formulate their text and images, and they only allow for a relatively simple communication exchange. Nonetheless, blogs develop relationships through self-presentation and self-disclosure more than collaborative projects, because a blogger discusses issues through varying levels of personal opinions and thoughts. At the next level, content-based

Table 5.1 Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/ self-disclosure

		Social presence/media richness: low to high		
Self-presentation/ self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g. YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)

(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p.63)

communities such as YouTube and social networking sites like Facebook have a higher level of social presence and media richness, because they also enable and encourage the sharing of pictures, videos and other forms of media, as well as text, in a richer way than through the format of Wikipedia, for example. There is a less intense focus on self-disclosure in content communities, but varying degrees of self-disclosure in social networking sites that foster senses of connection. Virtual games and social worlds such as World of Warcraft and Second Life have even higher levels of social presence and media richness, as they aim to replicate many dimensions of face-to-face interactions in a virtual environment. They also have strong levels of self-disclosure, but where action in virtual games is guided by strict rules that oblige users to behave in a certain way, there is more potential for (real or fictitious) self-disclosure.

Social media are distinctive because the various platforms and interfaces offer a range of possible ways to communicate that produce different communicative experiences. Thus, the design of the human-computer interaction (HCI) that takes place in social media is directed by the design of its interface and platform. This provides senses of connectiveness and understanding, and shapes the kinds of relations that can be formed through communication, for instance, individual followers on Twitter or community-based online forums. Some of this design is visible, such as the technical interface, while other aspects are largely invisible, like the algorithms built into software and systems. These algorithms also shape user experience and influence the way in which content and contacts are computationally modelled (Berry 2011).

Algorithms as a feature of civic and public communication

Algorithms are built into the design of social media communication to underpin platform services. They are an integral part of the digital systems and their operations in search engines, personalised news systems, global financial markets and political campaigns across all forms of digital

communication, curation and search. Algorithms work by recording parti-cular web-use and data flows and semantically identifying data patterns. This underpins the way that a user can engage with content – whether through search, recommender logics and/or data analytics. Writing these algorithms often results in biases in the way data are computed, and these biases can generate a range of discriminatory outcomes. Algorithms therefore have a considerable influence because of the ways they analyse digital data and consequently guide users to engage with information across the Web. In short, they become a power in society because they steer users towards particular decisions and choices about what is relevant, significant and important. This unseen presence raises concerns about the lack of transparency in the way that algorithms work.

Journalists are, therefore, beginning to discuss the ways that algorithms operate in public, private and civic contexts (Diakopoulos 2015), building upon journalism's longstanding and widely held role in the public sphere. Thomas Carlyle, writing in 1841 (based on six lectures given in May 1840), noted Burke's Three Estates of Parliament (politicians in the House of Commons, nobility in the House of Lords and clergy in the Church of England), and observed that the men sitting in the reporters' gallery were even more important. The media are, consequently, often described as the Fourth Estate, acting as a critical observer to debate and contest any abuses of power in the other three pillars of society. This entails ensuring that citizens are informed about political, economic, social and cultural issues, so that they can participate in democracy. Journalists are, therefore, responsible for reporting on a range of issues that are relevant to the public interest, so the way that algorithms may be influencing people's knowledge and understanding is encroaching upon their remit. Because of this, investigative journalists, in particular, are developing approaches to understand how algorithms work (Diakopoulos 2015).

This entails trying to make algorithms visible. Some journalists are doing this by carrying out 'reverse engineering' to extract knowledge or design blueprints that reveal what an algorithm is doing. This is done by studying and then emulating the behaviour of an algorithm – namely the input, output and the transformation from one to the other. However, as it is not always possible to have all the information about these aspects to hand, journalists are having to create other types of reverse engineering. For example, if inputs are not available, then they need to observe or simulate inputs as part of an investigation. This is an interesting line of enquiry, as is the question of how an algorithm transforms an input into an output. This type of investigation requires computational skills and understanding. For instance, there needs to be an awareness that external evidence of an algorithm can be disturbed by A/B testing, which is the practice of randomly assigning different treatments or content to various groups to optimise for the best response rate or return. Algorithms can be unstable, they can change over

time, and they can have randomness built into them. These factors create difficulties in understanding patterns of input-output relationships. Because of this, and a range of other computational issues, the media sector will have to invest in developing computational skills and knowledge in order to make sense of algorithmic decisions.

Journalists will certainly need these skills – or have access to people with these skills – to be able to report on the impact of such algorithms. This, in turn, also means addressing some of the legal issues around journalistic practice and wider legal frameworks, particularly paying attention to any legal ramifications around algorithmic accountability which is identified by this investigative reporting. Furthermore, the process of investigating algorithms may raise new ethical questions such as: 'how might the investigation allow the algorithm to be manipulated or circumvented?' and 'who stands to benefit or suffer disadvantage from that manipulation?' (Diakopoulos 2015).

There is now a greater recognition that it is important to understand algorithms, by those working in the public sphere, other sectors, and – increasingly – ordinary citizens. However, this needs to be couched in a broader appreciation of the significance of any particular algorithmic action in a specific context. This means a level of interpreting an algorithm in relation to the wider range of historical, cultural and social expectations about the issue under question. Diakopoulos (2015) argues that traditional journalism still has a role to play here, through its reporting and investigation skills, which both enable this kind of interpretation of the influence of algorithms in social life, and raise questions about their accountability. These types of issues are not just relevant to journalists' work, but are also important to activists, social movements, civil society groups and individual citizens. However, the role of the journalist includes a belief in transparency and accountability that is centred in the public sphere and is founded on some sense of a public good. In principle, therefore, this position and role means that journalists should take a less political, partisan and campaigning stance than those who are actively involved in campaigning, activist or political activities.

HCI and algorithms (Ananny 2015) are both aspects of social media design which influence the way users experience communication via social media, although it is possible for users to adapt the design somewhat to meet their own purposes. The various types of social media illustrate how important it is to appreciate the influence of design decisions in the configuration of social media platforms, to understand how social media work in civic communication and the types of communication gaps they may yield (Hargittai and Hsieh 2010b).

To summarise, social media's design determines what can be communicated, in what way, and to what configuration of users. It affects how those in communication encounters can appropriate its technological features, what content can be shared, how it connects with different user

configurations, and how it facilitates different communicative experiences. To fully appreciate how these design attributes influence communication, and how communication and participation are related, there is a need to consider 'design in use'. This is a term used by design communities to refer to developing and testing design in the context of how it will be used, and it is a helpful concept to illustrate this key point in this book. The idea of design in use here refers to how design features in 'real world' usage of social media rather than in a design process. It offers a useful framework for assessing how social media design affects communication. By looking at the ways that different users in various contexts draw on social media's design features, it becomes possible to assess how design shapes communication, and how it influences the social dynamics of civic and political communication. These social dynamics are shaped by the cultural context of the communication, so this review and understanding lead towards developing a socio-cultural and socio-technical framework of analysis.

Social media design and use in relation to engagement and participation

To understand how social media design affects political and civic communication, there is a need to consider its role in the relationship between citizen engagement and social media use. Although taking a 'design in use' approach provides useful insights, it is still difficult to identify which specific factors influence participation, how social media operate in different contexts, and how the use of social media is linked to levels of participation.

Boulianne (2015) undertook a meta-analysis of 36 studies of social media use and participation, which were based on self-reported surveys conducted between 2008 and 2013. Her analysis revealed some overarching themes. In overall terms, taking into account the varying factors examined in the studies, 82% of respondents showed a positive relationship between social media use and some form of civic or political engagement or participation. However, only half of the relationships that were found between social media use and participation were statistically significant, and there was very little correlation between social media use and election campaign participation. The strongest relationships between social media and social networking sites were seen amongst young people (the age ranges varied across the studies she selected but the general age range was between 18 and 24). Although there seems to be a positive correspondence between social media and participation in the form of protest activity, these are no more likely to be statistically significant than any other types of participation. Furthermore, in order to understand participation in the form of protest, there is a need to consider a range of activities, such as marches, petitions, boycotts and demonstrations. However, these different types of activities are not explicitly identified in studies about protest, which makes it difficult to reach any robust conclusions about the

role of social media and what forms of protest their design allows users to take part in. Nonetheless, in other studies that do identify a range of protest activities (e.g. demonstrations), there is evidence to suggest that social media can facilitate citizens' participation.

Overall, Boulianne's (2015) meta-analysis did not find any demonstrable proof that social media and social networking sites strongly affect levels of participation or that their use is transformative in any direct way. This is partly because of the research methodologies employed in most studies of social media use. They lack the kind of experimental design that includes a control group, making it difficult to identify precise causal connections between social media and participation. This leads Boulianne (2015) to conclude that there is little evidence that social media actually change people's levels of participation, despite the popular discourse that tends to focus on the use of social media in events such as Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential election campaign. Boulianne's analysis reveals that high social media usage does not affect individuals' predisposition to vote or participate. Her meta-analysis also concludes that most studies view social media as one of many independent variables, making it difficult to identify whether other influencing factors, such as political awareness or an issue-based interest, may prompt people to use social media.

However, it is evident from Boulianne's analysis that the use of social media is, in itself, a form of participation and engagement, because it is part of shaping public narratives and understanding public affairs. Her results suggest that social media use generally has a positive correlation with engagement, when engagement is understood to comprise three sub-categories: social capital, civic engagement, and political participation. In particular, she notes some indications of positive relationships between expressive, informational and relational uses of social media and citizen engagement, when this is understood in terms of civic engagement and political participation. This analysis highlights the point that engagement and participation are often blurred and tightly related in terms of social media use. On the other hand, Boulianne's analysis revealed that social media do not support citizen engagement when they are used for entertainment and identity work,

Bearing in mind the lack of any strong causal relationships between social media and engagement and participation, there are, nonetheless, indicators that social media's design supports people who are interested in engaging in various ways. For instance, the design of social media is a key aspect of how protests can be organised. In particular, social media's networked design produces a scalable informal structure that can be easily and rapidly adapted to each unique context and issue under question. This enables the development of an impermanent framework which can be utilised to support the coordination of tasks in organising action. Before social media existed, this type of task allocation had to be performed by established, collective organisations. The design of social media is therefore useful for the practical

aspects of organising various types of actions, such as protests, and setting up and running advocacy campaigns.

Beyond these ways of organising participation, there are further questions around how social media can foster participation through the notion of connective (Bennett and Segerberg 2013) – rather than collective – action. The emergence of 'networked social movements' (Castells 2001) which centre on global issues have ushered in a new type of connective activism. Mobilising people to pursue a common goal or to raise a particular concern involves some level of coordination. Before the mainstreaming of digital media, this was achieved by developing collective identities and some formal organisation that would coordinate any agreed action. In contrast, connective action means using the new ways of coordinating action that have become available through digital technology and social media within a more networked and issues-based political culture.

Connective action involves the use of a combination of multiple research strategies, such as surveys and mapping Twitter activity by analysing hashtags and hyperlinking, to spread messages across networks of individuals and organisations. However, connective action goes beyond just the dissemination of messages, because it identifies sources and information, communicates that to others, and also receives and shares information back from the network. The digitally supported communication work in itself becomes a networked organisational form. Therefore, the form of communication and the form of organisation – which are both the network – influence and support each other.

The communication and its dynamic networked structure operate as aspects of the development of connective action, although action is created out of multiple connected actors (both people and communication, see Chapters 9 and 10). The networking logic of digital media and networked social movements together organise action through this type of connectivity. The characteristics of connective action include personalised public engagement, which is self-motivated. In other words, it is the desire of citizens to share their thoughts and feelings that drives and shapes the action, rather than any formal organisation or a leader planning the action. In fact, connective action does not require leadership or formal organisation because the use of technology platforms and applications takes on the role of capturing communication that, in effect, becomes the organising structure for shaping any action.

Within this connective action, social media's design operates by facilitating the rapid communication of personalised social media frames as well as memes around a network and across networks of networks. An Internet meme is a piece of media that can comprise an image, an image macro, a hyperlink, a video, a hashtag, or a word or phrase, which is spread from person to person via social networks, blogs, direct e-mail or news sources. Social media frames are part of media framing techniques, which shape the way that information is presented to readers, audiences and users and can influence how people interpret the information (Fairhurst and Sarr 1996). This

framing can be quickly created and shared in social media, for example, in the way that Twitter produces user-generated narratives that others in the network can identify with (see Chapter 9). This type of digital approach is faster than mobilising through collective structures, because it bypasses the need to create a collective identity. Instead of action that is formally organised collectively, individuals merge their own personal struggles into larger frames using social media, as seen in campaigns such as 'we are the 99%' (used by the Occupy movement) and #62MillionGirls (part of Michelle Obama's campaign to raise awareness about the number of girls not being schooled across the world). Individuals can therefore become part of a global movement by using a hashtag, posting a photo or personal comments, without needing to join any formal organisation or align themselves to a shared collective identity. People can empathise with a cause or movement, engage with it at an individual level of commitment and activity, and share relevant concerns with one another. This identification and sharing may – or may not – foster different forms of action in which individuals come together to register their concern about an issue. This can sometimes be in the form of a protest or, at other times, can involve joining a social movement for a period of time. These design features support a process of connective action that enables a mobilisation of action that is larger, faster and more flexible than conventional social movement activities.

A range of examples show how social media's connective action is enacted to develop senses of participation underpinning a more general sentiment or concern amongst individuals. For instance, pan-European protest against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement was demonstrated using public Facebook and Twitter communication. Users drew on both platforms' rational and resource-oriented mode of communication design. In this context, the time distribution of motivational and resource-driven messages was an important aspect of mobilising support. In particular, the motivational posts had a higher impact than resource-oriented messages on both platforms, even though they were fewer in number. The combination of both resource-focused communication and motivational communication proved useful in organising this protest.

Another feature of connective communication and participation is mobile communication, especially the widespread, extensive use of smartphones. Research (Veenstra et al. 2014; Chen 2016) has looked at the relationship between Twitter and Facebook use on mobile phones and political conversation with offline and online political participation, as well as online expressive communication. In contrast to online digital communication, some of these studies show that people who use Twitter on mobile phones are more likely to engage in both online and offline political participation, and in online expressive communication. The use of Facebook on a mobile phone has a different dynamic to that of Twitter, because those who use Facebook on their mobiles tend to do so mainly for online expressive communication.

This distinction suggests that social media apps, such as Twitter, bring mobile communication back into the public realm of an (albeit diffused) broadcast-like channel. Mobile Twitter adds to the affordances of mobility and networked connectivity, and can be seen as a relatively public medium within the wider range of social media.

Another dynamic of social media design's influence on political communication is the way it can stimulate the core antecedents of protest participation, such as identity, efficacy and anger. For example, these factors were already present in Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.[1] A sense of identity and anger mediated the relationship between online alternative news and protest intention, while anger and efficacy mediated the relationship between social media news and protest intention. This shows how the features of social media are integrated into general and individual feelings about a situation and – in this context – were particularly significant in creating the intention to protest that was fed by feelings of anger and threats to identity. Here social media also interacted with online alternative news sources, producing a structure of social concern which was personalised but connected to social media use, and the more organised creation of alternative online news. This example demonstrates that when social media are configured with alternative news in a situation with clear senses of political identity, they have the potential to mobilise collective action. This goes beyond connective action because it pursues a broader collective purpose of fighting for democracy that far exceeds a particular and/or singular issue.

This example illustrates that the broader context needs to be taken into account when considering how social media design may feature in both civic and political communication. The ability to use social media rests on more than just the extent of Internet infrastructure available in a country and the access that its citizens have to it. In open democratic societies that abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, privacy of communication is legally protected, so people are able to undertake web-based forms of communication. This is not the case for all nations, though, and open society can also be threatened, as seen in the Hong Kong example.

For instance, although Colombia's Internet connectivity has increased, this has not necessarily meant that social media can be used for civic and political communication. There are a number of political concerns in Colombia that relate to the way it is opening up to global trade, including the large number of companies investing in the country's extractive industry (i.e. mining valuable minerals, nickel, gold, platinum, silver, copper, limestone, coal, petroleum and marble). This is creating a number of social and environmental issues and, consequently, social movements are forming to challenge some of these developments. This raises the context of whether – or to what extent – increased digital connectivity can help spread knowledge and support the mobilisation of anti-mining protests. In Colombia it appears

that there are only limited opportunities to use social media to share information and support and to mobilise protest, because of socio-economic constraints, fear of oppression, and the strong hierarchical power structures within established social movements.

These examples show that other contextual social and political factors can facilitate or constrain the ways that social media can be used for connective action. Social media are not inherently a communication tool for political mobilisation – rather, it is the way they are used within specific social and political contexts that gives them the characteristics of civic and political communication. As digital media, they enact both the concerns and the association of concerned actors within a dynamic and networked communication structure. Therefore, social media do not determine or create non-hierarchical knowledge structures – connective action and flat networked social movement approaches; instead, it is the external social and political conditions in which the social media are utilised that influence their use in social relations. In addition to these external relations of knowledge sharing, more internal knowledge sharing of a movement or configuration of individual actors also shapes how social media are used in civic and political contexts.

These factors can be seen in the way that social media were used in popular protests in Tunisia between December 2010 and January 2011. In this context, Breuer (2012) identifies three main aspects of the way social media were used to organise and mobilise protest. First, he finds that the use of social media facilitated several personal networks to come together to develop a 'digital elite' that acted as an organising network. This networked elite, combined with the affordances of social media, was able to circumvent the national media blackout by brokering information for external mainstream media organisations. Second, social media helped to overcome the perceived 'free rider'[2] problem within collective action, by being able to report the magnitude of protest events outside mainstream media news reporting. Third, their use facilitated the formation of a national collective identity, which was generally supportive of protest action and transcended geographical and socio-economic disparities by providing a shared sense of emotional grievance. In the Tunisian context, the internal and external factors configured in a specific way, while social media design and capabilities acted connectively to garner senses of identity and feelings (whether opinions, standpoints or sensibilities) to generate and mobilise collective protest.

There are, therefore, a variety of conditions that influence the way that social – and digital – media can be optimised to address a particular civic or political issue. Furthermore, a common feature of all these examples is that the use of social media is situated within, and spans across, civic and political contexts and communication. There is, therefore, some level of connection or reconnection between civic and political life. There are some challenges to understanding and assessing the quality of these types of communication and action, which requires addressing questions about information and participation, in particular who

participates and how this relates to the openness and inclusiveness of any public social media communication and the public sphere.

News and social media

In order to understand how social media feature in political culture, it is necessary to consider how they relate to mainstream media, because both are information sources that mediate and feature in the dynamics of engagement and participation. The relationship between news broadcasters and publishers and the social network platform companies is changing rapidly. Facebook, for example, is beginning to pay news companies to produce video content for them to stream online. Twitter, Google, YouTube and Snapchat have all increased their number of editorial personnel, as well as designing ways to include news along with pathways to media content. There is evidence that consumers are increasingly using social media to access news (Pew Research Center 2016; Oxford Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2016). Reports from data analytics firms such as Parse.ly show that social media are a leading source of referral traffic to the main news sites, as shown in the graph in Figure 5.1.

TOP TRAFFIC REFERRAL SOURCES JAN.–FEB., 2016
Percent of Known Referrals in the Parse.ly Network
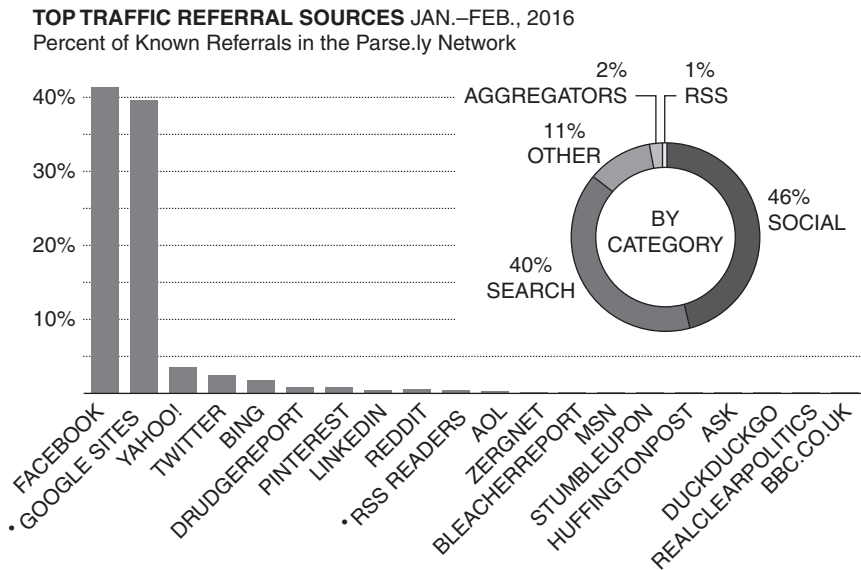
*   **Google Sites:** Aggregate of all Google-owned properties, e.g. Google.com, Google.ca, and Google News.
*   **RSS Readers:** All external traffic from RSS reader services such as feedly.com.   **(Parse.ly)**

Figure 5.1 Social media referral to main news sites
(https://blog.parse.ly/post/903/getting-your-news-from-social/, accessed 17/01/2017)

The rise of mobile access to news is a new feature of news consumption practices (Newman et al. 2015). The Oxford Study of Digital News 2015, which was based on representative surveys of news consumers in the US, Britain, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Finland, urban Brazil, Japan and Australia, identified a trend in rising use of mobile technologies and access, along with Facebook's increasing role in social discovery. The survey found that people in most of the countries surveyed were likely to access news via a mobile browser. It also found that people use a small number of trusted news sources on their mobile phones, and 25% of those questioned use a smartphone as their main device for accessing digital news. Facebook is becoming increasingly dominant, with 41% using the network to find, read, watch, share or comment on the news each week. The key point to note is that social media are now just as much an integral part of mainstream media as they are of alternative media and social network communication.

Conclusion

These trends indicate that social media are pervasive in civic and political communication in the mainstream media today. Social media's design and features can be used by the mainstream and alternative media, as well as other networked informal social movements and configurations of citizens and activists. A range of internal and external factors shape how social media feature in communication. The way they connect and communicate depends on the context of use and particular ways in which their media richness, self-presentation and disclosure support identification with an issue or cause and with others who share those concerns.

The design features of social media, such as their technical interfaces, determine what can be shared, with whom and in what ways. This has led to the development of forms and structures of communication that link individuals into a network and help to shape connective action. Social media's technical infrastructure is also influential in shaping access to information, with a significant rise in the preferred use of mobile technology. The invisible actions of algorithms also have a major impact, and there is growing awareness in the public sphere about this issue, with journalists starting to investigate how these processes operate and their social consequences.

In general terms, social media are part of civic and political communication in both the formal and informal spheres. For example, Twitter is used to organise protests and to provide a context in which civic information flows can occur outside conventional political communication channels (Howard and Hussain 2011; Procter et al. 2013a). Political and civic organisations use social media for activities such as providing information, producing e-petitions and campaigning, using these new services to communicate and connect with people in a more flexible, networked way. However, this does

not mean that the ways individuals and organisations communicate are necessarily linked or responsive to each other in formulating civic debate. In fact, there is a potential misalignment between the ways that individuals communicate and formulate civic concerns, and the ways that organisations communicate their views and perspectives. One of the consequences of this gap – the lack of a clear space for pluralistic debate – relates to how people are 'finding out what to say', which is a feature of political discussion that precedes different types of democratic processes (Teorell 2006). The next chapter will discuss social media ways of communicating and relating in political culture.

Notes

1 See the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA), which claims to be based on emotions such as identity and anger. It identifies three dominant socio-psychological perspectives that are antecedent conditions to this phenomenon: injustice, efficacy and identity (van Zomeren et al. 2008). There is an interrelationship among the three predictors as well as their predictive capacities for collective action.
2 A 'free rider' problem in collective action refers to situations where some individuals in a social movement, civic society group, community or network may reduce their contribution or performance if they believe that one or more other members of the group are gaining something for nothing from the network. It is based on the idea from economics that this occurs when those who benefit from resources, goods or services do not pay for them, which results in an under-provision of those goods or services for everyone in the group.

Political culture
Communication and ways of relating

Introduction

This chapter explores in more detail the concept of political culture in regard to the debate about understanding the mediation of civic participation through social media. Approaches to social media so far have tended to focus either on notions of engagement – including whether more engagement leads to improved participation and, if so, what kinds of participation – or on the boundary between public issues and personal problems. However, applying a political culture lens to considering the role of social media in social and political engagement and in forms of participation can reveal clear insights into the link between communication and culture. In order to understand the ways in which people can actively engage in political culture, we first need to understand the notion of political culture. Almond and Verba (1963) developed the concept to address the relationship between personal orientations and political systems. However, they do not consider the cultural dynamics within which that relationship is forged. To address that gap, this chapter discusses the active formation of civic agency and how communication and symbolic meaning feature in the ways that people relate to each other in civic life. This includes various forms of communication and media usage that raise questions about moral practices in how people relate to each other as they engage and participate in civic and political culture.

Extending political culture: the dynamics of interpretation in shaping political sensibilities

The idea of political culture is a highly contested one, since many observers consider that it originates from a conservative perspective. There is a great deal of debate about the ways in which it is theorised, including its precise definition, concepts and relationships between concepts. However, political culture is generally understood to mean a 'set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to a political process and which provide

the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system' (Darity 2008). In overall terms, political culture seeks to address and include the political ideals of a polity as well as its operating norms. Hence, political culture is seen as both the product of a political system's history and the histories of the system's members, and as being rooted in public events and private experiences. Political culture features in the shaping of political communication because it involves values, affinities, conflicts, networks and knowledge, which all frame the practices of communication and types of discussion within the civic realm (Dahlgren 2003).

In 1956 Gabriel Almond introduced the idea of political culture, and developed this further in collaboration with Verba in their 1963 book, *The Civic Culture*. Almond and Verba wanted to examine the ways in which people affect political systems, as well as the ways that political systems affect people. To achieve this, they looked at the idea and role of 'culture' in social life, since culture (however that is defined) provides a fabric of social life that is meaningful to individuals. Conversely, social life itself becomes meaningful through people's interpretations and actions. Thus, in many ways individuals are socialised into their culture, but they also produce and reproduce it. Almond and Verba (1963) argue that culture is a significant influence on shaping social life which can also act as a constraint on it, because of its relative power. Political systems and culture are distinctive from one another and can exist in a variety of different relationships to each other. There are some instances where political systems might fit into, and be embedded within, a culture, but this is not necessarily always the case. There is, of course, also the possibility that political systems may influence culture just as much as culture influences politics. Thus, the idea of understanding the relationship between people and political systems through culture is a complex one.

The previous chapters show that the relationship between participation and the political sphere involves a range of interactions that vary, both in terms of the actors involved and their diverse configurations. These types of dynamics make it difficult to develop theoretically informed approaches to understanding that relationship. To address this, Almond and Verba (1963) explain political culture as a 'distribution of patterns of orientation' at the individual level, in relation to culture as well as more collective aspects that shape the ways individuals orient themselves towards political issues and parties. The authors consider culture through the ideas of 'supramembership' and 'sharedness'. Supramembership supposes that culture is more than merely the aggregate of individuals who are considered in isolation and that membership is an emergent property. This idea has been challenged, however. For example, Kavanagh (1972) argues that moving from the aggregated features of individuals to the characteristics of a group culture is an individualistic fallacy. This is because this type of approach would not be able to account for the different cultures that were found in the Weimar Republic and in the

Third Reich, which both contained the same German population (Dittmer 1977). To counter this reductionist sense of culture, the concept of sharedness refers specifically to something shared among people. The notion of shared understanding is at the centre of the meaning of culture, since it provides a common framework of mutual orientation. However, in the early approaches to political culture, Almond and Verba took a broadly functionalist approach to the ways that subjects gained senses of shared understanding and how this then created particular orientations. This underemphasises the fact that people actively interpret political issues in ways that are meaningful to them and to their wider senses of social life.

Considerations of culture in anthropological terms focus on how culture is actively socially created, the meanings of social life, and other aspects such as language, table manners, religious ideas and moral values. Culture involves what have been called subcultures – meaning groups that have specific practices and values at odds with the wider society's common ideas and practices (Williams 2011). Culture is a framework for action and a distinction is made here between behaviour and meaningful action. Although it might be possible to identify certain regularities of behaviour, such as those seen in voting patterns, these are not defined by the patterns themselves. According to Geertz (1973), both the shaping and the meaning of patterns emerge through culture. Geertz argues that culture is the web of meaning that social beings weave through their actions and interpretations of social life. This idea of culture recognises that the ways in which meaning is generated through interpretation feed into the processes and relationships that characterise political arrangements, and so influence political culture. Goldfarb (2012) argues that these dynamics can be observed in the ways that individuals and organisations interact and communicate culturally and politically within their civic networks. He continues by asserting that it becomes possible to observe, appraise and reinvent political culture by examining humans interacting culturally and politically in their associations.

Civic culture and agency in making civil society

The theory of political culture that Almond and Verba developed in 1963 needs to be considered in relation to ideas about civic culture. However, the term 'civic culture' is, itself, as complex to define as political culture. The general notion of civic culture is frequently linked to ideas about civic participation, civil society and citizenship. In political theory, civic culture is often based on ideas about the different ways that citizenship can be embedded within society and how specific types of social relations can help to define citizenship.

For instance, the classic liberal model of democracy is based on a distinctive type of individualism. This assumes that citizens are free to pursue their own interests, to create their own lives and to seek happiness by making choices

based on rational considerations. These freedoms are protected by the state, which governs with a very light touch, being limited just to ensuring that individuals are not over-regulated, that the market responds to individual desires, and that the choices individuals make do not cause harm to others. There is little consideration of the social aspects of the ways that individuals learn to become citizens socially or how decisions and choices might be shaped through the social bonds in which a person is embedded. There also seems to be an assumption that citizens are 'pre-programmed' in some way and do not need any experience to engage as a citizen, with everyone just naturally pursuing their own individual interests irrespective of the society they inhabit.

Communitarianism takes a different view. Although communitarianism has a long history within political philosophy, it became popular in the 1980s. It includes a range of approaches along a continuum of the strength of communitarianism, but all of these stress the social and cultural aspects of citizenship. Some of the lighter approaches argue that a political community can only be achieved where there is a social and cultural fabric. This fabric involves developing and sustaining shared values and social relations that support cultural cohesion (Dahlgren 2006). Other approaches argue more deeply that there needs to be some level of a pre-political community in existence to enable democracy. However, there are two main problems with this type of tight-knit stable community. First, they are not typical forms of society in late modern Western society and, second, these types of community are at risk of becoming closed, inward-looking enclaves.

Another approach, republicanism, seeks to find a midpoint between liberalism and communitarianism. This viewpoint draws on certain aspects of liberalism, such as individual rights, as well as other elements of communitarianism, such as the way that civic bonds are shaped by community dynamics. In contemporary society this is sometimes called civic republicanism (Dahlgren 2006) or neo-republicanism (van Gunsteren 1998). These modern renditions view citizenship as a mode of social agency located within pluralistic contexts which have a variety of interests (Dahlgren 2006). This approach aligns with ideas about citizens actively participating in civic life and, through this, achieving democratic self-governance. This type of engagement in public life is seen both as a duty and as something that people find rewarding, and it includes the idea that people develop themselves by participating in civic and democratic life. This extends the idea of political engagement beyond the formal and legal aspects of political processes into other ethical and social concerns of political life. This position highlights the social and cultural aspects of societal life which support people in understanding and enacting civic virtues. This starts to recognise that political culture is created through social and cultural life. This might include self-interest, but it is something that is learned in society, and the way that self-interest is expressed and managed is also socially shaped.

    This understanding that citizenship is something that is learned in civic society leads on to the notion that the way in which political culture is shaped relates to the characteristics of its society. This raises questions about how contemporary society shapes civic society, since it is infused with digital communication and is organised via networked forms. In this context, ideas about radical democracy offer insights into how people learn civic virtues. Mouffe (2000) uses the idea of agonism to acknowledge a more diverse and fragmented global society. Although she uses this concept to address some aspects of post-structuralism, she still seeks to ground these differences in material relations, by considering certain issues and their characteristics in debates about radical democracy. Radical democracy draws on post-structuralism to explore the dynamics of political life. It highlights the contextual nature of people's subjective positions and identities within contemporary society, noting that social life and concerns are both in a constant state of flux and contingent on a range of shifting situations. This argument posits that context shapes the characteristics of contemporary political struggle. This view recognises that political debate is complex in contemporary society, and that people engage in a number of issues from a range of standpoints that make up different aspects of their identities, so each individual can hold multiple – even contradictory – political positions simultaneously. This view supposes that political engagement and partici-pation take place within an environment of difference and diversity, where a range of issues and perspectives emerge and circulate in varying ways. Therefore, clearly defined, fixed ideological and value positions are no longer strongly held, legal frameworks are constantly being questioned, and multiple voices are striving to be heard.

    This situation can be seen as positive in normative terms, because acts of contestation around difference and the negotiations of a heterogeneous society are part of an open and democratic system. Progressive groups and communities may use these processes to build alliances in order to lobby for a particular issue. These alliances can change and reconfigure in different ways, which reduces the likelihood of power being centralised. However, in order for this kind of open and diverse society to function, its citizens need to be strongly committed to a robust democratic framework, through which they follow the formal rules of democracy. This is because an open society depends on a set of conditions in which a heterogeneous society fosters some level of integration amongst its people in order to ensure justice and equality. The notion of radical democracy highlights the way in which political culture is both sociological and cultural, linking it into a rich sense of civic life. Although, as described in Chapter 2, there are debates about levels of participation, these do not fully discuss links with the factors that shape participation at various levels. As noted above, the concept of political culture itself raises questions about this point. However, some of the approaches used to operationalise it have resulted in divisions in the ways that political

culture is embedded in civic culture, in everyday life culture, in popular culture, as well as in formal culture.

The idea of civil society is useful for exploring the relationship between lived culture and political culture. As Dahlgren (2006) observes, civil society is used in a variety of disciplines ranging from normative political philosophy, across social sciences to scholarship of the public sphere. Nonetheless, he argues there is an overall sense that civil society is 'the societal terrain between the state and the economy, the realm of free association where citizens can interact to pursue their shared interests, including political ones' (Dahlgren 2006, p.271). This is a very broad definition which could potentially include a vast array of associations and activities occurring within society. Thus, we need to ask what is culturally viewed as being appropriate action and organisation in civil society, and how an open society can manage more regressive organisations within it which encourage anti-democratic sentiment, such as far-right political groups. Despite this, however, most civil society actors, political and academic commentators share a generally positive – even optimistic – view of this difference of opinion, believing that there need to be active and diverse patterns of association within society to support democracy. Furthermore, people learn to become citizens of their societies within a social context that is diverse and shaped by a variety of associations and interactions. In broad terms, patterns of association – and interactions within and between them – provide a learning environment for individuals and groups in society. People learn to engage with different perspectives and deal with conflict and, in so doing, they develop their social selves and identities in relation to diversity. This process creates the potential for communities, groups and individuals to engage constructively in the complexities and negotiations of social life.

So, acknowledging the social aspects of civil society enables a recognition that civil society spaces of communication are developed through its interactions and associations. These communication spaces may include activities such as town hall meetings, informal discussions in the street and social media, but each is a means for phronesis to occur (see Chapter 2). They also combine to create a public sphere in action, in whatever ways a public sphere may emerge (see Chapter 3). This concept extends the points about levels and types of participation made in Chapters 2 and 3. In order to understand the relationship between social media and the political sphere, there is a need to understand not only levels of participation and types of participation and engagement, but also the notion of agency, and the different methods used to acquire this.

Looking at agency through the lens of civil society opens up a discussion about how people develop their civic roles. Putnam (2000), working within a civic society tradition, addresses several aspects of this phenomenon. His analysis of the character of the social bonds of people living in the US in the mid- to late 1900s generated the metaphor of 'bowling alone'. Putnam uses

this metaphor to assert that American society is highly individualised with weak social bonds. Furthermore, he continues by observing a lack of communicative interaction amongst people, leading to a decline in involvement in civic life. Social capital in particular is seen to be weakening as a result of both decreasing numbers of social contact networks and waning competencies at undertaking communication (Dahlgren 2006). Putnam's work is useful because it focuses attention on the social conditions of phronesis and supports the idea that citizens develop and shape their manner of public engagement socially. However, Putnam's analysis is open to criticism because of its over-simplicity. For instance, one of his fundamental arguments is that civic culture is in decline because people are watching more television and the content of these programmes is becoming less intellectually challenging – that there has been a general 'dumbing down'. In reality, though, as the previous chapters have shown, people actively engage with a range of issues via popular culture, being active 'prosumers' (Wessels 2014) as well as passive consumers, and they also use social media to self-organise in a variety of offline and online ways. This, along with other types of actions such as lobbying, petitioning, organising and participating in protests, are all evidence of civic agency.

So, although there are debates about the strength of civic engagement and about levels of participation, there are many examples of civic agency. Stewart (2000) draws from this the notion that civic agency is located within social experience and that participation features as one aspect of civic agency in different ways. For example, democratic participation can break out amongst citizens in ways that change the norms of social interaction via events such as real-life and online protests. These intense bursts of participative engagement and action are frequently deeply experienced in terms of affective engagement, in moments of strongly motivated involvement. However, these types of intense but transitory participatory events are not sufficient to foster ongoing participation. Stewart (2000) asserts that a competence in civic communication is an important aspect of the dynamics of civic agency, because it enables citizens to use and build on affective bursts of participation, as well as taking part in other types of civic action. Part of this competence is people's ability to interpret different political situations and contexts and, based on this understanding, to decide what type of action is suitable in that particular situation.

These kinds of competences are gained through participation – by observing and joining in with civic action on an individual level. Just like other diverse social skills, civic communicative skills are learnt in everyday life (Agre 2004). This perspective suggests that citizenship is learnt through experience – 'learning by doing' – and that civic competence is not developed by political society but is, instead, socially learnt and culturally shaped. This addresses a weakness in Putnam's work and some of the early approaches to political culture, such as Almond and Verba, which stress the importance of trust

and networks but do not examine in any detail how networks are socially created, how trust is socially developed, and what social factors can destroy trust. Commentators, such as Agre (2004) and Stewart (2000), address this weakness by asserting that civic agency is learnt. Both these writers identify a range of skills that individuals attain socially and culturally, such as being able to find and interpret information, and learning how to campaign and organise events. Communication skills are part of the overall skill set needed, and one relatively new aspect of this is understanding how to communicate via social media. Agre (2004) in particular mentions the social skills needed for this, such as facilitating social interaction, a capacity for rhetoric and the ability to interpret and define issues, in addition to knowing how to organise, lobby and manoeuvre in political contexts. These skills are learnt in everyday life and by engaging in civic and political culture.

This focus on the skills required to take part in political culture is significant, because it questions how these skills are learnt and the notion that engagement and participation are both interactional. Even though the forms and characteristics of interaction might vary, it is important to recognise that social interaction shapes political culture. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, a range of social and cultural factors feature in the dynamics of political engagement and participation. This creates a need to consider how to understand and assess these kinds of possible interactions and relationships between people and politics. Questions arise around the ways that people shape politics and vice versa, about what conditions are required for a stable democracy and how democracy can support diversity whilst maintaining stability. There are also questions about what role the practices of communication play in every relationship between people and politics.

If we accept the argument that social and cultural civic society generates the conditions for people to engage and participate politically, then the way that communication is conducted in the civic sphere also feeds into the dynamics of political culture. In order to understand the types of interaction that shape particular political cultures, we need to pay attention to the socio-cultural fabric in which individuals gain their sense of political astuteness, good interpretive and communication abilities. All these skills are learnt socially and within specific civic and political contexts and, together, they form a distinctive culture, which can be called lived political culture. As explained above, this term and concept is used in a variety of ways, but its strength is that it identifies the need to understand the culture of a political system, such as democracy, and the culture of its context, for instance, the nation-state of the US (c.f. de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*). Communication forms part of both these cultures as well as spanning across them. Dewey (1939a) reminds us that society is made through communication and that issues are developed, shaped and shared through communication. Thus, it is useful to view political culture as a dynamic concept in order to

understand the relationship between people and politics, and to appreciate how communication features in that relationship.

Communication and the symbolic aspects of political culture

A key feature of the experience of politics and the ways that people gain access to politics is through communication. This can be in the form of leaflets and pamphlets, mass media, rallies and town hall meetings, formal political communication, or digital communication and social media. As discussed in Chapter 3, communication involves the exchange and circulation of symbols (Thompson 1995). Dittmer (1977) applies a political culture framework to communication, defining political culture as a 'political system', which is nestled inside a 'more inclusive system' that can be termed 'political communication' (Dittmer 1977, p.566). This approach goes beyond Almond and Verba's individualistic approach, since its focus on political communication generates the conditions for people's understandings of supramembership. Supramembership is facilitated by the use of symbols of political discourse which are, by definition, wider than the individual. Political communication also enables feelings of sharedness to develop, since the symbols used have varying degrees of common meanings. In addition, different forms of communication generate shared interactions – such as public discourse – while some are based on other types of group or community identification as well as on personal senses of identification. This is seen in different social formations – for instance, the ways that the relationship between mass communication and the nation-state creates an imagined national identity. Another example is the ways that social media and social networking sites create feelings of shared identities which are based on certain types of networks.

However, the types of collectiveness and identification engendered diverge between mass media and social media forms of communication. Although both are – to some degree – imagined, the logics of participation are qualitatively different and these differences impact on the character of political culture and political communication. One of the key differences is that mass media employ a top-down, centralised, one-to-many communication model, in contrast to social media's networked form of mass self-communication (Castells 2009; and see Chapter 3). Another main difference is the level to which people can create, shape and control symbols. Both public service broadcasters and commercial media companies have high levels of control over programming and the use of symbols. Even though they are subject to regulation and the imperative to ensure that their programmes attract audiences, these media organisations control the use of symbols in their communication content and processes. However, there is a different logic in social media and social networking communication. In this context, the content is user-generated, with users themselves deciding – and creating – whatever they think is important to communicate. Users or networks of users set

agendas, deciding which issues and topics are relevant and important. These users may, of course, link to – or, indeed, be embedded within – wider social formations such as social movements, political parties and commercial marketing networks. However, even in those circumstances, the communication is less determined, less centralised and less open to control, as a result of the unpredictable nature of interactions. It is often difficult to predict which issues or topics will catch a networked imagination and 'go viral' – that is, be communicated exponentially. Users also have greater control over the use and meaning of symbols, as illustrated by the use of 'memes' – multimodal artefacts that are remixed by many users. Users draw on popular culture to create memes and then remix them to make public commentaries (Milner 2013). The use of memes can be seen in a number of protest movements, such as the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and Occupy Wall Street.

   In order to understand how such symbols are shared and disseminated, it is important to examine the ways that they are interpreted and understood. The development of symbols in traditional and early modern societies was context-specific and based on particular cultures; however, in today's globalised world, the same symbols are circulated and spread across many cultures, and are then reinterpreted through the ways they are reused. Although there is an element of post-modernist play in this process, there are nonetheless contextual frameworks of interpretation that make sense of 'symbols in use'. So, although symbols are increasingly being shared in a global economy of goods and services, cross-cultural comparison of these symbols remains difficult, since they are only meaningful within each culture's larger symbolic system or subsystem (Geertz 1973). Therefore, it is not sufficient to consider individual symbols by themselves, as they only gain meaning within a wider cultural context. It is also inappropriate to examine symbols at a national level, because this assumes that a nation-state's cultural framework is made up of a single, coherent culture, ignoring the reality of a diversity of integral cultures. Thus, any analysis of symbols at the level of intercultural symbolic communication requires a comparison of an entire symbol system or subsystems. By creating the symbolic aspects of communication, actors develop an internal coherence, which means that those participating in that cultural system or subsystem can understand the communication and its wider meaning and relevance. Within open societies and international communities this requires enabling people who are not as tightly involved in a network or community (broadly defined) to interpret the meaning of the communication. This is not easily achieved, since some people are more cosmopolitan and culturally skilled at understanding different symbol systems than others. Hence, when practised ethically, public service broadcasting and journalism play a role in translating such symbols, while some intercultural civic organisations contribute to widening understanding.

In addressing the role of communication in political culture, Dittmer (1977) shows how the idea of political culture can be extended beyond its initial individualist conceptualisation. Communication features in political culture in the way it interacts with, and relates across, people's symbolic and cultural lives. Communication in all its forms does not necessarily define, or simply reflect society; rather, it yields meaning from within cultures that are, themselves, interpreted culturally. Different forms of communication and their organisational structures operate in diverse ways. There are concerns that ideologically determined forms of media can inculcate people into certain ways of thinking, as writers from the Frankfurt School have described. There is also the risk that a hegemonic dominant ideology may become imprinted as an intrinsic factor in the encoding and decoding of media messages, as Stuart Hall and colleagues have shown (e.g. Hall 1973). However, as audience scholars including Ang (1985) and Livingstone (2013) have noted, audiences may also be active, so will interpret the message and engage with those interpretations in a variety of ways (Wessels et al. 2013). The development and use of digital networked communication extends the ways in which audiences can be active. As Sonia Livingstone (in Lievrouw and Livingstone 2002) noted as far back as 2002, active modes of user engagement in digital culture include online shopping, browsing ('surfing'), researching and communicating. This reveals that there is more opportunity for user/audience agency in a digital communication system than an analogue system, which can be seen in the ways that users can publish their thoughts and ideas online and share their feelings, beliefs and opinions with others. Thus, digital communication is a more open form of communication – although it still entails certain risks – for instance, ideological manipulation or abusive exchanges. This leads on to an examination of the character of digital openness, the ways that this openness plays out in civic and political culture, and a consideration of how people relate publicly in the contexts of both civic and political culture.

The dynamics of political culture: sharing and ways of relating publicly

People relate to each other in numerous public ways – for example, the face-to-face interactions of daily life, large-scale public events (Roche 2000) and various forms of mediated communication. All these types of social interaction play a part in developing public discourse. The ways in which people can engage and participate in civic life and political culture are shaped by the information and knowledge they have access to, and how they interpret and share that knowledge. There are varied sources of knowledge and information, including libraries, government, education providers, the media and subject-specific specialist information providers, as well as knowledge gleaned through everyday life. Another aspect of how people relate to each other in

public goes beyond just knowing, to acknowledging issues in different ways. It is these processes of acknowledgement that give certain issues credence within a particular configuration of civic actors, which may or may not subsequently be taken up by political actors (Weschler 1989, Afterword, supra note 3, at 92, cited in Arthur 2009). The issues chosen are acknowledged through circulating symbols as discussed above and – more than just sharing these symbols – by interpreting and reusing them. This is embedded in the ways that symbols operate in a culture's way of relating, as every culture provides a unique fabric of understanding and a set of expectations that serve to inform and shape social action. Although social actors – both individuals and organisations – may interpret a symbol differently from others and assign meaning to it in a variety of ways, these references are, nonetheless, all ways of relating to that same symbol within a shared cultural framework. Therefore, symbols are an important feature of patterns of interaction and the ways that people relate to one another.

There is, however, a degree of agency that both creates public discourse and facilitates how discourse influences the ways that people interact with each other. In relation to this point, Chilton (2005) proposes that culture – understood as ways of relating – feeds into the ways that people relate to each other publicly. Chilton observes that the way a specific culture is framed is based on groups of people who share a particular way of relating. This approach is sensitive to the ways that people create cultures, so can be termed a bottom-up approach, which differs from top-down approaches to culture. Top-down approaches originate from collectivities, such as nation-states, and search for the things that people within such entities have in common. This method reifies culture and does not capture the ways that cultures are made through social actors weaving webs of meaning through their social action (c.f. Geertz 1973). In contrast, viewing culture as something that is created through social action leads to the realisation that senses of commonality, shared understandings and contestations over meaning are all created through interaction. Within this perspective, Chilton (2005) argues that a way of relating is only shared if there is something that is 'publicly common' to a collectivity. In the digital age, collectivities include various types of independent networks as well as networks of networks, which vary in their online and offline configurations and in their scale and reach. This definition does not exclude locally shaped collectivities or established but nonetheless imagined communities such as nation-states. Chilton (2005) uses the term 'publicly common' to describe a way of relating that is understood by everyone within a particular cultural configuration and is used by all the actors to orient themselves to one another, thereby producing the *public* focus and orientation towards a set of issues.

This concept of public commonness focuses attention on how the actual *use* of a way of relating helps to identify who participates in – or is excluded from – any specific cultural configuration. It also reveals that differing

configurations of culture are, nonetheless, meaningful because the actors are working together within shared sensibilities and shared practices of ways of relating. This enables an analysis of both homogeneous cultures and more complex, diverse societies through concepts of subculture and cultural conflict. The focus on publicness also allows for the fact that cultural expectations can differ from individuals' preferred ways of relating, which frees the conceptualisation of political culture from Talcott Parsons's much-criticised focus on value consensus. Therefore, political culture does not depend on all of the people liking a culture or regarding it as legitimate. Rather, it is defined by the ways of relating that people actually use to coordinate their dealings with one another, which shape changing cultural perceptions that can either challenge or seek to protect the status quo. This suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between the ways in which different groups in society interpret and work with a range of issues. Taking a more dynamic approach to the ways that political sensibilities are communicated and shared moves attention beyond assumptions of consensus to also incorporate conflict. Although cultural traditions might well be resilient, cultures can change rapidly as people adopt or reject publicly common ways of relating. This is seen, for example, in the ways that people drop in and out of social movements (Wessels 2010b). Examining the ways that social actors relate publicly in a dynamic orientation to something that is shared – but not necessarily commonly agreed upon – opens up the relationship between being a 'participant', a subject and part of a culture. This is an active relationship that may be influenced by particular ideologies, subjective positions and popular – 'trending' – public discourses, but it is not necessarily determined either socially or through technological modes of communication (c.f. Pateman 1970, 1971).

This new emphasis on active and dynamic engagement in ways of relating moves theoretical analysis away from a behaviourist paradigm within the political culture literature. According to this view, behaviour is instead understood as an active interpretation of, and engagement in, ongoing social life and as a meaningful action, instead of a response to any sort of stimulus (Geertz 1973). This perspective states that people engage in social situations and activities by interpreting a specific context to identify, interconnect, and make meaning of their own and others' actions. This interpretation and interaction can involve simple actions or more complex sets of actions. Interpretive work is embedded in all aspects of life including, for example, highly routinised actions such as those found in bureaucratic work (Danet 1971), the flow of everyday life (Chaney 2002), and media-based practices (Silverstone 2006). Social actors use this interpretative action to work through, make sense of and choose various courses of action. This means that part of an interpretative framework includes some sense of moral reasoning alongside varying degrees of recognition for other social actors' perspectives and concerns in the ways they relate to each other. This moral reasoning

enables an individual to move from knowledge to processes of acknowl-edgement which, in a highly mediated society, occur through publicly engaged communication. Blogs, tweets, Instagram pictures and YouTube vlogs, as well as mainstream news and print (whether consumed online or offline) are all part of a communication environment in which moral and ethical concerns are raised, expressed and represented.

Social actors relate to one another publicly in contemporary society through various types of media. As discussed in Chapter 4, the media and communication environment comprises individuals' mass self-communication as well as media organisations' mass communication strategies and pro-gramming. The increasing civic media also interact with both of these, so are involved in actively reworking what civic society might mean in the digital age. Academic debate about the concept of civic media is currently led by researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Civic Media Lab in the US. They define civic media as 'any form of communication that strengthens the social bonds within a community or creates a strong sense of civic engagement among its residents' (https://civic.mit.edu/about). This defi-nition makes civic media more inclusive than previous narrow definitions about techniques of news gathering and reporting, since it also incorporates wider participatory activities that use a variety of new civic media techniques. These include, for example, the use of technologies to plan and carry out protests and acts of civil disobedience, or phone-texting systems that allow people to vote instantly on everyday activities. Those working from a civic media approach seek to develop digital and social media technologies for community empowerment, which also involve the creation of curricula and open-source frameworks for civic action. Here the focus is on how to transform civic knowledge into civic action, which is not only considered vital for democracy, but is in itself democratic, because it recognises and acknowledges oneself in others. The Civic Media Lab argues that by sup-porting people to obtain the skills they need to process, evaluate and act upon knowledge that is in circulation, civic media can help to sustain an environment in which the diversity of contributions are recognised and where ways of relating are shaped by the mutual respect that is necessary for democratic debate. They point out that some of this activity leans towards traditional journalism, whereas other activity moves in radical new directions (https://civic.mit.edu/about).

These diverse uses of media – personal, civic and political – express the different dimensions of participation in the digital age. Each one is also a distinctive aspect of the ways that people relate to each other publicly. As discussed earlier in Chapters 4 and 5, the use of media – especially social media – can merge personal, civic and political communication. Social media reflect, and are embedded in, a fully rounded sense of what participation means. By using social media, individuals, groups, communities and networks – in all the kinds of cultural configurations that people create – can

reconnect the personal to the public by the use of knowledge, reasoning and emotion. In short, social media are a form of phronesis as they provide a communication medium through which people can work out what they want to say and how they want to engage in discussions (Teorell 2006) – although, as noted earlier, this is not to say that social media are used in isolation. Their networking logic and social malleability (Dittrich et al. 2014) mean that they can connect to people and places of debate both online and offline, and through the integration of online and offline deliberations. The publicness of these ways of relating therefore has the specific characteristic of being at once both personally felt and publicly expressed. Furthermore, this publicness is networked and dynamic, since the ways that users interact with communicative episodes and content shape its journey and life. For example, an issue can go viral, it can be pursued by activists, or it can be ignored. Whether issues, stories and topics are picked up on or not is, to some degree, shaped by the interpretive work of social media users. Users will draw on a number of resources within their own interpretive frames to evaluate a communication, ranging from its entertainment value to its prestige, as well as the related moral and ethical concerns. Therefore, there is a moral dimension to the ways that people relate to each other through social media within the wider communication environment.

This communication environment is a space that brings together a culturally created political culture with civic life and personal experiences where people can relate to each other publicly. In contemporary society, the communication environment is constituted by a range of media and social actors (see Chapter 7). In terms of the moral aspects of relating publicly, this environment can be understood as a mediapolis, which is 'the mediated public space where contemporary political life increasingly finds its place, both at national and global levels' (Silverstone 2006, p.31). Since this is a public space in which different groups of people meet and interact around a range of topics, there is a moral dimension to it in relation to who gets heard, respect within dialogue, and the ways that people discuss and engage with each other – in short, how they relate. Drawing on moral philosophy, Silverstone (2006) explores moral practices in the mediapolis through the concept of 'proper distance' and by addressing hospitality and responsibility in the mediation of public and everyday life. Proper distance means the degree of proximity required in mediated inter-relationships to create and sustain a sense of the 'other' that is sufficient for reciprocity, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding. If proper distance is achieved in mediated communication, it maintains a sense of the other through difference as well as shared identity, thus proper distance is a prerequisite for – and part of – plurality.

Silverstone argues that 'proper distance involves imagination, understanding and duty of care and involves an epistemological (Arendt) and an ontological (Levinas) commitment to finding the space to express what is

experienced (Arendt) and essential (Levinas) in our relationships to the other' (Silverstone 2006, p.47). Every one of us – whether an individual retweeting, an activist campaigning via Facebook, a blogger or a citizen journalist – takes on some responsibility for how we relate with others, which is tied into an ethic of hospitality. Silverstone (2006) recognises Derrida's notion of ethics-as-hospitality as important, because hospitality is an obligation rather than a right. He argues that this is at the heart of our relationships with others and is constitutive of such relations. He describes hospitality:

> The capacity, indeed the expectation, of welcoming the other on one's space, with or without any expectation of reciprocity, is a particular and irreducible component of what it means to be human. Hospitality is the mark of the interface we have with the stranger … It is inscribed into the cultures of most of the world religions as an ethic beyond the political, an ethic of humility and generosity, which bypasses differences of power and inequalities of wealth and status.
>
> (Silverstone 2006, p.13)

This draws attention to the fact that there are multiple and diverse voices within the public communication space – and potentially within the public sphere, if it is an open one. To address difference, Silverstone (2006) identifies contrapuntal moments which show that the presence of the other in time and space is a point of reference in relation to the here, the now and the self. He writes that such contrapuntal moments are necessary in communication to create a genuine space for dialogue which fosters respect and hospitality amongst people. This does not suggest that engaging in debate via contrapuntal communication can ameliorate cultural differences or conflict, but rather that there is an ongoing recognition and re-recognition of difference which social actors engage with in various ways (Wessels 2008). In reality, though, not all communication is open and hospitable to others. The 'one-to-many' format of mass communication can be unequal and unjust, because many voices are not heard (Silverstone 2006). Social media can generate more open networks of communication, but they can also create filter bubbles that only give space to one viewpoint or one kind of user network which shares a particular viewpoint. Nonetheless, Silverstone identifies the point that communication and the mediapolis are dynamically understood aspects of political culture.

Conclusion: rethinking political culture in the dynamics of civil society and the mediapolis

The mediapolis is significant because it affects how social actors relate to each other, the ways that issues of ethics and morality are expressed, debated and valued publicly, and what public points of reference are widely shared

or paid attention to. It also provides a space in which symbols are circulated and interpreted and then taken up into various interpretive cultures. These cultures are both personal and public and they come into play in constituting civic cultures within civil society. Their differing cultural configurations are purposely created by social actors and their active engagement in social interaction, so action creates a dynamic form of political culture.

This chapter has shown how the early, rather reductionist and individualist notion of political culture has been extended into a more active and dynamic sensitising concept. Drawing on an active notion of culture, as advocated by Geertz (1973), and noting the significance of symbolic communication, ways of relating and publicly shared reference points in civil society yields a more dynamic concept of political culture. Furthermore, considering civil society as a space where citizens interact to pursue their personal and political interests moves political culture from being perceived as a top-down concept with imposed *a priori* categories. Instead, the dynamics of political culture can be observed in the ways that individuals and organisations interact and communicate culturally and politically within their civic networks. In addition, political culture is made dynamic by the ways that social actors interact culturally and politically in their various patterns of cultural associations. This includes, but is not limited to, social media as a feature of the ways that people relate to each other.

Chapter 7

Contexts of civic communication at the local, national and global levels

Introduction

This chapter describes and discusses the way that civic participation and the use of social media are, to some degree, context-specific. This partly relates to the way that the kinds of issues emerging in civic discussions vary in relation to their context and community. The characteristics of any issue and those involved who are interested in any particular issue vary just as much as the context. The way in which people relate to each other and the focus of their civic concern shapes the forms of communication in particular contexts. This means that the use of social media is, to some degree, context-specific – just like any other form of communication. There may be general patterns in the way that communication and communication media are used but, none-theless, the precise character of any communication is influenced by the context in which it is situated. Therefore, the particularity of issues, the people engaging and participating, and the context are all brought together in specific ways. The resulting configuration, which can also change over time, is reflected in the ways that people organise themselves individually and in groups to respond to issues varies at local, national and global levels, and in the ways they use and adapt social media.

Situating the practices of social media use and civic participation within the dynamics of lived political culture

There are a wide range of situations in which the use of social media within political culture and civic participation come together and act in various ways in relation to diverse issues. Although there are certain common aspects across a range of practices, each situation is shaped by its own unique context. Context here refers to the type of issue under question, the characteristics of the mode of participation, the ways that the communication is conducted, and features of the participants and the ways they organise themselves. Furthermore, these actions and practices are also shaped to some degree by the lived political culture in which they are enacted and, in

turn, each of these aspects has the potential to influence the dynamics of political culture. This notion of context supports Goldfarb's (2012) assertion that political culture is understood through the ways in which people act in association with each other and the meanings they ascribe to these associations.

The contexts in which this wide range of actions take place include:

- Local activist groups and locality-based forms of community action.
- International concern about humanitarian events.
- Protests and mobilisations aimed to achieve social change.
- Global issues-based social movements.

In these types of context, engagement and participation can involve the use of social media. However, each context may have a different approach to using social media and may use them in different ways. Both the strategy and practices of use vary in relation to which platforms are used, how social media feature in a broader communication strategy, the character and scale of participants, and the relations between online and offline activities. The next section describes and discusses some particular cases, to illustrate each of these types of situated activity and contexts.

Community-based networks and political culture: locally based community groups and social media

The idea of community action has a relatively long history, but the term 'community' is highly debated (Somerville 2016). As Harris and McCabe (2017b) note, the word is often interpreted broadly and is used to refer to concepts such as community empowerment, community engagement and a range of self-help activities. Within the context of the 'community action' sphere, it often refers to 'informal groups of people, acting on a voluntary basis, working together to solve common problems by taking action themselves and with others' (Richardson 2008, p.1). This definition is extended to include the ways that people join in and self-organise a variety of events such as carnivals, festivals and other social gatherings (Taylor 2015). This framework is also used in more political and politicised concepts of community mobilisation that include challenging the control that elites have over knowledge (O'Donovan 2014) and in coming together to organise collective action (Ostrom 2015).

In their study of the ways that community action groups use social media, Harris and McCabe observe some of the trends identified in Chapters 4 and 5. For example, they situate the use of social media in this context within wider social change, arguing that 'social media reflects and may reinforce a number of clear social trends including social diversification, an emphasis on identity, and the assumed weakening of hierarchies' (Harris and McCabe 2017b,

p.12). This is part of more widespread changes towards a networked society (Castells 2001). Given these changes, Harris and McCabe (2017b) argue that community groups and organisations use social media within the broad and evolving context of a networked society that is characterised, to some degree, by mobile connectivity and networked individualism (see also Rainie and Wellman 2012). In the context of locally based community action, this individualised networking does not affect or undermine senses of group allegiance and networking – in fact, social media tend to 'reproduce forms of traditional kinship organisation … Social media has thereby shaped new, modern forms of tribal allegiances', as revealed in a recent multinational study (Miller et al. 2016, p.185).

Linked to this notion that social media span individual and group networks, community action seeks to harness social media's potentially transformative power. Here, the democratising role of social media is seen to be important for community action, particularly in terms of who has the power to set agendas. For example, Standage writes that, 'by making it quick and easy for anyone to share information with others, modern social media gives ordinary people a collective agenda-setting power' (Standage 2013, p.239). So, if the use of social media is understood to link individual and group networking activities, and to enable ordinary people to set political discourse agendas, then it must also offer some potential to create new ways of participating in politics at the local, national and global levels. For example, blogs provide 'new digitally enabled ways of involving people in any aspect of democratic politics and government, not replacing but rather augmenting more traditional participation routes' (Bright 2015).

Although social media may offer new opportunities to support civic participation and develop a more dynamic political culture, this potential can only be realised through the ways it is used and activated in specific contexts. Thus, in the context of community action, the role of social media is often discussed in terms of community engagement. Referring back to the earlier discussion by Dahlgren (2006), Gilchrist and Taylor (2016) note that community engagement here is different from levels of citizen control as described by Arnstein's (1969) model of participation. Although people can engage in a range of ways and to varying degrees, community engagement does not necessarily focus on producing change or enabling empowerment. Alongside this rather general benefit of engagement focus, there is also the concern that social media are generating passive forms of superficial engagement, such as 'clicktivism' and 'slacktivism', which may appear to show support for political or social causes, but require very little real active and situated action, effort or commitment (Morozov 2009; Harlow and Guo 2014; Howard 2014). However, some writers contest this point by suggesting that online activism supports offline participation (Christensen 2011), for example, the use of Facebook by environmental groups in Scotland (Marcus and Tidey 2015), showing how digital activism interacts with its offline mobilisation.

Some contexts of civic engagement are focused on engaging people more actively and concentrate on achieving transformation and change. The main areas of engagement and participation activities at the community level include advocacy projects (Obar et al. 2012) and youth engagement work (Wells 2014). The other areas that are considered by commentators are the development of local online forms of storytelling (Chen et al. 2012) and the promotion of community events (Bussu 2016). As yet, however, it is difficult to understand fully how social media can be used in transformative ways in community life. Popple (2015) therefore addresses the relationship between community development and social media by asking a series of questions to ascertain whether social media provide a genuine challenge to the core values of community development. Instead of asking how social media are being used, Popple (2015) raises the following questions:

- Has social media affected the way we interact in our various communities?
- Has social media produced new communities that are more meaningful than the traditional communities that existed before?

(Popple 2015, p.4)

Popple (2015), however, takes an either/or stance which does not acknowledge the more nuanced and variable ways that relationships have changed and the ways they are perceived in normative terms – sometimes as better, sometimes worse, and sometimes just different. Taylor (2015) does not take such an opposing position, arguing instead that online communication can enhance, reinforce and broaden the geographical spread of face-to-face relationships (see also Kavanaugh et al. 2014). Although this viewpoint draws on national and international online movements, paying less attention to the local level, other observers note that digital technologies including social media have 'opened the way to new forms of activism and campaigning' at the local level (Gilchrist and Taylor 2016, p.16). They assert that social media are being used across a range of relationships that intersect with and across senses of the local level. These include examples of both individual and community engagement in larger, national-scale issues that affect local life, for instance the way that social media were used to organise rescue and clear-up activities in the 2014 floods in England (Miller 2015). Social media are used to map local social activities (Marcus and Tidey 2015) and for environmental activism at the national level in Scotland (Hemmi and Crowther 2013) as well as in England, for example the East End Quality of Life Community project, based in Sheffield (England) (www.sheffieldeastend.org.uk).

The use of social media at the local level is embedded within wider practices that interact with physical activities, such as community hall meetings, and with other forms of communication, like printed leaflets and website information. This link between social media use and situated, locality-based work at what can be termed neighbourhood levels demonstrates the ways that social media reinforce face-to-face networks and build bonding capital

(Harris and Flouch 2011; Kim and Shin 2016; Xu et al. 2013). The precise relationship between online and offline in locality-based settings, locales and neighbourhoods varies in relation to particular places. For example, in Wester Hailes in Edinburgh, the dynamic of digital activism is one where online social networks are created by the social networks that already exist off-line, so the social media networks are reflections of that community's offline relationships (Matthews 2016). Some areas of London reveal the opposite, with the community being reworked anew via online neighbourhood inter-actions that interact with offline life (Harris and Flouch 2011). One inhibiting factor in this kind of online networking that has been identified in, for example, the US context, is that some local people might not feel comfortable using social media because, on the one hand, they might not be regular and practised users of social media and, on the other hand, some people may experience difficulties in developing community-based relations that are developed by meeting face to face in a physical community. This may create forms of exclusion whilst increasing inequality of access to community activities. There are also concerns in the US context that if social media become the only communication outlet, this would undermine the expectations that residents have of neighbourhood communication. The current norm is for neighbourhood communication to be face to face and held at a stable interpersonal distance. This contrasts strongly with social media, which can both be too intimate and simultaneously too impersonal for these neighbour-hood environments (Johnson and Halegoua 2014). This means that social media can be invasive, since they encourage people to disclose their personal information into wider social networks (Wessels 2012a). Paradoxically, this communication can also feel impersonal because it is virtual (Wessels 2010b). Some people might struggle with this aspect of social media, whereas others are confident in developing online communities (Wessels 2010b). These examples show that social media are interpreted and utilised in a number of different ways, some of which are closely related to an immediate locale, and others which address national and global issues.

To date, little research has been carried out into the use of social media by community action groups. A recent study by Harris and McCabe (2017b) is an exception to this. They undertook a study of two urban and two rural neighbourhoods in England during 2015 and 2016. Their analysis reveals that the way local community action groups use social media depends on how they want to inform local citizens about issues, but also how they want to mobilise people and encourage participation at the local level. One of the overarching aspects of this usage is that they tightly integrate the use of social media into place-based interactions and events. In working with social media in community contexts, they learn how to negotiate their use. Through the process of this negotiation, they are starting to learn how social media can effectively foster engagement and participation, as well as understanding their limitations. The issues that these organisations are grappling with

include choosing which platforms to use and in what configuration, deciding how to communicate with a range of people using social media, and how this communication can feed into other practices at the local level.

Harris and McCabe's study shows that community organisations primarily use social media to share ideas, to showcase achievements and to promote and advertise events. This type of communication is a Web 1.0 form – using social media to broadcast messages – known as 'webcasting', which is the distribution of a media presentation of a single content source that uses Internet-based streaming media technology. It distributes to simultaneous listeners or viewers either live or on demand (Shiao 2012). This can include, for example, sending out information via Facebook to an audience which may be very large, because of the way that social media are linked and networked. This observation is reinforced by the research Roche undertook in 2014, in which one of the survey respondents says:

> We use social media to share information and ideas, create and continue dialogue, respond to questions people have, offer people support, help to promote the work of others and ourselves and flag up activities and events … We know that what we share has been useful when people respond to it and we know we are building relationships when there is a conversation online.
>
> (Roche 2014, p.6)

Although this use of social media entails sharing information, it nonetheless extends beyond a simple producer-receiver communication model to work in a number of ways. For instance, user groups feel that it helps them to promote their organisation and reach out to a wider range of people. Those working at the community level say that social media help them to build people's capacity to tell stories about what is happening in their local communities and, in doing so, this enables them to have their voices heard (Harris and McCabe 2017a). The way social media feature in these communities is by supporting the development of senses of local communities and kick-starting community-based activities (Harris and McCabe 2017a). However, even though community organisations do gain certain benefits from using social media, they are also aware of the need to manage some of the negative aspects. They are particularly concerned about maintaining trust, in the context of what is described as the 'narcissistic side' of social media (Harris and McCabe 2017b, p.28) – that is, people's use of Facebook, for instance, to post content that may not be considered appropriate for community action. Harris and McCabe's (2017b) respondents reported that Facebook contains plenty of trivia, drivel and showing off. They also felt that social media can sometimes feel insular and claustrophobic (Harris and McCabe 2017b).

This reveals the need to be vigilant about social media use. For instance, it is important that the individualistic and self-aggrandising aspects of social

media are downplayed in a community context. It is also important to pay attention to the quality and tenor of posts, and offer ways to mitigate any that might make people feel upset or uncomfortable. An example of this is posting a message that asks audiences to share content if they like an idea, or just to scroll on down the webpage if they are not interested in it. Another element of social media that worries community groups is the risk that posts might be misinterpreted and the danger that social media can raise a lot of suspicion and uncertainty. Bearing these concerns in mind, community groups also note that, paradoxically, some people say that information posted on Facebook often feels more real and tangible to them than words on a poster or in a newsletter (Harris and McCabe 2017b). Generally, community groups report finding that people will engage with a topic or issues most if it is posted on Facebook (Harris and McCabe 2017b). There are exceptions to this, however, with some individuals snubbing Facebook, especially those who disagree with its neo-liberal and individualistic ethos (Harris and McCabe 2017b), including people living in poverty who are unable to participate in the kinds of lifestyles often projected on Facebook, due to financial constraints. Nonetheless, community groups believe that there are a number of benefits to using social media, as long as these issues are managed.

This type of communication is shaped by the platforms chosen for use, in relation to who a community group wants to reach, and the communications aspect of community work is understood in terms of connections, rather than audiences. The groups do not view those they are connecting with as being defined by social media, but instead perceive that social media connect with people who are already involved with or interested in community life, as well as others who may become interested and involved. The groups Harris and McCabe studied discovered that their use of social media also affects what can be termed an 'invisible audience' – individuals who find out about a range of issues and activities without the community organisation knowing that they have reached them. Although it is important to acknowledge social media's reach and instant effect, this still needs to be supported by other types of engagement activity – so social media must be seen as just one element in a wider conversation. For example, Harris and McCabe (2017b) discuss a small group based in the suburbs of a city in the Midlands (UK), which uses Facebook both to help sustain the network and support a wider range of civic activities held at a local community centre. These include a pensioners' club, pre-school and family sessions, as well as drop-in sessions around specific interests or concerns. Thus, the group's online activity via Facebook acts as an extension of its offline social activities, helping to enable and sustain personal relationships (Harris and McCabe 2017b).

Social media can act as an extension of offline activities in this way because their personal communicative feel helps to build community spirit by enabling people to get to know one another. They also allow them to

keep up to date about ongoing issues, since information gained at a community event is often followed up on and shared via Facebook. Another way they work at the local level is by enabling the organisation of local events and other activities. They are also used to reinforce the community network through pictures that its members post online after events such as trips and community barbecues. This strengthens the network by sharing memories which, in turn, reinforces the shared experience (Harris and McCabe 2017b). Community groups are also turning to social media to bolster their fundraising efforts. However, social media need to be embedded in established reliable and sympathetic connections to enable them to develop this fundraising potential. Of course, social media might attract new members and donors, but there needs to be a strong sense of connection amongst their users and between the community groups and users. The groups Harris and McCabe studied use Facebook and Twitter to connect with different types of people. They report that Facebook is good for reaching those people who are part of the community, whereas Twitter is more effective for reaching stakeholders (Harris and McCabe 2017b, p.44). Facebook and Twitter are used extensively to encourage engagement and the groups consider them a powerful tool when used as part of a package of wider activities. The groups also find that social media are most valuable for building relationships: 'it's about building relationships and getting something back. Not just telling people what to do' (Harris and McCabe 2017b, p.45). They also recognise the need to be aware of the users' cultures, in order to effectively use social media to build relationships. For example, they need to be utilised within a culture of mutuality within Nepalese communities, whereas they can be used in a more individualistic way in Polish cultural networks.

Harris and McCabe's (2017b) research found that social media can be used by community groups to support local civic action, when integrated with other offline activities and digital technologies. They cite one example where people felt excluded from planning processes and decision making in a local regeneration programme, so activists used online and database technologies, email, Twitter and Facebook to activate and mobilise action. These local activists reported that they needed these linked technologies to enable them to communicate with a large enough number of people in a 'timely way, at a relatively low cost and with minimal resources' (Harris and McCabe 2017b, p.46). This shows how, when social media are embedded in a range of offline activities around issues that are meaningful to local people, such as regeneration and social inclusion, they can raise support for civic action around issues that are both civic and political – whether from an emotional or a reasoned standpoint. This use of digital practices and the subsequent civic action creates a particular kind of political culture, which is both networked and grounded in lived realities and is about community interests of which individuals feel a part.

Protest and political culture: rallying and expressing civic concern and social media at national and global levels

One of the usual ways that people converge to register and express concerns about a civic or political issue is through social movements. However, current emerging and changing senses of political culture are bringing about two main changes to the ways that social movements operate. First is the growth of digitally supported new social movements and, second, the rise of specific new forms of protest. Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the way that social movements are understood has changed (Wessels et al. 2017). The idea of new social movements (Buechler 1995) and networked social movements (Castells 2001) reveals some of the new ways in which people have begun to organise themselves in order to address a range of political and civic issues, outside the formal political process.

Two key arguments emerge from the literature on social movements. The first asserts that contemporary social movements have a 'lifeworld' focus, in which debate and communication serve to create a normative consensus (Habermas 1984, 1987). 'Lifeworld' here refers to an individual's internal subjective viewpoint, which is understood in relation to an externally perceived system (Habermas 1984, 1987). This ethos relates to the way in which economic and political institutions are increasingly intervening in individuals' lifeworlds, prompting reactions around such issues as people's quality of life, democratic participation and identity (Staggenborg 2011). Social movements that are centred around cultural issues take a more lifeworld approach, recognising that culture includes the symbolic dimensions of all structures, institutions and practices (see Polletta 2004), so they are engaging with both structural and cultural issues. The second argument is that contemporary social movements use the flexibility of digital technology and its platforms to organise action (Castells 2001). Because of these changes, Melucci (1996) asserts that social movements are now characterised as being fluid networks which can foster collective action as and when needed.

In addition to their fluidity, flexibility and focus on particular issues or values that might be distributed across networks, 'to understand the way social movements are constructed requires looking at the formation and maintenance of the cognitive frameworks and social relationships that form the basis of collective action' (Melucci 1988, p.331). Digital relationships are often formed within submerged networks. These are networks that have not yet given themselves a clear identity and made that identity visible (Wessels et al. 2017). However, because these submerged networks are in early stages of development, they facilitate the growth of shared interests and the shaping of identification with specific issues. Through these kinds of interactions, activists generate new cultural models and symbolic challenges (Mueller 1994, pp.247–248). The dynamics of this type of activity involve the way in which the various participants' perceptions, beliefs and emotions in relation

to a cause are aligned with their personal values (Staggenborg 2011) around developing engagement and mobilisation. One of the emerging features of this dynamic is that the development and framing of an issue involve inter-action and mobilisation which tend to occur through specific episodes of contention. One key aspect of these episodes of contention is the way in which protest emerges and bursts out into the public sphere in commu-nicative ways and in the public domain as sets of situated activities and actions. The more dynamic the interplay and interconnection is within and amongst social movements and various activists, the more citizens and non-citizens become recognised as being part of a particular movement or as engaging with a particular issue (Goldstone 2002).

One core area of development in this context is the focus on events (Oliver et al. 2003), which often form an element of diverse social movements. Although there are debates about how to define events, they are generally understood to encompass different types and sizes of activities, as well as causing varying levels of disruption. This focus on events helps researchers to analyse the ways in which action mobilisations decline and fail, or emerge and succeed. There is variation in the ways that events feature in political culture at particular historical moments – for example, there was a national 'protest rhythmology' in France during the 1980s (Fillieule 1998), and similar patterns in the US during the 1990s (Oliver and Myers 1999). In post-com-munist countries such as the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Hungary, political protest has been central to processes of regime change and the consolidation of new systems. The main forms of protest there include marches, rallies and strikes (Szabo 1996). In these post-communist contexts, new democ-racies have had to accept protest as an integral part of a more open society, and a pursuit that operates alongside other institutions of representation. Any such national protest also takes place within the global context of lib-eral economic reforms. Examples of this include events protesting against economic reforms in countries that are forced to renegotiate their foreign debt obligations with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other international actors such as the US and Europe (for background to the wider debate, see for example Walton and Seddon 1994). Social media are now a key aspect of organising these kinds of protests, at both the national and international levels.

An early example of social media being used to organise social protest is evident in the London riots of 2011, which were part of a wider set of pro-tests across several cities in the UK and, thus, were of national significance. Although this was not a typical form of social movement event, it illustrates one situation when social frustration erupted outside formal political pro-cesses. Research by Paul Lewis and his team reveals that those involved did not consider themselves to be participating in riots, but in acts of social protest (Lewis et al. 2011, p.24). The overriding feeling underpinning these protests was a sense of an injustice that was based on inequalities. Many

people were concerned about their own economic situation – such as the lack of a job, lack of money or lack of opportunity (Lewis et al. 2011). Another set of concerns was more social, such as feeling a lack of status and social honour. Above all, though, was the perception of inequality and injustice, and a feeling of alienation from mainstream society. The protestors believed that nobody cared about them or their situation, and that they would only be listened to if they created a big enough disturbance that those in power were forced to pay attention to them.

A distinguishing feature of this incident of protest was the use of social media and mobile phones. Most media commentators and reporters were quick to note that Twitter, Facebook and BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) were key factors in organising the protest. However, Lewis et al.'s (2011) study provides a more detailed analysis of the ways that mobile phones and social media featured in the action. Their research shows that just a few hours after the first disturbance, text messages on BlackBerry mobile phones pinged across north London. These were largely sent through the BBM network, in which users exchanged PINs so that they could share messages rapidly and as frequently as they liked. Although texting is now part of everyday life, it was during this protest that the efficiency and security of an online communication network became apparent. For those who took part in the protests, BBM was much more useful than Facebook or Twitter, as it offered a quick and easy way to share real-time information about things like safe routes home and where the police were situated.

Twitter played a different role, being used to encourage people to participate in the protest. There is evidence that tweets were used to trigger action, such as 'GoLondonriotsGo!' and 'eat me Scotlandyard'. However, the overwhelming response to these kinds of tweets was negative, with responses to those that incited action such as: 'someone has just posted Go on [H]ackney. Can we have them arrested please' (Lewis et al. 2011, p.32). Other Twitter users forwarded those user details to police Twitter feeds. In some ways, therefore, those communicating on social media were self-policing and their responses reflected the complexity of the situation. In this instance, some people felt so angered and alienated that they believed their only course of action was to create disruption, whereas others did not condone this type of inflammatory action. Whatever the complexity of the situation, it is apparent that Twitter was used in civic terms after the event (Lewis et al. 2011) – for instance, it was widely used to mobilise people to help clean up the area after the event. Even just working on the 'evidence base of tweets that were reposted over 1,000 times, it is clear the clean-up mobilisation reached more than 7 million Twitter users – far in excess of any incitement tweets' (Lewis et al. 2011, p.33).

This research into the London riots is one of the first to really examine the use of social media and mobile communication in detail. Their analysis shows that whilst attention needs to be paid to the way social media feature

in protest, it is also important to locate social media within the wider civic culture. This reveals that a simply media-centric approach is reductive, because it overlooks the specific social relations within civic culture in relation to the dynamics of the wider political context, which also shape the action. Likewise, that action and the interpretation of the situation shape the ways that social media are utilised. Thus, just as the local community groups understood that they had to use certain social media platforms in particular ways to connect and develop conversations, so those in the city environment used a specific form of social media to respond to an event.

The way that the relations between a particular civic and political culture shape the use of social media can also be seen in the context of new social movements which are operating at both the national and global levels. Examples of this include the Occupy movement (Castells 2015), Anonymous (Fuchs 2013), the protests in Maidan Square, Kiev (Kurkov et al. 2014), in Gezi, Istanbul (Smith et al. 2015; Haciyakupoglu and Zhang 2015), as well as the Arab Spring (Alaimo 2015), the Libyan crisis (Morris 2014) and the Umbrella movement in Hong Kong (Lee et al. 2017).

The dynamics of these types of movements can be seen in 15-M, also known as the Indignados movement, which was active in Spain during 2011 and 2012. This group mainly focused on economic and political issues such as high unemployment, welfare cuts and a poorly performing representative democracy. The protest began with demonstrations in several areas of Madrid on 15 May 2011, a week before regional elections in Spain. The next day, protesters camped out in the main squares of other Spanish cities, and this protest continued until 2012. This was a heterogeneous movement made up of a diverse range of individuals and groups who came together because of their shared frustration with Spain's economic and social crisis.

15-M convened and developed a presence using a combination of online and offline communication. The movement was first established online, then protest moved from online discussions into the physical spaces of the camps in city squares. The protestors drew on their knowledge gained by developing e-social movements, which are defined by the use of digital technology as a crucial tool for mobilising citizens (Garcia-Jimenez et al. 2014). This states that digital technology can help movements to expand their communication capacity – both in terms of creating their own alternative media, and in using social media to reach out and spread their message. The networking logic of digital communication (Castells 2001, 2009) is taken up and used within the social organisation activities of new social and e-social movements. In the case of 15-M, digital communication's decentralised, open and flat structure was used alongside organising a movement that had a horizontal hierarchy, was leaderless, spontaneous and flexible (Castells 2009). This dynamic is typical of e-social movements, since they are decentralised, non-hierarchical and networked, which allows new movements to counter some of the fears that

exist around them becoming autocracies, whilst also making them more adaptable (Atkinson 2010).

A key feature that has emerged out of these changes is the way that digital and social media support 'resistance performance' (Atkinson 2010), by facilitating the development of alternative media. Resistance performance refers to an historical time when the amount of alternative activities increases significantly. These types of alternative media communicate critical perspectives that can support people in resisting normative or hegemonic perspectives. As Atkinson writes, '[t]he power conceptualization we find in alternative media lead to build and reinforce points of view in favor of social justice' (Atkinson 2010, p.34). This means that the growth of alternative media which combine to produce a resistance performance period supports the possibility of democratising access to production, distribution and sharing of information. This in turn opens up the communicative space to more people who can engage and participate in the communication. Scolari argues that this also fosters an increase in 'the processes of exchange, production and symbolic consumption developed in a context with several users, media and languages technologically interconnected in a reticular way' (Scolari 2008, p.114).

The way that digital and social media allow people to self-publish and communicate enables social movement participants to voice their own concerns and express alternative interpretations of an issue. This has the potential to democratise symbolic communication (c.f. Thompson 1995; also see Chapter 4 in this book), because ordinary people and activists are able both to shape a discourse and self-represent themselves. This contrasts with mainstream media, where public service broadcasters and commercial media companies have the power to form and shape discourse. The use of social and digital media therefore helps movements to create alternative debates, to raise awareness about specific issues, and to engage in the negotiation of symbolic power in the civic and political spheres. This takes place within an extended sense of a public sphere, in which social media are used to highlight civic and political concerns via their own platforms, as well as seeking to influence mainstream media messages (Candon 2012). Thus, one of the key factors that social media add to civic and political debate is the way that they can be used symbolically in those debates.

15-M used Facebook to communicate and develop discourse in its symbolic struggle for expression, representation and voice, via the following official Facebook sites:

- 15-M Movement – www.facebook.com/Mov15M
- Spanish Revolution – www.facebook.com/SpanishRevolution
- Democracia Real Ya (Real Democracy Now) – http://facebook.com/democraciarealya
- Juventud Sin Futuro (Youth Without a Future) – http://facebook.com/juventudsinfuturo

- Acampada en Sol (Encampment in the Sun) – http://facebook.com/acampadaensol

Garcia-Jimenez, Zamora-Medina and Martinez-Fernandez's (2014) study shows how the movement sought to express itself in symbolic terms, and how that symbolic work – its representation – changed over the protest's lifetime. Initially, photographs were used to gain national and international recognition, which were combined with messages on Facebook asking people to participate. Expressions such as 'take to the street' and 'don't just look at us: join us' (Garcia-Jimenez et al. 2014, p.2553) are examples of the types of calls made to encourage people to join in. As the protest continued, the movement published pictures of police abuse on Facebook which helped to counter both dominant mainstream media coverage of the action and any under-reporting of police mistreatment. As the movement became more organised and coordinated, it started to use increased audio-visual content to gain support and symbolically express the point that this was a peaceful protest. It also used social media to provide information about how people could join in with specific protests, using smartphones to send messages before and during particular events. As in the London riots discussed above, a significant amount of civic conversation in relation to the protest took place on Twitter. The most frequently used hashtag was #M12M15. Garcia-Jimenez et al.'s (2014) analysis shows that 79% of people tweeting about the movement did not belong to it, so their tweets reveal how the protest made significant headway in terms of symbolic power – having gained support for, and understanding of, its aims and ethos.

People connected with 'Occupy Wall Street' as part of the Occupy movement used social media sites such as Tumblr and reddit to engage with developments, to share information, and to participate in the movement's activities. Occupy Wall Street emerged as a protest against a range of per-ceived injustices, such as inequality, corporate influence over politics and unregulated business practices (Milner 2013). As in the case of 15-M, Occupy Wall Street's communication dynamics changed over time. At the beginning, grassroots activists used Twitter and YouTube to disseminate information about the movement. In the ongoing protest actions, the social and participatory media remained important for communicating both within the movement and beyond it, to a wider public sphere. The Occupy Wall Street movement used various forms of digital media, including social media, in similar ways to the local community groups discussed earlier, in relation to 'interpersonal ties and existing alliances' (Milner 2013, p.2358). Overall, social media were used for a mix of communications, including offline communication, analogue, posters and print-based media, low-tech media production and cutting-edge technology – which are often used in what is termed 'transmedia mobilisation' (Costanza-Chock 2012, p.378). The main forms of social media used by Occupy Wall Street were hashtags

on Twitter, sureddits on reddit, tumblogs on Tumblr and videos on YouTube.

One element of social media in the symbolic struggle of representation is the way that Internet memes are used by protest and social movements. These are defined as 'units of popular culture that are circulated, imitated, and transformed by Internet users, creating a shared cultural experience' (Shifman 2013, p.367; also see Chapter 6). As Milner observes, memes are 'multimodal symbolic artefacts' (Milner 2013, p.2359) in mediated public discourse, which play a role in 'panmediated knots' (ibid.). Panmediated knots refer to the way in which existing and emerging forms of activism become interlinked through reworking, remixing and 'mashing-up' (Bolin 2005) media content to produce new forms of mediation. In this way, media content can work as a 'decentred knot' of engagement which expresses a plurality of coexistence and interaction (DeLuca et al. 2012). The Occupy Wall Street movement used a range of content and media forms, including:

- Common phrases like 'We are the 99%' and 'This is what democracy looks like'.
- Videos that were edited, annotated and re-edited to include footage of assemblies, marches or police responses to protests.
- Grassroots media artefacts that were captured and uploaded, such as cardboard protest signs or subversive street art.

(Milner 2013, p.2359)

Milner (2013) argues that image memes, which he describes as 'small still-picture and animated GIF files' were particularly prolific in this movement, in public discussions on reddit and Tumblr. The image memes on these sites worked through satirical humour that was then picked up on in wider public commentary. The strength of image memes is that they can be produced quickly, then shared easily and rapidly. This makes them a useful way to respond instantly and flexibly to a range of public events and occurrences. At the height of the Occupy Wall Street movement, image memes were vital in fostering discussions about its social and political dimensions. However, there is some concern about the way that memes comprise a populist expression of a diverse range of public concerns, since it is important to note that there is no direct and straightforward translation of populism into social media. Burgess (2007) makes an insightful observation in relation to this, finding what he calls a 'vernacular creativity' in YouTube videos, in trending Twitter topics and in memes. Here, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, everyday popular culture and civic and political concerns are all brought together in ways that arise from the experiences of civic and political culture. Both can act in relation to each other in the ongoing work of phronesis, through which people seek to understand, engage and participate in social life.

Thus, the use of social media at both national and international levels is shaped by the context in which it is being utilised. Protest movements' usage is embedded within the surrounding social relations and in relation to wider public discourse and the general public. Social media are used to organise and mobilise people and activities, but they are also used for symbolic communication. As the needs of a protest movement evolve over time, its communication activities and use of social media also alter.

Characteristics of the forms and content of civic communication at local, national and global levels

People are finding new ways to organise social movements and protests, and these have been understood as constituting new social movements – sometimes called e-social movements (Bohdanova 2014) – which use digital networks and forms of communication to interact and to organise a range of activities. Changes in the ways that people engage with and in community action are also evident at the local community level, where these groups also use digital and social media to communicate and organise themselves. National and international protest movements are networked, have flat hierarchical structures and work without any need for individualistic (charismatic) leadership (Theocharis et al. 2015; Theocharis 2013). Community groups are also networked and have open and participatory working structures (Harris and McCabe 2017b). The communication and communicative networks of national- and international-level protests are supported by and, sometimes, replicated through the use of social media, and both the message and the action can spread rapidly and widely. This is less apparent at the local community group level. Although these groups are agile and often work across a number of places in their locality and communicate with diverse interest groups within and outside their area, they are nonetheless more place-focused and have smaller networks to draw on. The communication across all three levels – local, national and international – is based on a configuration of different types of media and various types of social networks and relations. The precise character of this configuration depends on the context that the activity is taking place in, while the malleability of digital technology (Wessels 2014) means that social media can be adapted to fit any particular situation.

A wide range of social media platforms are used for civic communication at all levels, including Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr and YouTube, and their content varies from a 140-character tweet to videos and image memes. These memes play a distinctive role within protest movements, reflecting a more general feature of new social movements – that communication in these contexts is highly visual (Poell 2014). When social media are used as part of a wider conversation at the local, national or international levels, it can support and sustain protests or causes over time. This may vary in relation to each specific context, but social media link to a variety of other

online and offline actions that help to maintain support, enthusiasm and momentum (Kurkov et al. 2014).

This chapter has argued that social media feature in a range of social actions seeking to raise, express and react to particular issues and concerns. The action taken – whether by community groups, protesters or social movements – is not only shaped by those involved and their social relations, but also involves interactions with other civic actors. Together, these networks are actively engaging with social and civic issues and, thereby, crafting a lived political culture. This culture may not be directly communicating with formal political organisations or the mainstream media, but it is the public space where the issues of the day are encountered and confronted. Roberts reinforces this idea by arguing that new media (including social media) can help 'to empower those who privately hold oppositional views to a government regime and then translate these into public expressions of opposition' (Roberts 2014, p.159). However, as Bohdanova observes, social media are only one tool in civic and political action, and even when embedded in new social movements such as e-social movements, it does not guarantee that any action will be successful in achieving political or social change. Thus, although protests, local campaigns and even revolutions can be 'live-streamed, tweeted and posted on Facebook' (Bohdanova 2014, p.136), this does not mean that the issues in question will be addressed or overcome. So, even though social and civic groups are using social media to help raise their concerns, these digitally networked organisational and communication forms may lack ability to enact actual political change. Wells argues that even though socially networked community-based and social movement-based actions are relatively agile and strong in symbolic terms, there are still 'limits to non-hierarchical, non-institutional mobilisation' (Wells 2014, p.211). These dynamics are being felt at the community level as well as in the social movement arena because these emerging new networks may find themselves affected by the same challenges as many traditional civic and social organisations, which struggle to find the right balance between managing their reputation, controlling their image and sharing their message.

Conclusion

The characteristics of the forms and content of civic communication at local, national and international levels are predominantly issue-based, whereby individuals, civic community groups and various types of protest movements seek to express concern and mobilise action around a specific topic. Individuals and networks act to identify an issue, then shape the use of social media to stimulate awareness, influence opinion and elicit action. This communication may, or may not, link to political and civic institutions and, where there is a link, the character of the communication can vary. In addition, the context around a civic issue is important in shaping the networks

and characteristics of the communication, and the form of social media tools themselves also influences what can be communicated and how. This does not mean that social media determine the communication, however, because actors in civil society and institutions in the public sphere both actively shape their own communication strategies in order to voice their concerns, and use a range of social media platforms and content to enhance these efforts. This type of communication and activity-expressed concerns within a lived political culture are realised through a range of connections and nodes.

Contexts of civic communication

Campaigning, citizen journalism and general social media use in civic life

Introduction

This chapter extends the discussion in Chapter 7 by considering other types of social action taking place within the civic sphere and the role that social media play in those. The argument made in this chapter also supports the claim that civic participation and the use of social media are both, to some degree, context specific. The kinds of issues that are raised through civic discussions vary in relation to their contexts and communities. This is reflected in the ways that particular community, protest, social movement and other types of civic action coordinate their communication. Political culture in contemporary society involves online campaigning networks, participatory journalism and non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) work, alongside other, more general types of civic participation, including the use of social media. As shown in Chapter 7, the contexts and social relations around these types of participation also shape how social media are used. This chapter discusses online campaigning, participatory journalism, and the ways that people use social media to engage in civic life.

Campaigning and the use of social media

Campaigning is a well-established element of political culture that is undertaken by political parties, NGOs and voluntary and community groups, as well as special interest groups. Online campaigning networks have emerged in the digital age. These are usually bottom-up citizen networks that have a staff team of some sort to help coordinate their campaigns – for instance:

- 38 Degrees – https://home.38degrees.org.uk

  A British not-for-profit political activism organisation.

- MoveOn – https://front.moveon.org

An American progressive public policy advocacy group and political action committee.

- GetUP! – www.getup.org.au

An independent movement seeking to build a progressive Australia by facilitating participation in democratic activity.

- Avaaz – https://secure.avaaz.org/page/en/

A campaigning community that seeks to bring people-powered politics to decision making at the global level.

- SumofUS – www.sumofus.org

A community of people from around the world who are committed to curbing the growing power of corporations.

These examples are all based within a non-governmental and non-party-political context, and illustrate the ways in which digital media are introducing a new, community-based model of 'citizen-initiated campaigning' (CIC). This use of digital media and grassroots citizen action is challenging the dominant professionalised model of campaign management, by devolving power over core tasks to ordinary people (Gibson 2013). These groups focus on a range of issues that citizens are concerned about and believe need to be resolved. Political parties also use CIC – for instance, Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential election campaign was one of the first to use social media extensively, and to utilise crowdfunding platforms to raise money in support of it. However, the rise of Internet-enabled citizens' movements is indicative of new forms of engagement and participation in issue-based politics that link civic concerns with political action.

38 Degrees is one example of a citizen-driven online campaigning network. It was launched in May 2009 with the intention of meeting the needs of people who are interested in politics but do not want to engage in party-political activity (Hadley 2011). It claims that its membership numbered over 2.5 million people in 2017 (www.38degrees.org.uk/pages/members/), and it views itself as a progressive campaigning community. It enables UK citizens to take action on issues by providing them with easy ways to engage and participate, using digital tools and communication. There is no formal membership; rather, membership takes the form of a list of subscribers. 38 Degrees campaigns on a diverse range of issues in areas such as health, politics, community, environment and planning. Within these main themes, they run individual campaigns, for instance lobbying to re-open community clubs, demanding deportations to cease, calling for mobile phone apps promoting

bullying to be banned, and supporting education facilities for children with additional needs. Their campaigns are very specific, usually focusing on a particular issue that is based in a named community in a certain place. 38 Degrees uses digital technology as a tool for their campaigning. As described in the previous chapter, the potential of social media is achieved through the social relations in which they are embedded. Although the relations that 38 Degrees work within vary in scope and reach, they always centre around a well-defined, concrete issue. The clarity of the issue in question provides a focus for communication and eases the use of social media for that communication and any related campaigning activity. Therefore, alongside their online campaigning and e-petitioning work, members of 38 Degrees are encouraged to write to their member of Parliament (MP) and other people in powerful positions, as well as participating in consultation processes (Hadley 2011, p.16).

The network's ethos is that it is driven by its supporters, who undertake the campaigning activity. 38 Degrees uses a participatory methodology, whereby subscribers devise suggestions for announcements and discuss ideas on an online blog, then campaign using Facebook and Twitter. One of the network's main aims is to engage people in this kind of civic and political participation. Like the community groups and social movements discussed in the previous chapter, 38 Degrees recognises that the quality of a campaign group's relations is vital for engaging people. The campaign director's view (cited in Hadley 2011, p.16) is that mobilising on a mass scale requires directly involving the people you want to participate. She notes the role that social media play in this respect, since they help to involve people in a more direct and individual way than mass broadcast media such as television. Moreover, the campaign director argues that social media are giving people the opportunity to 'reintegrate our political life with other areas of our lives' (Hannah Lownsbrough, in Hadley 2011, p.16). So, 38 Degrees' campaign team considers social media helpful for connecting the personal with the public, the rational with the emotional, and the everyday with the political. Thus, it is actually bringing politics back into everyday social life in ways that counter some of the artificial boundaries that had previously arisen around understandings of politics, as discussed in Chapter 2.

To contextualise the work of social media within organisations such as 38 Degrees, there is a need to understand its forms of social relations. One of the characteristics of these types of organisation is that they are hybrid (Bennett and Segerberg 2013; Margetts et al. 2015) – integrating social media platforms with networks of participants. Recent research and scholarly analysis have argued that hybridity is a key feature of contemporary political activism, including organisational hybridity (Chadwick and Dennis 2017). This asserts that the capacity and capability of social media (and digital media more generally) to enable personalised, networked and interactive communication are combining with the social trends of personalisation,

political consumerism and post-materialist lifestyle politics to create a new political model, called a hybrid mobilisation movement (Chadwick 2007). Campaigning movements such as 38 Degrees and the other networks mentioned above are examples of this type of organisation, which are employing digital technologies – including social media – to reconfigure the spatial and temporal character of political life. They use, mix and modify the existing communication and advocacy repertoires that are typically associated with parties, interest groups and social movements, through social media. They utilise digital and social media to be able to adapt quickly to external changes in spatial, temporal and institutional terms. They also switch nimbly between online and offline action, shifting easily from one campaign to another and moving seamlessly between those strategies that are focused on powerful elites and others that centre on their own members.

A defining feature of these organisations is that their infrastructure is primarily digital, which allows them to be more adaptable and responsive than those built on strict hierarchies (Bimber et al. 2012). They work in a networked way (Castells 2001) and their relations comprise 'loose affiliations of digitally connected individuals' (Chadwick and Dennis 2017, p.44). The structural dynamic of these networked organisations facilitated by digital and social media is that a set of individuals come together digitally over a particular issue at a certain time, and this interaction may, or may not, involve offline action as well. Once an issue has been raised and the campaign has run its course, that network of people disperses. This flexible and dynamic action and interaction can arise and recede in any number of ways and in relation to a range of issues. However, as noted in the previous chapter, digital and social media interact with a number of other communications media and a range of organisations, participants and the general citizenry. Chadwick and Dennis (2017) perceive this relationship between different media through the concept of 'media-systemic hybridity'. In their study of 38 Degrees, they show that various usages of digital media – including social media – interact and coexist with attempts to gain professional news media presence and coverage. Furthermore, they point out that social media content, such as comments on Facebook and Twitter, works in relation to other digital media in seeking to gain widespread media interest and developing mainstream media stories or reports.

This combination of organisational and media hybridity has created a new form of political communication, as Chadwick and Dennis (2017) maintain: 'political communication now occurs in a hybrid media system built upon interactions between older and newer media logics' (Chadwick and Dennis 2017, p.45). 'Media logics' here refer to 'bundles of technologies, genres, norms, behaviours and organisational forms – in the reflexively connected fields of media and politics' (Chadwick 2013, p.4). Chadwick pursues this idea by arguing that the actors in this system are 'articulated' – that is, they construct their own place and orientation – within the dynamics of a

complex network of evolving and changing relationships. These articulations are shaped through power, including the ways that certain dimensions of power adapt to, and align with, interdependencies in the concentration and diffusion of power. Within this fluid environment, actors play with information flows – creating, tapping or steering them for their own ends. In other words, actors use information and communication to suit the purpose at hand by creating and/or modifying information. These types of strategies include actors then manipulating the levels of agency held by other actors in that situation, as well as both traditional and digital media (Chadwick 2013, p.4).

This argument is clearly illustrated by an analysis of one of 38 Degrees' campaigns. A study of the 'Big Tax Turnoff' campaign between 17 April and late May 2013 showed how the mainstream press picked up on a point that was made in a meeting of the House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Select Committee. A representative from a large energy company was asked how much corporation tax the company had paid over a certain period, and he replied that it had not paid any tax in the three years stated. Journalists immediately shared this response via Twitter. The following day, 38 Degrees set up a national citizens' campaign, and *The Sun*, one of the UK's most-read newspapers, also reported it. Articles in other national press then generated extra interest for the staff employed at 38 Degrees' central office. This team sought to strengthen their campaign and capitalise upon the interest triggered by press stories by providing reporters with public opinion data they had gathered from online surveys and by analysing emails and social media content, especially from Facebook.

Social media feature in this type of campaigning because they are positioned as a communication and networking tool within the social relations of campaigning. Their technological design, malleability, interactivity and networking characteristics all mean that they can quickly and easily be adapted to meet the needs of any particular campaign. However, their potential and purpose can only be realised through the social relations of a campaign. In this case, the relations were amongst driven citizen supporters of 38 Degrees, the mainstream media and 38 Degrees' paid staff. Social media played a variety of roles and their flows of communication were shaped in relation to this campaign's specific requirements. This is shown by the way that journalists used Twitter to instantly publish newsworthy comment, and how the online campaigning network picked that up and mobilised support through social media, which interacted with the way the mainstream press were reporting it. All of this was further supported by collecting and analysing data from social media (as well as other sources) to strengthen the campaign. This example shows how social media feature in the ways that new forms of political culture are emerging, made up of diverse and changing configurations of citizens, participants, networked NGOs and the mainstream media. Here, civic concern and engagement are expressed and enacted through the

integration of social media communication and campaigning alliances. Together, these create a civic event within the flow of contemporary political culture.

Traditional and participatory journalism and social media

Journalism's role is located within the Fourth Estate, and it is a key aspect of political culture in Western societies. Both broadcast and print media have been forced to react to the production and editorial changes brought about by the digital revolution (Wessels 2010b). Some general changes to the media environment are shaping the remit and processes of journalism, as well as the relationships between readers, audiences and journalists. In overall terms, the rise of digital technologies in newsrooms and in general public use has affected relations between the production and consumption of regional and local press, along with national and global media. New digital technologies and services such as smartphones and social media present a threat to national and local newspapers because they give individuals and communities access to a variety of news and opinion websites, as well as social media news items and blogs (www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/). A further challenge is that digital technologies – including the use of social media – facilitate the expansion of citizen or participatory journalism. Although this is different from community, public or civic journalism, each of these types of journalism features in civic life and political culture.

In general terms, community journalism is defined by its focus on news that is oriented around local communities and is based on events and interests relevant to individual city neighbourhoods, suburbs, small towns and villages. Community journalists are not amateurs – many are professionally trained reporters and editors, while others have completed training to become community journalists. Some specialised community journalism training programmes have recently become available at established undergraduate and graduate institutes. Community journalism is one element of mainstream journalism, which is mainly enacted in local and regional press. It is distinctive from civic journalism, although the culture of community journalism aligns strongly with notions of civic journalism, and many community newspapers have a civic journalism ethos. Civic or public journalism (the terms are used interchangeably) seeks to integrate the practice of journalism and the role of journalism as an institutional actor in social life around democratic processes. It operates from the standpoint that journalism needs to go beyond its primary role of informing citizens about public issues, to find ways of engaging people more directly, in order to encourage and increase public debate. This intends to change the position of its readers from being spectators of political and social processes, to place them in a more participatory situation instead. Civic journalism – whether as a philosophy, a

practice or, indeed, both – treats its readers, community members and citizens in general as participants.

The idea of public journalism is valuable for thinking about how to understand participation, democracy and political culture. A debate between Walter Lippman and John Dewey in the 1920s raised issues about the role of journalism in democratic societies and within democratic processes, which is particularly relevant here. Lippmann's (1922) viewpoint is that a journalist's role is to record and directly report policy and other issues that affect the public. In contrast, Dewey's (1927, 1939b) view asserts that journalists should actively engage with the public and should critically examine government information, commercial sector practices and a range of other issues that are in the public interest. Alongside this careful analysis and reportage, journalists (or, more probably, editors) should clearly state their own stance on the issues under review. In arguing for this kind of public or civic journalism, Dewey was building on an idea that effective democracy entails conversation and debate, and that journalism is an important actor in any such discussions.

Jay Rosen and Davis Merritt (1994) pursue this early idea about the role of journalism in democracy. The main thrust of what is, in effect, a manifesto, is that public journalism locates a journalist 'within the political community as a responsible member with a full stake in public life' (Rosen and Merritt 1994, p.34). This is a specific and distinctive role that differentiates a journalist from political actors, interest groups and citizens. According to this model, journalists must take a critical position on a range of public issues and uphold their responsibility to engage members of the public in an informed way. This requires maintaining both a sufficient degree of distance to have a critical stance on an issue, whilst remaining close enough to gain an understanding of how the issue affects different stakeholders. This tension means that a journalist will occasionally need to declare a personal interest or point of view on an issue or debate. To summarise, Rosen and Merritt (1994) define public journalism as a practice that:

- Addresses people as citizens and potential participants in public affairs, rather than victims or spectators.
- Helps the political community to act upon, rather than just learn about, its problems.
- Improves the climate of public discussion, rather than simply watching it deteriorate.
- Helps make public life work well, so that it claims our attention.
- Speaks honestly about what journalism's civic values are, what its preferred view of politics is and how it enacts its role as a public actor.

This debate about the role of public journalism shows how journalism is part of political culture. In a democracy, the role of journalism extends

further than this and beyond the work of community journalism as well. The media provide information and opinions, including political communication in their role as the Fourth Estate, which helps to hold governments to account. This raises the question of how participative journalism actually is and whether a more participative journalism supports a more pluralist public sphere within the dynamics of political culture.

One recent development in this area is citizen journalism – journalism that is driven by members of the public who identify particular news stories themselves. In this type of journalism, citizens collect news and information, analyse, report and publish it. As Radsch (2013) points out, there can be both an activist and an alternative news agenda in citizen journalism, as it tends to function outside mainstream media institutions. It is often a response to what some perceive as the limitations of mainstream professional journalism, which is generally guided by strong editorial policy about what counts as news and how new stories should be reported on. Citizen journalism represents a form of role reversal, since ordinary people who are usually positioned as the audience become news producers by using various communication tools to share information with others (Rosen 2008). The term 'citizen journalism' contains certain connotations: the word 'citizen' implies an inherent commitment to civic-mindedness and social responsibility; and 'journalism' seeks to recognise the work of the profession. There is a close alignment between this form of journalism and digital and social media, because citizen journalism is primarily *online* and *digital* and its reporters can be considered amateurs since they do not need to have trained as journalists and they are not employed by a public service broadcaster or a privately owned media company.

Citizen journalism draws on ideas about citizen media and user-generated content, highlighting the link between the practice of journalism and its relation to the political and public spheres (Radsch 2013). The design and capability of digital technology is a significant aspect of citizen journalism because services such as social networking sites, media-sharing sites and a number of social media platforms enable ordinary people to publish and share information, opinions and analysis. The high level of mobile phone ownership is another important technological aspect, giving people access to the Web, a range of data, and other people across the globe. This wide-scale development and use of social media platforms means that ordinary people frequently report breaking news more rapidly than traditional media outlets. This happened, for instance, in the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the 2013 protests in Turkey, the Euromaidan events in Ukraine and the 2014 Ferguson unrest. Although technology has enabled this type of activity, it has needed to be modified in order to facilitate citizen journalism. Technology providers have adapted it by introducing open publishing, collaborative editing and distributed content (Flew 2005), which allow people to create, augment or correct

information – either individually or in collaboration with others. So, for example, people can write about local council meetings on blogs on online forums. They can check the facts reported in the mainstream media and challenge any errors or bias through social media or blogs. People can also take digital photos of what they deem to be newsworthy events and post them on platforms like Instagram, or as videos on YouTube. Lasica (2003) identifies the following types of media as being particularly useful for citizen journalism:

- Audience participation, such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photographs or video footage captured from mobile phone cameras, or local news articles written by community residents.
- Independent news and information websites, such as Consumer Reports (an American non-profit organisation focusing on unbiased product testing, consumer research and advocacy), or the Drudge Report (a politically conservative American news aggregation website).
- Fully fledged participatory news sites, such as one:convo (www.f6s.com/oneconvo), NowPublic (www.nowpublic.com), OhmyNews (http://international.ohmynews.com), DigitalJournal (www.digitaljournal.com), GroundReport (www.groundreport.com) and Fair Observer (www.fairobserver.com).
- Collaborative and contributory media sites, such as Slashdot (https://slashdot.org), Kuro5hin (www.kuro5hin.org) and Newsvine (www.newsvine.com).
- Personal video and radio broadcasting sites, such as KenRadio (www.stitcher.com/podcast/kenradiocom-world-tech-round-up) and Clipshack (clipshack.com); and Big Contact, which allows users to create their own channels (http://bigcontact.com).

This overview of citizen journalism demonstrates how ordinary people are using social media to create their own news. This type of news comprises whatever they consider to be important, and it provides an opportunity for other voices to be heard outside those reported in the mainstream media. These types of opportunities to participate mean that people are becoming involved in the production as well as the consumption of news. As Dickens, Couldry and Fotopoulou (2015) suggest, this participation in news production has the potential to enhance people's understanding of each other's perspectives on the world. However, despite some early optimism about participatory and citizen journalism, Karlsson et al. (2015) find that it does not necessarily increase participation across the community – rather, it is undertaken by a small number of people who are keen to contribute, who may not be representative of the general interests of a community, locality or region.

Another concern is that too much reliance on social media can produce 'filter bubbles'. A filter bubble is the intellectual isolation that can occur when websites use algorithms to selectively predict the information a user

would want to see, and then gives the user information according to this assumption. Websites make these assumptions based on information gleaned from a user, such as their former online click-through behaviour, search and browsing history, and location. For that reason, the websites are more likely to present only information that matches a user's past activity. A filter bubble, therefore, can cause users to have significantly less contact with contradicting viewpoints, causing them to become less informed and, possibly, intellectually isolated (www.techopedia.com/definition/28556/filter-bubble). The combination of semantic technology, digital algorithms and the personalisation of media sources may combine to encourage people to engage only with topics they already feel an affinity towards. Sunstein (2006) argues that these are 'communication cocoons' or 'echo chambers' within social media and digital communication, and it is clear that these may increase the risks of polarisation, whilst simultaneously reducing diversity. Other concerns include the effects of personalisation on democracy, and how the impact of new gatekeepers and public opinion lobbyism might affect an open democracy (www.pewinternet.org/2017/03/29/the-future-of-free-speech-trolls-anonymity-and-fake-news-online/). However, a study in Sweden (https://lnu.se/en/research/searchresearch/forskningsprojekt/project-regional-press-project-regpress/) shows that people actually draw upon multiple media sources as well as a range of social networks in order to obtain and interpret information (Ekelin et al. forthcoming). This research supports the argument made by Parisier (2011) that there is still a lack of empirical evidence to suggest that filters actually have any discernible influence on the ways people make sense of news and information.

In the field of journalism, citizen-led activity and use of social media interacts with mainstream media, just as it does in the context of campaigning, and both contribute to the dynamics of political culture. To understand how citizen journalism is situated within these dynamics, it is important to consider some changes within mainstream media. These include the development of multimedia newsrooms, which are generating new modes of conduct, and compelling journalists and their managers to find new ways of working and engaging with citizens (Hermans et al. 2014). Multimedia newsrooms not only involve journalists using digital technology to support their reporting work, but also the use of user-generated context. In some contexts, such as the BBC's User-Generated Content and Social Media Hub (www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20150922112641140), this practice is highly regulated, with citizens submitting news items, text, photos and videos via social media platforms for BBC journalists to scour through. They follow up any interesting leads, assess them in relation to the organisation's editorial and news values, then develop some of them into news items (Lewis et al. 2008; Cottle 2003). In addition to this type of activity, multimedia newsrooms also use sources gathered from citizen journalism to present alternative, bottom-up perspectives on certain stories.

Another innovation is 'hyperlocal' media, which is 'a hybrid of civic, community, state wide public affairs, and alternative newspaper movements combined with the interactive and broadcast abilities accompanying Web 2.0' (Metzgar et al. 2011, p.774). Dickens et al. (2015) argue that hyperlocal media seek to address the decline of traditional local news media (also see Picard 2003, 2008) by introducing a community orientation to news media operations (Howley 2010). Hyperlocal media operations and their editorial choices are largely driven by commercial imperatives (Metzgar et al. 2011), in contrast to civic journalism, which provides local information that enables citizens to take action in their own communities. Furthermore, Dickens et al. (2015) identify an emerging 'inter-local' dynamic of community journalism in the connections between different localities. They argue that inter-local dialogic spaces are emerging via online hubs that make community reporters feel connected, create shared training approaches, reporting practices and a wider common ethos. They differentiate this inter-local space from notions of aggregated local voices on a national scale (citizen journalism) and local voices in hyperlocal news. They argue that this is not superseding the local, but creating different forms of connections within a national space of comparison. In this context, a dedicated community reporters' web platform gives community reporters, news groups and website groups and bloggers all around the country (and the world) opportunities to get together. This dedicated web space preserves a sense of a community voice, whilst also bringing it into contact with distant others (Dickens et al. 2015).

All of these innovations show that journalism is an increasingly diverse practice operating in a variety of contexts. It entails interactions between citizen-led participation and professional journalism, with each drawing on a range of digital technologies – including social media platforms – in a very similar way to the campaigning organisations discussed earlier. Just as in the other contexts discussed in this and the previous chapter, social media usage is shaped by its context of use within the social relations of participants, institutions and members of the public. The point of connection is frequently a particular issue or story, which can either be experienced very locally, or understood at national and global levels. As John Dewey observes, there is a relationship between issues of concern and publics, and these issues create publics (Dewey 1927). This point raises questions about visibility (Marres 2007) and how shared concerns are debated and resolved in everyday social spaces beyond the formal political process (Couldry 2010). Part of connecting the media with people and connecting people with people – whether face to face or via social media – is found in the relationship between storytelling and civic engagement. Chen et al. (2012) note that stories are important for enhancing civic engagement and inter-group interaction, because places and people become connected through stories they can identify with and which resonate with them. Rantanen (2009) asserts that the news

media play a significant role in constructing individuals' lived experience, so this means that the news has to offer its audience and users specific points of identification.

Within the wider media environment, participation can occur through consumerism, as well as through civic activity. Media organisations and the companies that advertise through them are eager to promote consumer engagement and participation, as a way of increasing their profits. This consumer-led element is realised in various ways. For example, media executives in Norway consider active consumer engagement to be a key attribute of their audiences (Sundet and Ytreberg 2009). Their overarching strategic goals are to create consumer loyalty (Jenkins 2006), capture consumer data and feedback (Andrejevic 2007), encourage user-generated content (van Dijck 2009), and peer promotion (Baym 2009), as well as aiming to provide an enhanced brand or product experience (Jenkins et al. 2013). These attempts to invite the audience in are neither new nor unique to the media industry – many other sectors act in similar ways (Griffen-Foley 2004; Hayashi 2000). Karlsson et al. (2015) observe that user-generated content is a sanctioned and controlled form of participation in the media which is governed by fairly rigid rules and protocols, and fits the general critique that user involvement is simply a way to make consumers 'work' for the industry for free (Caraway 2011; Comor 2011; Humphreys and Grayson 2008). Thus, participation in consumer terms may well follow a similar pattern, but it is a highly orchestrated and manipulated form of participation that does not extend to critical engagement with civic or political issues. This is not to suggest that various issues are not addressed by the commercial sector – there are numerous examples of campaigns supported by commercial companies which, in effect, means that commercial actors are entering into civic debate and political culture.

Although the media industry at large is becoming increasingly oriented towards strategically cultivating consumer participation, it does this in different ways from other industry sectors. Unlike companies that produce entertainment content, most news organisations are characterised by a slow adaption of consumer participation and are reluctant to let citizens enter the realm of production (Domingo 2008; Matheson 2004; Thurman 2008). The level at which people are encouraged to participate is by sending in user-generated content, which is then used in the production of news and other appropriate programmes (Harrison 2010). So, although consumerism can connect with people, news functions in a different way from other media because it has a social and public responsibility as well as the need to be commercially viable. News media foster participation by publishing material that elicits empathy, admiration or pride in people's achievements, as well as holding people and organisations to account. By doing this, journalists can enhance the bonds that join people together as a society (Elliott and Ozar 2010). Furthermore, journalism has:

the rare ability to promote civic participation in ways that are timely (unlike most scholarship), independent (unlike political parties or special-interest groups), and contemporaneously available to nearly all segments of society (unlike classroom discussions or even blogs, which are available only to those with a computer).

(Borden 2010, p.61)

Nip (2006) distinguishes between fostering participation through the mechanisms and frameworks established by professional journalism and the strategies of media organisations. This distinction can be extended to highlight the efforts made in digital and social media and participatory journalism to create additional forms of participation. Thinking about the connection amongst locales, people and media raises questions about the ways that the media feature in the dynamics of participation. Regional and national media, citizen journalism and participatory journalism all play a role in generating participation – whether as consumers or producers – both of which form part of the dynamic of active audiences (Livingstone 2013). However, innovations in journalism are undermining any straightforward distinction between journalist and citizen. Following Livingstone's (2013) definition of active audiences – which includes both producers and consumers as a type of prosumer – reveals how people draw on a range of resources and interpretive schema both to identify what they perceive as issues and to choose the ways they interpret and engage with those issues. Livingstone suggests conceptualising audiences 'as a relational or interactive construct' that opens up the 'diverse sets of relationships between people and media forms' (Livingstone 1998, p.14). This emphasises the modes of connection, relationship and communication that result in engaged, participatory individuals and publics (Livingstone 2005).

    These innovations in a dynamic media environment, along with considerations about what information is reported as news, by whom, and in what way, raise significant questions about power. As Chadwick and Dennis (2017) note, the use of social media services, content and data is part of a complex interplay of the negotiation of symbolic power. The notion of media power critically addresses ideas about the Fourth Estate that underpin conceptions of the media and its related liberal models (Couldry and Curran 2003, pp.3–4). Couldry and Curran (2003) draw on Pierre Bourdieu's scholarship to suggest that media power may be understood as the symbolic power to construct reality (Bourdieu 1991). Drawing on this argument, Couldry and Curran (2003) argue that media institutions circulate discourses, and that this dissemination makes the media appear at the natural centre of a given society. However, this notion conceals the complexity and range of practices through which media power is legitimated (Couldry 2003). Couldry (2003) asserts that this 'myth' of being at the centre is strategically useful for 'particular purposes in particular struggles, both within and beyond media institutions'

(Couldry 2003, p.47). Hess (2015) takes from this the idea that media innovations can play a central role in social life as a node that people pass through, or are drawn to, in order to connect to others. She argues that this role represents a significant amount of power.

Hess (2013) uses the concept of 'mediated social capital' to examine the dynamics of news media. She defines this as the power to connect people – both consciously and unconsciously – across various social, economic and cultural spaces, and to link ordinary people with those in positions of power (Hess 2013, p.113). This also recognises the news media's ability to control the information that brings people together in physical and digital spaces (see Hess 2013, 2014). This social power is a resource that commercial news media can utilise to build or maintain a position of advantage, and it is also one that public service broadcasters and citizen journalists negotiate in attempts to increase their visibility and influence. The ways in which journalists bond, bridge and link across networks define how the news media can connect people deliberately and consciously (i.e. their ability to harness people's attention), and each type of journalism has different levels of control over how information brings people together. She perceives this as happening in civic spaces and discussions about the common good, in addition to more private and domestic domains. Hess (2013, 2014) argues that this moves the concept of social capital away from a societal-level resource to one that is held by the media. She observes that this power can be used to abuse or exclude, just as easily as to empower or include, which leads us back to considerations of how citizens engage and participate in civic life and the ways that they use social media to do so.

Citizens, civic participation and social media

The discussions above and in Chapter 7 confirm that social media are part of a range of civic and political activities that together make up contemporary lived political culture. One of the characteristics of social media is that their use is shaped by the social relations of a specific context. Although there is a degree of diversity of people and groups who are part of these types of social relations, the main actors include NGOs and community organisations, social movements, campaign groups, mainstream media, social media platforms and ordinary individuals. People often have different roles and positions in different contexts, and they can act as advocates, campaigners, interested citizens, engage in Twitter communication and so on. They can, therefore, be protesters, campaigners, community advocates, public observers or onlookers, audiences and publics. Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is an everyday aspect of civic participation that involves the well-established and more mundane practices of civic engagement and participation – and these types of activity are at the centre of traditional understandings of civic culture and political culture. In the

contemporary communication environment, which is hybrid in character and is shaped by digital media and networked associations, the established practices of civic participation are interacting with an increasing number of civic and political practices. It therefore becomes important to understand the more commonplace practices of civic culture and social media because, on the one hand, these are still an important part of political culture whilst, on the other hand, they form the basis for participation in a range of other activities within civic and political culture.

Although Almond and Verba's (1963) theory about civic society and political culture is comparative and international, studies of the US draw on baseline understandings of civic life and political culture. Evidence gathered by researchers such as Smith et al. (2009) and Smith (2013) at the Pew Research Center (www.pewresearch.org) helps to assess the ways in which citizens use social media to engage in civic life. More specifically, research on social media and political engagement shows that social media are becoming an integral feature of political and civic engagement for many Americans (Rainie et al. 2012). This is a continual trend, with The Pew Research Center Social Media Update 2016 finding that most Americans obtain their news via social media and that half of the American public used social media to get information about the 2016 presidential election; and, although there are variations in use across socio-economic and ethnic divisions, these divisions are reducing (Gottfried and Shearer 2016). These high levels of Americans' social media use partly facilitate the similarly high levels of civic engagement through social media.

The Pew Research Center's 2016 social media data (Gottfried and Shearer 2016) provide a good indicator of how pervasive the use of social media is. They show that the most popular social media platform in the US is Facebook. Almost eight out of every ten Americans who have access to the Internet (79% of the population) use Facebook, which is more than twice as many as the 24% who use Twitter. Some other social media platforms are used by about a third of American Internet users – 31% use Pinterest, 32% use Instagram and 29% use LinkedIn. The Pew Research Center Social Media Update 2016 estimates that, in terms of the overall population – both Internet users and non-users – 68% of American adults are Facebook users, 28% use Instagram, 26% use Pinterest, 25% use LinkedIn and 21% use Twitter (Gottfried and Shearer 2016). Social media users tend to interact on a diverse array of platforms, with over half of online Americans using more than five social media platforms, and Facebook, Instagram and Twitter being checked on a daily or weekly basis. These figures show that social media are an integral part of many Americans' lives, and that social media services are used for a range of personal, social, civic and political purposes. Although these figures relate to the US, other developed countries reveal similar trends, while developing countries are following a similar path (https://wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview

and www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/).

Rainie et al.'s (2012) study of social media users and civic engagement in the US found that 69% of Internet users use social networking sites, 16% use Twitter, and 60% of all American adults overall use either a social networking site like Facebook, LinkedIn or Google+, or Twitter. Rainie et al. (2012) found some patterns in the ways that social media users engage in political and civic culture: 38% of their sample (hereafter called 'sample') use social media to 'like' or promote material that relates to political or social issues posted by other people. This mode of engagement is most popular with individuals who are under 50 years old and have low levels of educational attainment. Those with high school- and university-level education are more likely to post comments on social media. People of all age groups also use social media to encourage others to vote (35% of the sample), although users with some tertiary-level education are more likely to do this. Another practice is for social media users to post their own thoughts and comments about political and social issues on social media (34% of the sample), which was most frequently done by those aged between 18 and 29. Social media are also used to repost other users' content about political and social issues (33% of the sample), with university students most likely to do this. People also use social media to encourage others to take action on political and/or social issues that they feel are important to them (31% of the sample). People between 18 and 29 years old with a university education or above are most likely to do this. Social media are used to post links to political stories or articles for others to read (28% of the sample), and young people with some tertiary education are most likely to do this. All of these figures show that social media are a feature of the diverse ways that people engage with – and go beyond that to participate in – civic and political issues and concerns.

These practices show that social media are used to share information about social and political issues, as well as encouraging action. Although some of this activity might be construed as easy-to-do forms of slacktivism (see Chapter 5), such as clicking that you 'like' something, it can also trigger more active forms of engagement. This can be seen in certain types of social media practices, particularly those that are most likely to be done by younger people; however, most of the activities are carried out across a range of age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Nonetheless, younger people (between 18 and 29 years old) tend to be more active in posting material than those over 50 years old, particularly sharing their own thoughts on specific issues and posting links to political material (Rainie et al. 2012). Social media users encourage others to take political action and to join political groups on social networking sites. They follow elected officials and candidates for office on social media (20% of the sample), and like or promote political material that others have posted. The social media users who talk about politics on a regular basis are most likely to use social media

for civic or political purposes. Social media users who have the strongest
ideological ties to political parties (which, in the US, are liberal Democrats
and conservative Republicans), tend to be more likely than political moder-
ates to use social media for these purposes (Rainie et al. 2012). In terms of
engaging in groups, people use social media to belong to a group that focuses
on a political or social issue, and/or one that is working towards a cause
(21% of the sample). There are some demographic variations here, with
white social media users (24% of the sample) being more likely than black
(13% of the sample) and Hispanic (12% of the sample) users to belong to
active social and political online groups (Rainie et al. 2012). Although there
is some variation in the users' social backgrounds, social media are used in
an array of civic and political ways. However, in terms of symbolic power
and levels of participation, younger, white, university-educated people are
more likely to be actively engaged in civic and political issues via social
media.

   To sum up, Rainie et al. (2012) found that engagement through social
media has become a marked feature of political and civic life for a significant
portion of Americans. These findings support previous work by the Pew
Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, which has documented
the pivotal role that the Internet and social media play in people's partici-
pation in groups and organisations (Rainie et al. 2011). Other studies have
shown that people who use social media, especially Facebook, are more
civically and politically active than non-users (Hampton et al. 2011).
Although there is a slight bias towards young, white, university-educated
people, people who use social media to participate in civic and political life
are more socio-economically diverse than those who participate in civic
affairs through more traditional online and offline activities, such as signing
petitions or interacting with news organisations (Smith et al. 2009). These
findings suggest that social media are a key feature of civic participation,
certainly in the US. However, the growth of social media in the Global
North suggests a base for civic engagement that varies in line with a particular
national or regional culture of civic life. As social media spread across the
Global South, there is increased potential for its use for civic engagement.
However, given that the social relations of particular contexts shape the use
of social media in political culture, the way they develop will be shaped by
specific national and regional civic cultures of global society (Wessels 2014).

Conclusion

This chapter extends the discussion in Chapter 7 by considering how social
media are being used in online citizen-led campaigning, various types of
journalism and general types of civic engagement. One of the consistent and
defining features across all these areas of political culture is that social media
are an integral aspect of how groups, networks, organisations and

individuals communicate within and across the digital communications environment. The way that social media are used and which platforms are used depends on each particular context. However, the use of social media is rarely based on one platform; instead, people and organisations use diverse configurations of a number of platforms to communicate with a range of people – including activists, participants, citizen and professional journalists, and ordinary people as observers and social media users. It is also apparent that these levels of engagement vary from merely clicking that you 'like' something, to organising an online campaign and undertaking citizen journalism. Although it could be argued that these activities sit along a continuum of less-to-more active engagement, the use of social media fosters awareness and interpretation along the whole breadth of usage. Thus, for example, the way that material is posted and shared requires some knowledge about the issue itself as well as an awareness of which networks may be interested in the material.

The orientation is therefore towards a 'communicative civic-ness', which refers to the way that people communicate about civic issues, and in relation to civic issues, across various types of networks (see Chapter 10) that people engage with and participate in – to a greater or lesser degree. This is a richer understanding of the character of engagement and participation than that suggested by notions of slacktivism, which perceive online engagement as an easy way to participate which does not require any genuine commitment. However, by viewing communicative civic-ness as something that is embedded within civic and lived political culture, it becomes evident that all levels of online engagement can be seen as contributing to a vibrant participative public sphere. Another feature of this communicative civic-ness is that it comprises an interactive and interconnected space of people, networks and media. This is a hybrid type of space made up of numerous nodes, which connects different actors involved in diverse civic or political issues in a variety of interactions. These actors are brought together in a political way, since each creates alliances and uses information and content across social media in order to gain symbolic power for the issues they are advocating or supporting. Communicative civic-ness is, therefore, a dynamic process that feeds into civic and political life.

Chapter 9

Networks of social media and civic engagement and participation

Introduction

The previous two chapters have explored the ways that social media are being used in various types of civic and political culture, revealing the emergence of what can be called a communicative civic-ness. This term will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but first we need to examine critically the concept of political culture in order to assess the use of social media in civic life. The previous chapters show that the social relations of particular contexts of civic and political action shape the use of social media, and that those contexts comprise a range of actors including activists, participants, professional and citizen journalists, community groups and campaigning groups. Each of these actors has traditionally featured in civic life, and their engagement in civic life requires various types of communication.

This chapter outlines the ways that political culture has addressed these forms of involvement, in order to identify new aspects of civic communication, engagement and participation. These debates relate to the way in which political culture is considered as a lived culture, since it constitutes both personal and public concerns. People reflect upon and discuss a variety of issues in their everyday life – and think about things in a reasoned way but also in relation to their emotional aspects. They interact with news reporting that provides facts in a rather abstract way, as well as with the narratives that develop within news stories. Engagement and participation are practised through various interactions with issues and concerns at personal, civic and political levels – sometimes merging and at other times remaining distinctive. People may engage more or participate more in one context than another. This fluctuating and interrelated form of engagement and participation means that political culture cannot be reduced to a straightforward relationship between a person's set of values and a political party. Rather, it is a more dynamic culture that is materialised through everyday life. Political culture is defined through the various avenues of expression, engagement and participation – such as protest, new social movements, community action groups, campaigning and petitioning. The chapter critically discusses

whether mainstream politics needs to change in order to engage more meaningfully with people's values and concerns. In response to claims that there are deficits in mainstream politics, it discusses how social media developments can be used to foster affect in creating engagement on the one hand, whilst, on the other hand, producing emerging new forms of connective organisations in the rise of contentious politics.

Beyond socialised political culture and 'bowling alone', towards networks of expression

Chapter 6 outlined some of the main issues about political culture[1] and its shortcomings in considering the rich diversity of ways in which people actually interpret civic concerns and engage politically and culturally. Chapters 7 and 8 showed that people engage in civic life and politics in various ways, and in relation to a variety of interests, and they do so from a range of positions which tend to be issues-based rather than directly party political. A return to Almond and Verba's types of political culture reveals how the more networked forms of political culture cut across their classifications in differing ways. Almond and Verba (1963) developed a typology based on people's attitudes towards, and participation in, politics. From this base, they identified a 'parochial' type of participation, in which citizens are not very aware of central government or its policies so they go about their daily lives with little regard for, or knowledge of, decisions taken by the state. According to Almond and Verba's (1963) schema, these people have a high level of distance between themselves and mainstream politics, marked by a correlated lack of interest in politics. However, as the discussion of the London riots in Chapter 7 shows, people can feel alienated from mainstream politics if they do not believe that it cares about their particular concerns.

   A second type of political participation is classed as 'subject', in which citizens live under strong government rule and have little say in policy or other decisions. They know about the politics of a particular government, its actors and institutions. There is a strong downward flow of politics from a – usually centralised – authoritarian structure, which produces an affective relationship. Almond and Verba's (1963) 'participant' type is where citizens believe that the government affects them, but they are also able to influence government. In this type of political culture, which is usually democratic in both the political and administrative senses, people are oriented towards the political system. This is generally found in Western democracies, and social media are embedded within it as a communication tool, as seen in the US. These types do not have to be discrete, as they can combine together to create civic culture (Almond and Verba 1963). In considering the con-temporary dynamics of political culture, a mix of these types of relationships is apparent. Many of these are communicated online through social media, as well as by more traditional ways of communicating and sharing concerns

about a range of issues. This raises the question of how a dynamic and networked sense of political culture is created and shared.

Almond and Verba (1963) correspond to Dawson and Prewitt, who define political culture as a 'pattern of distribution of orientations members of a political community have towards politics' (Dawson and Prewitt 1969, p.27). Pateman (1971), in responding to Dawson and Prewitt (1969) as well as Almond and Verba (1963), argues that the word 'orientations' is used here to denote how individuals relate to politics in terms of their perceptions of politics, which include cognition and knowledge, affective feelings, attitudes, and the ways they evaluate politics in terms of their values and norms (Easton and Dennis 1969). Almond and Verba (1963) clearly state that they understand culture as referring to a 'psychological orientation towards social objects', where orientation means 'the internalised aspects of objects and relationships'. They state that political culture refers to 'the political system as internalised in the cognitions, feelings and evaluations of its population' (Almond and Verba 1963, pp.13–14). This approach to political culture means viewing an individual's value perspectives, personality or psychological factors alongside the cognitive aspects of politics such as knowledge and beliefs as all forming part of the culture of participation within different political forms (e.g. democracy and authoritarianism) (see Chapter 2). However, this narrow focus on certain psychological aspects of political culture misses the more dynamic and shared senses of meaning-making that define culture and, in so doing, shape civic and political sensibilities. This is one area where Almond and Verba's (1963) approach is open to criticism, because their rather reductionist approach to culture reflects the fact that they drew on a Parsonian framework of social order which proposes a functional fit between individuals and social systems.

In Parsonian terms, orientation is understood as a set of actions that are related to social norms, which are learnt through socialisation. An individual's orientation 'concerns the how of his relation to the object world, the patterns or ways in which his relations to it are organised' (Parsons 1971, p.7). The way that someone becomes oriented is by socialisation, which is understood as the internalisation of culture – and, more specifically, of normative culture – from Parsons's viewpoint: 'inherent in an action system [is the notion] that action is … normatively oriented' (Parsons 1971, p.36). According to this perspective, political culture is a subsystem of the cultural system which is important because it upholds social order by orienting people into having a shared set of values and normative understandings. Parsons and Shills argue that cultural patterns are both an 'object of orientation' and an 'element in the orientation of action' which can be transferred from being an object to becoming an element of orientation (Parsons and Shills 1951, pp.6–7, 67). This follows a dyadic model which argues that in order to maintain a stable pattern of interaction between the ego and alter ego, individuals need to have mutual (normative) expectations about each other's behaviour and share a normative meaning or definition of these (Parsons and Shills 1951).

They assert that, 'what was once an object becomes a constitutive part of the actor ... it is part of his personality' (Parsons and Shills 1951, p.8). According to this theory, the concept of orientation is psychological and is learned through culture. System norms are internalised through an individual's personality, which controls and institutionalises stable patterns of interactions that are simultaneously structural.

Thus, in order to analyse political culture from a Parsonian perspective, there needs to be a structure of shared political values which defines a political situation and underpins a set of collective goals. Political power has to be consensual, which leads to a 'generalised capacity' for achieving collective goals through decision making by those in authority positions (Parsons 1967). However, the shortcoming of this approach to political culture is that it overlooks the ways that issues are contested and debated from a range of differing positions. Furthermore, it misses the diversity of forms of participation in both civic and political culture, and it does not account for the fact that people from similar backgrounds may have divergent views about the same issue. It also ignores the question of how societies organised around networks rather than structures engage and shape the spaces for debate in the public sphere, the civic sphere and the intersections between everyday life, civic life and political life. Putnam (2000) sought to examine some of these trends in civic engagement in his well-known text *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000). In this book, he studies social networks and social cohesion, focusing on the perceived decline in American political involvement in the late 1900s. Putnam (2000) argues that evidence of this decline is seen in reduced voter turnout, lower attendance at public meetings, and fewer people offering to serve on committees and work with political parties. Putnam argues that trust in government was already declining because of numerous political scandals from the 1960s onwards, but that wider trends can be observed in civic engagement.

Putnam (2000) notes that fewer people nowadays are volunteering in civic organisations such as religious groups, labour organisations, parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, the Red Cross, and so on. To express these falling levels of civic engagement and participation and the significance of this, he uses the example of bowling. Putnam asserts that even though more people are bowling in total, those who bowl in leagues are fewer. He believes this is a cause for concern, because bowling alone means that people are no longer participating in social interactions and civic discussions. Putnam does note that, despite the decline of traditional types of civic engagement, a range of new and more vibrant organisations have emerged, such as:

- National environmental organisations.
- Feminist groups.
- The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

<div align="right">(Putnam 1995a, pp.65–78)</div>

Putnam views the lobbying power of these new mass-membership organisa-tions as being of great political importance. However, he observes that these organisations do not involve the same levels of interaction and participation, which he calls 'social connectedness' (Putnam 2000), as their predecessors. He argues that engagement in the new organisations has diminished to just paying membership fees and reading a newsletter. Although some people might attend certain organisational meetings, most are unlikely to meet other members of the organisation. He argues that this makes the bonds between members weak, with the ties between them being centred on common symbols and leaders, instead of each other. Likewise, other forms of social connectedness, such as book groups, provide interaction but are not directly focused on community or civic issues. He notes the growth of non-profit groups but considers these to be third sector, rather than civic, organisations. He also disregards 'support groups' which provide care and help for a range of people (some with religious affiliations), such as Alcoholics Anonymous, because they do not function collectively in the same way as the more traditional civic organisations, being focused on internal, individual care concerns. So, although Putnam acknowledges the rise of different types of associations in relation to the decline of civic participation in traditional organisations, he nonetheless perceives an overall reduction in social capital. Although wider social changes may have influenced this trend (such as women entering paid employment which reduces the amount of free time they can spend on voluntary activities), he makes the rather simplistic assertion that television – and in terms of more recent technological inno-vations, the Internet – is individualising leisure time which is, therefore, having a significant negative impact on civic participation in the US.

Wuthnow (1998) questions Putnam's analysis, arguing that it is the *form*, rather than the levels, of civic participation that has changed. He asserts that although fewer people may be joining formal organisations such as the Rotary Club, individuals are participating in more ad hoc and specialised ways. As proof of this, Wuthnow (1998) gives examples including anti-AIDS walks, beach clean-ups, lobbying campaigns and the award-winning www.volunteerma tch.org website, which was set up in 1991 to enable people to contribute specific altruistic activities on a one-off basis, or even do 'remote volunteering'. Both Putnam and Wuthnow observe that American people's participation in civic life transformed during the 1980s, but each interprets this change in a different way. Putnam views it as a decline in civic participation, whereas Wuthnow perceives it as a move to new forms of civic participation.

Politics and engagement: deficits in politics and political processes

It makes sense that the forms of civic engagement and participation develop in line with broader social changes leading to an information society that is

organised via networks. The growth in the use of digital technology, combined with globalisation and a neo-liberal socio-economic and political agenda, is influencing the ways that people can participate in civic life (Wessels 2010b). This raises questions about what role new types of inclusion and exclusion play in the dynamics of political engagement. Thus far, the discussion has concentrated on the ways in which ordinary people and an array of civic society groups engage and participate in civic society and political culture. The debate about civic and political participation often focuses on the citizen level in relation to particular sets of political orientations and perspectives (see Chapters 2 and 3); however, as Chapters 7 and 8 show, people are frequently frustrated by formal politics, so they find other means to raise their concerns. These are often around perceptions of political inequality, as seen in the London riots and discussed below in the US context. They often arise from a general disillusionment with politics that leads some scholars, such as Colin Hay (2007), to debate the future of politics overall, which is also discussed below.

A deep concern about political and other inequalities emerged in the US between 2000 and 2012. This resulted from the dominant neo-liberal agenda that emerged during Ronald Reagan's presidency in the 1980s, which continues today, and has created increased inequalities. This concern is clearly demonstrated in, for instance, the 2011 Occupy movement that drew attention to growing economic inequality in the US, whereby certain wealthy Americans began to benefit disproportionately, while middle-class and poor citizens saw their income levels stagnate or decline. This economic disparity fed into political inequality. One way that this happened was through the political action committees in the 2012 election process, which accepted huge amounts of money donated by wealthy individuals to finance presidential candidates' electoral campaigns. This led to a bias in politics because it enabled a few very rich people to speak out more loudly than everybody else. Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012) examine this political inequality in their book *The Unheavenly Chorus*, asserting that American people have a strong belief in – and an equally strong desire for – political equality. It is clearly recognised, within both the populace and within American political culture, that the strength and quality of democracy depends on everyone's voices and opinions being heard. However, the link between political inequality and economic inequality is only weakly acknowledged within this culture. In general terms, Americans accept high levels and extremes of economic inequality because they believe that the market rewards people who work hard and are entrepreneurial, and that a capitalist market economy is required to incentivise individual and societal productivity.

In response to a lack of critical questioning about the link between economic and political inequality, Schlozman et al. (2012) point out that this set of values about market rewards undermines the value of equality in political participation. They show that the rates of political participation vary across

socio-economic categories and correlate with class positions. They observe that the more affluent and educated individuals are, the more likely they are to participate in political activity and to do so using a wide range of participatory political methods. The difference between the ways that wealthy people and those on lower incomes participate in politics is less pronounced in time-based activities such as volunteering on campaigns. However, as can be expected, the gap between the ways that the rich and poor participate is widest in terms of donating money. Schlozman et al. (2012) argue that this results in a situation where many poor people lose the power of their vote, in contrast to the theoretical democratic system of 'one person one vote'. Furthermore, they assert that protest is seen as a weapon of the weak. For these authors, therefore, economic inequality undercuts the possibilities for political equality and this has democratic implications, because those who are wealthy and active will have different policy preferences from those who are not. They claim that this is resulting in wealthy voices dominating the shaping of policy, at the expense of those who are poor and those in middle-class positions, whose voices are no longer being heard. This is moving economic policy to the right overall, and ignoring or underemphasising the interests and well-being of the less privileged.

This situation in the US is producing a politics that is moving away from a middle ground – either towards addressing the interests of rich voters or towards poorer voters. In addition, these politics do not encourage or support any significant redistribution of income across the population. This corresponds to the trend, noted by Schlozman et al. (2012), for American politicians to be less focused on the median voter and less concerned about the middle ground than has previously been the case in the two-party political system. This is largely explained by the fact that the Americans who are more active in politics tend to be those with higher incomes, who hold more conservative economic views. Because these people are more active and able to contribute to party funds, their voices and preferences are generally more influential than other voters. Ordinary citizens, average political campaign workers and average political financial donors experience lower levels of influence. This is because people in these positions have less money to contribute to the political process, so politicians are less interested in them.

This leads on to another feature of contemporary US politics – political polarisation. There is certainly a polarisation between elected politicians, with a large gap even between the Democrats and Republicans which are both located in the middle ground, and with very little overlap between these parties. Although Fiorina (2006) argues that the public is not divided along political lines, Schlozman et al.'s analysis in *The Unheavenly Chorus* shows that this polarisation is reflected in the public divergence. The authors argue that politically active partisans are entrenched in either the Democrats' established policy stance or in the Republicans' increasingly right-wing position. These divisions can also be seen at a more organised level, where citizens

come together to lobby government. In fact, in Washington, DC, only one in eight organised groups is made up of ordinary people; most of the lobbying and donating in the US political capital is done by corporate groupings. There is a lack of representation by ordinary citizens except at the level of occupational associations and professional workers, and there are no interest groups comprising people on means-tested social programmes or of unskilled, low-skilled, manual or service workers. These groups are represented by unions, which Schlozman et al. (2012) observe play an important role in representing the less privileged and pushing for their interests. However, as in other countries, unions in the US are in decline, which is consequently reducing the opportunities for those with less political and economic capital to have their voices heard.

The overriding conclusion reached by Schlozman et al. (2012) is that political inequality has widened in the US. They report that when there is a larger voter turnout, this is generally due to higher rates of lower-class constituents. If this is the case, the authors suggest that mobilising political participation might provide an opportunity to address existing inequality. They also note that the Internet may help to mobilise younger people, who are under-represented among the active citizenry. Here attention needs to be paid to the effects of a digital divide, although many of those gaps are closing (Castells 2001). The case of political inequality in the US raises broader issues about how effective current political organisations are at addressing participation levels and inequality. There is a need to consider the characteristics of contemporary politics and how they feature in the wider lived experience of political culture. Colin Hay's (2007) work on the UK is insightful here, as his research highlights the shortcomings in Putnam's work and questions the mainstream approach to assessing political participation.

Hay (2007) examines those people who do not engage in traditional politics but are, nonetheless, involved in other types of political activity. He also asks whether people's non-participation can be seen as a political act in itself. He argues that the rise of neo-liberalism and a philosophy of public choice have resulted in people feeling alienated from the existing democratic process. In short, Hay (2007) turns on its head the conventional view that 'citizens get the politics they deserve', asserting instead that 'democratic polities get the level of political participation they deserve'. This requires considering the internal dynamics of a political system that is not able to adapt to the participatory expectations or political apathy of 'new citizens' (see Chapter 2), or to external factors such as economic globalisation, consumerism and individualisation. Stoker (2009) thinks that Hay is far too negative, and points out that what he views as increasingly individualised and politically naïve citizens are likely to be disappointed by collective decision making, which is at the heart of democratic processes. Although new forms of participation such as blogging suggest that citizens are less willing to be governed, there are questions about whether citizens have the processes in place for self-government.

Stoker's (2009) argument situates the causes of citizen apathy outside the political process and polity to focus on people's perceptions of politics and their increased leanings towards other forms of political engagement.

Hay (2007) concentrates on the way that neo-liberal ideas and the notion of rational choice are pushing people away from politics. He argues that the shaping of politics, political rhetoric and policy are all based on the idea that people are self-interested and rational actors seeking to gain the most benefit from whatever sources they have access to. This idea of choice is linked to a neo-liberal ideology, which posits that the capitalist market should be free from state control so that it can inform and guide social life. According to Hay (2007), both of these ideas – that choice is rational and the invisible hand of the market – have depoliticising affects, which are therefore creating political dissatisfaction. He argues that this process of depoliticisation began in the 1980s when both the efficacy of the state and belief in the integrity of political actors started being attacked. In the 1990s, once welfarist and corporatist politics had been undermined, there was a period of normalisation that established neo-liberalism as the natural way to do politics. In this new public form of management, the issues that mattered to people were taken out of the political arena into the realm of 'non-political' experts in technocratic and economic management. Politics therefore no longer seems so relevant to ordinary people's concerns.

The fact that politics has lost its significance and relevance for many people leads on to Hay's second point: the need to look at what he calls the 'supply side' of political participation. In analysing political participation, Hay (2007) distinguishes between a 'supply side' and a 'demand side', asserting that most analyses of political participation focus on the 'demand side' – that is, how receptive citizens are to political appeals. This approach places the responsibility for a lack of political participation upon citizens, rather than on politicians. He notes that influential academics such as Robert Putnam, Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart and Mark Franklin all take this kind of 'demand side' perspective, albeit from different interpretations. However, Hay (2007) takes a different view, suggesting that analysis should concentrate on what he terms the 'supply side', which includes the content of the appeals and issues that politicians raise, the skills and capacity that politicians have to deliver on their promises, and the causes of disaffection that arise from these. This means that if politicians cannot identify and communicate a particular policy well and/or cannot deliver on their policy promises, then citizens will lose interest and confidence in politics.

One aspect of this is what it means for an issue to become 'politicised' or 'de-politicised'. In order to make this distinction, Hay (2007) starts by defining politics as a 'capacity for agency and deliberation in situations of genuine collective or social choice' (Hay 2007, p.34). This is an expansive definition which asserts that politics exists beyond the ballot box, can occur 'anywhere and over any issue', and therefore any topic can become

politicised. Levels of intensity around an issue can increase when it is promoted from the realm of necessity into the private sphere, then from the private to the public sphere, and from the public to the government sphere. Hay (2007) explains that depoliticisation occurs similarly, but in reverse, so a political issue can be relegated to just a matter of necessity. This overall trend of depoliticisation has been growing for the last 30 years, resulting in a perceived lack of interest and participation in politics, feelings of disdain towards politicians, and citizens lacking confidence in the effectiveness of formal political institutions. In concrete terms, this shift can be seen in the way that responsibility for governance has moved from the formal governmental sphere to quasi-independent bodies in the public sphere, such as independent central banks and QUANGOs (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations). This displacement has gone further in the way that the market has replaced formal governance, as seen in the extensive privatisation of public services in the 1980s. Other shifts include moving responsibility for key policy areas such as welfare and the environment away from the state, towards both the non-governmental public sphere and the individual. Some politicians' belief that 'less politics means more efficiency' has resulted in a dilution of, and reduction in, the domains in which *politicians* may argue for politics as collective choice and where political agency can take place. This creates a context where many areas of social life are now viewed as matters of individual consumer choice or those which are determined by uncontrollable market forces, leaving little or no room for politics.

In assessing the role of social media and the ways people are finding to engage and participate in civic life and lived political culture, it is important to consider the current state of politics. The discussion in this section has shown that there is a deficit in politics and political process, meaning that formal political processes and activities are not meeting the demand side of their purpose. The weakening of democratic government in the Global North is prompting people to find new ways to engage with the issues they view as important and significant. In searching for ways to engage – and, for some, to participate – people are using social media as well as organising through protest, campaigning, citizen journalism or various sorts of online engagement.

Emerging publics: social media, affect and narrativising issues in the public sphere

Hay's (2007) argument that politics is losing its relevance in contemporary society and that political actors are failing to question how neo-liberalism is responsible for increased senses of marginalisation raises questions about how people can participate in issues that are important to them. Although Stoker (2009) claims that this position is slightly overstated, he nonetheless suggests that increased political participation is only a partial solution to the

wider need to foster civic engagement. Stoker includes a range of different types of participation in this, including activism, local action groups, social movements and protests. The dynamics of these kinds of participation, however characterised, are embedded in the use of social media. Therefore, even though social media can facilitate the development of connections, it is nonetheless the social relations of any particular context that shape the types of participation that emerge in a specific context (see Chapters 7 and 8). As described earlier, the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the Spanish Indignados movements have garnered a great deal of attention from commentators seeking to understand the role of social media in protest activities. Whereas some have argued that social media enhance freedoms and can lead to transformative changes (e.g. Castells 2012; Earl and Kimport 2011; Shirky 2008), others have noted the limitations of commercial platforms and the potential for slacktivism rather than activism within those platforms (Dean 2005; Fuchs 2014; Gladwell 2010; Hoofd 2012; Morozov 2009; Poell and van Dijck 2016; see also Chapter 7). However, one point that has not been sufficiently recognised in this debate is how social media can tap into and express the affective aspect of civic and political engagement and participation.

Zizi Papacharissi's book *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics* (2015) contributes to this discourse. She moves away from the well-worn discussions on whether social media form a space for political debate to focus, instead examining whether people can use online spaces for political affect and, if so, how (Clark 2016). In her book, 'affect' means the feelings and emotions that are part of political engagement. She extends the notion of affect into a consideration of how these feelings can be produced and shared through online interactions. She seeks to understand how social media are providing new ways for people to express themselves online and how that expression creates a form of participation which is based on 'soft structures of feeling' (Papacharissi 2015, p.116) – in other words, people's belief that their views matter, are worth expressing, and add something to an existing story. The importance of story for engaging people is well recognised by journalists and was discussed in the previous chapter. The process by which this occurs is that, first, people like to feel they are part of a developing story. They then begin contributing by making (often emotional) declarations online by posting words, photos and videos on Twitter, Facebook, or other social media platforms. Through this process, people deem that they have become part of a story.

Papacharissi's (2015) argument is not technology-centric, as she clearly makes the case that it is people's narratives, rather than social media or digital technology, which create the connective tissue of engagement. These narratives also help to create and sustain engagement at the beginning, middle and end of any story. From this base, she observes that the various emotional contributions people make using an array of social media tools and content contribute to the way that certain events can increase in

intensity to become political statements. For example, individuals' emotional responses to conversations about protests create a story that enables the event, the issues in question and the participants to become political statements. This line of reasoning means that Papacharissi contributes to current discourse by revealing the way that social media can facilitate emotional feelings of belonging through enabling the development and expression of narrative (Clark 2016). If this facility interacts with the ways that people identify with a particular issue and/or event, then it can push a range of issues into the political sphere. Therefore, the sense of involvement in stories created through social media is a part of political engagement. Clark (2016) notes that this observation taps into recent scholarship (Mouffe 2005, 2013) that is challenging deep-rooted assumptions about deliberation and reason, which inform the idealised notion of a Habermasian public sphere.

Established approaches to political participation have argued that such engagement is based on rational action, whilst underplaying the emotional and affective aspects of political engagement (see Chapter 2). Papacharissi (2015) traces the beginning of the rational versus emotional dichotomy to the late 17th century, writing that an Enlightenment-based critique of the role of the Church brought attention to the need for 'reason' to be a basis of a more open and secular society. The critique focused on the Church's power to create affective relationships with the populace and its monopoly on knowledge, both of which were seen as barriers to development towards a more democratic society. However, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, this dichotomy has been more of an analytical divide than one that reflects the experiences of political engagement in everyday life. The difficulty of understanding the boundary between affect and emotion continues today and is highlighted in 'the affective turn' in recent studies of media, politics and everyday life. In addition, there is still a concern about how people can resist popular media that are designed to appeal to their emotions. Communication scholars who follow Habermas's (1991) critique of popular media are seeking to find ways that people can avoid the potential ideological exploitation and knowledge management that are a part of a more affectively driven media (Clark 2016).

Papacharissi (2015) addresses these concerns by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) studies which consider 'affect' as comprising a range of forces other than conscious 'knowing'. The argument is that the 'ways of affect' that work in a liminal way, i.e. as a space between knowledge bases, can support individuals to produce new thoughts or actions. Papacharissi (2015) asserts: 'Per affect theory, empowerment lies in liminality, in pre-emergence and emergence, or at the point at which new formations of the political are in the process of being imagined but not yet articulated' (Papacharissi 2015, p.19). This is because people feel empowered when they believe that their own views count, which is an important aspect of fostering engagement in political activities. This is where affect theory has some explanatory power in its focus on the discursive aspects of engagement and the idea of empowerment,

because it is through discursive and expressive activity that individuals find personal fulfilment, and if this is related to a wider group or network, it triggers greater engagement in civic and political life. For example, in the context of social movements, individuals also sometimes move from sharing feelings into carrying out the kinds of transformative actions that tend to take place much more slowly, more ponderously, and much less thrillingly (Clark 2016; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Tufecki and Wilson 2012; Verhulst and Walgrave 2009). Clark (2016) argues that the way affect can foster interest and engagement provides insights into understanding the potential and limitations of online affective expression.

As noted in Chapters 7 and 8, context is important in shaping how social media are used, for what purpose and with what ethos. Papacharissi (2015) focuses on three examples of what she calls 'affective publics', which she defines as 'networked public formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment' (Papacharissi 2015, p.125).[2] She finds that tweets with the hashtag #egypt were emotionally charged because they blended fact and opinion as part of the resulting Twitter flow which created what Papacharissi (2015) calls 'affective news'. This had the characteristics of newsworthiness but at the same time reflected the indignation that those tweeting felt towards an unresponsive regime. In the context of discussions surrounding Occupy Wall Street, tweets with the hashtag #ows were also emotionally charged, but they were distinctive in character by being declarative rather than deliberative. The declarative aspect was a result of people who had different views about the movement seeking to discredit or even silence those they disagreed with. Papacharissi (2015) notes that #ows supporters had some level of success in challenging the dominant narrative about rising inequities in the US and elsewhere. However, the discourse surrounding Occupy Wall Street events could best be described as disruptive rather than transformative, due to the range of differing opinions that were expressed around it. Another context is the way in which the political occurs in everyday expressive statements on Twitter. Here, as Clark (2016) notes, Papacharissi draws on her previous work in A *Networked Self* (2011) and A *Private Sphere* (2010), to consider how individuals perform expressions of the self where 'the act of making a private thought public bears the potential of a political act' (Papacharissi 2015, p.111). She observes that trending conversations on Twitter allow individuals to contribute personal thoughts to ongoing public conversations. In this way, trending hashtags can be used to link individual expressions about experiences of oppression and collective political consciousness and action (see e.g. Moraga and Anzaldua 2015; Perez 2009).

Of course, other media such as TV and radio create affect, but Papacharissi (2015) shows what the specific affordances of Twitter are in creating affective attunement and engagement (Papacharissi 2015, p.134). She highlights the affective aspects of political engagement to show how social media – particularly

Twitter – can foster a form of affective engagement that also allows critical stances towards dominant ideologies. As noted in Chapter 8, there are limits of diversity on social media (c.f. filter bubbles), since Twitter and other social media platforms tend to privilege certain people and points of view over others. Nonetheless, a focus on affect and involvement through joining a social media narrative as it unfolds is an important aspect in the dynamics of engagement and participation in lived political culture. As Papacharissi asserts, participation in online conversations enables people to 'feel their way into politics' (Papacharissi 2015, p.25).

To some degree, Papacharissi's (2015) argument is related to Bennett and Segerberg's (2013) thesis, which posits that social media have brought about what they term 'connective action'. They use this term to refer to the ways that the networking logic of digital media makes communication networked and, because of this, digital media enable people to personalise the expressions of a particular thread of communication or distributed content. For example, an individual can personalise a social movement's message and, in so doing, express their own feelings on the subject. Then, through sharing their personalised expression, they can extend the communication of a social movement's mission beyond the boundary of such traditional organisations. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) show how digital media work in political organisations, while Papacharissi (2015) brings theories of affect into discussions about political organising.

Bennett and Segerberg (2013) identify the overarching characteristics of the ways that digital and social media use in protest movements goes beyond simply sending and receiving messages. As noted in Chapters 7 and 8, protests and other related civic and political activities involve roles for traditional, well-established advocacy organisations, there are often hybrid relations with other organisations, and digital media are used for personalised public engagement. Bennett and Segerberg (2013) explore the differences between a logic of collective action that is associated with high levels of organisational resources and the formation of collective identities, and a logic of connective action which is based on personalised content sharing across media networks. Introducing digital media in the former does not change the core dynamics of the action, but it does in the latter.

Bennett and Segerberg (2013) produced a typology that defines collective action as organisationally brokered networks, and two types of connective action – either self-organising networks or organisationally enabled networks (see Figure 9.1). They define the ideal type of collective action as large-scale action networks that depend on brokering organisations to carry the burden of facilitating cooperation and bridging differences when possible. These may use digital media and social technologies more as a means of mobilising and managing participation and coordinating goals, rather than inviting personalised interpretations of problems and self-organisation of action. Another ideal type they identify is that of connective action networks, which are

CONNECTIVE ACTION Self Organizing Networks	CONNECTIVE ACTION Organizationally Enabled Networks	COLLECTIVE ACTION Organizationally Brokered Networks
• Little or no organizational coordination of action • Large scale personal access to multi-layered social technologies • Communication content centers on emergent inclusive personal action frames • Personal expression shared over social networks • Collectivities often shun involvement of existing formal organizations	• Loose organizational coordination of action • Organizations provide social technology outlays - both custom and commercial • Communication content centers on organizationally generated inclusive person action frames • Some organizational moderation of personal expression through social networks • Organizations in the background in loosely linked networks	• Strong organizational coordination of action • Social technologies used by organizations to manage participation and coordinate goals • Communication content centers on collective action frames • Organizational management of social networks - more emphasis on interpersonal networks to build relationships for collective action • Organizations in the foreground as coalitions with differences bridged through high resource organization brokerage

Figure 9.1 Elements of connective and collective action networks
(Bennett and Segerberg 2013, p.567)

largely self-organised and do not have central or 'lead' organisational actors. In this context, the participants use technologies as important organisational agents. Although a few formal organisations may be involved, they are usually positioned at the periphery and can be online, offline, or both. In this context, personal action frames become the transmission units across trusted social networks. Between these two ideal types, there is connective action, which is hybrid in character. In this ideal type, participating formal organisational actors do not develop and project strong agendas, political brands or collective identities. Instead, they use resources to deploy social media that facilitate the development of loose public networks around personalised action themes, which might link with larger communication networks and, therefore, increase the impact of the network. These three ideal types are not mutually exclusive. In the cases Bennett and Segerberg (2013) discuss, they show that the different logics of their typology can be used to observe actually occurring combinations of different types of action within complex protest ecologies. This highlights the dynamics of new forms of organisational action and social media use in a political culture that is partly defined by the rise of contentious politics.

Conclusion

So far, this book has shown that communication in the civic sphere and, indeed, within the sphere of political communication, involves a range of communication forms. These include face-to-face, offline group communication, town hall meetings, public protest and leaflet publication, as well as the more recent use of digital media, including social media. The innovation of the Internet and the World Wide Web has interacted with broader social changes such as globalisation and a more networked sociability which is

shaping the ways that people experience civic life, interpret and value politics, and identify what they consider to be significant issues. These social, technological and communicative changes are combining to generate new sensibilities and experiences of civic life and political culture. This is not to say that there has been a transformative change, but rather a range of subtle shifts in the perceptions and practices of how people engage – and participate – in civic life. In some ways, there is a return to a more rounded sense of engagement, since everyday feelings and experiences are reconnected with reason and planned public expression. In addition, ordinary people have access to communication platforms which allow them to identify the issues that concern them, and to express their feelings about these in popular forms as well as in formal journalistic and political discourse. There is evidence that new ways of organising are emerging in response to a significant level of citizen disengagement with formal politics, which are no longer seen as relevant and interesting to them.

However, several key questions remain about whether these types of engagement are transformative and have any impact in political terms. It is difficult to see any progressive change from a classic perspective of political participation aligned with Almond and Verba's functionalist idea of political culture. However, by taking a more dynamic understanding of political culture as something 'lived' and realised through people's patterns of association as advocated by Goldfarb (2012), and understanding the use of social media as part of a communicative civic-ness, it becomes possible to identify some nuances of change. These changes can be considered positive or negative in normative terms – but it does show, following Silverstone (2006), that the media are tightly bound up with people's own moral and political universes. Furthermore, individuals' and groups' diverse imaginative responses to feelings of alienation from political processes highlight the deficit of current political culture. Even if the emerging culture is not an improvement on previous incarnations, there is some indication that people are becoming aware of the normalising of neo-liberal politics and how it is creating greater political inequality that undermines the development of open, inclusive and democratic societies.

Notes

1 There is a typology of political culture, and political scientist William S. Stewart argues that political behaviour can be explained as participating in one or more of eight political cultures: anarchism, oligarchy, Tory corporatism, fascism, classic liberalism, radical liberalism, democratic socialism, and Leninist socialism. Societies that exemplify each of these cultures have existed historically.
2 She employs a discourse analysis of Twitter hashtags in her three cases.

Communicative civic-ness

Framing communication, civic engagement and participation

Introduction

This chapter draws on the previous chapters' discussions to start developing a new framework for shaping theoretical and conceptual ideas that can offer insights for understanding and analysing civic participation in the digital age. It focuses particularly on the relationship between the use of social media and engagement in political culture. This conceptual and analytical framework will enable an assessment of the relationship between social media and political culture, as well as the significance of that relationship in the wider dynamics of participation.

The context of framing social media and political culture

This book discusses both the use of social media and the way that 'lived political culture' (as discussed further below) is embedded in wider social and civic life. There is an ongoing debate about the level and character of participation in democratic society. One key point that is integral to these debates is the notion that participation in democratic and formal political processes is embedded within civic society. This, in turn, raises questions about the social relations of civil society and how people feel engaged in civil life.

The definition of political culture that Almond and Verba (1963) put forward underplays the dynamics of culture in the way that people experience politics and political life, as well as civic issues. However, a more dynamic understanding of culture as something through which social life is made meaningful (c.f. Geertz 1973) can grasp the richness of civic life and the ways that people grapple with both personal concerns and public issues (as discussed in Chapters 6 and 9). Although Almond and Verba's (1963) approach recognises that there is a relationship between individual citizens and governing organisations, they view this as a functional relationship. This functionalist approach does not, and cannot, fully capture the rich and dynamic links of civic life because it reduces any relationship to the way that citizen orientations align or do not align with the values and policies of political parties. A functionalist

approach is also somewhat limited in grasping the ways that meaning can be expressed in a digitally enabled networked society. Even if a functionalist approach focuses on the relation between citizens and political parties in a networked society, the move to a more issue-based politics means that the relationship between people and politics is more diverse. This makes it more difficult to identify and analyse political engagement, participation and orientation. Another key point that has emerged, as discussed in Chapter 9, is that government itself has reduced in relevance and significance for many people. The marketisation of government work and the privatisation of previously state-run services has displaced formal governance, resulting in people no longer being able to appreciate what the role of government is in political life. Furthermore, the turn to neo-liberal ideology has also displaced senses of state responsibility for social and individual well-being, because individuals are expected to compete in a market for economic and social resources and status, and, as a result, no longer view the state as having a role to provide social support in times of need. This diminishing and repositioning of the responsibilities of government and its level of impact means that people are finding other ways to express their concerns and opinions. The combination of the development of a digitally enabled networked society alongside changes in the role of politics and the rise of social media is creating what is termed in this book as 'communicative civic-ness' (discussed in more detail below).

Communicative civic-ness refers to the ways in which people connect, share, feel and reason across networks of communication – whether online, offline, or a mix of both. These networks can be hybrid, connective or collectively based. The character of this communicative civic-ness is created through the lived realities of people's lives and the ways they interpret and make sense of the issues that affect them and other people. As discussed in Chapter 2, the practices of interpretation and sense making are part of phronesis. This is a type of wisdom that relates to practical life and requires the ability to discern how and why to act virtuously in life through a kind of practical virtue that also seeks to foster other people's moral character. This practice re-moralises politics by bringing it in touch with the scruples of everyday lived experiences, as well as politicising ethics, values and moralities. The media form part of this process and, as Silverstone (2005b) observes, interact with social and cultural life to shape people's experiences. Silverstone uses the term 'dialectic' to explain how the processes of communication interact with the social and cultural environments that support them, with the relationships that individuals and institutions have to those environments, and with each other (Silverstone 2005b).

Silverstone extends his argument by suggesting that the work the media do creates a mediapolis, which he defines as a 'mediated public space where contemporary political life increasingly finds its place, both at national and global levels' (Silverstone 2006, p.31). The mediapolis is a communicative

space in which questions of public culture and personal interest are articulated and mediated. This approach takes account of lived experience and recognises that the media frame social life, which can either facilitate collective action or fragment understanding, thereby undermining individual and community expression. The idea of a mediapolis interacts with notions of a public sphere. As discussed in Chapter 3, both the role and character of the public sphere are highly debated and difficult to grasp. There are also concerns about how inclusive and pluralistic the public sphere is. The empirical reality of these issues has changed over time; nonetheless, it is useful to think about the public sphere as being reflexive, in relation to whatever historically specific dynamics and tensions exist in a particular context. Viewing the public sphere as reflexive permits a consideration of how far it enables critical thought and draws attention to any disciplinary mechanisms and hidden injuries (such as prejudice, hate speech and voices not being heard) that might be circulated and targeted through it. Furthermore, by considering the public sphere as reflexive opens up a space for questions around prescriptive ideas about what is public and what is private, and the relationship between these spaces of social life, and allows for an appreciation of discourses that question or address areas of social life that hitherto might not have been explored.

By viewing the public sphere as reflexive and acknowledging that the media intersect private and public life, it is possible to see how various senses of civic life become realised through communication in material and political realities. Civic life – lives which are shared, understood and made meaningful by individuals, groups and institutions – is created through social agency and communication. As John Dewey (1939a) famously argues, society is made in and through communication. This is not to suggest that society is not material and political but, rather, that material and political life involves communication, which thereby embeds society's cultural and symbolic life into its social relations. There are numerous forms of communication, including co-presence, mass media and social media, and each has a varying level of media richness and social presence (see Chapter 5). Recognising these different forms and characters of the communication experience leads onto a discussion of the ethos of any communication, which can be understood as the feeling and ethos created by the people involved in any communication act and process.

This has several dimensions. For instance, Silverstone (2006) argues that part of understanding how mediated communication features in this ethos is the way that perceptions of the other and perceptions of ourselves are framed and shared. This, by extension, opens up the idea of communication practices having a moral dimension, which involves each actor being mindful of 'proper distance' (Silverstone 2006). Proper distance refers to instances when communication brings people together in a close enough way to understand each other whilst at enough of a distance to ensure respect for

one another. Being able to understand each other as well as respect each other means that people with different views and experiences can engage effectively in diverse public discourses. This is a prerequisite of a deliberative approach to democracy. As noted in Chapter 3, deliberation does not necessarily mean, or result in, a common good. In fact, notions of a common good often assume that there is an implicit standpoint of an 'us'. Not only is the notion of a common 'us' false, given the social divisions within contemporary society, but it can also be cited by dominant groups as a way to assert their power. The relations of social power benefit dominant groups and put less powerful and less well-defined groups at a disadvantage, which is reflected in struggles for symbolic power through the media. Thus, the mediapolis as an area of civic communication – in which a range of issues are raised and discussed – can serve as a space for debate and praxis.

This point leads to questions about who is able to participate in the public sphere. As discussed in Chapter 3, considering the inclusivity of the public sphere means asking questions about how material inequality may affect the ways in which people can participate. Fraser (1990) questions the assumption that people can take part as equals in the public sphere and that social inequality is separated from this interaction. Fraser does not accept the formal principle of 'participatory parity' and points out that informal, and sometimes subtle, modes of domination and control are present in public deliberation. She argues that subordinate and under-represented people are often further disadvantaged because they do not have the necessary skills and experience to engage in public discourse. For example, those who experience some level of exclusion often lack experience in formal public debate. However, given the rise of contentious politics (see Chapter 9) and the growing frustration with contemporary social, economic and political inequality, people are finding ever-new ways to express their concerns. They are doing this by traditional means, such as writing to government representatives, campaigning and protesting. However, individuals are reworking these established activities in the networked digital age by adopting a more networked organisational model and by using social media. This reworking is hybrid, as the online and networked communication interacts with a range of offline activities and organisations. Furthermore, although there is some evidence of a digital divide in organising civic and political action, social media accessed via mobile technology are proving a good tool for the politically under-represented to self-organise. This may not have a transformative effect in terms of progressive social change but, nonetheless, concern and issues are being expressed in the public sphere and being registered in the political sensibility of the moment. This process is, therefore, enacting communicative civic-ness.

The diversity and openness of communicative civic-ness relate to debates about whether the development and proliferation of many competing publics are a move away from greater democracy, rather than a step towards it. The

assumption is that a 'single comprehensive public sphere is better than multiple publics', because it will counter risks of fragmentation (Goode 2005, p.42). In connection to this, as discussed in Chapter 3, Fraser extends her concern with social inequality into the formation of discursive realms, arguing that people need spaces where they can find their own voice independently in order to clarify identities, build solidarities and interests. This frequently entails developing constructions of identities in relation to an accepted sense of 'us' – as, for example, in the idea of a 'national interest', which may serve the interests of dominant, rather than subordinate, groups. This means that subordinate groups require alternative – subaltern – spaces for deliberation, although there is no evidence that such spaces are more democratic and egalitarian than predominant ones. As Fraser (1990) writes, subaltern publics can 'function as spaces of withdrawal and regrouping', but they can also act as 'bases and training grounds for agitational activities that are directed at wider publics' (Goode 2005, p.42). This does not suggest an 'either/or' situation, but observes that the dialectic between both these functions is where the potential for emancipatory action arises. Thus, new forms of organisation and expression in the digital era, such as coming together through connective action of various sorts and using social media forms of communication, are creating more dynamic ways of engaging and participating.

Accepting the notion of communicative civic-ness, and the idea that political culture is crafted from concerns in people's personal and civic lives, raises questions about the dynamics of democracy in the digital age. As noted in Chapter 3, Grossi (2005) asserts that the processes of democracy, public sphere(s) and communication flows have undergone systemic socio-economic and politico-cultural change in the digital age. This book shows that they have also changed in terms of patterns of engagement and participation, the role of government, the communication environment and forms of inequality. Grossi (2005) argues that the emancipative dimension of democracy, the discursive nature of the public sphere and the participative value of linguistic-communicative practices therefore all need to be understood and reassessed. The examples of civic communication, engagement and participation in Chapters 7 and 8 illustrate some of Grossi's claims. He states that digital communication, which includes social media, is embedded within changes in the public sphere in late modernity by both flows of top-down political communication and bottom-up discursive practices. These are part of the development of alternative public issues, senses of multiple belonging and a range of new rights. As he notes, it is difficult to map out fully the way in which these types of public spheres work; however, one key element is that they – or their constitutive parts – are communicative. Communication can be seen as participative and as having agency (Habermas 1981) because it is the foundation of vital worlds. Thus, communication is seen as a type of action that can be both civic and political. However, there is ambiguity about the transformative potential of communicative civic-ness and any of

its related – and possibly hybrid – relations with other forms of action, such as protest and campaigning, as well as general engagement and participatory practices.

This relates to a point that Negt and Kluge made in the pre-digital era in 1972. They asked whether there is a need to consider how praxis is relevant in the public sphere – because productive activity makes a contribution to the public sphere as well as communication – and they suggested that praxis in the public sphere would be emancipatory. They deemed praxis to be inclusive because it includes material and cultural production as well as political action. As discussed in Chapter 3, by raising this point, Negt and Kluge (1972) open up the discussion about the public sphere beyond discourse, to include communication, opinion-forming civic and political culture. This links to Habermas's (1981) arguments about 'communicative action', which posit that it is possible to move to discourse if agreements or understanding break down in other areas of civic and political life. This focus on communicative action is helpful in steering between action based on social, economic, political and cultural subject positions and abstract discussion. It is particularly useful in examining what praxis means in a diverse society where there are a range of interests, identities and positions all seeking to find a voice in the public sphere or mediapolis.

Habermas (1989) recognises a number of associations and spaces for debate within the public sphere and acknowledges that multiplicity is a characteristic of the public sphere. Certainly, there is a multiplicity of association and spaces in the contexts of civic and political communication, as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Communicative civic-ness is different, however, because opinions arising from each of the different associations and different spaces of debate are not necessarily directed towards each other and the same centre of power – although protest is frequently targeted against the neo-liberal compact of market and limited state power in Western democracies. The new forms of connective action and uses of social media within these public spheres show that associations are potentially open to everyone, have fluid networks of members and cut across interest groups. However, Fraser (1990) argues that distinctive publics and groups are still important in delineating certain concerns and constituents and, indeed, as noted in Chapter 9, protest is seen as the politics of the poor and excluded. She states that this does not align with a totalising ethic of inclusivity, which may be able to embrace diversity in both debate and in social life. However, she recognises that an ethic is created through a shared or connective sensibility that acts as a starting point for dialogue, discussion and conversation. She argues for a public sphere in the form of an inclusive auditorium, including a range of anterooms – some of which are open and inclusive, and others which are reserved for particular groups and topics that require work and clarification before entering into more open debate. The development of the use of social media in personal and civic communication offers some

potential for this. However, as shown in Chapters 7 and 8, this potential can only be realised by the character of social relations in the surrounding context.

Summary of the 'communication, engagement and participation complex' in relation to developing a framework of communicative civic-ness

The debate about participation and civic communication in civic life is a long-standing one. In general terms, civic communication is understood as being destabilised by the proliferation of media platforms, which is making it difficult to control media messages. Furthermore, communication is diverse, since it covers a wide range of local, national and global issues and perspectives. These factors affect the ways that individuals and organisations communicate with each other and engage in civic life. Social media are a key element of these trends, because digitally supported social networks which are part of a new – lived and communicative – political culture have the potential to facilitate the creation of novel forms of civic society. However, social media can either foster and enhance civic debate or reduce and constrain it, so there is a need to understand the characteristics of social media tools and the forms of social networking that shape the development of civic communication and political discussion.

Civic participation is also becoming increasingly diverse, so any analysis of it needs to consider why and how individuals use social media for civic communication, what networks they use and which organisations they communicate with. The types and scope of civic networks and the position of organisations within these may range across local, national and international networks, depending on the issue under discussion. In contemporary political culture, organisations that were not traditionally seen as part of the media environment are now engaging with the public via social media. For example, local government uses social media to communicate with voluntary community organisations and local residents, and global non-governmental organisations use social media to mobilise opinion and action on a variety of issues. These coexist alongside established media institutions such as public service broadcasters, which operate at the national level and include social media as one facet of their communication strategy. In addition, communication is being undertaken by a range of self-organising networks, social movements and other types of community and protest groups, which are expressing civic concerns outside traditional forms of civic processes, leading to what Dutton calls a 'Fifth Estate' (Dutton 2009). Dutton (2009) argues that the amount of information on the World Wide Web (WWW) provides an independent information resource for individuals. Individuals and groups can use this information to challenge governments, the press, universities and other public bodies, and to hold them to account. Equally, the WWW-enabled

Fifth Estate is also a resource for civil society which has the potential to support a more pluralistic form of democratic accountability.

These aspects are all producing a new environment of 'civic media' (Jenkins 2007). Jenkins and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Civic Media in the US explore definitions of civic media, stressing that any understanding of civic media needs to go beyond just focusing on the technological medium and developments in journalism in the digital age. Jenkins recognises that the design of technological tools is important, as are developments in journalism such as citizen journalism. Nonetheless, he argues that defining civic media involves understanding the social contexts within which they operate and the cultural protocols that are part of their use. He considers the term civic media to refer to the use of any media that foster or enhance civic engagement, asserting that they should, therefore, be as inclusive and broad as possible. This means bringing tools, practices and participation all together into one framework. Of course, this raises questions about how these diverse elements can be combined to form an entity with some analytical power. If the framework is too broad and includes everything, it will become hard for it to single out any insights about the relative significance of each individual aspect within the domain or the ways they relate to each other. If it is too narrow, it will not capture the complexity and diversity of civic engagement, participation and communication.

A framework of civic participation: communicative civic-ness, social media, civic networks and political culture

This book argues that civic participation and engagement are a key feature of contemporary lived political culture. It proposes a dynamic framework which includes the use of social media, their design and the social relations of modes of participation – which all relate to each other dynamically. This means that users exist in flexible and malleable interactions, from their divergent perspectives on a topic, their various types of relationships with an issue or issues, and their decisions about how to communicate and what media configurations to use. There is a general framework of resources and types of participation, but these are configured in particular ways within a lived political culture that is embedded within civic culture. Moreover, this book argues that lived political culture encompasses both a general ethos and a set of relationships within different social contexts, as well as particular instances of political and civic concern and expression, so the configuration of communication, participation and civic concern is also adapted to suit the context. The framework comprises:

- Hybrid engagers within the social relations of civic society.
- The 'communication, engagement and participation complex' of lived political culture in the digital age.
- Seven distributed nodes of communicative civic-ness.

Hybrid engagers within the social relations of civic society

As Chapters 7 and 8 show, individuals and groups have diverse perspectives on any particular civic issue and engage with it in a variety of ways. People will gain awareness of, interpret and participate in action to varying degrees and in varying ways. Thus, people can be seen as hybrid engagers within civic life (also see Wessels et al. 2013 for the use of this term in another context). The examples and discussion about participation and the ways that people use social media and, indeed, engage by becoming involved in the stories and narratives that emerge from social media, show that they can be positioned in different ways and can engage through different aspects of their subjectivity and their specific senses of civic-ness. People engage and participate in social media in a variety of ways. They use online and offline methods and they integrate the two modes. They use an array of communication formats to develop and share content, as well as developing hybrid ways to communicate that content across networks. The overall process that hybrid engagers are involved in is one of mediated communication. People engage in the narrative of chosen issues by drawing on different cultural and communicative resources, using different modes of engagement and participation to engage in civic and political culture. This engagement can range in level – from simply signing an online campaign to reposting an image meme whilst participating in a protest. The mediation aspect of social media involves: first, the design of the technological medium and platform; second, the design of content, including the text, images and sound within the politics of representation; and third, the civic imagination of those who engage in stories about issues and the imagination of those who start to instigate civic concern by beginning a narrative about a specific issue. These aspects are not mutually exclusive – in fact, they interact with each other in networked and hybrid ways.

Given this variety, the framework is based on a continuum of hybrid engager ideal types. These include individuals, groups, crowds, protest networks, communities and online networks. The characteristics of each of these can be configured and articulated in a number of ways. For example, there is the hybrid engager who is a follower on Twitter and experiences the narrative thread on Twitter in an individualised and relatively distanced way. There are also people who take part in real-life protests and post image memes to engage as protesters through a sense of commitment to a social movement, who will actively participate in any subsequent work to further their cause. Another type of hybrid engager is a person taking part in online campaigns to express their concern about an issue, engaging with it closely without becoming directly involved in any protest or lobbying work. These hybrid engagers can configure in a number of ways so, for example, an individual can follow one issue on Twitter, take part in a street protest about another issue, and sign an online petition about a third concern, thus

engaging in a range of ways and in relation to multiple issues. For instance, a person can have one main concern and engage in a number of ways to support that issue by using social media, campaigning, taking part in community meetings, and protesting. Or an individual can show their interest in just one issue by one form of engagement, whether online or offline.

This continuum ranges from independent users taking on a supporting role, to people participating in collective forms of community action group engagement to advance a social issue. The first type is a highly individualised and distanced position, with a low sense of civic-ness. The second has a high sense of civic-ness. This continuum involves levels of engagement with issues, ways of communicating those issues and the narratives used to exemplify those issues. These senses of engagement are shaped by affect as well as reason. Furthermore, the engagers' and participants' knowledge bases and interests shape what can be termed as the 'storying of issues' in the mediapolis. There is a dynamic relationship between all the actors involved in an issue, who combine to create stories about civic concern and, through that relationship, take it into the lived experience of political culture. This is seen in an online campaign's hybrid interaction with formal institutions such as the mainstream press and government bodies, which gives the issue a heightened political awareness (see Figure 10.1).

The use of social media is part of the mediated experience of contemporary civic life and political culture. How an issue is identified and by

CONTEXT	POSITIONS	ENGAGER IDENTITIES
Community action	Local community group	Community activists
Campaigning	Advocacy group	Campaigners
Protesting	Protest organisations	Protesters
Social movement	Social movement networks	Social movement activists
		Virtual communication engagers
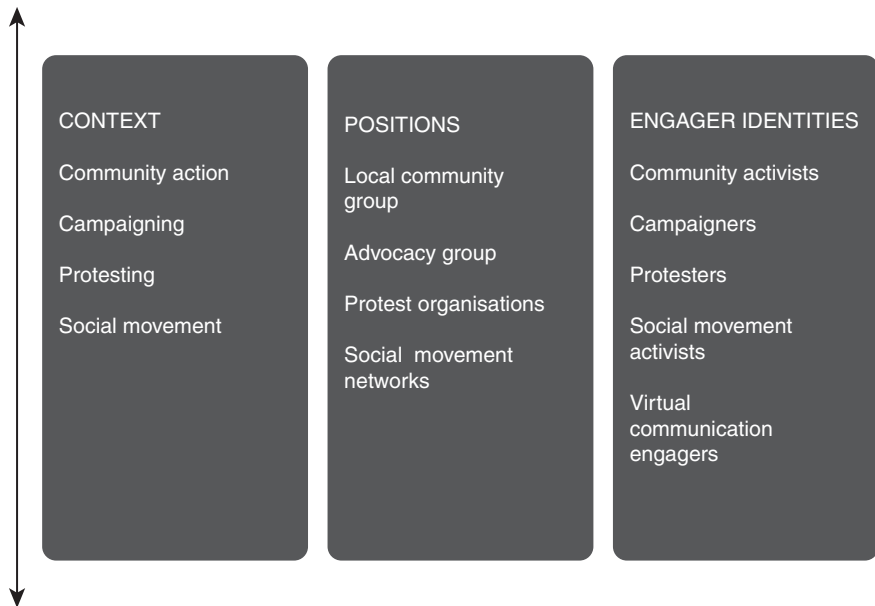
Figure 10.1 Hybrid engagers in civic contexts

whom, how awareness is raised about it, and how a narrative is created via social media all feature in the ways that specific engagers feel 'close to' or 'far away from' an issue. Silverstone suggests that the ideal view is when an engager feels close enough to understand an issue but far enough away to maintain respect about its details. In the context of civic life, the mediated experience of issues is crafted through the use of social media and the work of other media and actors in any particular context. The social relations of communicative civic-ness create the feel of an issue and determine how it connects with people, as well as communicating the reasoning and justification that underlie a certain issue and turn it into a political concern. The social relations of communicative civic-ness and the way these relations determine how social media are used in different contexts mould the experience of engagement and participation. However, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, diverse and individual expression in a shared arena involves being open and respectful in spaces that can accommodate the development of narratives about issues. This means understanding the way in which a range of hybrid engagers, civic organisations such as community groups and social movements, civic journalists, mainstream press and formal government all interact to shape an issue. This involves contestation in symbolic terms that interact with people's understanding, concern and (to varying degrees) experience of an issue. The media, including the use of social media, facilitate an imaginative connection alongside concrete connections through action. The imaginative aspect is as important as more tangible actions for fostering senses of civic concern and, if open, extending that concern to be sensitive to a range of civic issues from different places which involve divergent subject positions. Thus, there is scope to create proper distance in a mediated civic sensibility by using social media to develop narratives.

Wessels et al. (2013) assert that there is a relationship between the content of an issue and the form of how that issue is narrated. The way in which media are used is influential in creating a communicative sensibility, which fosters identification with an issue and can also enable people to feel part of a developing narrative. This is not to suggest that an issue can determine a hybrid engager's levels of engagement or participation, but to comment that the narrative of an issue is civically developed. It is produced by the variety of ways people may progress from tweeting to reporting a story as a citizen journalist. The collaboration is not strongly organised or even, necessarily, designed: instead, people, groups and communications join up in a dynamic and flexible way to address an issue. The precise configurations vary and they usually have a hybrid and connected character. In the process of coming together, these dynamic, hybrid and connective networks create ways to use the forms and language of social media, in order to foster a range of hybrid engager distances. The communication becomes shaped in these particular ways because in some instances social media are used to raise awareness, in other cases they are used to recount under-reported

incidents such as police brutality at protests, and in others they are used to foster support for a campaign. In each of these instances, people will be differently positioned as hybrid engagers and will want to engage to varying degrees. Social media's design means that they can be used to facilitate the wide range of positions someone chooses to take in relation to an issue or issues. Thus, Silverstone's assertion that the mediapolis is a place where voices can be heard in a civic sense shows that the use of social media can facilitate 'proper distance' in the way they are used to communicate a range of issues across networks of differently positioned interests and subjectivities (see Figure 10.2). However, as this book explains, using social media to organise action around civic concerns is not necessarily transformative or successful in remedying an issue, or in producing social and political change. This is because communication is only one dimension within a broader set of social relations of political culture, to which the discussion now turns.

The 'communication, engagement and participation complex' of lived political culture in the digital age

Figure 10.3 depicts the main relationships and interactions between engagement and participation, communication and civic life in the digital era. At an abstract level, there is a relationship between individuals who have their own interests and subject positions (i.e. hybrid engagers), and civic life and context. This relationship is mediated through communication – whether as a co-presence, in offline group communication, mass-media communication,
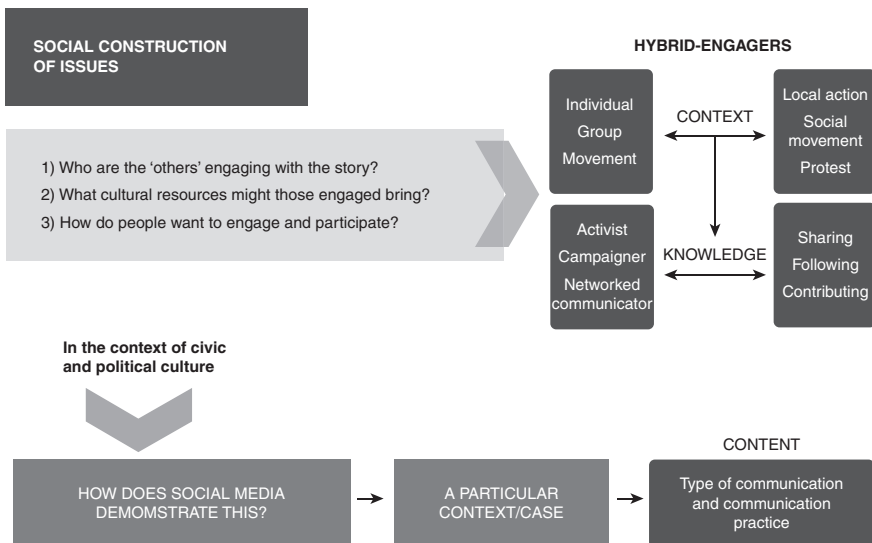
Figure 10.2 Sharing civic concerns in a networked digital age

RELATIONSHIP   CONTEXT   (SOCIAL) MEDIA

INTERESTS   INTERPRETATION

Individuals	Local
Communities	National
Groups	International
Networks	
Social movements	**Meaning in the dynamic of civic life and lived political culture**
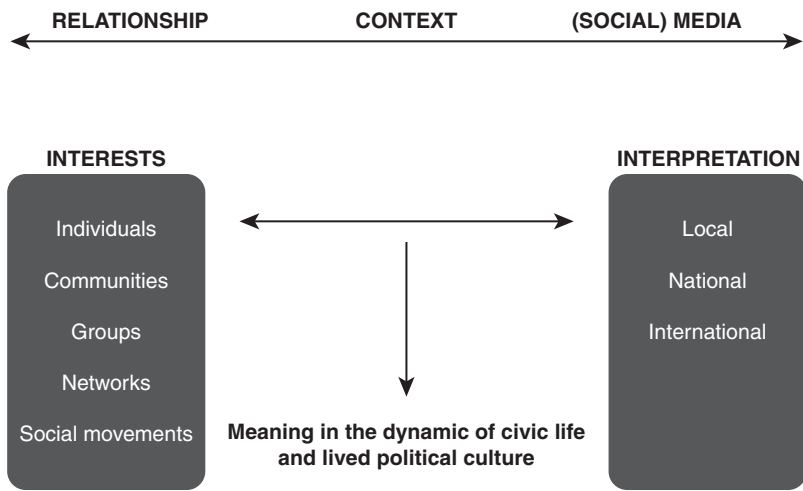
Figure 10.3 The 'communication, engagement and participation complex'

or digitally networked mass self-communication. This is represented at each end of the diagram and is linked across the top. The communication between people and civic contexts involves a dynamic interplay between interests and interpretations. Issues gain meaning through this interplay and enter the subtleties of civic life to become part of lived political culture.

These high-level dynamics materialise and are enacted through a range of social processes which are embedded in the social networks, nodes of contemporary civic life and lived political culture. Figure 10.3 shows that there is a relationship between the types of engagement and participation taking place, how communication features in different types of engagement and participation, and the instances of communicative civic-ness within a wider context of lived political culture. At one end of the continuum of that relationship is a range of people with varying interests and levels of engagement who are hybrid civic engagers, and at the other end is what each engager is referring to in terms of an issue's scope and reach, and its related community and/or network, which is called an issue network. An issue network can encompass civic sensibility and action at local, regional, national, global or (possibly) imagined levels. The work that fosters links between civic engagers of various types and issue networks of various types are the interests of both civic engagers and issue networks and their interpretations by hybrid civic engagers, issue networks and other actors within civic contexts of lived political culture. These are configured in different ways to weave meaning into civic and political engagement that is built on and re-informs the meanings of particular specifics of social life – which, at the same time, draws on the way that meaning is shaped within the dynamics of social life. This is not a tautology, nor are they both mutually reinforcing; rather, they

enable an ongoing negotiation of meaning in social life that underpins the civic meaningfulness generated through communicative civic-ness.

Seven distributed nodes of communicative civic-ness

The broad dynamics of all this materialises in concrete terms through access to and use of resources, through different communication forms and media, social networks, institutions, issues under discussion and the ways those issues are made meaningful within political culture. My networked model is made up of seven nodes of activity that relate to, and interact with, one another (Figure 10.4). These are not physical or digital nodes, but communicative civic spaces that capture facets of interests and interpretations which are, in turn, then configured and communicated into varying levels of ongoing activity. These types of nodes materialise and act in various ways within networks of civic and political activity. They are distributed, since they are not necessarily located in one place, organisation or context, but can each be located and enacted in multiple settings, situations and contexts.

Distributed node 1: issues

This node focuses on issues that are raised and worked on in civic contexts. These can vary, comprising the issues and concerns of individuals, groups, communities and social movements, as well as more formal organisations such as unions. This node also includes the development and use of news, information, opinion, data, culture and politics that can be configured and gain significance through the ways they are interpreted and shared across networks and contexts.
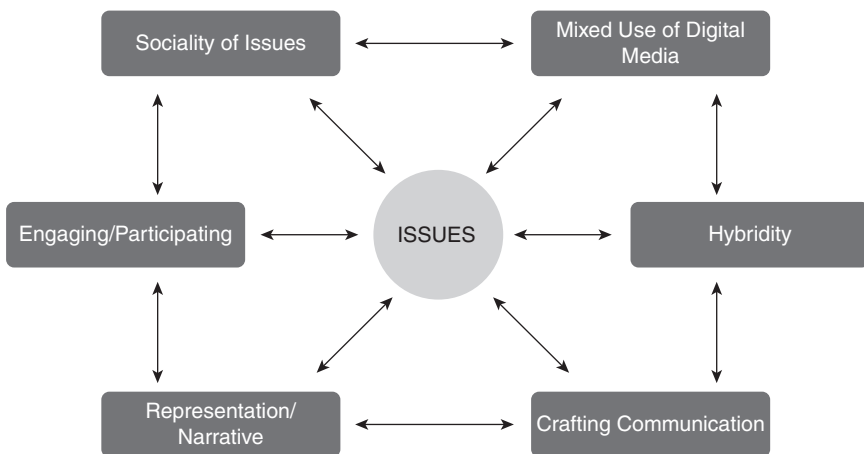
Figure 10.4 Distributed nodes: sharing civic concerns in a networked digital age

Distributed node 2: sociality of issues

This is an activity-based node. The node comprises the spaces in which issues are interpreted in relation to users' knowledge of various sources, the credibility and people's perceptions of the issue, trust for those involved in raising awareness of the issue, campaigning for it and mobilising around it. The node involves emotional engagement in the issue as well as reasoning within a civic conversation. It also entails the use of various online and offline communication media within the public sphere, including the mediapolis as an online space for communicating civic and political issues.

Distributed node 3: mixed use of digital technology

This node covers the communication-based activity that uses digital media, including social media. It is evident within this node how different digital technologies are employed to raise awareness, network and mobilise around civic issues. Digital technologies are used to mix, use and reuse information and data, to report and interpret issues, to connect people across a network and to coordinate action. Social media are part of the mixed use of digital technology and are positioned within a broader media and communications environment. They are used to raise awareness, to connect people, to involve individuals at an emotional level, to develop a narrative around an issue and to mobilise people. Their level of impact depends on the sociality of the issue (node 2) and the quality of the social relations of engagement and participation (node 4). This node is concerned with the integration of media sources and the configuration of media use, both in applications and platforms, as well as in usage.

Distributed node 4: engagement and participation

There are differing definitions of engagement in relation to participation. In this node, it refers to engagement that involves reflection or knowledge, as well as action. There are moments when a civic engager switches to a parti-cipatory role, although there is no clear-cut line between engagement and participation. Engagement relates to the ways that people are interested in an issue, and how they find out about it, follow, share and attract other people to it. In many ways, engagement is a type of participation because a person, group or community becomes involved in an issue.

   In the digital age, the transition to participation can be subtle, since once a person starts to feel part of an issue, they engage with it emotionally and/or through reason, and the point of participation happens when they then communicate their thoughts and feelings. This is where communicative civic-ness occurs. Communication is an active behaviour which produces a parti-cipatory logic when it is combined with civic sensibility. The participatory

logic is extended because of the hybrid character of connective action, which means that communication can interact with formal political institutions as well as with other forms of self-organised citizen action. In this book, therefore, the terms participation and engagement are used interchangeably, whilst being mindful about the distinction noted by Dahlgren (2006) that engagement refers to some interest in an issue, whereas participation denotes any practical action taken to support an issue. It is important to recognise that there are different levels and types of engagement and participation; however, it is equally important to appreciate that the different levels and types of engagement and participation are dynamic, interchangeable and varying in character and scope.

Distributed node 5: hybridity in creating issues

This node centres on the ways that individuals, groups, networks and institutions identify issues, communicate their concerns about those issues, and with whom. It focuses on how people select topics of debate, and how social media users on various platforms decide what to focus on. This may involve tendencies to select in line with a wider sense of civic-ness and political expediency, whether known through networks or through more traditional civic society lenses. In social media and the digital communications environment, the articulation of issues is an interactive process that can involve a range of actors who are configured in different ways. Sometimes the selection of an issue is crowd-based, Twitter-based or social movement-based; at other times, formal institutions such as the press, government and think tanks can make the selection. Again, issues develop in dynamic ways and depend on interaction between the actors involved, and levels of active engagement, participation or passive following.

Distributed node 6: representation and narrative

This node is embedded in practices of representation – including social and digital media as well as traditional media – and the ways in which people express their ideas and thoughts. The work of representation is central to determining how issues are considered, shaped, expressed and circulated. It also involves the negotiation of identity and roles within issue stories and issue networks, as well as in any mobilising, activist or other protest activity. Social media have a dynamic aspect in terms of representation, since they enable a wide range of individuals to feed into an evolving narrative that shapes the representation of an issue – through, for example, the use of memes and Twitter feeds. Representation is a key feature of the way that opinions can be expressed and their power in relation to other voices, and what those other voices stand for within a differentiated public sphere and mediapolis.

Distributed node 7: crafting communication within the design of communication tools

This node focuses on the ways that social actors develop varying skills in engaging civic communication and in political communication, using tools and networks to craft ways of communicating. Embedded within these skills are levels of written literacy, media literacy and digital literacy. This node also covers the technologies that facilitate communication and engagement. Although the tools do not determine communication or participation, they shape the way in which communication can be crafted and how any communication can be distributed across a range of possible individuals, groups, communities, organisations and institutions. The design of social media also determines the kind of communication that can take place, and shapes what can be communicated in particular types of networks, such as individualised, community or crowd-based relations. The people engaging and participating in various types of civic communication understand how different social media platforms work and the types of communication gaps each platform has. Based on this knowledge, they select what type of platform to use for a particular aspect of their communication practice and context. People use diverse configurations of social media platforms as well as sometimes preferring to use one single platform, such as Twitter, to follow a trending topic or issue.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the dynamics of social media in civic communication in the context of lived political culture. It has provided a new conceptual framework for analysing civic participation through the lens of communicative civic-ness. The theoretical framework shows that engagement and participation in civic life emerge through a relationship between hybrid engagers and a range of issues. This is enacted through the seven distributed nodes of communicative civic-ness. The nodes exist in a dynamic relation to one another. They each have a level of autonomy, since they all have specific characteristics that act in particular ways. However, those characteristics are only enacted as communicative civic-ness when each comes together around a particular issue and social network of lived political culture. The levels of autonomy, their enactment and the way they connect with political communication creates the sociality of civic culture. As this sociality interacts with the broader dynamics of social media, it generates a communicative civic-ness that is embedded in political culture as it is lived and reimagined in people's negotiations and contestations of social and political life. This is understood and felt at a personal level, and acknowledged and rendered as valid in civic life.

Embedding social media in the social relations of civic life moves social media from being a form of mass self-communication to one that is a feature of the new relations of political communication and culture. Lived political

culture involves everyday experiences, concerns, values, affinities, conflicts, reflection and discussion, networks and knowledge, and these frame practices of communication and discussion in the civic realm (Dahlgren 2003). They become acknowledged, identified with and shared through a communicative civic-ness that shapes the meanings of civic issues and the ways they are communicated in social media, and influences how issues are represented and discussed. The way in which social media are used in connective and hybrid communication feeds into lived political culture. In so doing, social media support the process through which issues and people in different subject positions can engage with, and participate in, civic debate. To varying degrees, they also shape and foster political participation and/or deliberation in the civic arena (Teorell 2006), although there is some uncertainty about the quality and character of how this type of engagement and participation in civic life feeds into democratic processes to support progressive and accountable social transformation and change.

Chapter 11

Conclusion
Communicative civic-ness

This book has sought to explain how social media use is interacting with the ways people are finding to express the issues that they feel are important. It has examined the question of how open, user-generated and networked communication media facilitate civic communication. Civic communication refers to the way in which people, groups, communities and movements communicate and organise to raise awareness about an issue, share it, increase support for it and, possibly, mobilise a response to it. The use of social media in these types of contexts enables communication that is outside formal political communication and democratic processes. Social media are also allowing people to express a range of issues outside any media regulation, which therefore has the potential to contribute to a more diverse and vibrant public sphere. There are, however, a number of concerns arising from this, including the ethics of communication needed to ensure that communication is inclusive and respectful. The context of the use of social media in the civic sphere is, on the one hand, an extension of civic engagement and participation as classically understood by writers such as Almond and Verba (1963) and Putnam (2000), and, on the other hand, a result of people's frustration with formal politics leading them to create other ways to express their feelings and mobilise action. This book has reviewed examples from both types of civic engagement. For example, it discussed the way in which traditional types of civic organisations such as community groups are using social media, as well as new types of Internet-centred protest movements. There are a variety of civic organisations and networks, and each of these is adapting and using social media in different ways. The diversity of communication and networks demonstrates that the context and the social relations of that context shape the use of social media.

It is also important to consider a further point in relation to the context of use: that civic communication is also a form of public communication. In many ways, it merges personal and public communication and frames instances of communication within civic terms. The use of social media as a form of mass self-communication supports this, by enabling personal expression to feed into wider networked communication, such as a Twitter

feed or by posting image memes. Given the public aspect of social media communication, it is important to understand that the public sphere comprises one part of the context including an issue, content and social networks, as well as understanding how the public sphere relates to civic and political culture. This starts to move the discussion towards the characteristics of relationships between people and formal political organisations, i.e. to political culture as classically understood by those such as Almond and Verba (1963). However, the original notion of political culture based on functionalism is limited, because it is ethnocentric and fails to recognise the diversity of citizens' civic cultures. This book has therefore developed the concept further, in order to include the richness and meaning of relationships between people and governments. Drawing on a range of developments around the concept, this book has examined the idea of lived political culture, which asserts that politics is part of social relations and is experienced in the negotiations and contestations of social life. However, this idea of lived political culture needs to be considered in relation to formal democratic politics and processes because, as discussed in Chapter 2, there are various types of democratic arrangements and each type requires a different specific level and type of participation. There are advantages and disadvantages to the different forms of democracy, as well as arguments for higher or lower levels of participation. These debates are ongoing, but they highlight the fact that there is a delicate balance between enabling ways of engaging, and ensuring that political decision making holds legitimacy across society.

The processes of engagement and participation used to foster an open and inclusive democratic society align with concerns about the strength of civic culture. Traditionally, civic culture has been seen as the space in which people identify and discuss their concerns, which are sometimes internal to one group and at other times extend across a number of groups. Opportunities for people to engage in civic culture arise through a range of organisations and institutions such as community groups, educational groups, the Church and so on. In addition, this is now being supplemented by the growth of new social movements and single-issue politics in the civic sphere, which cut across interests and subject positions. This increasingly diverse civic culture provides both the opportunity to foster a more diverse and open political culture and, conversely, the possibility of fragmenting political culture. The role of the public sphere is significant because civic culture is shaped by a variety of factors and there is a continuous risk that it might be overwhelmed by extreme views. The public sphere can remain a space for public debate by functioning as a check on any such colonisation. This means that it has become a site for negotiations of symbolic meaning and power, which are played out through the media. Thus, the media's accountability, technology and content are all key considerations for sustaining an open civil society. One way to examine how the media feature in the public

sphere and in civic life is by using the notion of the mediapolis – that is, the mediated space for discourse and politics.

Digital media, including social media, are part of the mediapolis. The way they can be adapted for use in various civic contexts and can enable networked communication means that social media are supporting the development of interactions and relationships between people. This is resulting in novel forms of civil society which are emerging through the social networks being developed through communication – the rise of social media is a key feature of these trends. These media and communication tools and networks are seen as a new aspect of political culture. Indeed, as this book has discussed, Silverstone (2006) reinforces Dahlgren's (2009) point by arguing that social media are part of a mediated public space where contemporary civic and political life finds its place at national and global levels. Silverstone (2006) recognises that the media are a significant aspect of the way that individuals make sense of social life, form political discourse and engage in action. He further notes that the characteristics of social media and the way they are used have consequences, since media can liberate the possibility of collective action, or fragment understandings and undermine public debate. Silverstone's (2006) point is particularly pertinent to social media because there is not yet a clear understanding of social media's potential to foster deliberative democracy, in terms of both the characteristics of social media tools and any attendant new forms of social networking in the formation of political discourse and action.

This book has shown that the use of social media is shaped by the social relations of their civic use and by the context surrounding a particular topic. Decisions about what types of social media are used are shaped by the design of each technological platform, while the characteristics of each type of social media platform shape the kind of communication that can take place. The design of social media influences what can be communicated to whom, and in what way. In general terms, social media can foster individualised communication, community communication and crowd-based communication. For example, the micro-blogging service Twitter operates at the individual level, communicating in 140-character messages. Social-graph media, such as Facebook and Com-me-Toolkit, are configured using various social media that enable community-based communication in diverse ways. The power of the public is mobilised via crowdfunding social media, as used in Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential election campaign, for example. Furthermore, social media can give people a feeling of belonging, as they use them to develop narratives that foster senses of affective involvement, as well as those that appeal to reason. These different platforms are used in civic communication, and each is adapted for use in relation to how it helps a network of people to communicate and engage other people and other networks in an issue, to campaign or to protest.

Social media are networked and interactive, allow for mass self-communication, and link with other media forms. All these three aspects are harnessed in developing ways to communicate in the civic sphere. As the above discussion shows, different social media afford different forms of communication that have specific characteristics. These characteristics vary along a continuum of highly individualised short Twitter comments, to communities of interest organised via Facebook, to committed bloggers and activists who frequently post their thoughts and opinions. The networked character of this communication and its multi-modality means that its content can be shared in numerous ways, within networks and amongst networks of networks. The organisation of the communication is often hybrid, since it connects followers, members and participants around a particular issue, but it also links to mainstream media and formal political organisations. The interconnections, relationships and interactions of communication via social media are created through the seven distributed nodes of civic communication (see Chapter 10). Some social media-based communications connects with institutions, whereas others circumvent official authority frameworks. In an age of contentious politics, some people choose to circumvent formal political processes, and can do so using social media.

The discussion in Chapter 9 about the development of neo-liberal politics reveals that many people do not believe that mainstream, formal politics is adequately addressing a range of contemporary issues. This means that some people who are estranged from traditional politics are extensively involved in other political activities, and may view their non-participation as a political act. Although there is some merit in the suggestion that the growth of neo-liberalism and political actors' failure to challenge it are directly responsible for a decline in engagement with formal politics, this may be a slightly over-stated account. Increased political participation may go some way towards reconnecting people with formal politics; however, it does not offer a complete solution because of the more deeply embedded issues, such as political inequality and polarising political positions. In this context, various types of engagement and participation are emerging, including activism, local action groups, social movements and civil protest, as well as contributing to communication forums on social media.

Drawing on the focus of political culture entails examining how political systems are constructed, how citizens engage with them, and why they do so. Political culture considers the relationship between citizens and political elites, which is not tightly integrated because of the current disaffection with politics alongside increasing political inequality. The rise of contentious politics, protest movements, and the further development of campaigning and community action groups suggest not only a vibrant civic culture, but also a dissatisfaction with formal politics. Within the diverse theories of political culture (Inglehart and Welzel, http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic96263.files/culture_democracy.pdf, accessed 3 January 2017), there is a

general proposition that the persistence of democratic institutions at a system level is linked to mass tendencies in individual-level attitudes and value orientations (Lerner 1958; Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1966). Although this book has discussed extensively the limitations of this definition, nonetheless it does draw attention to the relations between people and democracy. This relationship includes the ways that political elites make decisions based on their own norms and attitudes, as well as taking into account the norms and attitudes of citizens. Another aspect of the link between people and democracy is how people relate to government and to other citizens. The basic argument is that political systems depend on people's perspectives about, and attitudes towards, a political system, and these attitudes are shaped within civic culture. Therefore, the ways that people come together in civic communication and interaction shape the character of democracy, its maintenance or decline. It is therefore important to consider civic culture and communication, because they create the space where democratic norms are experienced in everyday life. The reasoning behind this follows de Tocqueville (2000 [1837]), who sees democracy as a system of government whose principles are practised at the grassroots level by citizens experiencing democratic norms in their everyday lives. According to this communitarian point of view, the ways in which people connect with each other in daily life help to foster understanding between them.

It is possible to trace, and enrich, our understanding about the ways that people engage with each other across social and political networks by using the idea of communicative civic-ness and lived political culture. People identify with and engage in civic culture as hybrid subjects and actors, since each person has a range of interests and subject positions and acts on them in different ways. These ways of engaging and participating are enabled by civic networks and senses of civic concerns that do not necessarily derive from one shared standpoint. Instead, numerous issues are being raised by different configurations of individuals and groups, so that each issue gains its own level of influence and group(s) of followers. There is, therefore, an openness that allows people to organise and communicate a range of issues that matter to them personally, as well as civically. In this sense, communication in the civic sphere is open and democratic. Furthermore, given that mediated communication involves the negotiation of symbolic life, it makes communication political. The dynamic and networked character of communicative civic-ness is embedded within political culture – but a political culture that is understood as a *lived* political culture. Thus, acts of communication do not represent the kind of political communication within political culture classically perceived by Almond and Verba (1963), because communicative civic-ness is created by, and exists within, social and civic networks that may (or may not) interact with formal political organisations.

A further related point is that the social action of communicative civicness is part of the contemporary shaping of political culture. This moves on

from Almond and Verba's (1963) concept of political culture, to view political culture as something that is lived. What lived political culture refers to is the way political sensibility is created through humans interacting civically, culturally and politically in their associations. Thus, as Goldfarb (2012) argues, it is through the variety of human interactions in their patterns of association that political culture can be observed, appraised and reinvented. Here, as the book shows, we see many digital and pre-digital ways of engaging and participating, and a mixture of the two that inform the practices of communicating and interacting in a variety of patterns of associations in contemporary civic and political life. The combination of all these forms of engagement and participation creates what this book calls 'communicative civic-ness'.

As Chapter 10 discussed in detail, the mechanism of communicative civicness entails complex acts of engagement and participation, communication and civic life, in which there is a relationship between people who each have their own interests, subjective perspectives, civic life and context. This relationship is mediated through communication – whether as a co-presence, in offline group communication, mass-media communication, or digitally networked mass self-communication. The model of engagement is dynamic and networked, which configures in various ways over time. The network is enabled through seven distributed nodes:

1 Issues.
2 Sociality of issues.
3 Mixed use of digital technology, including social media.
4 Engagement and participation.
5 Hybridity in creating issues.
6 Representation and narrative.
7 Crafting communication within the design of communication tools.

This organisation of distributed nodes shows that the relations between people in the civic sphere are networked, dynamic and communicative. Furthermore, the way it behaves shows that there is no longer a stable set of values amongst people which relate to a political system's set of values. This reveals: (a) a diversity of interests and subjective positions; and (b) a polarisation of issues and positions. The first can be seen in the range of online campaigning activities, and the second in the London riots. This new conceptual framework shows how civic engagement and participation are organised in a digital networked age. It also identifies the network and nodes through which social media are becoming used as civic media. Furthermore, the framework is a sensitising one, showing that social media have the potential to take forms of debate in a number of different directions in relation to various civic networks and organisations. Some of these may reinforce classically conceived democratic processes, while others may threaten those processes.

The development of a new framework of communicative civic-ness seeks to aid a better-informed debate about social media's capacity to support the pluralistic discussions that underpin deliberative democratic processes, and to identify ways to achieve that outcome. Communicative civic-ness has the potential to support a vibrant democracy, by opening up a public and political space where people can engage and participate, which, in turn, requires a democracy that can engage with it. However, conversely, communicative civic-ness can also function in a way that is not open and respectful, where communication does not practise proper distance, and which can then be colonised by extreme views or by those with particular political and economic agendas. To guard against such threats means finding ways to support a rich and open sense of civic and political engagement and participation. The nub of the argument is that natural law notions of politics fail to take into account the wider meaning of politics, including morality, virtue, practical wisdom and civic humanism. Furthermore, they do not fully recognise phronesis within citizens' personal and public everyday life, or the way that civic and civil culture can open up space for reflexivity and participation. This highlights the interrelationship between engagement and participation in civic life. The link between engaging and participating in something involves a range of abilities, such as having the resources to participate practically, having the knowledge of how to participate, having relations with people and the means to communicate. These are all shaped by the cultural context of engagement and participation, and the diverse ways in which people might participate. In terms of policy recommendations, there needs to be a development of civic resources, civically supported education and training, and support for civic communication. Together, these can facilitate an open and vibrant political culture that is rooted in lived experience and which shapes a lived political culture that is relevant to people.

The rise of social media in civic life, as well as in public and private life, is enabling both engagement with issues and participation – however that is defined by the participants. There are, however, dangers in reducing the argument solely to an idealised sense of how people choose to practise phronesis (or not), and to what degree everyday life can facilitate this. It is important to remember that civic culture conveys a sense of civic life that respects individual and collective social life, and consider how that relates to senses of democratic process. The terms civic engagement and participation convey both individual and collective forms of action that identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement and participation also involve public decision making and its governance across a wide array of public interest areas. These range from how and by whom a community's resources are allocated, to issues of national and international concern about human rights and well-being. The principles of civic engagement and participation underpin a basic tenet of democratic governance, which is that sovereignty ultimately resides in people as the citizenry. In short, civic

engagement and participation are about people's right to define the public good, determine the policies by which they will seek this, and reform or replace institutions that do not serve that end. This perspective not only questions what civic culture is and how people can communicate and orga-nise in civic ways, but also requires a democratic process of decision making that is seen as legitimate by a democratic electorate, as well as being equal and inclusive in the negotiation of a networked, connective and collective social life.

In addition to the level of participation – which includes engagement and communication – its quality also remains an important aspect of ensuring democratic society. Social media can be used as a tool of greater engagement and participation, but the character and quality of that participation are constantly under scrutiny, because they can be used in various ways – for either progressive or, conversely, reactionary purposes. This requires taking into account the design and use of social media by civic networks. The per-ception of greater engagement and participation in a networked digital age is problematic – not just in terms of quality, but also in how civic culture is being reworked – because it can either reduce or increase political inequality. Therefore, to assess the use of social media, it is important to consider the significance of how humans come together to act in political culture. This book argues that the workings of political culture need to be explored by examining humans interacting civically, culturally and politically. It is through the variety of human interactions and patterns of association that political culture can be observed, appraised and reinvented. This book has contributed to this knowledge by explaining how a communicative civic-ness is developing, and exploring some of the consequent limitations. Further-more, the concept shows that political culture is becoming increasingly complex in a networked, digital age, as well as being characterised by political inequality and a loss of vision for progressive democratic politics.

Bibliography

Abendroth, W. (1964) *Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*. Frankfurt a. M.: Stimme-Verlag.

Adam, B., Beck, U. and Van Loon, J. (2000) *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*. London: Sage.

Agre, P.E. (2004) *The Practical Republic: Social Skills and the Progress of Citizenship DRAFT Essay*. Los Angeles: Department of Information Studies, University of California.

Alaimo, K. (2015) How the Facebook Arabic Page 'We Are All Khaled Said' Helped Promote the Egyptian Revolution. *Social, Media & Society* 1(2).

Almond, G.A. and Verba, S. (1963) *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. London: Sage.

Ananny, M. (2015) Toward an Ethics of Algorithms Convening, Observation, Probability, and Timeliness. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 41(1) 93–117.

Andersen, J.G. and Hoff, J. (2001) Political Engagement in *Democracy and Citizenship in Scandinavia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 15–30.

Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Andrejevic, M. (2007) Surveillance in the Digital Enclosure. *The Communication Review* 10(4) 295–317.

Ang, I. (1985) *Watching Dallas: Soap Operas and the Melodramatic Imagination*. London: Methuen.

Appiah, K.A. (1998) Race, Pluralism, and Afrocentricity. *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. JBHE Foundation 19 116–118.

Archer, M.S. (2003) *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, M. (2007) *Making our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arendt, H. (1963) *On Revolution*. New York: Viking.

Aries, P. (1962) *Centuries of Childhood. A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Random House.

Arnstein, S.R. (1969) A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of American Planning Association* 35(4) 216–224.

Arthur, P. (2009) How Transitions Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual of Transitional Justice. *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(2), May, 321–367.

Atkinson, J. (2010) *Alternative Media and Politics of Resistance. A Communication Perspective*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Barney, D. (2004) *The Network Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Baym, N.K. (2009) Amateur Experts: International Fan Labor in Swedish Independent Music. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 12(5) 433–449.

Beck, U. (2000) *La società del rischio. Verso una seconda modernità*. Carocci: Roma.

Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S. (1994) *Reflexive Modernization*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bennett, L. and Segerberg, A. (2013) *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W.L. and Segerberg, A. (2012) The Logic of Connective Action. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(5) 739–768.

Berger, P.L., Berger, B. and Kellner, H. (1974) *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. New York: Vintage.

Berker, T., Hartmann, M., Punie, Y. and Ward, K. (Eds) (2005) *Domestication of Media and Technologies*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Berry, D.M. (2011) *The Philosophy of Software: Code and Mediation in the Digital Age*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Beveridge, Sir William (1942) *Beveridge Report: Social Insurance and Allied Services Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty November 1942 HMSO CMND 6404*. www.sochealth.co.uk/national-health-service/public-health-and-wellbeing/beveridge-report/.

Bimber, B., Flanagin, A.J. and Stohl, C. (2012) *Collective Action in Organizations: Interaction and Engagement in an Era of Technological Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boehner, K., DePaula, R., Dourish, P. and Sengers, P. (2007) How Emotion is Made and Measured. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies* 65(4) 275–291.

Bohdanova, T. (2014) Unexpected Revolution: The Role of Social Media in Ukraine's Euromaidan Uprising. *European View* 13(1) 133–142.

Bolin, M. (2005) *End-User Programming for the Web*. Submitted to the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Engineering in Computer Science and Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Borden, S.L. (2010) The Moral Justification for Journalism in Meyers, C. (Ed.) *A Philosophical Approach to Journalism Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Boulianne, S. (2015) Social Media Use and Participation: A Meta-analysis of Current Research. *Information, Communication & Society* 18(5) 524–538.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Bowser, A. and Shanley, L. (2013) *New Visions in Citizen Science*. Woodrow Wilson Centre. Retrieved from www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/new-visions-citizen-science.

Brady, H.E. (2003) *An Analytical Perspective on Participatory Inequality and Income Inequality*. A paper for the Russell Sage Foundation Project on the 'Social Dimensions of Inequality'. University of California, Berkeley, January 28.

Breuer, A. (2012) *The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing Political Protest: Evidence from the Tunisian Revolution*. German Development Institute Discussion Paper No. 10/2012, Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik.

Bright, J. (2015) Crowdsourcing for Public Policy and Government. Policy and inter-
    net blog, 27 August. Retrieved from: http://blogs.oii.ox.ac.uk/policy/crowdsour
    cing-for-public-policy-and-government/.
British Social Attitudes Information System. (www.britsocat.com).
Buechler, S.M. (1995) New Social Movement Theories. *Sociological Quarterly* 36(3)
    441–464.
Burgess, J. (2007) *Vernacular Creativity and New Media*. Doctoral dissertation,
    Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.
Bussu, S. (2016) *Big Local Online: The Social Media Presence of Big Local: How Areas
    are Using Social Networks*. Local Trust.
Calhoun, C. (1992) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Candon, J.I. (2012) Ciudadanía en la red: Poder y contrapoder en los medios de
    comunicación [Citizenship in the net: Power and counterpower in mass media].
    Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico 18(2) 679–687.
Carah, N. (2017) Algorithmic Brands: A Decade of Brand Experiments with Mobile
    and Social Media. *New Media & Society* 19(3) 384–400.
Caraway, B. (2011) Audience Labor in the New Media Environment: A Marxian
    Revisiting of the Audience Commodity. *Media, Culture & Society* 33(5) 693–708.
Carlyle, T. (1841) *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*. London: James
    Fraser.
Castells, M. (2001) *The Internet Galaxy. Reflections on the Internet, Business & Society*.
    Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Castells, M. (2004a) *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Cheltenham, UK
    and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
Castells, M. (2004b) *The Power of Identity* (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.
Castells, M. (2007) Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network
    Society. *International Journal of Communication* 1 238–266.
Castells, M. (2009) *Communication Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Castells, M. (2012) Networks of Outrage and Hope – Social Movements in the
    Internet Age. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 25(3) 398–402.
Castells, M. (2015) *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*.
    Cambridge: Polity Press.
Chadwick, A. (2007) Digital Network Repertoires and Organizational Hybridity.
    Political Communication 24(3) 283–301.
Chadwick, A. (2013) *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford: Oxford
    University Press.
Chadwick, A. and Dennis, J. (2017) Social Media, Professional Media and Mobilisation
    in Contemporary Britain: Explaining the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Citizens'
    Movement 38 Degrees. *Political Studies* 65(1) 42–60.
Chaney, D. (2002) *Cultural Change and Everyday Life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Chen, N.N., Fan Dong, F., Ball-Rokeach, S.J., Parks, M. and Huang, J. (2012) Building
    a New Media Platform for Local Storytelling and Civic Engagement in Ethnically
    Diverse Neighborhoods. *New Media & Society* 14(6) 931–950.
Chen, Y.K. (2016) The Effects of Social Media and Mobile Apps Use on Political
    Participation in Taiwan in Wei, R. (Ed.) *Mobile Media, Political Participation, and
    Civic Activism in Asia*. Part of the series Mobile Communication in Asia: Local
    Insights, Global Implications. Springer, 177–191.
Chilton, S. (1988) Defining Political Culture. *The Western Political Quarterly* 41(3) 419–445.

Chilton, S. (2005) Defining Political Culture in *Grounding Political Development* (2nd online edition). Retrieved (23. 05. 2017) from www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/Articles/GPD6.html.

Christensen, H. (2011) Political Activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or Political Participation by Other Means? *First Monday* 16(2).

Clark, L.S. (2016) Book Review. *International Journal of Communication* 10 1120–1124.

Coleman, S. (2006) How the Other Half Votes: Big Brother Viewers and the 2005 General Election. *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9(4) 457–479.

Coleman, S. (2007) Political Marketing: A Comparative Perspective. *Parliament* 60(1) 180–186.

Coleman, S. and Blumler, J.G. (2009) *The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice and Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Comor, E. (2011) Contextualizing and Critiquing the Fantastic Prosumer: Power, Alienation and Hegemony. *Critical Sociology* 37(3) 309–327.

Corbett, S. (2013) *The Social Quality of Participatory Democracy: Social Empowerment in the Workplace and Local Community*. PhD thesis, University of Sheffield. http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/5146/.

Corner, J. and Pels, D. (Eds) (2003) *Media and the Restyling of Politics*. London: Sage.

Costanza-Chock, S. (2012) Mic Check! Media Cultures and the Occupy Movement. *Social Movement Studies* 11(3–4) 375–385.

Cottle, S. (Ed.) (2003) *News, Public Relations and Power*. London: Sage.

Cottle, S. (2010) Global Cries and World News Ecology in Allan, S. (Ed.) *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. New York, NY: Routledge, 473–484.

Couldry, N. (2003) *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach*. Psychology Press.

Couldry, N. (2010) *Why Voice Matters*. London: Sage.

Couldry, N. and Curran, J. (2003) *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Rowman and Littlefield.

Craglia, M. and Shanley, L. (2015) Data Democracy – Increased Supply of Geospatial Information and Expanded Participatory Processes in the Production of Data. *International Journal of Digital Earth* 8(9).

Crider, J. (2015) Social Media and Protest Movements. *Culture Brief* 13 (Fall).

Cronin, C. and De Greiff, P. (Eds) (1996) *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crouch, C. (2000) *Coping with Post-Democracy*. London: Fabian Society.

Crouch, C. (2004) *Post-Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crozier, M., Huntington, S.P. and Watanuki, J. (1975) *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*. New York: New York University Press.

Daft, R.L. and Lengel, R.H. (1986) Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness and Structural Design. *Management Science* 32(5) 554–571.

Dahl, R.A. (1971) *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dahlgren, P. (2003) Reconfiguring Civic Culture in the New Media Milieu in Corner, J. and Pels, D. (Eds) *Media and the Restyling of Politics: Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*. Sage Publications Limited.

Dahlgren, P. (2005) The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Political Communication* 22(2) 147–162.

Dahlgren, P. (2006) Doing Citizenship. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9(3) 267–286.

Dahlgren, P. (2009) *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dahlgren, P. (2013) *The Political Web: Media, Participation and Alternative Democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dalton, R. (2004) *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Danet, B. (1971) The Language of Persuasion in Bureaucracy: 'Modern' and 'Traditional' Appeals to the Israel Customs Authorities. *American Sociological Review* 36 847–859.

Darity, W.A., Jr. (2008) *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (2nd edition). Thomson Gale.

Dawson, R.E. and Prewitt, K. (1969) *Political Socialization: An Analytic Study*. London: Little Brown. 63(4) 1293–1294.

de Beus, J. (2011) Audience Democracy: An Emerging Pattern in Postmodern Political Communication in Brants, K. and Voltmer, K. (Eds) *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 19–38.

de Tocqueville, A. (2000) *Democracy in America*. Winthrop: University of Chicago Press.

Dean, J. (2005) Communicative Capitalism: Circulation and the Foreclosure of Politics. *Cultural Politics* 1(1) 51–74.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Massumi, B. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

DeLuca, K., Lawson, S. and Sun, Y. (2012) Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5 483–509.

Dewey, J. (1927) *The Public and its Problems*. New York: Holt.

Dewey, J. (1939a) *Intelligence in the Modern World*. New York: Modern Library.

Dewey, J. (1939b) *Freedom and Culture*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Diakopoulos, N. (2015) Algorithmic Accountability: Journalistic Investigation of Computational Power Structures. *Digital Journalism* 3(3) 1–18.

Dickens, L., Couldry, N. and Fotopoulou, A. (2015) News in the Community? Investigating the New Spaces of News Production/Consumption. *Journalism Studies* 16(1) 97–114.

Dittmer, L. (1977) Political Culture and Political Symbolism: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis. *World Politics* 29 552–583.

Dittrich, Y., Eriksen, S. and Wessels, B. (2014) Learning Through Situated Innovation – Why the Specific is Crucial for Participatory Design Research. *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems* 26(1) 29–59.

Domingo, D. (2008) Interactivity in the Daily Routines of Online Newsrooms: Dealing with an Uncomfortable Myth. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13(3) 680–704.

Dooby, M.A. (1997) *The True Story of the Novel*. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press.

Dutton, W.H. (2009) The Fifth Estate Emerging through the Network of Networks. *Prometheus* 27(1) 1–15.

Earl, J. and Kimport, K. (2011) *Digitally-Enabled Social Change*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Easton, D. and Dennis, J. (1969) *Children in the Political System: Origins of Political Legitimacy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Eckstein, H. (1966) *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Edelman, M. (1971) *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence*. New York: Academic Press.

Edelman, M. (1985) *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Ekelin, A., Forsberg, A., Kempe, E., Ringfjord, B.-M., Wahlberg, M. and Wessels, B. (forthcoming) Filter Bubbles as Critical Media Engagement – Readers' Awareness, Interpretation and Practices. REGPRESS working paper. https://lnu.se/en/research/searchresearch/forskningsprojekt/project-regional-press-project-regpress/ and in preparation for *European Journal of Communication*.

Elias, N. (1969) *The Civilizing Process, Vol. I. The History of Manners*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Elias, N. (1982) *The Civilizing Process, Vol. II. State Formation and Civilization*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Eliasoph, N. (1998) *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elliott, D. and Ozar, D. (2010) An Explanation and a Method for the Ethics of Journalism in Meyers, C. (Ed.) *Journalism Ethics: A Philosophical Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

European Commission (forthcoming) *Europe in a Changing World – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies*. Scoping Paper for Horizon 2020 work programme 2018–2020 Societal Challenge 6.

Fairhurst, G. and Sarr, R. (1996) *The Art of Framing*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fillieule, O. (1998) Plus ça change, moins ça change: Demonstrations in France during the 1980s in Rucht, D., Koopmans, R. and Neidhardt, F. (Eds) *Acts of Dissent*. Berlin: Sigma, 199–226.

Fine, G. and Harrington, B. (2004) Tiny Publics: Small Groups and Civil Society. *Sociological Theory* 22(3) 341–356.

Fiorina, M. (2006) *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (2nd edition). New York: Longman.

Fischer, C.S. (2005) Book Review of R. Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000). *Social Networks Elsevier* 27 155–167.

Flaxman, S., Goel, S. and Rao, J.M. (2016) Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Online News Consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80 (Special issue) 298–320.

Flew, T. (2005) *New Media: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fountain, J.E. (2001) *Building the Virtual State: Information Technology and Institutional Change*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Franklin, R.A. (2008) Newszak. Entertainment versus News and Information in Biressi, A. and Nunn, H. (Eds) *The Tabloid Culture Reader*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press, 13–22.

Fraser, N. (1990) Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text* 25/26 56–80.

Fraser, N. (1992) Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy in Calhoun, C. (Ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Boston, MA: MIT Press, 109–142.

Fraser, N. (2006) Transnazionalizzare la sfera pubblica: legittimità ed efficacia del-l'opinione pubblica nel mondo postwestfaliano. *Lla Rivista delle Politiche Sociali* 2 39–69.

Fraser, N. (Ed.) (2014) *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Fuchs, C. (2013) The Anonymous Movement in the Context of Liberalism and Socialism. *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements* 5(2) 345–376.

Fuchs, C. (2014) Book Review of M. Castell's *Networks of Outrage and Hope. Media, Culture & Society* 36(1) 122–124.

Garcia-Jimenez, L., Zamora-Medina, R. and Martinez-Fernandez, R. (2014) The Construction of Symbolic Power: Comparing Offline and Online Media Representations of Occupy the Street in Spain. *International Journal of Communication* 8 2540–2560.

Garnham, N. (1992) The Media and the Public Sphere in Calhoun, C. (Ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 359–377.

Gaver, B., Dunne, T. and Pacenti, E. (1999) Design: Cultural Probes. *Interactions* 6(1) 21–29.

Gaver, W.W., Boucher, A., Pennington, S. and Walker, B. (2004) Cultural Probes and the Value of Uncertainty. *Interactions* 11(5) 53–56.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gianpietro, M. and Sfardini, A. (2009) *Politica Pop: Da 'Porta a Porta' a 'L'Isola dei Famosi'* [Pop Politics: From 'Door to Door' to 'Island of the Famous']. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.

Gibson, R.K. (2013) Party Change, Social Media and the Rise of 'Citizen-initiated' Campaigning. *Party Politics* 21(2) 183–197.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Giddens, A. (1994) *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gil de Zuniga, H., Jung, N. and Valenzuela, S. (2012) Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 17 319–336.

Gilchrist, A. and Taylor, M. (2016) *The Short Guide to Community Development* (2nd edition revised). Bristol: Policy Press. Retrieved from: http://policypress.co.uk/the-short-guide-to-community-development.

Giroux, H.A. (2012) *Disposable Youth, Racialized Memories, and the Culture of Cruelty*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor & Francis.

Gitlin, T. (1998) Public Sphere or Public Sphericules? in Liebes, T. and Curran, J. (Eds) *Media, Ritual, Identity*. London: Routledge, 175–202.

Gladwell, M. (2010) Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted. *New Yorker*. Retrieved (23. 05. 2016) from www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell.

Global Internet User Survey. (2012) (www.internetsociety.org/apps/surveyexplorer/).

Goffman, E. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: The Overlook Press.

Golden, M.M. (1998) Interest Groups in the Rule-Making Process: Who Participates? Whose Voices Get Heard? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8(2) 245–270.

Goldfarb, J.C. (2012) *Reinventing Political Culture: The Power of Culture versus the Culture of Power*. Cambridge: Polity.

Goldstone, J.A. (Ed.) (2002) *States, Parties, and Social Movements*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Goode, L. (2005) *Jurgen Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere*. London: Pluto Press.

Goode, L. (2009) Social News, Citizen Journalism and Democracy. *New Media & Society* 11(8) 1287–1305.

Goode, L. and Zuberi, N. (Eds) (2004) [1984] *Media Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Auckland: Pearson Longman.

Gorrell, G.M. and Bontcheva, K.L. (2014) Classifying Twitter Favorites: Like, Bookmark, or Thanks? *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*.

Gottfried, J. and Shearer, E. (2016) *News Use across Social Media Platforms 2016*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved (12. 09. 2016) from www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/.

Greenbaum, J. and Kyng, M. (Eds) (1991) *Design at Work: Cooperative Design of Computer Systems*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Greenwood, S., Perrin, A. and Duggan, M. (2016) *Social Media Update 2016. Facebook Usage and Engagement is on the Rise, while Adoption of Other Platforms Holds Steady*. Retrieved from www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/.

Griffen-Foley, B. (2004) From Tit-bits to Big Brother: A Century of Audience Participation in the Media. *Media, Culture & Society* 26(4) 533–548.

Grossi, G. (2005) The Public Sphere and Communication Flows in the Era of the Net in Dahlgren, P., The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Political Communication* 22(2) 147–162.

Habermas, J. (1984) [1981] *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, translated by McCarthy, Thomas A. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1987) [1981] *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, translated by McCarthy, Thomas A. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1989/1991) [1962] *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Burger, T. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Haciyakupoglu, G. and Zhang, W. (2015) Social Media and Trust During the Gezi Protests in Turkey. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 20(4) 450–466.

Hadley, P. (2011) *Campaigning Effectiveness. A New Campaigning Landscape? Implications of the 2010 General Election*. National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Hall, S. (1973) *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. CCCS Stencilled Paper No. 7. Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

Hampton, K.N., Sessions Goulet, L., Rainie, L. and Purcell, K. (2011) *Social networking sites and our lives: How people's trust, personal relationships, and civic and political involvement are connected to their use of social networking sites and other technologies*. Pew Research Center. Pew Internet and American Life Project. Retrieved (27. 09. 2016) from www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2011/PIP%20-%20Social%20networking%20sites%20and%20our%20lives.pdf.

Hargittai, E. and Hsieh, Y.I.P. (2010a) From Dabblers to Omnivores: A Typology of Social Network Site Usage in Papacharissi, Z. (Ed.) *A Networked Self*. New York: Routledge, 146–168.

Hargittai, E. and Hsieh, Y.P. (2010b) Predictors and Consequences of Differentiated Practices on Social Network Sites. *Information, Communication & Society* 13(4) 515–536.

Harlow, S. and Guo, L. (2014) Will the Revolution be Tweeted or Facebooked? Using Digital Communication Tools in Immigrant Activism. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 19(3) 463–478.

Harper, T. (2016) The Big Data Public and its Problems: Big Data and the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. *New Media & Society* 1–16.

Harris, K. and Flouch, H. (2011) *The Online Neighbourhood Networks Study*. Networked Neighbourhoods.

Harris, K. and McCabe, A. (2017a) *Community Action and Social Media: A Review of the Literature*. Barrow Cadbury Third Sector Research Centre, Working Paper 139.

Harris, K. and McCabe, A. (2017b) *Community Action and Social Media: Trouble in Utopia?* Barrow Cadbury Third Sector Research Centre, Working Paper 140.

Harrison, J. (2010) User-generated Content and Gatekeeping at the BBC Hub. *Journalism Studies* 11(2) 243–256.

Harrison, J. and Wessels, B. (2005) A New Public Service Communication Environment? Public Service Broadcasting Values in the Reconfiguring Media. *New Media & Society* 7(6) 861–880.

Harrison, J. and Wessels, B. (Eds) (2009) *Mediating Europe: New Media, Mass Communication, and the European Public Sphere*. Oxford: Berghahn Publishers.

Hay, C. (2007) *Why We Hate Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hayashi, K. (2000) The 'Home and Family' Section in the Japanese Newspaper in Sparks, C. and Tulloch, J. (Eds) *Tabloid Tales. Global Debates over Media Standards*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Haythornthwaite, C. (2011) Networks, Crowds and Communities. Invited presentation. Sheffield University, Sheffield, UK.

Held, D. (1996) *Models of Democracy*. Oxford: Polity Press and Blackwell Publishers.

Hemmi, A. and Crowther, J. (2013) Learning Environmental Activism through Social Networking Sites? *Concept* 4(1) 1–7.

Hermans, L., Schaap, G. and Bardoel, J. (2014) Re-establishing the Relationship with the Public. *Journalism Studies* 15(5) 642–654.

Hermes, J. (2005) *Rereading Popular Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hess, K. (2013) Tertius Tactics: Mediated Social Capital as a Resource of Power for Traditional News Media. *Communication Theory* 23(2) 112–130.

Hess, K. (2014) Making Connections: 'Mediated Social' Capital and Small Town Press. *Journalism Studies* 16(4) 482–496.

Hess, K. (2015) Making Connections. *Journalism Studies* 16(4) 482–496.

Hess, K. and Waller, L. (2014) River Flows and Profit Flows. *Journalism Studies* 17(3) 263–276.

Hine, C. (2008) Virtual Ethnography: Modes, Varieties, Affordances in Fielding, N.G., Lee, R.M. and Blank, G. (Eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. London: Sage.

Hodgkinson, T. (2008) With Friends Like These … *The Guardian* (14 January). Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/technology/2008/jan/14/facebook.

Hoggett, P. and Thompson, S. (Eds) (2012) *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Holmes, M. (2010) The Emotionalization of Reflexivity. *Sociology* 44(1) 139–154.

Hoofd, I. (2012) *Ambiguities of Activism: Alter-globalism and the Imperatives of Speed.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Howard, E. (2014) How 'Clicktivism' has Changed the Face of Political Campaigns. *The Guardian*, 24 September.

Howard, P.N. and Hussain, M.M. (2011) The Role of Digital Media. *Journal of Democracy* 22(3) 35–48.

Howard, P.N. and Hussain, M.M. (2013) *Democracy's Fourth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring.* Oxford University Press.

Howley, K. (2010) *Understanding Community Media.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Humphreys, A. and Grayson, K. (2008) The Intersecting Roles of Consumer and Producer: A Critical Perspective on Co-production, Co-creation and Prosumption. *Sociology Compass* 2 1–18.

Huntingdon, S. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Jasper, J.M. and Poulsen, J. (1995) Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-nuclear Protests. *Social Problems* 42 493–512.

Jenkins, H. (2006) *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide.* New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins, H. (2007) What is Civic Media? Presented at MIT Communications Forum, September 20. Retrieved from http://henryjenkins.org/2007/10/what_is_civic_media_1.html.

Jenkins, H., Ford, S. and Green, J. (2013) *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Johnson, B.J. and Halegoua, G.R. (2014) Potential and Challenges for Social Media in the Neighborhood Context. *Journal of Urban Technology* 21(4) 51–75.

Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010) Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons* 53 59–68.

Karlsson, M., Bergström, A., Clerwall, C. and Fast, K. (2015) Participatory Journalism – The (R)evolution that Wasn't. Content and User Behavior in Sweden 2007–2013. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 20(3) 295–311.

Karvonen, E. (2009) Entertainmentization of the European Public Sphere in Harrison, J. and Wessels, B. (Eds) *Mediating Europe: New Media, Mass Communications and the European Public Sphere.* Oxford: Berghahn Books, 99–127.

Katz, E. and Lazarsfeld, P.F. (1955) *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications.* New York: The Free Press.

Kavanagh, D. (1972) *Political Culture.* New York: Macmillan.

Kavanaugh, A., Tedesco, J.C. and Madondo, K. (2014) Social Media vs. Traditional Internet Use for Community Involvement: Toward Broadening Participation in Tambouris, E., Macintosh, A. and Bannister, F. (Eds) *Electronic Participation: 6th IFIP WG 8.5 international conference, ePart 2014, Dublin, Ireland, September 2–3, 2014. Proceedings Vol. 8654.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 1–12.

Keane, J. (1995) Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere. *The Communication Review* 1(1) 1–22.

Kim, Y.C. and Shin, E.K. (2016) Localized Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Seoul's Urban Neighborhoods. *American Behavioral Scientist* 60(1) 81–100.

Koontz, T.M., Steelman, T.A., Carnin, J., Korfmacher, S., Moseley, C. and Thomas, C.W. (2004) *Collaborative Environmental Management: What Role for Government?* Washington, DC: RFF Press.

Kurkov, A., Taylor, S. and Darragh, A.L. (2014) *Ukraine Diaries: Dispatches from Kiev*. London: Harvill Secker.

Lash, C. (1977) *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged*. New York: Basic Books.

Lash, S. (1999) *Another Modernity: A Different Rationality*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Lasica, J.D. (2003) What is Participatory Journalism? *Online Journalism Review*.

Latour, B. (2004) *Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck*. www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/92-BECK_GB.pdf.

LeDuc, L., Niemi, R. and Norris, P. (Eds) (2009) *Comparing Democracies Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*. Campaign Communications. London: Sage.

Lee, F.L.F., Chen, H.T. and Chan, M. (2017) Social Media Use and University Students' Participation in a Large-scale Protest Campaign: The Case of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. *Telematics and Informatics* 34(2) 457–469.

Lerner, D. (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. New York: Free Press.

Lewis, J., Williams, A. and Franklin, B. (2008) A Compromised Fourth Estate? *Journalism Studies* 9(1) 1–20.

Lewis, P., Newburn, T., Taylor, M., McGillivray, C., Greenhill, A., Frayman, H. and Proctor, R. (2011) *Reading the Riots: Investigating England's Summer of Disorder*. London: The London School of Economics and Political Science and *The Guardian*.

Liebes, T. and Curran, J. (Eds) (1998) *Media, Ritual, Identity*. London: Routledge.

Lievrouw, L. and Livingstone, S. (2002) *The Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of ICT*. Student edition/2nd. London: Sage.

Lievrouw, L.A. and Livingstone, S. (2006) Introduction to the First Edition (2002): The Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs in Lievrouw, L.A. and Livingstone, S. (Eds) *The Handbook of New Media*. London: Sage, 15–32.

Lilleker, D.G. (2006) *Key Concepts in Political Communication*. London: Sage.

Lippmann, W. (1922) *Public Opinion*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Livingstone, S. (1998) Audience Research at the Crossroads: The 'Implied Audience' in Media and Cultural Theory. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 1(2) 193–217.

Livingstone, S. (2002) *Young People and New Media*. Sage Publications.

Livingstone, S. (Ed.) (2005) *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere*. Bristol: Intellect.

Livingstone, S. (2013) The End of Audiences? Theoretical Echoes of Reception Amidst the Uncertainties of Use in Hartley, J., Burgess, J. and Bruns, A. (Eds) *A Companion to New Media Dynamics*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Loader, B.D. (1998) *Cyberspace Divide: Equality, Agency, and Policy in the Information Society*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Loader, B.D., Vromen, A. and Xenos, M.A. (2016) Performing for the Young Networked Citizen? Celebrity Politics, Social Networking and the Political Engagement of Young People. *Media, Culture & Society* 38(3) 400–419.

Lunt, P. and Stenner, P. (2005) The Jerry Springer Show as an Emotional Public Sphere. *Media, Culture & Society* 27(1) 59–81.

Lyon, D. (2001) *The Information Society: Issues and Illusions*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Manin, B. (1997) *The Principles of Representative Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Manning, N. (2013) 'I mainly look at things on an issue by issue basis': Reflexivity and Phronêsis in Young People's Political Engagements. *Journal of Youth Studies* 16(1) 17–33.

Manning, P.K. (1977) *Police Work: The Social Organisation of Policing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mansell, R. (2012) *Imagining the Internet: Communication, Innovation and Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mansell, R. and Silverstone, R. (Eds) (1996) *Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies*. Oxford University Press.

Mansell, R. and Steinmueller, E. (2002) *Mobilizing the Information Society: Strategies for Growth and Opportunity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marcus, G. and Tidey, J. (2015) *Community Mirror: A Data-driven Method for 'Below the Radar' Research*. Nesta Working Paper. London: Nesta.

Margetts, H., John, P., Hale, S. and Yasseri, T. (2015) *Political Turbulence: How Social Media Shape Collective Action*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Markham, A. and Lindgren, S. (forthcoming) From Object to Flow: Network Sensibilities, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Media. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*.

Marres, N. (2007) The Issues Deserve More Credit: Pragmatist Contributions to the Study of Public Involvement in Controversy. *Social Studies of Science* 37(5) 759–780.

Marwick, A.E. and Boyd, D. (2010) I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience. *New Media & Society* 13(1) 114–133.

Matheson, D. (2004) Weblogs and the Epistemology of the News: Some Trends in Online Journalism. *New Media & Society* 6(4) 443–468.

Matthews, P. (2016) Social Media, Community Development and Social Capital. *Community Development Journal* 51(3) 419–435.

Melucci, A. (1988) Getting Involved: Identity and Mobilization in Social Movements. *International Social Movement Research* 1 329–348.

Melucci, A. (1996) *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mercea, D. (2012) Digital Prefigurative Participation: The Entwinement of Online Communication and Offline Participation in Protest Events. *New Media & Society* 14(1) 153–169.

Merkel, W. (2013) *Is There a Crisis of Democracy? Can We Answer the Question?* Prepared for delivery at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 29–September 1, 2013.

Metzgar, E.T., Kurpius, D.D. and Rowley, M. (2011) Defining Hyperlocal Media: Proposing a Framework for Discussion. *New Media & Society* 13(5) 772–787.

Miazhevich, G. (2011) Moderating the Extreme: The Role of Vladimir Pozner's Vremena in Russian State Television Responses to the Rise of Xenophobia. *TV and New Media* 12(1) 23–45.

Michels, S. (2004) Democracy in Plato's Laws. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 35(4) 517–528.

Mill, J.S. (2008) [1861] *Considerations on Representative Government*. New York: Cosimo.

Miller, C. (2015) *Social Action on Social Media*. London: Nesta.

Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S. and Wang, X. (2016) *How the World Changed Social Media*. London: UCL Press.

Mills, C.W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Milner, R.M. (2013) Pop Polyvocality: Internet Memes, Public Participation, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement. *International Journal of Communication* 2357–2390.

Milward, H.B. and Provan, K.G. (2000) Governing the Hollow State. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10(2) 359–380.

Moraga, C. and Anzaldua, G. (2015) *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (4th edition). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Morozov, E. (2009) The Brave New World of Slacktivism. Foreign policy blog, 19 May. Retrieved from: www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104302141.

Morozov, E. (2011) *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. New York: Public Affairs.

Morris, L. (2014) Contextualizing the Power of Social Media: Technology, Communication and the Libya Crisis. *First Monday* 19(12).

Mouffe, C. (1992) *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2005) *On the Political*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (2013) *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically*. London: Verso.

Mueller, C. (1994) Conflict, Networks and the Origins of Women's Liberation in Larana, E., Johnstone, H. and Gusfield, J. (Eds) *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 247–248.

Negt, O. and Kluge, A. (1988) [1972] The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections, translated by Labanyi, P. *October* 46 (Fall).

Negt, O. and Kluge, A. (1993) *Public Sphere and Experience. Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*. University of Minnesota Press.

Newman, N., Dutton, W. and Blank, G. (2012) Social Media in the Changing Ecology of News: The Fourth and Fifth Estates in Britain. *International Journal of Internet Science* 7(1) 6–22.

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Levy, D.A.L. and Nielsen, R.K. (2016) *Reuters Institute Digital News Report*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Newman, N., Levy, D. and Nielsen, R.K. (2015) *Tracking the Future of News*. Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2015.

Nielsen, R.K. (2011) Mundane Internet Tools, Mobilizing Practices, and the Coproduction of Citizenship in Political Campaigns. *New Media & Society* 13(5) 755–771.

Nieminen, H. (2007) *Europe of Networks or the European Public Sphere? Four Plus One Approaches*. Paper presented at the 50th Congress of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, Paris, July 22–25.

Nip, J.Y.M. (2006) Exploring the Second Phase of Public Journalism. *Journalism Studies* 7(2) 212–236.

Norris, P. (Ed.) (1999) *Critical Citizens – Global Support for Democratic Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norris. P. (2011) *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Obar, J.A., Zube, P. and Lampe, C. (2012) Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action. *Journal of Information Policy* 2 1–25.

O'Donovan, O. (2014) The Commons, the Battle of the Book and the Cracked Enclosures of Academic Publishing. *Community Development Journal* 49(1) i21–i30.

Offe, C. (1984) *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. London: Hutchinson.

Oliver, P.E., Cadena-Roa, J. and Strawn, K.D. (2003) Emerging Political Sociology for the 21st Century Research. *Political Sociology* 12 213–244.

Oliver, P.E. and Myers, D.I. (1999) How Events Enter the Public Sphere. *American Journal of Sociology* 105 38–87.

Ostrom, E. (2015) *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Report (2016) (www.digita lnewsreport.org/survey/2016/).

OxIS: Oxford UK Internet Surveys. (n.d.) Retrieved (23. 05. 2017) from http://micro sites.oii.ox.ac.uk/oxis.

Papacharissi, Z. (2002) The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere. *New Media & Society* 4(1) 9–27.

Papacharissi, Z. (2009) The Citizen is the Message: Alternative Modes of Civic Engagement in Papacharissi, Z. (Ed.) *Journalism and Citizenship: New Agendas in Communication*. New York: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z. (2015) *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology and Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Parisier, E. (2011) *The Filter Bubble: How the New Personalized Web is Changing What We Read and How We Think*. New York: Penguin Press.

Parsons, T. (1967) *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Parsons, T. (1971) *The System of Modern Societies*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Parsons, T. and Shills, E.A. (Eds) (1951) *Towards a General Theory of Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pateman, C. (1970) *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pateman, C. (1971) Political Culture, Political Structure and Political Change. *British Journal of Political Science* 1(29) 1–305.

Perez, L. (2009) *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pew Research Center (2016) *Oxford Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*.

Pharr, S.J. and Putnam, R.D. (Eds) (2000) *Disaffected Democracies – What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Picard, R.G. (2003) Cash Cows or Entrecôte: Publishing Companies and Disruptive Technologies. *Trends in Communication* 11(2) 127–136.

Picard, R.G. (2008) Shifts in Newspaper Advertising Expenditures and their Implications for the Future of Newspapers. *Journalism Studies* 9(5) 704–716.

Poell, T. (2014) Social Media and the Transformation of Activist Communication: Exploring the Social Media Ecology of the 2010 Toronto G20 Protests. *Information, Communication & Society* 17(6) 716–731.

Poell, T. and van Dijck, J. (2016) Constructing Public Space: Global Perspectives on Social Media and Popular Contestation [Introduction to special section on constructing public space in social media]. *International Journal of Communication* 10 226–234.

Polanyi, K. (1957) *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Polletta, F. (2004) Culture In and Outside Institutions. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 25 161–183.

Popple, K. (2015) *Analysing Community Work: Theory and Practice* (2nd edition). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Privitera, W. (2001) *Sfera pubblica e democratizzazione*. Laterza Roma-Bari.

Procter, R., Crump, J., Karstedt, S., Voss, A. and Cantijoch, M. (2013a) Reading the Riots: What Were the Police Doing on Twitter? *Policing & Society* 23(4) 413–436.

Procter, R., Vis, F. and Voss, A. (2013b) Reading the Riots on Twitter: Methodological Innovation for the Analysis of Big Data. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 16(3) 197–214.

Putnam, R. (1995a) Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy* (January) 65–78.

Putnam, R.D. (1995b) Tuning In Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *Political Science and Politics* 28(4) 664–683.

Putnam, R.D. (2000) *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Radsch, C.C. (2013) *The Revolutions will be Blogged: Cyberactivism and the 4th Estate in Egypt*. Doctoral dissertation, American University.

Rainie, L., Purcell, K. and Smith, A. (2011) *The Social Side of the Internet*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved (06. 12. 2016) from www.pewinternet.org/2011/01/18/the-social-side-of-the-internet/.

Rainie, L., Smith, A., Schlozman, K.L., Brady, H. and Verba, S. (2012) *Social Media and Political Engagement*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved (06. 12. 2016) from www.pewinternet.org/2012/10/19/social-media-and-political-engagement/.

Rainie, L. and Wellman, B. (2012) *Networked: The New Social Operating System*. London: MIT. Retrieved from: https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/networked.

Rantanen, T. (2009) *When News was New*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ravikant, N. and Rifkin, A. (2010) Why Twitter is Massively Undervalued Compared to Facebook. Retrieved from http://techcrunch.com/2010/10/16/why-twitter-is-massively-undervalued-compared-to-facebook.

Reigert, K. (Ed.) (2007) *Politicotainment: Television's Take on the Real*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

Richardson, L. (2008) *DIY Community Action: Neighbourhood Problems and Community Self-help*. Bristol: Policy Press. Retrieved from http://policypress.co.uk/diy-community-action.

Roberts, J.M. (2014) *New Media and Public Activism: Neoliberalism, the State and Radical Protest in the Public Sphere*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Roche, M. (1992) *Rethinking Citizenship: Welfare, Ideology and Change in Modern Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Roche, M. (2000) *Mega-events and Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*. London: Routledge.

Roche, P. (2014) *Connections to be Made? Social Media Use by Infrastructure Organisations Supporting the Voluntary Sector in the West Midlands*. Birmingham: RAWM.

Rogers, Y. (2011) Interaction Design Gone Wild: Striving for Wild Theory. *Interactions* 18(4) 58–62.

Romero, D.M., Galuba, W., Asur, S. and Huberman, B.A. (n.d.) *Influence and Passivity in Social Media*. ACM Digital Library.

Rosen, J. (2008) *A Most Useful Definition of Citizen Journalism*. PressThink.

Rosen, J. and Merritt, D. (1994) *Public Journalism: Theory and Practice*. Kettering Foundation.

Rousseau, J. (1988) [1762] *On the Social Contract*, translated by Cress, D.A. Indianapolis Cambridge: Ian Hackett Publishing Company.

Sarikakis, K. and Wessels, B. (2018) The Dynamics of Social Media, Political Culture, and Communication Governance in Civic Participation in Eberwein, T., Melischek, G.,

Seethaler, J. and Wenzel, C. (Eds) *Changing Media – Changing Democracy? The Democratic Potential of Social Media*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 219–235.

Sartori, G. (1962) Constitutionalism: A Preliminary Discussion. *The American Political Science Review* 56(4) 853–864.

Schau, H.J. and Gilly, M.C. (2003) We are what we Post? Self-presentation in Personal Web Space. *Journal of Consumer Research* 30(3) 385–404.

Schlozman, K.L., Verba, S. and Brady, H.E. (1999) Civic Participation and the Equality Problem in Skocpol, T. and Fiorina, M.P. (Eds) *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 427–459.

Schlozman, L., Verba, K. and Brady, H.E. (2010) Weapon of the Strong? Participatory Inequality and the Internet. *Perspectives on Politics* 8 487–509.

Schlozman, K.L., Verba, S. and Brady, H.E. (2012) *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schofield Clark, L. (2016) Book Review of Z. Papacharissi's *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics* (2014). *International Journal of Communication* 10.

Schumpeter, J.A. (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Scolari, C. (2008) *Hipermediaciones: Elementos para una teoría de la comunicación digital interactiva* [Hyper-mediations: Elements of an interactive digital communication theory]. Barcelona, Spain: Gedisa.

Seaver, N. (2014) *Knowing Algorithms! Media in Transition 8*, Cambridge, MA, April 2013. Unpublished Draft Revised, February 2014. Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine Intel Science and Technology Center for Social Computing.

Senge, P.M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (2nd edition). London: Random House Business Books.

Senge, P. (2006) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York, NY: Currency/Doubleday.

Shannon, C. and Weaver, W. (1963) *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Shao, G. (2009) Understanding the Appeal of User-generated Media: A Uses and Gratification Perspective. *Internet Research* 19(1) 7–25.

Shiao, D. (26 December 2012) Webcasting 101: Planning and Executing High Quality Webcasts. *INXPO*. Retrieved 15 May 2016.

Shifman, L. (2013) Memes in a Digital World: Reconciling with a Conceptual Troublemaker. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 18(3) 362–377.

Shirky, C. (2008) *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. London: Penguin Books.

Short, J., Williams, E. and Christie, B. (1976) *The Social Psychology of Telecommunications*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Silverstone, R. (Ed.) (2005a) *Media, Technology and Everyday Life in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Silverstone, R. (2005b) The Sociology of Mediation and Communication in Calhoun, C., Rojek, C. and Turner, B.S. (Eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Sociology*. London: Sage, 188–207.

Silverstone, R. (2006) *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Singer, J.B. (2009) Spaces: Discourse About the 2007 Scottish Elections on a National Newspaper Web Site. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 14(4) 477–496.

Skeels, M.M. and Grudin, J. (2009) When Social Networks Cross Boundaries: A Case Study of Workplace Use of Facebook and LinkedIn. *Proceedings of the ACM 2009 International Conference on Supporting Group Work* 95–104.

Skocpol, T. (2004) Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy. *Perspectives on Politics* 2(1) 3–20.

Smith, A. (2013) *Civic Engagement in the Digital Age*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved (12. 11. 2016) from www.pewinternet.org/2013/04/25/civic-engagement-in-the-digital-age/.

Smith, A., Schlozman, K.L., Verba, S. and Brady, H. (2009) *The Internet and Civic Engagement*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved (12. 11. 2016) from www.pewinternet.org/2009/09/01/the-internet-and-civic-engagement/.

Smith, B.G., Men, R.L. and Al-Sinan, R. (2015) Tweeting Taksim: Communication Power and Social Media Advocacy in the Taksim Square Protests. *Computers in Human Behavior* 50 499–507.

Somerville, P. (2016) *Understanding Community: Politics, Policy and Practice* (2nd edition). Bristol: Policy Press.

Staggenborg, S. (2011) *Social Movements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Standage, T. (2013) *Writing on the Wall: Social Media: The First 2,000 Years*. London: Bloomsbury.

Stanyer, J. and Wring, D. (2004) Public Images, Private Lives: An Introduction. *Parliamentary Affairs* 57(1).

Starks, M. (2007) *Switching to Digital Television: UK Public Policy and the Market*. Bristol: Intellect.

Steinert, H. and Pilgram, A. (2007) *Welfare Policy from Below: Struggles Against Social Exclusion in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Stenberg, C.W. (1972) *The New Grass Roots Government?* Washington, DC: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

Stewart, A. (2000) *Theories of Power and Domination*. London: Sage.

Stoker, G. (2009) What's Wrong with Our Political Culture and What, if Anything, Can We Do to Improve It? Reflections on Colin Hay's 'Why We Hate Politics'. *British Politics* 4 83–91.

Striphas, T. (2015) Algorithmic Culture. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 18(4–5) 395–412.

Sundet, V.S. and Ytreberg, E. (2009) Working Notions of Active Audiences: Further Research on the Active Participant in Convergent Media Industries. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 15(4) 383–390.

Sunstein, C. (2001) *Echo Chambers: Bush v. Gore, Impeachment, and Beyond*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Sunstein, C.R. (2006) *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Szabo, M. (1996) Repertoires of Contention in Post-Communist Protest Cultures: An East Central European Comparative Survey. *Social Research* 63(4) 1155–1182.

Taylor, J. (2015) *Working with Communities* (2nd edition). Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/working-with-communities.

Teichgraeber, R.F. (1986) *'Free Trade' and Moral Philosophy: Rethinking the Sources of Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Teorell, J. (2006) Political Participation and Three Theories of Democracy: A Research Inventory and Agenda. *European Journal of Political Research* 45(5) 787–810.

Theocharis, Y. (2013) The Wealth of (Occupation) Networks? Communication Patterns and Information Distribution in a Twitter Protest Network. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* 10(1) 35–56.

Theocharis, Y., Lowe, W., van Deth, J. and Garcia-Albacete, G. (2015) Using Twitter to Mobilize Protest Action: Online Mobilization Patterns and Action Repertoires in the Occupy Wall Street, Indignados and Aganaktismenoi Movements. *Information, Communication & Society* 18(2) 202–220.

Thompson, J.B. (1995) *Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Thompson, S. and Hoggett, P. (Eds) (2012) *Politics and the Emotions. The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*. London: Continuum.

Thurman, N. (2008) Forum for Citizen Journalists? Adoption of User-generated Content Initiatives by Online News Media. *New Media & Society* 10(1) 139–157.

Tronto, J.C. (1993) *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York: Routledge.

Tufecki, Z. and Wilson, C. (2012) Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication* 62(2) 363–379.

van Dijck, J. (2009) Users like You? Theorising Agency in User-generated Content. *Media Culture & Society* 31(1) 41–58.

van Gunsteren, H.R. (1998) *A Theory of Citizenship Organizing Plurality in Contemporary Democracies*. Westview Press.

van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T. and Spears, R. (2008) Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-psychological Perspectives. *Psychological Bulletin* 134(4) 504–535.

van Zoonen, L. (2005) *Entertaining the Citizen: When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Veenstra, A.S., Iyer, N., Hossain, M.D. and Park, J. (2014) Time, Place, Technology: Twitter as an Information Source in the Wisconsin Labor Protests. *Computers in Human Behavior* 31 65–72.

Verba, S. (2011) A Life in Political Science. *Annual Review of Political Science* 14 1–15.

Verhulst, J. and Walgrave, S. (2009) The First Time is the Hardest? A Cross-national and Cross-issue Comparison of First-time Protest Participants. *Political Behavior* 31 455–484.

Vromen, A., Loader, B.D. and Xenos, M. (2016) Beyond Lifestyle Politics in a Time of Crisis? Comparing Young People's Issue Agendas and Views on Inequality. *Policy Studies* 36(6) 532–549.

Walton, J. and Seddon, D. (1994) *Free Markets & Food Riots: The Politics of Global Adjustment*. Studies in Urban and Social Change. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Webster, F. (Ed.) (2003) *The Information Society Reader*. London: Routledge.

Wellman, B. and Haythornthwaite, C. (Eds) (2002) *The Internet in Everyday Life*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Wells, C. (2014) Civic Identity and the Question of Organization in Contemporary Civic Engagement. *Policy & Internet* 6(2) 209–216.

Wessels, B. (2008) Exploring the Notion of the Europeanization of Public Spheres and Civil Society in Fostering a Culture of Dialogue Through the Concept of Proper Distance. *Sociology: Thought and Action* (Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas) 3(23) 28–46.

Wessels, B. (2010a) The Public Sphere and the European Information Society in Bee, C. and Bozzini, E. (Eds) *Mapping the European Public Sphere*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Wessels, B. (2010b) *Understanding the Internet: A Socio-Cultural Perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wessels, B. (2012a) Identification and the Practices of Identity and Privacy in Everyday Digital Communication. *New Media & Society* 14(8) 1251–1268.

Wessels, B. (2012b) Exploring Human Agency and Digital Systems: Services, Personalisation and Participation. *Information, Communication & Society*.

Wessels, B. (2013) The Reproduction and Reconfiguration of Inequality: Differentiation and Class, Status and Power in the Dynamics of Digital Divides in Ragnedda, M. and Muschert, G.W. (Eds) *The Digital Divide: The Internet and Social Inequality in International Perspective*, 17–28.

Wessels, B. (2014) *Exploring Social Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wessels, B. (2015) Authentication, Status, and Power in a Digitally Organized Society. *International Journal of Communication* 9 2801–2818.

Wessels, B., Anderson, B., Durrant, A. and Ellis, J. (2013) Mediating Genocide: Cultural Understanding Through Digital and Print Media Stories in Global Communication. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics* 8(2–3) 193–209.

Wessels, B., Dittrich, Y., Ekelin, A. and Eriksen, S. (2012) Creating Synergies Between Participatory Design of e-Services and Collaborative Planning. *International Journal of e-Planning Research* 1(3) 33–48.

Wessels, B., Finn, R.L., Wadhwa, K. and Sveinsdottir, T. (2017) *Open Data and Knowledge Society*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

White, I. (2006) *Power to the People: The Report of Power, an Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy*. Parliament and Constitution Centre Standard Note: SN/PC/3948.

Williams, F. (1994) Social Relations, Welfare and the Post-Fordist Debate in Burrows, R. and Loader, B. (Eds) *Towards a Post-Fordist Welfare State?* London: Routledge.

Williams, P. (2011) *Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

World Internet Project. (www.worldinternetproject.net).

World Values Survey. (www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

Wuthnow, R. (1998) *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Xu, W.W., Li, L., Stefanone, M.A. and Fu, Y.R. (2013) Does Social Media Users' Commenting Behavior Differ by their Local Community Tie? A Computer-assisted Linguistic Analysis Approach. *First Monday* 19(1).

Zolo, D. (1992) *Democracy and Complexity: A Realist Approach*. Oxford and Cambridge: Polity Press.

Zuiderveen Borgesius, F.J., Trilling, D., Möller, J., Bodó, B. and de Vreese, C.H. (2016) Should We Worry about Filter Bubbles? *Internet Policy Review* 5(1).

Index