

The role of New Media in political socialization in Algeria: Towards digital political participation

Nadjat Lahdiri

Centre of Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology, CRASC, Oran, Algeria.
Email: nadjatlahdiri@yahoo.fr ; Orcid No: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3259-4498>.

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The research paper aimed to shed light on the role of new media in building political awareness in Algeria, while examining its repercussions and impacts in the near and long term. It also highlighted the importance of politics, particularly political upbringing, which qualifies individuals for active and effective participation in building an informed and advanced society. This is particularly true given that new media, as a result of the technological revolution taking place in the world of human communication, seeks to preserve the integrity of society by providing numerous media and communication outlets, unrestricted by geography and time.

Methodology: We adopted a historical retrieval approach, which is based on retrieving the historical factors leading to the transformation of political practice and political participation, particularly, in Algeria over time periods characterized by characteristics and features that reinforced this transformation. It also relied on a descriptive and analytical approach to examine the path of the circumstances and factors that led to the transition of both upbringing and political participation in Algeria from traditional to digital media.

Results: New media has enabled Algerian individuals to participate and interact politically across its various platforms: Facebook, Twitter, personal blogs, various websites, and other social media. It also helped to gain political education and provided him with opportunities to express his opinion and share it with others on various political issues.

Conclusion: Social media platforms and outlets emerging from new media have provided a platform for political education, based on their use as a means and an end, embodied in digital political practice in Algeria. They are relied upon in the future to continue to activate positive political participation among various social segments.

Keywords: Algeria, New Media, Political communication, Political socialisation, Digital Political Participation.

INTRODUCTION

Political communication holds a prominent place in both local and international political arenas. It shapes public opinion, facilitates the exchange of ideologies, and brings people closer intellectually, culturally, and even geographically. This process relies on the sharing of ideas, beliefs, and political ideologies, often disseminated by political elites or various ideological movements through communication channels designed to attract the largest possible number of supporters.

Throughout history, humans have used communication tools to serve their goals and ambitions in various fields. In Algeria, political content, speeches, and programs were traditionally disseminated through conventional media—mass media and print journalism. However, with the advent of technological advances and the emergence of digital communication, more innovative, accessible, and influential channels have emerged to help individuals and groups pursue political objectives. This development is referred to as new media, which is also known by other terms such as social media, digital media, digital networking, or electronic media.

All these labels refer to the process of conveying messages with meaning and intent from a sender to a receiver—whether an individual, group, or mass audience—through digital communication tools. These tools are used across practical, scientific, educational, entertainment, and cultural fields to share information, ideas, and ideological perspectives without being bound by time or place.

Continuous use of new media through both professional and personal channels has led to the emergence of what is known as the information society. This society is built on digital networking and the exchange and interaction with content, impacting the nature of social relationships, human development, and the level of satisfaction individuals derive from the media they consume and contribute to—particularly in the political sphere.

Significance of the Study

The topic of political participation holds a vital position both globally and within Algeria. This importance stems from its evolving characteristics, which change in line with the country's social and political context. Political participation, as a behavior and a practice, reflects a part of human political conduct and plays a central role in managing civil life and implementing mechanisms of political engagement.

Examining the transition from traditional media to digital platforms offers insight into how individuals—starting from political socialization—gain the opportunity to engage in digital political participation. These two processes are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Objectives of the Study

This paper seeks to explore how political participation in Algeria has moved from traditional media channels to digital and personal platforms. These platforms have allowed both individuals and groups to produce, disseminate, and promote their ideas widely, within what is now referred to as the virtual society.

The study also aims to underline the significance of politics and, more specifically, political socialization in preparing individuals to participate meaningfully in the development of a conscious and advanced society.

Research Problem

Technological advancements have minimized the time and space required for digital communication, allowing individuals and groups to utilize multiple digital platforms and create content that can be shared and interacted with by others. These platforms have transformed users from passive receivers into active participants who freely express their opinions—either in support or opposition—of the content.

This shift has prompted researchers and academics to study political participation in both traditional and digital contexts. These studies analyze the context, applications, and impacts of participation using classical and modern communication theories. They reveal an almost dual-level interaction between sender and receiver, in terms of persuasion, influence, and ideological dissemination. This interaction aims to generate acceptance and adoption of political action and its underlying principles, regardless of temporal or spatial limitations.

In light of this, the paper raises the following central question: To what extent has new media contributed to shaping political awareness in Algeria, and what factors have supported the transition of political socialization from traditional to digital platforms?

Research Questions

Based on the main research problem, the following sub-questions are proposed:

- How does the process of political socialization occur?
- What is the role and impact of new media and social networks in the transition from traditional to digital political participation in Algeria?
- What are the risks posed by new media in political socialization processes?

Methodology

This paper falls within the field of media studies. It seeks to interpret a media phenomenon through understanding and analysis, alongside a historical account of its development. For this reason, the study adopts the descriptive-analytical method, which helps in examining how political

participation in Algeria has shifted from traditional media to digital platforms. This transition cannot be understood without tracing the historical process and identifying the factors and context that have driven the change.

The descriptive-analytical method is defined as "an approach that relies on accurate and sufficient information about a specific phenomenon or topic over a known period of time, in order to reach practical results interpreted objectively and in line with the actual data of the phenomenon" (Al-Bayati, 2018). This method is also useful for "studying facts related to a phenomenon, a situation, a group of people, or a set of conditions, aiming to collect comprehensive and accurate data. Based on this, conclusions can be drawn to support social reforms or other related actions" (Al-Mashhadani, 2017). It is often used to examine "the current status of phenomena in terms of their characteristics, forms, relationships, and influencing factors" (Al-Mahmoudi, 2019).

Because media phenomena are reflections of social reality—and are themselves social phenomena—the descriptive method is considered one of the most appropriate approaches for understanding social reality and identifying its features (Al-Askari, 2004). It focuses on "describing natural or social phenomena in order to establish scientific facts." The descriptive method complements the historical retrieval method, which is used to trace the past development of a phenomenon and its evolution to the present (Al-Rubaie, 2012).

The historical retrieval method "aims to revisit the past and its remnants." It is commonly used in historical, social, and ethical sciences (Al-Rubaie, 2012).

Together, the descriptive-analytical and historical retrieval approaches allow us to study how political participation in Algeria has evolved from a traditional to a digital model. This transition is both a media and political phenomenon, and it reflects the ongoing impact of technological advancement with its unique characteristics, features, and manifestations.

Previous Studies

Research on political participation in Algeria has generally employed analytical and survey-based approaches. These include the use of questionnaires and field interviews, often appearing in academic theses or peer-reviewed journal articles. Some of these studies have examined the nature of political participation and how it has evolved in line with changing national contexts, influenced by broader international transformations across political, economic, and socio-cultural fields.

A study by Messaoudi (2024) titled "Political Socialization and Its Impact on Political Participation in Algeria" aimed to explore the Algerian individual's relationship with political processes and how they engage with them. The study investigated the accumulation of political awareness and experience in the Algerian context. Using the descriptive method and the state-society approach, it analyzed how political systems influence society. The study concluded that political socialization significantly affects political behavior, depending on the nature of the relationship

between the individual and the state. It recommended enhancing the legal and political environment and giving greater attention to political socialization.

In another study, Boumeshal (2019) explored “The Role of Political Communication in Political Socialization in Algeria” through a field investigation involving readers of the Algerian newspaper *El Khabar* and viewers of Algerian national television. Using both descriptive and analytical methods, the study found that each media outlet played a different political role. *El Khabar* focused more on analytical content, while the national television leaned toward political propaganda. The study concluded that the examined media outlets contributed minimally to political socialization, limiting it to electoral participation and party affiliation.

The study by Remech (2020), titled “The Role of New Media in Political Socialization Among Algerian Youth,” investigated how new media platforms affect political awareness among young people in Algeria. Using descriptive and survey methods, the study found that youth in the sample used digital platforms to attain participatory awareness. However, the level of political engagement remained low, as participants tended not to interact deeply with political topics. This lack of engagement contributed to their limited participation in electoral processes.

At the Arab level, a study conducted by Helmy, Shenouda, and Shehab (2022) titled “The Role of New Media as a Framework for Political Socialization in Reshaping Societal Awareness” examined how new media contributes to political socialization in Egypt and the broader Arab region. The authors concluded that digital platforms had become alternative venues for free expression and played a significant role in challenging existing social norms and values. These platforms exposed the inability of political authorities to meet the aspirations of the younger generation. The study recommended confronting this ideological penetration with strong educational and media strategies rooted in national values.

Through this review of local and Arab academic studies—many of which applied descriptive and analytical methods—it becomes clear that the current paper adds value by specifically focusing on how both political socialization and participation have transitioned from traditional to digital media platforms and social networks in Algeria. This transition is examined as part of the broader technological evolution, with the aim of offering a clearer picture of digital political participation and its current applications in Algerian society.

Theoretical Framework

An individual cannot engage in political participation on issues that concern them and shape the direction of national policies without first acquiring fundamental political knowledge. This knowledge is formed through the process of political socialization. It may develop over different stages and is usually the result of deliberate individual effort aimed at gaining the capacity for political involvement.

Political socialization often results from regular and continuous exposure to political topics and content. This can take place through traditional media or through digital platforms. These platforms support what is known as a "civic forum" or, in the words of philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, a public sphere—a network for sharing information and points of view (Buckley et al., 2014). This network strengthens opportunities for political engagement by allowing people from various backgrounds to discuss and debate public issues, regardless of their educational level, social status, or cultural background.

Because this study addresses how political participation has shifted from traditional media to digital media across various platforms and channels, it is grounded in Habermas's Public Sphere Theory. The theory defines the public sphere as a space found in modern societies where political participation occurs through structured discussions. It is where citizens come together to exchange views on shared concerns. This process forms a discursive platform that connects institutions and the public (Fraser, 2001). If we consider the public sphere as a structured space for negotiation and cultural or ideological contestation among diverse groups (Fraser, 2001), then it becomes an inclusive space for expressing differing opinions and perspectives.

One of the key contributions of the Public Sphere Theory to communication studies is its focus on the forms and methods of communication as essential components of political and public life. It also provides a foundation for understanding political commitment and the ethical aspects of communication theories. The concept of the public sphere lies at the heart of studies in public debate, media, political communication, and democratic discourse (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Since this paper examines the transition from traditional political participation to digital political participation in Algeria, it also relies on the concept of the Digital Public Sphere. This concept emerged in response to the technological shift in media and communication processes. It led to the development of more precise theories for interpreting media content, its meanings, contexts, effects, and goals—especially as media practice itself was transformed by the digital revolution.

The Digital Public Sphere Theory assumes that discussion and dialogue take place on social media platforms, forming what is now referred to as the virtual public sphere. This sphere is supported by a wide range of digital platforms that allow individuals to engage in political participation through open dialogue and free expression. It also enables them to discuss various political matters without interference, restrictions, or official censorship.

Many studies have defined the digital public sphere in line with deliberative theory, which draws inspiration from the Greek agora, the Parisian café culture, and the salon debates of earlier centuries. From this perspective, the digital public sphere is seen as a communicative space where concerned and engaged individuals discuss shared issues based on a set of high normative standards (Schafer, 2015).

The transformation of media practices, along with the tools used to deliver content to the public, has been shaped by technological developments and the rise of digital media. This includes

the expansion of digital channels and social networks. These changes have shifted how we understand political participation—from being grounded in traditional physical spaces, where dialogue and idea exchange took place, to digital and virtual environments. These new spaces offer more accessible, flexible, and innovative ways for individuals to engage politically, using the broad range of tools and platforms available in the digital age.

Key Terms of the Research Paper

Political Communication

The term political communication consists of two components: communication, which refers to the act of transmitting messages within a defined environment, with its essential elements; and political, which denotes a domain of thought and action concerned with the production of ideas, positions, and ideological visions aimed at acquiring or exercising power. This occurs through participation in political parties and the promotion of political programs or ideologies via various communicative channels, both personal and institutional.

Conceptually, and according to John Midow, political communication—within the political approach—is defined as “symbols and messages exchanged in a way that is influenced by the political system or influences it.” Shafi, in a related view, defines it as “the function and impact of communication within the political process” (Ben Saoud, 2008). From a media perspective, political communication refers to “the targeted political activity carried out by politicians, media professionals, or the general public, reflecting specific political goals related to the political environment and influencing governments, public opinion, or the private lives of individuals and communities through various media platforms” (Ben Saoud, 2008).

The two definitions do not differ significantly in meaning or structure. The first defines the term through the dissection of communication as a behavioral act, while the second builds on it by highlighting its components: the action, the content, and the medium through which political communication is delivered.

Political communication emerged alongside human engagement with politics and political behavior, and with individuals’ continuous efforts to spread their ideas and convictions using different communicative tools. It is a process involving a sender and a receiver—either individuals or groups—exchanging messages carrying political meanings and implications through a channel that facilitates the transmission and dissemination of content.

Political communication becomes more prominent during major political events, such as election campaigns, the formation of political parties, or the promotion of ideological movements. Through this process, individuals express their opinions and contribute to the spread of political culture. It also plays a role in political socialization, which begins in early life and continues depending on one's interest in politics.

Political communication reflects the exchange of politically charged messages within specific communicative environments. It is used by both individuals and governments to achieve political aims. Media institutions play a central role in transmitting political ideas, plans, and ideologies between political actors and the public. Media is not only a medium but also a participant in shaping decisions about public issues or political alternatives. As Nollet (2019) states, "Media plays a contributing role in the process of decision-making regarding issues addressed by public authorities or in political choices."

Terminologically, political communication refers to the exchange of political messages between individuals or groups through a process that includes all the elements of communication: sender, receiver, message, and channel. These messages relate to political behavior (actions, attitudes, inclinations) or political discourse (ideologies, ideas, directions). The goal is to produce political influence by using various media and communication tools to persuade the public of the ideas and narratives promoted by political authorities or actors, targeting audiences across different levels, categories, and ideological orientations.

New Media

The term new media is used interchangeably with several other expressions, such as digital media, interactive media, information media, multimedia, networked online media, cyber media, and hypermedia. According to the Condensed Net Glossary, new media is considered the media of the information age, emerging from the convergence of two major developments of this era: the explosion of information and the evolution of telecommunications (Sheikhani, 2010).

Lester defines new media as "a set of communication technologies resulting from the merger of computer technologies with traditional media, including print, photography, audio, and video" (Sadiq, 2008). Others describe it as "new methods of communication within the digital environment, allowing smaller communities to gather and exchange information online. It provides individuals and groups the opportunity to voice their concerns and represent their communities to the wider world" (Sadiq, 2008).

New Media

In its terminological sense, new media refers to various digital media tools, platforms, and social networks that emerged as a result of the ongoing technological revolution. Despite the variety of terms used to describe it, they all converge on the idea that it relies on the internet as a base for sharing, exchanging, broadcasting, and promoting ideas and messages between senders and receivers.

Political Socialization

The concept of political socialization represents a shared area of interest between politics, sociology, and media studies. According to Atkin and Gantz (1978), political socialization is "a

developmental process through which children and youth acquire political knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors from their surrounding political environment." Sheikooof defines it as "the process by which political behavior and traditions are passed from one generation to the next" (Ben Saoud Al-Bashr, 2008).

Political socialization also refers to "the process by which a society transmits its political culture from one generation to another." It involves both gaining and internalizing political culture. In early childhood, it occurs through indoctrination, while in later stages it takes the form of learning and acquisition. Across generations, it happens through both formal and informal, planned and spontaneous transmission, through channels such as the family, peers, educational institutions, places of worship, friends, and government entities (Nadhir, 2012).

Political socialization cannot occur without political communication. In all societies, it is closely linked to the political system and the available means of transmission, including traditional and digital media channels. These tools play a role in developing political behaviors and skills, especially within educational institutions, such as schools, institutes, and universities, which contribute to preparing individuals for political engagement.

The nature of political socialization varies over time depending on the social and political conditions of the community, the actors involved in the process, and the goals they pursue. It is largely influenced by the structure of the political system, prevailing ideologies, and methods used to guide people toward shared objectives. Political socialization does not follow a single method but rather adopts different forms depending on the society's circumstances. It is a dynamic and continuous process that affects individuals throughout their lives. It is not limited to a specific age group. Its significance lies in creating a link between citizens and political leadership by emphasizing political goals and explaining key concepts such as legitimacy, loyalty, and the relationship between rulers and the ruled (Nadhir, 2012).

Education plays a central role in this process across different stages of life. It encourages individuals to engage with political change. Political leaders are considered central symbols of political life, as citizens tend to follow their images, ideas, and discourse to guide their own political orientation (Al-Sharafi, 2012). This process helps build what is known as political culture. In this regard, Azmi Bishara notes that the development of political culture depends on the presence of active institutions and structures (Al-Sharafi, 2012).

Childhood is the most critical stage for political socialization. It is the phase where foundational values can be instilled before the child adopts fixed patterns of behavior or social habits. The child is seen as a blank slate during this stage, making it vital to shape their values early so they become a lasting part of their personality and future behavior. Ahmad Badr identifies the period between the ages of three and thirteen as the most critical for political socialization and requiring more deliberate effort (Tamar, 2015).

As political socialization begins in early childhood, the child grows within a specific political environment that may shape them into an engaged citizen, influenced by both traditional and digital media.

Terminologically, political socialization refers to the process of acquiring political knowledge, ideologies, discourse skills, and strategies. It includes learning about political participation and practice, along with the values and principles that guide them. This prepares individuals to engage in political life in various forms and through different applications.

Digital Political Participation

Digital political participation is defined as "citizens' involvement in the political life of a given state. It is a form of free expression carried out through various means, aimed at choosing leaders or representatives and influencing decision-makers, either directly or through elected bodies" (Sbila & Al-Harmouni, 2017).

Participation can take many forms, such as joining political parties and engaging in political activities through these platforms. It can also be reflected in voting, whether by standing as a candidate or simply participating in the electoral process (Sbila & Al-Harmouni, 2017).

The term also refers to "activities carried out by certain individuals—either as a direct or indirect attempt—to influence governmental decisions or the behavior of political actors" (Van Deth, 2021). In light of technological advancement, digital tools have reshaped political participation. The internet, with its advanced features, now acts as a public space where citizens gain visibility through media platforms and form cross-border networks (Harvey, 2014). This has opened the door for all citizens to engage in political participation without exclusion or discrimination.

Digital political practices now take shape through various ideas, perspectives, and ideologies that individuals encounter online. These are debated, accepted, or rejected through processes of discussion and analysis, all aimed at deeper understanding and possible endorsement.

Terminologically, digital political participation refers to an individual's ability to engage in political dialogue, contribute to political discourse, and share content and ideas through social platforms. It includes expressing opinions, engaging in discussions, and interacting with political material in digital spaces.

Contribution of New Media Channels and Social Networks to Political Socialization in Algeria

Social media channels branch into multiple digital communication paths. Some are used personally; others professionally. E-journalism plays a significant role in shaping political socialization. It attracts an aware audience. These readers understand political issues in depth. They use these media to acquire knowledge. They reflect and act on political positions. Electronic

newspapers have many communicative features. They draw on the power of the internet. Blogs are among the most interactive, used, and influential tools.

E-journalism has built itself a youth readership. This readership shows interest in voicing opinions on national and international political issues. It does so through interaction with published content. An Arab study on the market for Arabic e-press found that this readership is mostly young men. Students and Arab immigrants form a large part of it. (Al-Dailami, 2011) The audience does not only follow. It thinks and participates. It responds via comments and discussions on websites. Later, participation grows with sending news, video clips. It peaks when youth begin to operate their own blogs, their own press. (Al-Dailami, 2011)

We can classify types of websites on the Internet along two dimensions: content and substance:

- **Commercial websites:** They aim to support production, advertise, and then market.
- **Interactive websites:** They rely on forums, chat rooms, audio dialogues, and mailing groups.
- **Informational websites:** They cover scientific, charitable, or intellectual activities.
- **Supplementary media websites:** These complement newspapers, radio, and television. They share the same content as their parent media outlets.
- **Pure journalistic websites:** These are strictly press sites. They rely on professionals who produce media material in standard journalistic formats.

Influence of Digital Algorithms on Shaping Political Awareness

The digital base, with its social networks and media channels, depends on a complex set of digital algorithms. These algorithms were developed to ensure the flow of information, messages, and content across users of all backgrounds and levels. They affect how content is delivered and consumed.

The use of organizational algorithms on social networks has sparked debate. Some argue that these algorithms respond to user preferences. In doing so, they may limit exposure to new ideas. They may reduce content diversity. They may increase polarization in digital spaces. (Berman & Katona, 2020)

Some ideal algorithms may amplify matching content between senders and receivers. They may create filter bubbles. Other algorithms that prioritize quality may reduce polarization. (Berman & Katona, 2020)

“Echo chambers” and “filter bubbles” are distinct but related concepts. They both arise from selective exposure to information. Echo chambers emerge when people repeatedly encounter content and individuals who reinforce their beliefs. Filter bubbles result from platform algorithms customizing content recommendations. Both phenomena fragment public discourse and amplify political polarization. (Del Cerro, 2024)

Filter bubbles, also called algorithms, determine which posts or links appear for individuals based on personal profile, past behavior, and interactions. The term “filter bubble” was coined by Eli Pariser in 2011. It refers to a situation in which a person sees only information that aligns with their beliefs and preferences because of algorithmic filtering. (Shcherbakova & Nikiforchuk, 2022; Milczarek, 2023)

These phenomena shape how we perceive the world. They influence what we believe and how much new or opposing information we encounter. People tend to favor information that confirms their prior beliefs. They avoid content that challenges them. This is known as confirmation bias. (Shcherbakova & Nikiforchuk, 2022)

Filter bubbles and echo chambers may pose dangers to information consumers. They limit exposure to diverse viewpoints. They foster isolation—even though the user may remain active and engaged. “You may live in a very comfortable and pleasant bubble. But once you step into realities outside the virtual world, the dissonance becomes clear.” (Shcherbakova & Nikiforchuk, 2022)

New Media & Social Networks Enabling Digital Political Participation

New media and social networks, both professional and personal, give individuals from various social classes, statuses, orientations, and beliefs, opportunities for digital political participation. They aim to bring more diverse citizens into the public sphere. This contributes to richer and more varied public discussion. (Vaccari et al., 2023)

At the same time, algorithmic filtration systems provide what is called a “protective filter bubble”. This is an algorithmically organized information ecosystem. It shields users from harmful content or from media perceived as disturbing. (Erickson, 2024) While these algorithms may give voice to people who have experienced trauma—helping them to understand their experience and express it—they may also limit exposure to diverse perspectives. This is especially true in environments restricted by political or social control. (Erickson, 2024)

Regardless of how complex digital communication becomes across various platforms and social media channels—whether aiming for participation, approval, socialization, or education in different fields including politics—digital algorithms maintain a number of benefits. Through their guiding and monitoring mechanisms, they define the type of content and the range of choices available to users. They help users consume information and content aligned with their interests.

Mechanisms of Political Socialization through Media in Algeria

Scholars in political communication divide media influence in political socialization into three types: cognitive influence, emotional influence, and behavioral influence. Cognitive influence appears in the relationship between media exposure and increased political and cultural awareness. Emotional influence is seen in shaping attitudes and positions toward political issues. Behavioral

influence refers to the link between media exposure and active participation in political life. (Ben Saud, 2008)

When all three effects are present, political socialization takes place. It manifests in public opinion, shaped by collective awareness of political issues. Political communication, as some scholars argue, achieves five core goals based on the mass society theory. First, it provides a space for the exchange of competing political discourses. It highlights the role of political actors, journalists, and public opinion. It also fosters the interaction among the three pillars of political communication: politics, media, and communication. (Labrecque, 2012)

Media is the foundation and support of political communication. Without it, intended outcomes and socialization cannot be realized. Media also contributes to shaping individuals in varying degrees, depending on the nature and function of the media itself. This function, however, is not exclusive to media. Other institutions—such as family, schools, mosques, neighborhoods, streets, and workplaces—also participate in the process. (Tamar, 2015)

Thus, political socialization is a continuous process shaped by an individual's daily exposure to media and their interaction with various social institutions. Media-based political socialization stems from two key factors: the functions of media and how people use it. Some argue that media exists mainly for entertainment or for providing access to information otherwise unavailable due to time or geographical constraints. (Tamar, 2015)

In addition to providing entertainment, media contributes to education, learning, and cultural as well as political socialization. Every society, regardless of its ideology or political system, aims to integrate its citizens into public life—particularly political life. This process is known as political socialization and is an essential component of the political system. In this context, Naji Sadek Sharab states that it is "the process of teaching the individual the values, norms, and concepts of the society in which they live, training them to occupy social roles that define their everyday behavior." Ahmad Badr also defines political socialization as "the means by which society transmits its political culture from one generation to the next, serving to preserve the institutions and norms of a given political community." (Tamar, 2015)

Political socialization can occur in two ways. The first is intentional, through deliberate efforts to engage with channels and tools of political learning. The second is unintentional, resulting from influence and interaction with political actors and environments. Repeated exposure to political messages, content, and discourse shapes this process over time.

In Algeria, media was long considered an isolated phenomenon tied mainly to the political system. It was seen as detached from other parts of society. Media's role in broader social dynamics was rarely acknowledged. As a result, print journalism was viewed as a tool aligned with dominant political powers. (Tamar, 2015)

Yet media remains one of the main pillars of political socialization, regardless of its form. It is important to note that the process of political socialization through broadcast, print, and audiovisual media has passed through two distinct phases that reflect Algeria's shifting political landscape.

The first phase was marked by political and party monopoly, during which media served as a tool of state control. It was used to mobilize the masses and promote the agenda of the ruling power. The second phase emerged with political and media pluralism. During this time, multiple political parties and independent newspapers appeared, introducing diverse messages. This shift changed the nature of political socialization and shaped new political attitudes and beliefs.

This trend continued with the rise of new media and social networks—both personal and professional. These platforms introduced new forms of political expression. They created a space for individuals to engage freely in political discourse. They offered access to tools for criticism, dialogue, and participation in political life for anyone with internet access.

Political Socialization in Algeria and the Shift Mechanisms of Political Participation from Traditional to Digital Means

Several studies confirm that new media platforms, including social media networks, have played an active role in driving political transformations across Arab countries. These platforms have been associated with what has been described as the awakening of Arab consciousness, known by terms such as the “Arab Spring,” the “Arab revolutions,” and others. These developments grew and were reinforced through the near-continuous interaction among millions of users on social networks who shared common goals and messages. The success of these platforms relies heavily on the strategic use of appropriate communication language. Language, in this context, becomes a vital factor in attracting different social groups to new media. These platforms do not require a high educational level or the use of a specific language to express political opinions digitally. Whether broad and nuanced or narrow and limited, all viewpoints find space and visibility in these mediums.

An analysis of Algerian users' behavior on social media reveals a linguistic blending in online content. Users combine multiple languages such as Modern Standard Arabic, French, Tamazight, and local dialects. Foreign languages also appear occasionally. Additionally, users often employ digital symbols, emojis, and manipulated images (commonly known as Photoshop) as part of their communication strategies.

The primary virtual spaces that contribute to political socialization today include various social networks with personal, professional, promotional, and advertising functions, as well as blogs and electronic journalism platforms. Political websites also play an important role. The emergence of new media and digital platforms has shifted political socialization from being a structured and methodical process to one that is individual and technology-driven. This transformation has made socialization increasingly digital in nature (Fondation A L, 2012). It is not only language that has undergone change—communication behaviors themselves have experienced a major shift. This

includes changes in how people think, how they create and share content, and how they engage in digital discussions.

A. Political Socialization in Algeria During the One-Party Era

After gaining independence in 1962, political socialization in Algeria evolved through various phases. Initially, it was shaped by traditional forms of communication, such as informal political discussions in public spaces like cafés, cultural clubs, and political gatherings. With the expansion of education among youth, schools and training centers became venues for dialogue and discussion on public issues. These conversations became more mature over time, especially as Algerian individuals began to consume media through newspapers, radio, and television. These media channels played a key role in shaping political awareness and participation.

However, political participation among youth in the Arab world appears to offer little benefit to existing political regimes. The relationship between youth and the state is often described as disconnected. Many regimes have not made real efforts to cultivate political awareness among young people. As noted by Al-Zayoud (2006), youth are often positioned either as passive supporters or as disengaged opponents. Political participation, therefore, depends on the availability of resources, motivation, and opportunities, as well as the societal traditions, ideologies, and the prevailing political climate (Juma'a, 1984).

Historically, Algeria's one-party era extended from independence in 1962 until the events of October 5, 1988. This period was defined by the dominance of a single political party—the National Liberation Front (FLN)—which shaped Algeria's general policies across various sectors. The media sector was seen as a sovereign and strategic domain, directly controlled by political authorities. Media institutions—print, radio, and television—were mobilized to support national development plans and the building of an independent Algerian state. These institutions also served a cultural role by promoting political awareness and supporting the decisions and initiatives of the state.

As Lahdiri (2024) noted, the print media in Algeria was closely tied to political decision-making. During the pre-pluralism era, media content carried a strong ideological tone, marked by a unified perspective. Media professionals and institutions were expected to serve the state's post-independence development goals and to promote the continued construction of socialist institutions aligned with the principles of the FLN, until the country entered the phase of political and media pluralism.

Furthermore, media played an additional role. Beyond providing independent information, it offered a platform for public dialogue. This allowed for the questioning of ministers and other public figures in accessible ways, enabling ordinary citizens to participate. In this sense, media served as a channel for expressing public opinion and conveying it to the government (Sabri, 2007).

B - Political Socialization in Algeria during the Era of Political and Media Pluralism

The period of political and media pluralism in Algeria began with the adoption of the Constitution of February 1989. This constitution recognized political and press freedoms. It enabled the establishment of political parties and led to the emergence of numerous journalistic outlets. As a result, Algeria gained significant experience in the media field. These developments took place in a context where press freedom was officially acknowledged, and the right to access sources of information was guaranteed. The first organic media law for a "pluralistic" press was enacted in April 1990. During this time, the press played an essential role in uncovering corruption cases.

However, this period of openness soon faced a serious setback during the "Black Decade." The resulting instability caused Algeria's international isolation. The media landscape deteriorated, and its performance declined. In response, the authorities began to use the press strategically on the international front. They sought to polish the country's image abroad and ease the diplomatic blockade (Lahdiri, 2024). At the domestic level, especially during the 1990s, the press became a tool in the struggle between political factions (Lahdiri, 2024). The diversity of private newspapers helped open ideological and intellectual spaces that were at times aligned and at other times conflicting (Lahdiri, 2022).

This diversity in media coverage led to a multiplicity of political ideologies and positions. Individuals began joining political parties and participating in political life. The citizen's role shifted from merely supporting public policies to becoming actively involved. Electoral behavior also evolved. Citizens began to run for office and express political opinions in public forums and private media platforms.

Political Socialization in Algeria in the Digital Context

Algeria has entered the age of technological transformation brought about by the ongoing digital revolution. This shift led to the emergence of digital communication platforms. Some political parties and active political figures started using these tools to spread political culture and promote political socialization. Their main target was the youth, who are viewed as the dominant and most influential demographic. They are seen as capable of accepting and adopting political and ideological ideas.

Facebook was the first media platform to be widely used for political discussions. It became a space for political promotion, political education, and public engagement. Alongside it, there were news websites and personal or professional platforms with various objectives. These played a significant role in the political socialization of Algerian individuals.

As Algerian society moved from traditional to digital communication, and from traditional to digital political participation, political awareness deepened. People began to absorb different political ideas through modern communication channels. This helped them acquire political knowledge and develop political culture. Digital platforms became a new space for individuals to express their

thoughts freely. They could share ideas widely and adopt new ideological directions. This shift helped transition political participation from its traditional form to a digital one, offering new content, opportunities, and choices in the political field.

Risks of New Media's Influence on Political Socialization

The role of new media, through its various channels and networks, is not limited to its positive aspects. While it enables individuals to participate in political life and integrate into political society, it also carries risks. These include the spread of fake news and information chaos. Ideological polarization is another risk, which may cause confusion in the values and beliefs that political actors seek to instill in the minds of users. Public opinion can be manipulated as a result.

Excessive and irresponsible use of new media may facilitate the spread of destructive ideas and deviant behaviors. It can drive users toward forming corrupt gatherings or unlicensed public protests. This could lead to public disorder by blocking streets, raising anti-government slogans, and even sparking large-scale unrest. Such chaos can erupt without prior warning or preparation. These acts may reflect hidden intentions that serve hostile political agendas aimed at creating division, sowing doubt, and undermining trust in local political content.

In addition, there are more dangerous aspects in the content of new media. These include the spread of immoral materials, violations of privacy, and threats to intellectual property rights. Content theft and unauthorized attribution are common. Defamation, blackmail, fraud, and forgery are also among the legal and ethical threats.

Another major risk lies in the emergence of a new form of communication. This differs from the structured language usually used in political, journalistic, or academic messages. In political discourse, for example, carefully chosen words are used to persuade and influence. But the spontaneous and informal style used by the general public often ignores basic rules of writing. This negatively affects the understanding of key messages and the ideological content intended for political education. As a result, individuals may adopt attitudes that are contrary to the ideas initially promoted through digital channels.

Psychological Effects of New Media on Political Socialization

Excessive use of new media and prolonged exposure to its content through social networks has led to significant psychological problems. These include negative behaviors and social isolation. Many users begin to live in a state of disconnection from reality and experience constant feelings of loneliness. They end up integrating into a world that has little to do with real life. Some researchers even describe them as "Internet addicts" (Mansour, 2012).

Fuchs' Perspective on the Risks of Digital Communication

In his book *Digital Democracy and Digital Public Sphere*, Fuchs (2023) identifies ten major risks associated with digital communication on social networks. These risks appear during both political socialization and political participation.

They include:

- Material capitalism and digital class structures, where digital labor is exploited through digital capital.
- Digital individualism, which focuses on personal opinion and weakens collective digital solidarity.
- Digital surveillance, which limits user privacy and freedom.
- Anti-social media, where platforms practice forms of digital authoritarianism.
- Algorithmic politics, which makes it difficult to distinguish accurate information from misleading content.
- Digital tabloid journalism, which pushes aside serious engagement with political content.
- Influencer capitalism, where popularity and reach replace informed political debate.
- Digital acceleration, marked by overwhelming information flow that lowers the quality of political discussion.
- Fake news, which erodes trust and credibility in digital information.

According to Fuchs (2023), the extent to which users are affected by these risks depends on their level of awareness and understanding. It also depends on their ability to control the volume and nature of content they engage with—especially when it relates to political issues at the local or international level.

Conclusions

Political socialization in Algeria has shifted from traditional methods to digital political participation. This transition has occurred through various digital platforms and communication tools, many of which are still evolving. The rise of new media has played a role in initiating political socialization, serving both as a means and an objective during several political events in Algeria.

There is growing reliance on digital platforms to enhance positive political participation, particularly among young people. Traditional media have contributed to fostering political awareness. Digital media and social networks have also supported political engagement across Algerian society. They have allowed users to discuss national political issues and to express their views more openly.

The virtual environment has provided a space for expressing political ideas and ideologies, especially within the local context. This has helped shape political awareness and strengthened understanding of developments inside and outside Algeria.

Recommendations

Achieving effective digital political participation requires:

- Ensuring equal access to digital participation for all members of society. New media should be activated and used to build a public opinion grounded in political culture that reflects the realities of the society.
- Applying the principles of positive political socialization, which allow citizens to take part actively and meaningfully in political life.
- Promoting a political culture based on mutual respect. There should be a clear encouragement of constructive dialogue and responsible criticism, while avoiding defamation or verbal attacks.
- Providing positive digital guidance, especially for youth. This aims to protect them from the risks that may result from the negative aspects of digital political participation. These risks can affect the individual, the nation, and other countries. The protection should cover legal, ethical, and cultural dimensions, within a framework of mutual respect for the cultures and political systems of other societies, both in Algeria and around the world.

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