Digital Immersion and Transformative Communication Patterns:
An Analytical Study of the Future of Human Interaction in the Age of Virtual Communities

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Abstract:

This article aims to provide an analytical study of the phenomenon of accelerated digital immersion within the digital environment and its profound impact on the nature of human communication. The article discusses how this immersion often unconscious and algorithm-driven results in a deep transformation of prevailing communication patterns within virtual communities. It examines the structural shifts occurring in human interaction, where quality (depth and authenticity) is increasingly replaced by quantity (speed and frequency).

The study also highlights future challenges related to the loss of the social and cultural context of human communication and its replacement with standardized digital contexts. The article concludes by emphasizing the need to reevaluate the digital tools being used and to establish a critical framework that safeguards the essence of effective and mindful human communication in the virtual age.

Keywords: digital immersion, human communication, virtual communities.

Introduction:

In light of the rapid transformations shaping the digital world, electronic platforms have become dynamic spaces for the digital exchange of almost everything. The technological boom and the widespread use of digital platforms have enabled individuals to engage instantly and directly with various issues. This interaction has generated an infinite amount of digital data that has reshaped traditional patterns of interaction between individuals and communities.

Virtual communities are emerging as environments that help create a new parallel reality for users, particularly in the context of games and multi-dimensional worlds. Studies have shown that virtual interaction may not equate to face-to-face interactions, and that understanding the cognitive and neural differences between the two is crucial. For example, communication quality and satisfaction may, in some cases, be higher in virtual relationships than in real ones due to intensified focus and reduced pressures within the virtual world. From a critical perspective, digital immersion raises existential and ethical questions about how personal relationships are transformed into fields of informational communication. It also requires deeper insight into the dynamics of human communication in digital environments.

Despite the vast opportunities presented by these transformations, they have also introduced new challenges related to the quality of human communication, social interaction, and the reliability of available knowledge. Accordingly, the problem addressed in this study lies in understanding the nature of these transformations.

Thus, understanding the multifaceted effects of digital immersion on communication patterns is essential for navigating the complexities of social interaction in a networked society. As technology continues to advance, the future of communication will likely be shaped by ongoing innovations that enhance digital interactions, while requiring careful consideration of their impact on human relationships and cultural understanding. Striking a balance between digital engagement and authentic relationships will be vital for fostering effective communication strategies moving forward.

Main Question:

How does increasing immersion in the digital environment reshape the essence of human communication, and what are the existential and social implications of this transformation within virtual communities?

1. What conceptual frameworks can be used to analyze the emergence and development of "virtual communities" as alternatives or complements to traditional communities?

2. What are the structural characteristics and qualitative features of the new communication patterns formed as a result of this immersion?

3. What are the future implications for human communication, and does this lead to a "flattening" of the depth and quality of human interaction?

Conceptual Propositions:

Section One: Virtual Communities (A Conceptual Perspective)

The contemporary era has witnessed continuous and accelerating developments in the fields of technology and the digital revolution, which have made access to information extremely fast and effortless. This era has thus come to be known as the "Information Age," whose outcomes affect all aspects of life, producing enormous changes that have reshaped social patterns and their underlying values. These transformations have eliminated many inherited concepts and ideas, and have triggered a radical shift across multiple fields, compelling the modern individual to interact with them and to revise their understanding of an ever-changing world.

Dr. Bahauddin Mazid states:"It appears that throughout history, human beings have continually searched for a parallel world in which they could express what they could not express in their real world, and achieve what they could not achieve within their lives constrained by time and place, rules, and social regulations. Since the dawn of history, humans have longed to break free from the limits they often perceived as suffocating due to their social, economic, or psychological circumstances giving rise to many myths and tales that envisioned such liberation."[1]

Traditional images of the virtual world are no longer confined to the domains of psychology and sociology alone. This era has given rise to a new form of society the virtual society which requires a multidisciplinary approach to understand its structure and dynamics. Consequently, a new field has emerged, combining computer science with social sciences to study this society, with a particular focus on computer-mediated communication and the rise of what is known as "internet sociality."

In this context, humans interact with computers and transform into a "digital virtual human" who lives within the information network and communicates with others across the globe. The writer Ibn Rahouma referred to this new entity as "Insoub," a term that blends "insan" (human) and "computer," to signify this fusion between the two.[2]

The early signs of the emergence of the virtual society which is closely linked to the technological revolution date back to the 1960s, marking the beginnings of the online networked society with the appearance of computer networks designed for educational purposes, such as the PLATO network, as well as the ARPANET network, which became known in the early 1970s, along with other early computer-based networks.[3]

However, the term "virtual community" appeared in 1993 by the researcher Howard Rheingold in his book titled "The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier." The book concluded that what human groups need most is the opportunity to build relationships with other groups located in different places, connected through shared interests.[4] Rheingold defines the virtual community as an assembly formed through electronic networks (such as the Internet), enabling individuals to interact and exchange experiences without the need for direct physical contact or the constraints of time and place. His argument concludes that this environment has established the emergence of a truly "digital homeland," where network users from all around the world can participate, share opinions, and exchange information. This represents a fundamental transformation in the way human and social relationships are formed.[5]

Some studies indicate that the term virtual community refers to a new human and technological environment for expression, information, and exchange. It is primarily composed of individuals from different countries, cultures, ages, and professions. It is also a global network of computers connected through communication infrastructures that allow information to be exchanged and transmitted digitally.

A virtual community can be defined as:"A group of people connected by shared interests, without necessarily being bound by geographical borders or ethnic, tribal, political, or religious ties. They interact through modern communication tools and social media platforms, and they develop among themselves the criteria for membership, the rules of entry and exit, the mechanisms of interaction, and the ethical norms that should be observed."[6]

Porter[7] also provides a definition that adds forms of interaction within these communities. He states that virtual communities are groups of individuals connected by interactive social relationships on the Internet, where they share electronic games and adopt different forms of dialogue through forums, blogs, and various social networking platforms.

Similarly, Eve-Brenner describes virtual interactions as having gone beyond being mere gatherings of people with shared interests, evolving instead into multiple forms of communities that parallel real societies in their diversity and complexity. These communication patterns made possible by the Internet have succeeded in creating new societal concepts established through the environment in which this communication occurs, thereby contributing to the creation of a new interactive environment that mirrors the traditional one.[8] Communication among them takes place through electronic networks, generating a sense of loyalty and participation among members. The virtual community is considered a semi-realistic representation of objects, people, and the environments in which they exist, combined with the idea of continuous interactivity between the user and the content they engage with in the digital environment.[9]

Francis Balle proposed three classifications of virtual communities:[10]

• Entirely open communities on the network, which are one hundred percent virtual.

• Thematic, specialized communities that share certain common features and focus on discussing specific topics.

• Professionally oriented communities, such as online teams and institutional groups.

The sociological explanation that best accounts for the emergence of virtual communities is that the human instinct for socialization drives individuals to constantly seek to get to know others by speaking with them and attempting to understand them. Computer-mediated chatting contributes to the creation of tribal-like behavior on the Internet, as described by Tannis Pledel. According to Pledel, digital social networks are not merely a collection of isolated individuals placed side by side; rather, they form a genuine social structure supported by the cohesion of its members on two levels:

• Within the group, through shared use of language, symbols, and emotional states.

• In relation to the outside world, through a Manichean logic in which the two opposites "us" and "them" confront each other.[11]

After the formation of the online electronic community, its members begin searching for one another within independent spaces of their own (entertainment games, professional domains) spaces in which the individual feels they are at the center of the group's attention. This is known as digital individualism on the network, which generates a sense of social companionship.

Section One: Transformations of the Internet and Digital Immersion:

1. Transformations of the Digital Environment: A reading of the contemporary technological landscape indicates fundamental shifts driven by the imperial power of digital platforms (GAFAM), which have established what can be described as "platform capitalism."[12]

It has ushered humanity into an era of "digital civilization," which has radically reshaped the ontology of the relationship between humans and machines. This technological acceleration especially in the field of artificial intelligence requires the academic community to move beyond initial fascination toward a critical deconstruction of what Hartmut Rosa describes as "social acceleration,"[13] a phenomenon that exceeds individuals' capacity for moral and psychological adaptation.

The frenzied race to develop AI systems raises an existential concern that recalls the complex duality of human nature. The human developer is no longer merely Homo sapiens (the rational human), but simultaneously Homo demens (the irrational or foolish human), according to the framework of Edgar Morin (Morin, 1973). Through this duality, humans engage in self-destructive behavior by creating highly complex technological entities that may eventually escape conscious control. This calls for a critical reassessment of the ethics of digital industries and their broader socio-technical contexts. Morin substantiates this view by describing the compound complexity of human creativity, stating that "there is a dual leadership in human creativity of the rational and the mad together at the core of a bipolar circle."[14]

And the realistic truth that can be acknowledged is that the technologies rapidly introduced beginning with the emergence of Web 2.0, the development of digital smartphones and operating systems (iOS–Android), and the rise of social media applications and personal content-creation platforms offer, with every leap forward, increasing temptations through the novelty of these digital innovations produced

by major tech companies. These innovations draw more and more people into the digital realm and into deeper technological dependence. Thus, the human being the user has found himself[15]To avoid making an absolute generalization, one can say that what has occurred is a cognitive and emotional migration toward digital environments spaces filled with recreational excitement that encourage individuals to engage, participate, and interact. These environments stimulate a powerful desire for presence, as though merely existing within a virtual digital space where tens, hundreds, or even millions follow one's activity makes one's presence or absence significant to others.

As a result, giant companies in the digital industry particularly those linked to smart-phone manufacturing, communication applications, and digital services are crowned daily with new stars on the ladder of digital innovation. Every technological breakthrough offers new features and added functionalities that pull millions of people deeper into virtual environments. Their market values increase by millions of dollars every day.

For example, the market value of Alphabet Inc., the parent company of YouTube, doubled in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching around 1.8 trillion USD, and rose further to approximately 1.94 trillion USD in 2023 an amount far exceeding the economies of many countries in Africa and Latin America.

In line with this, quantitative studies examining the scale of technological media use leveraging all available tools to observe human behavior within digital spaces report astonishing figures for the number of users who access the Internet daily worldwide.[16]

2. Digital Immersion and Its Effects: Digital immersion is defined as the full integration of digital technologies into daily life, fundamentally transforming cognitive processes, social structures, and the environmental footprint of humanity. It creates a state in which interactions increasingly occur through digital interfaces, influencing individual choices and perceptions of sustainable living.[17]

This phenomenon underscores the need for a critical examination of how digital environments shape social interactions and well-being. While digital platforms enhance connectivity, they can also contribute to feelings of inadequacy and social comparison, as users engage with carefully curated online personas rather than authentic real-life experiences.[18]

Digital immersion refers to the deep and extensive engagement of individuals with digital technologies, subtly shaping their everyday choices and perceptions, particularly in the context of sustainable living and community participation. This concept highlights the continuous flow of information, entertainment, and social interaction that affects consumption patterns and individuals' personal impact on the environment.[19]

With the growing importance of technology in daily life, it becomes essential to examine the effects of digital immersion on human behavior and societal structures. Academic exploration of digital immersion requires a critical analysis of its foundations within the frameworks of technological determinism and social constructivism. While technology offers remarkable possibilities, its integration into society is heavily shaped by cultural values, economic incentives, and political structures. Therefore, digital immersion is not a neutral phenomenon; it carries biases that may either exacerbate environmental and social inequalities or facilitate more equitable and innovative societal models.[20]

Recent studies have introduced measures such as the Digital Life Immersion Scale and the Digital Experience Quality Scale, which aim to assess individuals' experience and use of digital technologies

in a flexible and comprehensive manner. The spread of immersive technologies designed to fully surround users with simulated environments further underscores the depth of engagement that characterizes contemporary digital experiences.[21]

Cognitive and Social Effects:

Digital immersion affects cognitive functions, as research indicates that excessive use can lead to cognitive fatigue, reduced attention span, and changes in brain structure and functioning. The phenomenon known as "continuous partial attention," in which individuals divide their focus among multiple tasks without fully engaging in any of them, is a clear example of the cognitive strain caused by constant digital connectivity.

This behavioral shift has implications for interpersonal communication. Reliance on digital platforms can hinder the subtle nuances of face-to-face interaction, leading to misunderstanding and superficial exchanges.[22]

Section Two: Human Communication and the Networked Society:

1. Human Communication: Communication is defined as a natural, social, cultural, psychological, political, economic, and anthropological phenomenon in which all human dimensions intersect. It involves the exchange of ideas and information from one individual to another or among members of a group. Its substance consists of ideas and information, while its tools are language, words, gestures, and symbols.[23]According to the Palo Alto School, individuals in any social structure cannot not communicate; communication is fundamental to existence. Its various forms aim to build and maintain social relationships what is known as relational communication as individuals naturally seek to establish social bonds with others. Communication is therefore viewed as a process of creating and sustaining relationships, with an emphasis on friendship, intimacy, and social companionship.[24]They are born into relationships and live within networks of friendships, family ties, romantic relationships, marriage, and workplace connections. The ability to form relationships is innate; it is part of the genetic, cultural, and social heritage that has enabled the human species to survive. Relational communication is what allows individuals to establish these relationships and serves as the tool that helps them achieve their goals. Relationships cannot exist unless two people communicate with each other, or unless members of a group communicate among themselves.[25] whether in the physical world or in the virtual one.

2. The Rise of Digital Communication (Historical Context): The development of communication technologies has fundamentally transformed the ways in which individuals interact throughout history. Communication began as a purely verbal, face-to-face exchange. With the emergence of writing, people gained the ability to send messages across long distances, although this process was mostly slow and unpredictable. The shift from telegraphs and written correspondence to modern communication tools such as smartphones and video conferencing enabled instantaneous communication across the globe.[26]

The rise of digital communication, particularly through social media, has led to significant changes in social interaction. Research indicates that social media platforms not only facilitate communication but also shape patterns of social interaction.[27]This instantaneous ability to communicate has created a networked society in which technology often mediates relationships instead of direct personal contact. This social network enables unprecedented connectivity, giving individuals the opportunity to interact with people they would never have met otherwise.[28]

The transformations in social interaction are clearly reflected through social media platforms, which have become vital tools for engagement and expression. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter allow individuals to construct their social and professional identities, shaping public opinion and influencing social and economic relationships. Likewise, platforms such as YouTube and TikTok enhance content-based interaction, creating opportunities for self-expression and idea-sharing while reflecting broader societal interests.[29]

However, this shift has also raised concerns about the depth of relationships formed in these virtual spaces. Interactions can become transactional and emotionally detached, influenced by communication tools driven by artificial intelligence that prioritize efficiency over personal connection.[30]

Furthermore, while technology has facilitated communication to an unprecedented degree, it has also introduced new challenges. Issues such as the potential for message misinterpretation, the erosion of direct communication skills, and the impact of isolation on mental health have become increasingly significant in discussions surrounding the role of technology in communication.[31]

Thus, understanding the historical evolution of communication and the effects of technological change is essential for guiding the future of human interaction in an era dominated by virtual communities.

The development of communication theories over the past two decades has significantly shaped how individuals interact within virtual communities. Key theories including Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory and Daft and Lengel's Media Richness Theory provide insightful perspectives on the dynamics of communication in digital environments. These theories are fundamental to understanding how users interact with technology and with one another, especially as traditional communication patterns face new challenges and limitations in the digital context.[32]

Media Richness Theory, developed in the mid-1980s, serves as a foundational framework for understanding the effectiveness of different communication channels within the context of digital immersion. The theory classifies media according to their inherent ability to transmit information and facilitate shared understanding. It posits that media vary along a continuum of "richness," determined by four key characteristics: the capacity for immediate feedback,

the number of cues and channels available, the use of natural language, and the level of personal focus involved.[33]

According to this theory, richer media such as face-to-face interaction are more suitable for complex or ambiguous messages because they enable precise understanding and reduce uncertainty. In contrast, leaner media such as email or text messages may be sufficient for simpler communication tasks.[34]

Meanwhile, Manuel Castells' concept of the "Network Society" provides a broader social context for understanding digital immersion. Castells argues that we are moving from a centralized industrial era to a decentralized networked era in which power is distributed across diverse horizontal relationships among smaller, interconnected entities.[35] This shift highlights how technology is transforming social dynamics, enabling new forms of interaction and participation, while at the same time posing challenges related to the distribution of attention and information overload. The digital landscape often overwhelms users with constant notifications and messages, complicating their ability to focus on important tasks and relationships, and leading to chronic stress and reduced job satisfaction.

Castells adds, in his description of the network society, that networks operate according to an evolutionary logic. Over time, their ability to incorporate new actors and new content into the process of social organization increases, along with a relative independence from central authority driven by ongoing technological change particularly with the development of communication technologies. For this reason, networks have become the most efficient organizational form as a result of three main characteristics.[36] that have benefited from the new technological environment: flexibility, scalability, and survivability.

The Third Topic: Future Implications for Human Communication:

Looking ahead, the communication landscape will continue to evolve with technological advancements. The integration of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies will enhance and personalize communication, making it more efficient. However, it remains essential to recognize the intrinsic value of human relationships and the limitations that digital communication can impose. A thoughtful approach will be necessary to integrate digital tools with traditional communication practices in order to foster effective interactions in the future.[37]

1. The Transformation of Communication Toward "Theatricality" and Display:

In the context of digital immersion, human relationships have witnessed significant shifts in the quality of interaction between individuals. In the past, relationships relied heavily on face-to-face personal interaction, which provided a holistic social experience that included facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. These non-verbal elements add layers of understanding and emotional connection between individuals. With the shift to digital interaction, these relationships have become more abstract, relying more heavily on text, images, and emojis to convey emotions and ideas.[38]

In describing the scene, the writer Taysir Abu 'Uda says: "Facebook has become a virtual carnival for all groups of current daily activities in its postmodern form. Despite the presence of grand narratives and their penetration into every detail of our lives from capitalist domination and imperialist brutality to the chaotic authoritarianism practiced by the poles of global power there are also minor narratives that turn the unknown citizen into an imagined emperor standing on the Facebook stage, vomiting out all his daily and psychological complexes and his desire to express a voice that had long remained suppressed in the mire of oblivion."[39] This is what the theory of digital dramaturgy (Erving Goffman) attempted to explain regarding such behavior in the digital realm: social media platforms become a "front stage" where the individual presents a "refined" and idealized version of the self to manage others' impressions, while the "back stage" (their true self and actual emotions) disappears entirely. This transforms communication into a mere "performative act" rather than genuine interaction.

One potential drawback of social media is that users may want to separate their online relationships into different groups. For example, you may have no problem communicating with your manager on LinkedIn, but you might hesitate or feel differently if they send you a friend request on Facebook. Maintaining such boundaries between our relationships on social media is a fairly natural desire, but it is extremely difficult to achieve in practice. These boundaries do not hold, because as Marwick and boyd explain a context collapse occurs between them. Their 2010 research paper included[40] They employed an interesting methodology: asking Twitter users who their tweets were directed to. This poses a serious problem in communication through social media; although there are many relationships present there, we have very little certainty about who is paying attention to us at any given moment. Thus, Marwick and boyd use the concept of the imagined audience.

Even in normal everyday conversations, we can never be completely sure how our message is being conveyed or who is listening to us but this problem becomes amplified on social media. When you consider how many of your Twitter followers might be online, who might retweet your posts, and in which searches you might appear, you face a genuine difficulty in imagining who is actually reading your tweets.

And the researcher Lamia Saber indicates[41]In her book "The Digital Migration of Identities and the Consequences of Cultural Displacement into the Virtual", the researcher Lamia Saber points out that communication in the digital environment is moving toward what is called the "theatricalization of the virtual public sphere." Communication is no longer merely the transfer of information or traditional influence; instead, it has become a platform for self-display, creating a communicative environment that relies more on performative acting than on genuine interaction.

Research indicates that although digital tools such as chatbots can provide companionship and emotional support, they do not fully replicate the complexities of human interaction. Users may become dependent on these digital forms of communication which may affect their real-life interpersonal skills and emotional regulation.[42] This is also what Professor Sherry Turkle highlighted in her book "Alone Together", describing this phenomenon as the "connection paradox": we turn to digital communication because it gives us "the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship." Text-based communication allows us to control what we say (we write, delete, and edit), whereas face-to-face communication is full of surprises and cannot be controlled. The result is that we are technically connected all the time, yet we feel a deep emotional loneliness.

One of the most significant costs borne by real society due to the rise of an alternative virtual society is the automatic displacement of traditional social relationships; the ease of forming endless networks of digital ties has stripped the concept of "relationship" of its sanctity and symbolic value that once protected bonds of friendship, kinship, and collegiality.

2. The Objectification of Language and the Standardization of Communication

The emergence of digital communication has led to major changes in language and expression. While it has made communication more accessible, it has also highlighted the limitations of digital platforms in conveying nuances and cultural contexts. Misunderstandings become more common in written communication, especially among diverse teams, where cultural differences in tone and discourse may distort meaning. This has been particularly evident in remote interactions, where non-verbal cues are often absent, making it difficult to accurately interpret intentions.[43]

It is meant by the objectification of language that process which strips language of its vitality as a dynamic cultural organism, turning it into a mere rigid technical tool or a "thing" that serves purely functional and commercial purposes. This occurs through the imposition of "ready-made templates" of expression, such as the dominance of technical English or the excessive reliance on emojis.

An example from the reality of the Arabic language is the emergence of new technical terms within the digital environment terms that were previously unknown but have now become widely used. Among them, for instance, are: "Hashtag," "Trend" to refer to popular topics, and "Live" for live broadcasting. These terms express aspects of modern digital life, yet they lack authentic Arabic linguistic alternatives that would preserve the Arabic linguistic character. Added to this is the influence of the Unicode system provided by major tech companies, which creates a flattened global language stripped of the cultural and spiritual depth of peoples.

This "templating" not only suppresses linguistic creativity but also imposes a kind of domestication on the human mind, making it a consumer of the system. For example:

- Linguistic abbreviations: Abbreviations are one of the most prominent features of modern digital texts, contributing to faster communication and saving time and space. Expressions such as "Thanks" instead of " شكراً," or "LOL" (laughing out loud) are widely used on digital platforms. However, excessive reliance on such abbreviations reduces the use of full linguistic expression, weakening the expressive style of Arabic.

- Mixing colloquial with Standard Arabic: Digital texts often blend colloquial dialects with Modern Standard Arabic to make messages more accessible and relatable to the public.

Moreover, the nature of digital communication encourages brevity, often at the expense of clarity. This shift has implications for how individuals express themselves and how messages are received. With digital interactions replacing traditional face-to-face conversations, there is a growing risk of losing the emotional context usually conveyed through body language and facial expressions.[44]

Interactive media have profoundly influenced the syntactic structure and expressive styles of language.[45] Instant messaging, which has become the preferred method for quick and informal communication, has made brevity a fundamental feature of conversational language. This results in the use of abbreviations, emojis, and memes to convey ideas and emotions in a condensed manner. Consequently, non-standard syntactic structures have emerged.[46] which has raised concerns about whether this development represents linguistic deterioration or innovation. While some argue that texting has led to a decline in grammatical precision and proper punctuation, others view it as the emergence of a new form of written expression that values efficiency and creativity. In the context of the Arabic language, studies show that digital media have the potential to promote Modern Standard Arabic through educational content, yet they also expose it to challenges such as the dominance of colloquial dialects, linguistic borrowing, and the spread of grammatical errors.[47] Continuous exposure to foreign languages and the emergence of a hybrid language that blends Arabic with English and French pose a challenge to linguistic identity.

The issue has even extended to the very act of reading itself, raising the question: "Are we becoming people of reading, or people of platforms?" James Williams, a former Google researcher, expands on this critique of the effects created by digital technologies. In his book "Stand Out of Our Light: Freedom and Resistance in the Attention Economy," he argues that the disaster of "distraction," which stands between us and reading, is compounded by the long-term "crisis of will" it produces.[48] In other words, these digital technologies do not merely steal our time and attention; they deliberately work to break our ability to desire engaging in deeper and more meaningful activities, in favor of what their manufacturers and owners want. And if we consider that free, self-directed reading in its profound sense, unrelated to an academic lesson or work task requires a kind of freedom from these distractions and a weaning away from them, then these technologies and platforms are fully capable of undermining and resisting all of that.

3. Commercial Dominance over Communication (Commodity Psychosis):

The effects of the digital economy on human communication patterns are multidimensional, as its influence is evident in the transformation of communication methods, social interaction, and individuals' relationships within society. The digital economy enhances instant and direct communication by allowing individuals to access information rapidly through instant-messaging applications and email, reducing the importance of time and place in information exchange. It also

facilitates building new relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, thereby fostering commercial cooperation and innovation.[49]

The future of human communication in the digital age is subjected to the dominance of market logic and profit, which can be framed within the concept of "Surveillance Capitalism," as presented by sociologist Shoshana Zuboff. According to this perspective, the virtual environment is no longer a space for free social interaction; rather, it has become a mechanism for producing "cultural human capital" deliberately oriented toward profitability. Raw human experience is extracted and transformed into "behavioral surplus" that is sold in future-prediction markets.[50]

Within this system, an existential displacement of the individual takes place: the person is stripped of their status as a citizen with rights or an active social self, and is reduced to a customer or a functional data unit within the algorithms of the network. This process leads to a systematic reduction of both the individual and society, placing them into a standardized mold that exclusively serves the interests of major technology corporations, which exercise a new form of technological power that reshapes human behavior to align with their material gains.

Thus, it becomes clear how consumerist society affects human life and values, shaping thoughts, emotions, and reactions, leading individuals to feel a decline in individuality and privacy in a society that depends on speed and ease of accessing and disseminating personal information as if it were a marketable commodity. This produces a sense of alienation, emotional emptiness, and estrangement from others and from oneself, as the individual becomes subjected to a form of violence reflected in their forced adaptation to the values of this consumer society. It imposes specific behavioral patterns that conflict with personal values and principles, stripping individuals of their humanity. Various communication media further reinforce this consumerist domination, given their massive spread and profound ability to influence individuals.

The modern human has come to embody the Cartesian cogito, but in a more distorted form. Instead of saying "I think, therefore I am," he now says "I consume goods, therefore I am."[51] the consumerist cogito: the more he indulges in commodification, the more he affirms his self and existence. Of course, he does not say this explicitly, but his actions express it.

It is enough to open social media platforms or observe what influencers and media outlets present to see a massive flood of calls to purchase a new product or commodity. There are constant, continuous, and highly targeted processes aimed at influencing minds, bodies, and tastes. These efforts have succeeded in transforming many beliefs and perceptions, until commodification has become almost a ritualistic act in which individuals turn to new places of worship to perform the "prayers" of buying and acquiring.

It has reached the point where a person may feel empty if they do not engage in these rituals similar to the spiritual emptiness felt by those who abandon religious worship.[52] The dangerous aspect is that this has become a constant ritual one in which a person can no longer imagine a meaningful life without it, pursuing an illusory happiness and believing that salvation lies in such practices alone.

What has greatly contributed to the spread of these phenomena is the role of the media, which acts deceptively by focusing on moments of happiness showcased in advertisements and promotional videos. It highlights only one side of the luxurious lives of advertisers and influencers who continuously populate these scenes, leading the audience to believe that moments of happiness are the norm of life. This keeps them in a state of heightened attention and intense focus on achieving this fleeting moment throughout their entire lives.[53]

If we look at the deeper origin of this miserable condition in an individual's life, we find it rooted in the materialistic tendencies that emerged from the concepts of Western modernity. What we experience today has little to do with the natural disposition of societies especially our societies, which were raised on a faith-based ethos that values blessings, consumes moderately, handles money wisely, and operates within collective moral frameworks that guide all members of the community, thereby regulating the rhythm of commodification for everyone.[54]

It is very important to point out that the choice of capitalism was a natural result of this materialistic tendency, and that this capitalist orientation contains two key meanings that form its foundation:

1. Individualism: which revolves around the pursuit of pleasure, especially instinctual pleasures.

2. Pragmatism: which revolves around profit and the control of an ever-turning wheel of money through production that fuels consumption, and consumption that fuels production, in a continuous and unending cycle. Individuals have no freedom to step outside their prescribed role as consumers, solely to preserve the system as it is.[55]

Of course, this entire system operates far from any moral, ethical, or faith-based dimension, to the point that it is described as a value-free economy, detached from ethics and from any spiritual value. "This economic model also requires a specific model of the human being one that responds to the demands of this system, which is structurally harmonious and functionally coherent. This human being is of a particular type: one-dimensional, centered on the self, on pleasure, and on instinct. It is, of course, a model shaped by advertising, the media, and social networking platforms, which prepare the individual to take their place within the structure of this system so that they may perform their consumerist function to the fullest extent, through continuous and unending commodification.

Conclusion and Future Directions:

The multiplication and diversification of channels is a continuous process, and we can expect a wide adoption of new media in the coming few years. Most of the recently emerging media forms explicitly aimed at communicating with a broad world of connections rather than the intimate set of communications previously managed through email, mobile phones, and voice channels.

The communication landscape is constantly evolving, especially in the context of digital immersion and the networked society. As digital technologies become increasingly important in our daily lives, it is essential to explore future research directions that can enhance our understanding of these dynamics.

The world of social-network communication is erupting with countless problems, knots, complexities, and contradictions, leaving communication scholars no room to evade or bypass the responsibility of delving into the intricate relationship between humans and technology. This world has become unfamiliar, complex, and contradictory, filled with new practices and forms of life that we were not accustomed to before in administration, education… commerce and marketing, and in other fields even commerce itself, which has come to rely on new technologies (such as Bitcoin and blockchain) and various new digital currencies that form a new economy that did not exist a decade ago.

And just as digital communication technologies have offered remarkable gains and dazzling benefits to the human being of this era, they have also taken away many precious things and favorable opportunities. How much we need today to free ourselves from some of the dull communicative practices and forms imposed upon us by aggressive technologies and why not return, in certain

situations, to the traditional communicative forms that once enabled us to coexist within a framework of respect, freedom, and justice for all? Isn't a return to the past, in some cases, a step toward the future without our realizing it? This does not mean that we are against these digital industries we are, after all, among their first users. But being dependent on them with surrender and ease makes us, in effect, their hostages, as Judy Wajcman says when she advocates for the time that has been taken from us amid the piles of these endless media and technologies.

Nevertheless, moving toward the future and the challenges of the social environment requires first believing in and acknowledging the nature of the transformations and social changes the world is witnessing today. Actors in society must recognize that the clock of the future requires keeping pace with these growing digital transformations across various political, social, cultural… artistic and athletic dimensions. And the door to the future is open only to those who understand the value of technology but on the condition that they know how to use it in the best possible way, to make it a means, not for it to make them."

Future Directions and Research Prospects:

Building on the above, and in light of the accelerating pace of technological development (artificial intelligence, the metaverse), the study proposes the following research and practical directions for anticipating the future of human communication:

1. Toward "Digital Humanism": A shift from criticizing technology to "humanizing" it. Future research should move toward formulating ethical and philosophical frameworks that oblige developers and companies to integrate human values into the core of algorithms (Design for Values), ensuring that technology serves human well-being instead of exhausting it.

2. From "Digital Illiteracy" to "Critical Digital Awareness": It is no longer sufficient to teach individuals how to use technology (technical skills); there is an urgent need for education that strengthens cognitive resistance the individual's ability to understand algorithmic manipulation mechanisms, protect the autonomy of their decisions, and distinguish between reality and spectacle. This requires new educational policies focused on digital sovereignty, and more attention to the "economy of technology." This should be valued and consolidated in the field of education, enabling learners early on to grasp the specificity of the world we live in and our increasing need to invest in, understand, and live with and through technology.

3. Legislating the "Right to Disconnect": At the legal and social levels, research must explore institutionalizing the "right to disconnect" as a new human right, to protect the individual's psychological and temporal space from the overwhelming influence of the virtual world, and to restore the sanctity of direct communication and private, unmonitored moments.

4. A Sociology of "Post-Humanism": With the rise of generative AI and social robots, sociological research must move toward studying the future form of relationships: "Human–Machine." How will human communication be shaped when the other party in a conversation becomes an algorithm capable of accurately simulating emotions? This requires new theoretical frameworks that go beyond the (real/virtual) dichotomy to address the hybrid nature of the coming mode of existence.

5. Cultural Resistance to Reification: Encouraging studies and practices that revive local communities and face-to-face activities not as a rejection of technology, but as a necessity for psychological balance. Research must explore how to create a space that elevates critical thought in

order to preserve the depth of language, memory, and identity from dissolving into liquid digital globalization.

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