

## THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION, DEMOCRACY AND ATTACHMENT TO PHYSICAL PLACES

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### ABSTRACT

*Can new information and communications technologies increase citizen participation in civil life and development? Studies carried out worldwide of community information systems demonstrate that digital technologies can enhance the effectiveness of activities. Digital technologies have made a strong impact on people wanting to improve democracy right from the start. In light of the emphasis on "inclusion" in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this assignment contents that social exclusion and inclusion are dependent content in at least three senses. First, the ideal of an inclusive society varies from countries and by region. Second, different places have different histories, cultures, institutions and social structures. These influence the economic, social and political dimensions of social inclusion. Third, where one lives - shapes access to resources and opportunities. Social inclusion is spatially uneven.*

*Keywords: Digital, Technologies, Social inclusion, Democracy, Attachment, Physical*

### INTRODUCTION

It has been widely recognized that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) provide new opportunity for civil participation, and when used effectively, contributes positively to social capital and social inclusion of individuals as well as socio-economic development of societies (e.g. Helsper and Eynon (2013), Katz and Rice 2002; Moss Berger, Tolbert and McNeal (2008). Moreover, new digital technologies and online platforms have enabled and empowered ordinary citizens to produce and disseminate media contents. Thereby, changing the traditional relationship between professional producers and media content.

Beside great, hopes and optimism, there are also concerns over inequalities in access to and use of new technologies since 1990s, the concept of digital divide has been employed to describe these gaps. Initially digital divide referred to inequalities in physical access to computers and internet, but recently digital divide research attention has been increasingly shifted to differences in skills and used of new technologies (e.g. Dinaggio and Hargettai 2001; Helsper and Eynnon 2013; Van Deursen and Van Dijk 2010, 2014). The concept of digital divide has been criticized and called into question by scholars, who have suggested it implies a too simplistic

idea of bipolar division between “the have’s” and “the have not’s” and put much emphasis on technology disregarding the complex social economic, political and cultural factors involved (e.g. Warschauer 2013).

Digital inequalities exist between individuals and groups of people within countries and between countries and regions. The emphasis on inclusion in the sustainable development Goals (SDGS) compels us to specify what social inclusion is and how to establish it.

### **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

Digital technologies are electronics tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. These include social media, online games and applications, multimedia, productivity applications cloud computing, interoperable systems and mobile devices. The society is changing at a breakneck pace, and now we are beginning to discern the contours of the newly emergent form of life conjured up by the digital revolution and rapid technological change. Flows and consumption of commodities and information are being generated at a dramatically accelerated rate.

Powerful information and communications technologies and network infrastructures point to new possibilities for advances in productivity and efficiency, as well as the development and utilization of innovative products and services.

Digital applications also help us to manage increasing traffic volume and the consequences of the demographic transition. They enable us to reduce costs while raising the quality of products and services. The digital devices that are becoming omnipresent in our daily lives broaden our options but they modify both our institutions and social practices while

opening up new dimensions of action that have not yet been surveyed, let alone institutionalized in our legal system. The new sphere of digital society both empower and limit human beings. Besides great hopes and optimism, there are also concerns over inequalities in access to and use of new technologies.

Digital inequalities exist between individuals and groups of people within countries and between countries and regions. The big global digital divide continues to exist between countries of the global north and the developing countries of the global south. While the general trend has been for the global gaps in ICT access to be closing, the digital divide between the least developed countries and the rest of the world has continued to widen (e.g. Sciadas 2005; Skaletay, Soremekun and Galliers 2014). This is the case especially with African countries, most of which has not achieved any major improvements in digital development and ICT access until recently (Olatokun 2008; Skaletsky et al. 2014).

However, the situation may be changing gradually, at least in terms of physical access to internet penetration in the world, currently has the growth rate in the internet use (Internet Society 2014, 22).

### **ACCESS TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

At the early stages of digital divide research, access to new technologies was understood in a narrow sense as ownership of devices and as availability and affordability of internet services. These technology-oriented conceptualizations of digital divide and access have been later criticized and alternative conceptualizations have been put forth which recognize the importance of social aspects of access, such as awareness, usage, motivation, social support, and ICT and digital media skills (e.g. Dimmaggio and

Hargettai: 2001; Katz and Rice 2002; Van Dijk 2005; Warschauer 2003, 2004). As Dimaggio and Hargettai 2004 put it, once the internet penetration increases the most important issue has to do with “what are people doing and what are they able to do, when they go on-line”.

Mark Warschauer (2004, 31-48) emphasizes social embedding to technology and draws a parallel to traditional text literacy. For Warschauer, ICT access is a complex issue and using ICTs is essentially a social practice. Having the required skills and an understanding on meaningful ways of using ICTs and digital contents is just as important as is having a computer and been connected to the internet. Warschauer (2003, 2004) points out that to enable people to fully benefit from new technologies a broad set of resources is required, including physical resources, digital resources, human resources, and social resources.

### **MEANING OF SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Social inclusion/exclusion is one of a multi-dimensional relational process of increasing opportunities for social participation, enhancing capabilities to fulfill normatively prescribed social roles, broadening social ties of respect and recognition, and at the collective level, enhancing social bonds, cohesion, integration, or solidarity. Social inclusion may refer to a process encouraging social interaction between people with different socially relevant attributes or an impersonal institutional mechanism of opening up access to participate in all sphere of social life.

According to World Bank, social inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society. Improving the ability, opportunity; and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. Including those who

are mostly to be left behind is a complex global challenges, that affects developed and developing countries alike. It can be planned and achieved. The European Union Employment and Social Affairs Committee (2014) referred to digital inclusion as inclusion aims to prevent risk of digital exclusion, that is to ensure that disadvantage people are not left behind and avoid new forms of exclusion due to lack of digital literacy or of Internet access.

At the same time inclusion means also tapping new “digital” opportunities for the inclusion of socially disadvantaged people and less favored areas. The Information Society has the potential to distribute more equally knowledge resources and to offer new job opportunities, also by overcoming the traditional barriers to mobility and geographic distance, these definition benchmarks of inclusion seem to be access and digital literacy. The equal distribution of opportunities is mentioned.

The concern with social exclusion originated in France from there it diffused to the European Union and its member states (Silver 2014: Beland 2009). Initially, the term had republican connotations, but as it spread to new countries, its meaning adapted to the setting in which it was used. The United Kingdom for example; the new labour government of Tony Blair established a social exclusion unit that focused on assisting multiple-problem groups to find employment, combining a communication and neoliberal rights and obligations (pan tasis, Gordon, and Levites 2016; Gidens 2008).

Over time inclusion spread to Latin American where “marginalization” of informal workers was long considered a problem, one exacerbated by international debt and subsequent inflation and unemployment (Buvinic and Mazza 2014)

with time, policy discourse shifted from exclusion to “inclusion,” paradigms of social inclusion and its sister term vary by political philosophy (Silver 2014). Liberals envisage social inclusion as a consequence of state-guaranteed individual freedoms to exchange property and ideas, assemble; form groups weave dense, plural, cross cutting networks of voluntary civil society associations. Republicans points to the social bond, the solidarity of equal, laic citizens to achieve the collective good. Social democratic emphasizes the social rights of citizens to a decent contribution to society and negotiated class conflicts.

A traditional conservative though sees social order arising from a natural hierarchy of authority an organic society comprised of encompassing, circumscribed realms of life: family, community, and nation. Confucian thought aims for social harmony over individual freedoms. Religious paradigms generally are built on a community of believers who submit to one or more deities and their rules and leaders. Social inclusion is conceived in many alternatives ways, depending upon ideology, there can be ideological differences that make it hard to generalize about national beliefs.

The dominant image, frame work, ideal or paradigm of an inclusive society varies (Silver 2014). Conceptions and social inclusion described the ways a society’s part fit together and share value.

### **NATIONAL CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Places do have different histories, cultures, institutions and social structures which influence the idea of belonging, membership and citizenship. Formal citizenship excludes non-citizens from most rights and obligations of the nation conceptions of membership also draw boundaries. Nationalism is largely selective

of history, depicting the origins of the group and its consensual values. Symbolic, even mythical nationalism imagines a cohesive community that varies in openness to new corners and diversity (Honing 2011; Marx 2015; Wimmer 2013).

Places too are objects of attachment and identity, invested with sentiment and symbolism, with a “power’ of their own (Hayden 2009). The character and meaning of places are socially constructed, often by place-making elites and professionals (Gieryn 2010; Paulsen 2014). Rituals, monuments, and every day practices reinforce place symbolism. Selective history and collective memory forge abroad, enduring connections among strangers (Borer 2006), but also draw boundaries that allow residents to protect privileges and ration access to scarce privileges. Places mediate global and national forces, producing distinctive outcomes (Moloch, Freudenberg and Paulsen 2000; Kusenbach 2008).

### **SOCIAL DEMOCRACY**

Social democracy is a political, social and economy ideology that supports economic and social interventions to promote social justice within the frame work of a capitalist economy, as well as a regime involving a commitment to representative democracy, measures for income distribution, and welfare state provisions. Social democrats generally view society as equal to the sum of its parts. In other words, society is what people make of it. People are social beings, and society is where people achieve their fullest potential. The parts of society are people who naturally come together in society settings.

The fundamental values of social democracy were originally summaries by the slogans of French revolution: freedom, equality, brotherhood. In the spirit of

gender equality, the word brotherhood was later replaced with the word solidarity. The concepts can in turn be summarized by the word “democracy” as real democracy assumes and creates freedom, equality and solidarity at the same time.

The view of the importance of work can be seen as bordering between values and social theory. In social democracy, work by people is the central factor of production and with that for economic growth, as it is the work of people that puts all other production factors—raw materials, technology, and money to work. At the same time, work and with it the right to work is seen as important to the life and development of the individual, not just in a material but also in a personal and social sense.

The digital revolution raises questions that deal on the core elements of social democratic values. The fundamental social democratic values of freedom, justice and solidarity informed the European workers’ movement since its inception. These values are inspired by the philosophy of the enlightenment and the French revolution. From the industrial age to the modern knowledge economy, from imperial Germany to the unified and democratic Germany, those fundamental values have been reinterpreted again and again and applied to changed circumstances, to preserve their core elements.

Digitalization necessitates such a renewed sampling procedure for two reasons. First, the ongoing transformation is changing existing patterns of economic activity, learning and life itself, second, it adds an entirely new sphere to the spaces of action that are familiar to us: the highly dynamic way in which a new space has emerged raises questions concerning social democracy’s fundamental values. Social

democratic values must serve as the foundation upon which responses to the basic problems of the digital society. A focus on the three central values of freedom, justice, and solidarity.

- **FREEDOM:** With the origins and history of social democracy has always been a liberation movement. The idea was to empower human beings to lead self-determined lives. Social democracy developed a comprehensive understanding of freedom. That affords protection against encroachments by the state or society. It also means freedom from want and fear; and that one has available the material means for leading an autonomous life in the sense of enjoying “enabling” rights to liberty (“freedom to”). Every person *quo*. Individual has a claim to this “ambitious” version of liberty. Yet only society as a whole can insure that a person can make full use of his or her freedom.

When it comes to the opportunity to lead a free, autonomous life digitalization works at a cross purposes. The internet can reinforce certain recurring tropes in the quest for liberty, e.g. by helping social minorities to organize themselves, encouraging new forms of participation and stake holding, and enabling people to attain fuller sovereignty over their immediate living environment, The Internet has enormous potential for expanding freedom. Digitalization reveals a paradox of freedom and that can be traced back to Plato. Opportunities to exercise unregulated freedom lead to greater liberty for the strong few, but less liberty for the weak. Digitalization opens up new spaces for

interests to coalesce and be articulated. There is now greater leeway for free expression. Example; groups in society that are marginalized or stigmatized can organize themselves and carry out exchanges in social networks that cut across boundaries. Digitalization can be channeled and shaped. Social democracy succeeded in converting the social upheavals associated with industrialization into greater freedom for the individual.

- **JUSTICE:** What does justice mean in an era when internet access increasingly has become a pre requisite for finding one's way in the world? Opportunities to play a significant role in society and earn an income are increasingly contingent on access to the internet. There are also different individual capabilities in its use (media competence, etc.) That led to considerable inequalities. Internet work has opened up opportunities for inclusion to those who have been shut out of the normal labor market for one reason or another. The implications of digitalization for labor market policy will entail enormous challenges to the goal of achieving social justice.
- **SOLIDARITY:** The word solidarity comes from a Latin word "solidus" which means compact, fixed, durable, and which is also found in words such as "solid" and "solidity". The concept of solidarity has not caught the interest of political philosophy in the same way, though there are many simple, almost slogan-like statements expressing what solidarity is:
- Requirements by the bible: "carry one another's burden"

- The old slogan by the labor movement: "united we stand, divide we fall."
- The anti-racist campaign of the 1980s: "Don't touch my mate".
- The motto of the classic adventure novel the three musketeers: "one for all and all for one."

Today, the concept of "solidarity" is used to mean "to share with" or "to be there for", i.e. as a one-way movement from donor to recipient. Solidarity was the key to changing society. No one could tackle the injustices on his/her own; only together did people have the strength needed to do so.

The term solidarity is the practical expression of the insight that all people are social beings with a mutual dependence on each other. Solidarity is more than collective self-interest. Solidarity is also about shared and mutual responsibility for the way society works.

For workers' movement, solidarity afforded the opportunity to make freedom a reality even under conditions of inequality. Because some were willing and able to participate vicariously in the experiences of others humiliating conditions could be eliminated. Solidarity was given concrete, palpable expression in the social welfare state. The era of digitalization, the conditions under which people join together in solidarity have changed in many respects. Solidarity has become both more difficult and more necessary for several reasons: the public sphere has become and more necessary for several reasons: in this way the three value words are dependent on each other. Freedom assumes justice. Justice assumes solidarity and Solidarity assumes freedom and justice.

## WORK

The creation of social democracy as expression emancipation and participatory interests was closely bound up with the industrial revolution. By now the developments currently underway have earned the sobriquet the fourth industrial revolution". Its distinguishing features is the deployment of information that all phases of manufacturing. Such that all of the facilities involved in the process of production are networked with one another.

In the classical phase of industrial robotics, computers play a key role; the evolution of the fourth industrial revolution began with the rise of mainframe computer facilities in the fifties, expanded with the introduction of desktop PCS as mass consumer products in the Eighties, and then culminating in the Nineties. The latter step made possible the superstructure that has evolved today the integration of production, knowledge, and social networks into one single network. The further development of digitalization currently underway s driven by four trends:

1. The miniaturization of terminals that can be installed and put to use almost everywhere.
2. The exponential increase in sensors and SIM-cards, the basis of data exchange.
3. The constant improvement of available computing power since the sixties.
4. The sheer availability of masses of data, which is the basis for all big data models.

Places matter for economic and social outcomes. Neighborhood levels of poverty, ethnic diversity, and social cohesion have these effects through multiple mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion. At the national level access to citizenship is crucial for participation in the electoral process or

exercising free speech, assembly, and other rights essential to democratic participation. Countries like Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands- do permit legal residents who are not citizens to vote in local elections and engage in local associations since the issues affecting their immediate lives (Togeby 2009). They can them compose a majority in at least one electoral jurisdiction and elect a group member to office to represent group-specific interests. Consecration of minorities in an area also allows them to pool resources to pursue group - local priorities.

However, allowing non-citizens to vote is also justified by the goal of social inclusion, to allow residents to engage directly in the larger community rather than live on the margins. It is at the local level where social integration of migrants is most immediate. UNESCO defines civil inclusion as the connection that migrants feel with the larger urban community in which they live. Civil inclusion is based upon local involvement with the city, whether at the neighborhood, metropolitan, or even transnational scale.

The world social forum has called for more direct, democratic public involvement in decision making at the local and national government levels. Some places have a long tradition of citizen initiatives and direct democracy. The 1993 constitution amendment that mandated that women serve as leaders (parahans) of one third of randomly selected *gram panchayats* (village councils responsible for local infrastructure and decisions). This quota system has improved the general perceptions of women's abilities, improved women's electoral chances, and raised educational attainment of teenage girls (Beaman et al. 2009).

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social movement assumed a somewhat different form. New information technology increased the opportunities for ordinary people to work, share information, solve problems, and disband social movements are less likely to have leaders of organizations, Wikipedia, chat rooms, open-source software, and so on allow self-styled experts, many wary of authority, to have a say on virtually any subject.

### CONCLUSION

Digital technology can facilitate the social, economic civil participation of persons. The use of multiple CT channels to deliver services and multiple formats for the content delivered can allow persons to access information and communication in the manner in which they can comprehend and prefer. Digital technologies becoming a key driver of inclusive development because of their growing pervasiveness in the delivery of public and private services coupled and the increasing ability to use everyday consumer ICT devices as assistive devices.

While the potential of digital technology inclusive development is evident, its realization will require active efforts to reigns and shape the societal, legislative personal, and infrastructural factors within the effort.

Electronic groups may be unstable, but electronic interactions are significant elements of social groups. The growth of 'social networking' sites such as my space, Friendster, Facebook, whatsapp, and Instagram etc. indicates that the power of electronic interactions. These electronic interactions reinforce the face-to-face interactions of individuals who shared the same physical space.

This impact of new digital technologies is not restricted to teens and 'twenty

something' that have email and share photos with school friends, This new technology can intensify the amount of interaction amongst people who live in the same locality, abroad, and different places.

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