

Cultural Transformation and Disruption Through Media and Communication

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Preface

We live in a time when the rules that once governed societies, institutions, and public discourse are no longer merely bending. They are being deliberately unsettled, and in some cases, openly rejected by the very actors who once authored, upheld, or benefited from them. In this radically altered landscape, communication and media are no longer peripheral or neutral instruments; they constitute the core battlegrounds where political authority, cultural imaginaries, and social belonging are continuously negotiated. From algorithmic bias and surveillance capitalism to the mobilizing force of digital activism, from the global circulation of disinformation to the emergence of counter-publics that challenge hegemonic narratives, communicative practices now lie at the heart of how social change is imagined, contested, and enacted.

We live in a world where institutional and ideological struggles unfold across the long arc of civil history, yet today these tensions surface with unprecedented speed, visibility, and intensity. National security, once perceived as a specialized domain of statecraft and military operations, has become part of everyday consciousness. Media outlets, ranging from legacy broadcasters to decentralized digital platforms, act as early indicators and amplifiers of national-security agendas, influencing public sentiment and shaping geopolitical imaginaries. Although the conceptual framework that distinguishes the Global South and the Global North continues to structure debates about development and inequality, new fractures within both regions reveal how conflicts can emerge from unexpected and often irrational triggers. The deepening relationship between military influence and communication, manifested through information campaigns, online propaganda, cyber conflict, and strategic cultural narratives, demonstrates how media has become integral to contemporary security thinking.

We live in a social environment that is increasingly defined by the interaction between physical presence and virtual connectivity. Social relations, political mobilization, economic exchange, and cultural expression unfold simultaneously across material and digital spaces. This convergence creates new forms of agency as well as new vulnerabilities. It also blurs traditional distinctions between public and private

life, and between local and global experience. Yet the infrastructures that sustain this interconnected world, including data systems, communication networks, and algorithmic processes, remain largely opaque, privately managed, and unevenly accessible. These conditions raise urgent questions about power, participation, accountability, and inequality in a world shaped by mediated communication.

The book *Cultural Transformation and Disruption Through Media and Communication* explores how media and communication shape, accelerate, and sometimes obstruct social change in an age where both democratic values and shared truths are under pressure. This interdisciplinary volume brings together critical reflections, empirical research, activist insights, and creative approaches to examine how social actors respond to a world where norms are no longer stable, and where the infrastructures of communication are increasingly controlled by opaque powers. It seeks to document, analyze, and reimagine the communicative foundations of transformation, particularly within contexts marked by widening global inequality, political unrest, technological disruption, environmental uncertainty, and rapid cultural evolution.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNICATIVE ORDERS: POWER, PARTICIPATION, AND DISRUPTION

Contemporary communication systems are undergoing profound transformations as digital publics unsettle long-standing hierarchies of power and meaning-making. Networked participation, driven by citizens, activists, and micro-influencers, challenges institutional authority and introduces new dynamics of visibility and contestation. Across the volume, multiple chapters illustrate how communicative processes are reshaping the structures of power, participation, and civic engagement. Chapter 3, *Participation and Communication in Civic Emergency Volunteering*, demonstrates how community-based action in Europe is mediated through new forms of communicative coordination. Chapter 4, *Disrupted Voter Loyalty as a Political Marketing Challenge*, highlights how fragmented media environments destabilize long-standing electoral behaviour in Turkey. Meanwhile, Chapter 7, *Influencer Activism as a Resistance Network*, maps the rise of digital actors who mobilize publics beyond institutional boundaries across the collection of literature. Together with Chapter 2, *Cultural Shifts Through Shared Inquiry*, these contributions reveal the emergence of new communicative agents and practices that disrupt established orders and open alternative pathways for civic participation across diverse contexts. Although this volume does not include a chapter on algorithmic governance and platform-mediated control, it is important to recognize that these forces reconfigure how information circulates, often producing tensions between expanded opportunities for engagement and renewed forms of surveillance or manipulation. These shifting

communicative orders reveal a landscape where participation is increasingly fluid yet deeply entangled with disruptive forces that reshape civic discourse, political mobilisation, and everyday interaction.

MEDIA ECOSYSTEMS IN FLUX: PLATFORMS, TRANSPARENCY, AND DIGITAL INEQUALITY

Media environments are being redefined by platformisation, datafication, and the declining centrality of traditional media institutions. As global platforms dominate content distribution and algorithmic curation, concerns over transparency, accountability, and trust intensify. These developments deepen existing inequalities, with access, digital literacy, and infrastructural disparities determining who benefits from digital transformation and who remains marginalised. Within this evolving ecosystem, smaller markets and local media industries face heightened vulnerabilities as they navigate concentrated platform power and shifting regulatory pressures. Chapter 6, *Big Tech and the Myth of Transparency*, offers a critical account of simulated accountability in platform governance. Complementing this, Chapter 5, *Affective Polarisation and Political Participation in Podcast Environments*, captures how audio-mediated publics contribute to new forms of political alignment. These works collectively illuminate the power imbalances embedded in digital infrastructures and the need to scrutinize how algorithmic systems, platform logics, and fragmented consumption patterns reshape democratic communication and social knowledge.

CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS IN A MEDIATED WORLD

In an era of intensified cross-border mobility of media content, cultural identities are increasingly shaped through transnational encounters facilitated by cinema, streaming platforms, and digital communities. Diaspora media practices, global fandoms, and hybrid cultural expressions reveal the fluid negotiation of belonging and cultural memory across borders. National narratives are continually rearticulated as audiences engage with transnational imaginaries, sometimes reinforcing cultural proximity and at other times exposing deep-seated power asymmetries within global cultural circulation. Chapter 10, *The Evolving Landscape of Indonesian Cinema Consumption in the Digital Age*, documents shifting preferences and local specificities within a rapidly globalising film market. Additionally, Chapter 11, *Voice of the Margins, Regional TV Newsrooms and the Reframing of Resistance in India*, demonstrates how regional Indian newsrooms reframe narratives of resistance. These

studies collectively show how cultural identities are continually reconstructed within mediated encounters that span borders, industries, and localities.

EMERGING FRONTLINES: TECHNOLOGY, AUTHENTICITY, AND SOCIETAL FUTURES

Rapid technological advances, including AI, automation, and immersive media, are opening new frontlines in communication and social life. These innovations reshape notions of authenticity, credibility, and mediated selfhood, prompting debates about trust, ethics, and manipulation in digitally augmented environments. At the same time, accelerating technological change raises complex questions about governance, equity, labour, and sustainability, placing societies at a critical juncture where futures are negotiated amid competing visions of progress and risk. As digital transformation becomes increasingly intertwined with everyday practices and institutional structures, it compels renewed reflection on how technology can support inclusive, ethical, and resilient futures. For example, Chapter 15, *Blockchain Technology in the Art World*, offers insights into how authenticity and ownership are being redefined in creative economies. Chapter 13, *Immersive Narratives*, explores the experiential dimension of tourism in digitally curated environments. These contributions map a future where technology, identity, and communication converge to transform social imaginaries and reshape everyday life.

In bringing together these diverse yet interconnected perspectives, *Cultural Transformation and Disruption Through Media and Communication*, edited by Changsong Wang, makes a significant contribution to the study of contemporary communication and its role in shaping societal transformations. By examining the intersections of power, participation, media infrastructure, cultural identity, and technological innovation, the volume foregrounds the ways in which communicative practices both reflect and generate social change. It offers empirical, theoretical, and methodological insights that advance understanding of how digital platforms, participatory processes, and mediated narratives operate within complex global and local contexts.

The book challenges traditional assumptions about the stability of social, political, and cultural orders, highlighting how norms are constantly negotiated, contested, and reimaged. Its interdisciplinary scope bridges gaps between media studies, political communication, cultural studies, and emerging technological scholarship, providing scholars, practitioners, and policymakers with a comprehensive framework to analyze and respond to the dynamic frontlines of social transformation. Ultimately, this volume demonstrates that communication is not merely a mirror of social reality but an active agent in shaping the possibilities of social life. By

documenting the strategies, disruptions, and innovations through which societies navigate complexity, the book contributes both to theoretical debates and practical understanding, offering a roadmap for future research and action in an age where the structures of meaning, authority, and participation are continuously in flux.

Edited by Changsong Wang, this volume reflects a sustained commitment to advancing scholarship within the intersection of media, communication, and social change. It brings together critical perspectives from around the world, highlighting how communicative practices shape, accelerate, and sometimes obstruct societal transformations. By connecting political, cultural, technological, and environmental dimensions of communication, the book offers new insights into the dynamics of power, identity, and collective action. It not only documents the disruptions and innovations that characterize contemporary media landscapes but also inspires a deeper understanding of how societies imagine and enact change.

Chapter 1

Disrupted Orders and the New Frontlines of Social Change

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the shifting terrains of communication and media amid global crises from geopolitical conflict and algorithmic control to epistemic inequality and moral uncertainty. It argues that communication should be reimagined not as a neutral conduit, but as a contested social practice shaped by power, resistance, and transformation. The rise of digital activism, grassroots media, and identity-based counter-publics signals a reconfiguration of authority and agency across virtual and physical spaces. These developments challenge dominant narratives and open space for alternative epistemologies and political subjectivities, particularly from the Global South and historically marginalized groups. In a context of eroding moral authority and fragmented global governance, media, especially counter-hegemonic forms, becomes vital in articulating justice, solidarity, and planetary futures. The chapter calls for a pluralistic and transformative communicative praxis that embraces disruption as a generative force for reimagining democracy, development, and global coexistence.

1. INTRODUCTION

While some media commentaries underscore how certain national leaders continue to dominate daily headlines, often with a sense of public reluctance or

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch001

fatigue, this phenomenon points to a deeper entanglement between power, spectacle, and the relentless churn of the 24/7 news cycle. Even as cross-regional wars erupt unexpectedly, it is often the rhetoric or social media presence of these leaders that monopolizes attention, shaping narratives and steering public discourse. Amid ongoing disputes over tariffs and global economic tensions, media systems and spokesperson infrastructures have evolved into strategic instruments of statecraft and influence. As Dutta (2011) argues, communication infrastructures are not passive but deeply embedded in the structures of power, shaping whose voices are heard and whose are silenced. In this light, we now inhabit a world where the rules that once governed societies, institutions, and public conversation are not merely being bent; they are being deliberately dismantled by those who once upheld them. In this radically altered communicative landscape, media are no longer neutral tools. They have become battlegrounds where truth, power, and resistance collide.

Larson and Wiegele (1979), in their essay *Political Communication Theory and Research: An Overview*, observed how mass media, even then, had become deeply entangled with the mechanisms of political power and persuasion. Decades later, their insights resonate with even greater urgency. Today's communicative environment is marked not by the linear transmission of official narratives, but by chaotic, real-time feedback loops shaped by algorithms, influencers, trolls, bots, and the logic of virality (Kim et al, 2010; Tian & Wang, 2022; Waisbord, 2022). Political communication has evolved, or devolved, into an ecosystem where spectacle often outweighs substance, and where attention, not accuracy, becomes the dominant currency. At the same time, audiences are no longer passive recipients. The proliferation of digital tools has enabled new modes of participation, protest, and counter-narrative production. Recent scholarship increasingly emphasizes the need to examine how digital and mainstream media do not exist as separate discursive spheres but are deeply interwoven (Giraud & Poole, 2021; Ladeira & Lopes, 2024; Larsson & Teigland, 2019). As such, it is necessary to explore the relational dynamics within these hybrid media ecologies. Yet, this communicative empowerment is unevenly distributed. The affordances of new media platforms are double-edged: they amplify voices that once went unheard, but also magnify hate speech, disinformation, and performative outrage. Communication, in this sense, is caught in a paradox, simultaneously enabling liberation and deepening division.

In such a volatile media environment, the boundaries between fact and fiction, public and private, journalism and propaganda, have become increasingly blurred. These disrupted orders demand a rethinking of how communication operates in contemporary society. It is no longer merely as a conduit for information; it has become a site where norms are reconfigured, identities are negotiated, and power is both exercised and contested.

Chapter 2

Cultural Shifts Through Shared Inquiry: Participatory Research in the Age of Communication

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ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates how participatory research is reshaping cultural paradigms in the age of digital communication. Emphasizing shared inquiry, it explores how communities engage as co-creators of knowledge, challenging traditional power structures and redefining authority in research. Grounded in theoretical frameworks such as Freire's dialogical pedagogy, constructivism, and decolonial thought, the chapter analyzes the role of digital tools, such as podcasts, participatory video, and social media, in facilitating collaboration and amplifying marginalized voices. It also addresses critical challenges, including tokenism, digital divides, and institutional resistance. Through diverse case studies, the chapter highlights the real-world impact of participatory methods on education, environmental activism, and cultural preservation. It concludes by outlining implications for future research, communication strategies, and global cultural movements aimed at inclusivity and transformation.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch002

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cultural Transformation in the Digital Age

The digital age has ushered in unprecedented transformations in how cultures are formed, communicated, and contested. Cultural transformation today is no longer a slow, linear process confined to the margins of academic institutions or elite circles. Instead, it unfolds dynamically across digital platforms where users not only consume content but actively participate in creating meaning and shaping societal values. This transformation is deeply embedded in everyday life, from the use of social media in social justice movements to the rise of digital storytelling by indigenous communities (Rogers et al., 2017). In this context, culture is no longer static or hierarchical; it is fluid, interactive, and increasingly shaped by grassroots engagement and technological mediation.

1.2 Evolution of Communication and Research Methodologies

As communication technologies have evolved, so too have the ways researchers engage with communities and knowledge. Traditional research paradigms, which often position the researcher as the sole authority and knowledge producer, are increasingly challenged by the participatory ethos enabled by digital tools. Today, mobile technologies, collaborative platforms, and social media facilitate two-way interactions between researchers and participants, breaking down historical power imbalances. This shift has redefined not just communication practices but the epistemological foundations of research itself (Dadich et al., 2019). The line between researcher and subject is blurred, giving rise to more democratic and dialogical methods of inquiry. These changes reflect a growing acknowledgment of diverse worldviews, voices, and lived experiences in shaping knowledge and cultural narratives.

1.3 Participatory Research as a Tool for Cultural Inquiry

Participatory research emerges as a powerful methodology for exploring cultural transformation in the communication age. Rooted in principles of collaboration, reflexivity, and social justice, participatory research prioritizes the active involvement of community members in the research process - from design to data interpretation and dissemination (Kindon et al., 2007). This approach recognizes that those who live within a culture possess valuable insights that are essential to understanding and shaping it. Participatory research, therefore, becomes not only a methodologi-

Chapter 3

Participation and Communication in Civic Emergency Volunteering: A European Action–Research Study Within the SEE Project

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, environmental and climate crises have helped to redefine the paradigms of collective emergency response, encouraging the emergence of new forms of civic participation and spontaneous volunteering. The European project SEE – Social Cohesion by Empowering Volunteering in Emergencies – fits into this context of transformation, promoting a research-action pathway aimed at exploring, understanding, and enhancing the contribution of informal volunteers in crisis management. This chapter takes a post-qualitative approach to the main dynamics that emerged from activities carried out in five countries (Italy, Germany, France, Greece, and Slovakia), highlighting the key role of communication and social networks – both territorial and digital – in civic activation processes. Critical reflection highlights the importance of developing contextualized communication

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch003

models and participatory processes capable of strengthening the resilience of local communities, looking to a European framework for the enhancement of informal volunteering in emergency contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The intensification of extreme events linked to the climate crisis—such as the floods that have hit Valencia and various areas of Italy over the last year—has forcefully raised the issue of civic preparedness and the effectiveness of current emergency response models. Alongside the growing complexity of these phenomena, there is a structural difficulty in penetrating civil protection mechanisms with systemic actions for prevention and citizen training (Volterrani, 2021). In this scenario, the role of active citizenship takes on fundamental importance, both in the immediate intervention phase and in the preventive construction of an ecology of prevention and community resilience. Active citizenship can be imagined as the group of citizens who carry out voluntary actions in emergency situations without having previous experience in civil protection organizations or training to do so. As the international standard ISO 22319 (2017) suggests these are walk-in, episodic or unaffiliated volunteers both local and non-local. Their intention to express solidarity in a concrete and immediate way is therefore at the heart of their actions in a context that can be recognized as crisis volunteerism. In Valencia, this phenomenon is etched in our collective memory as the long queue of spontaneous volunteers who gathered at the City of Arts and Sciences, ready to offer physical and emotional support to the worst-affected areas of the city and their inhabitants in the hours after the disaster (Local Team, 2024). Several studies have emphasized the importance of volunteers as ‘first responders’ (Heelsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004), but have also highlighted how the growing informality and fragmentation of forms of engagement (McLennan et al., 2016; Strandh, 2019) is undermining institutional models of coordination. Civic volunteers, that’s to say the informal/spontaneous ones, are often considered external actors by organizations. Even though they are decisive, their lack of official recognition and adequate tools for integration into emergency management processes weakens their potential effectiveness (Paciarotti et al., 2018). At the same time, contemporary participatory processes of solidarity are increasingly characterized by a thematic and situational logic, linked to individual sensibilities and emotional ties to places (Coudry, 2024). This “participatory shift,” albeit fragmentary, reflects the complexity of the concept of participation itself in our individualized society. We no longer witness structured membership in an organization, but rather a situated expression of civic motivation rooted in everyday life (Bucholtz et al., 2024). Whereas this fluidity and unpredictability of participation is a defining feature of

Chapter 4

Disrupted Voter Loyalty as a Political Marketing Challenge: Analysis of Voter Decision-Making in a Fragmented Communication Environment

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the transformation of voter behavior in Turkey's 2024 local elections, focusing on disrupted patterns of party loyalty, the rise of strategic voting, and the role of communicative and ethical considerations in shaping electoral choices. Based on an online survey conducted between February 23 and March 10, 2024, with 1,606 valid responses, the study analyzes voter profiles independent of party affiliation and categorizes participants into five ideological groups—left, center-left, center, center-right, and right. The findings reveal a weakening of emotional and ideological attachments to political parties: 52.2% of respondents do not feel fully represented by their preferred party, while 53.9% demonstrate flexible

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch004

voting preferences and only 28.7% exhibit rigid partisan loyalty. Strategic voting is particularly common among centrist and center-right voters, whereas ideological commitment remains stronger among left-leaning groups.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed a profound transformation in voter behavior, characterized by a decline in rigid party loyalty and a corresponding rise in strategic voting patterns (Dalton, 2021). In Türkiye, the structural dynamics of the political system, high levels of polarization, and rapid changes in the media ecosystem have significantly contributed to this shift, fundamentally weakening traditional voter–party bonds (Çarkoğlu, 2019). This ongoing transformation has led to a widely acknowledged crisis of representation, particularly in the Turkish political context. When traditionally loyal voters perceive that political institutions are failing to address their core existential needs, such as economic stability or effective disaster preparedness, the emotional or habitual connection to the party becomes vulnerable. This structural deficit provides fertile ground for rational-choice-oriented behavior to emerge, where voters temporarily suspend partisanship to engage in instrumental decision-making aimed at maximizing personal and communal utility (Downs, 1957; Riker, 1962).

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature regarding the exact mechanisms that translate this systemic representation crisis into observable electoral shifts. There is a lack of robust, contemporary analysis detailing how the breakdown of traditional loyalty analytically links to the rise of the rational, issue-oriented voter. The 31 March 2024 Municipal Elections in Türkiye offer a compelling case study, providing timely empirical evidence of a critical electoral shift at the local level.

This study, based on data collected from 1,606 participants, provides a comprehensive analysis of political loyalty, strategic voting, and perceptions of political ethics. The findings reveal that while approximately one in four voters exhibits unwavering loyalty, a significant 57.2% demonstrate an inclination toward alternative parties and strategic voting. These results reflect a complex balance between ideological commitment and pragmatic flexibility within Turkish society.

Moreover, the majority of respondents (88.4%) reject disinformation and unethical campaigning, suggesting a heightened awareness of political ethics and accountability in Türkiye’s democratic culture. Leadership qualities and critical issue priorities—like environmental initiatives—are also significant determinants of preferences, frequently transcending established partisan divides.

Chapter 5

Affective Polarisation and Political Participation in Podcast Environments

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the relationship between affective polarization and political participation within the digital environment of podcasts. As the power of traditional media is changing, the information flows shift toward individual creators. A comparative case study analyzed 150 YouTube comments from two ideologically opposed episodes of the AIDEA podcast in Slovenia. Utilizing manual and AI-assisted coding, the comments were analyzed for polarity, political orientation, sentiment, and thematic categories. The comments were strongly polarized, emotionally charged, and varied according to the guests' political leanings. The first episode revealed more bipolar patterns of engagement, whereas the second emphasized systemic and ideological critique. Findings indicate that podcasts function not only as an informative medium but also as an affective and discursive environment that shapes contemporary political participation in a hybrid media space.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch005

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Digital Political Discourse and Parasocial Relations

In the digital age, a significant part of political participation occurs in online environments, where the use of social media to follow the news builds and strengthens social capital. This increases opportunities for civic and political engagement, which also takes place outside traditional institutional frameworks (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). These institutions, such as traditional media, once served as primary information centers. Still, with the emergence of digital communication channels, such as podcasts, individuals have gained the ability to participate in political discourse actively (Whipple et al., 2023). Koc-Michalska and Lilleker (2016) also emphasize the multidimensionality of political participation and examine it through the concept of the digital agora (Bang, 2005), where users can express their views, build social ties, and participate in mobilization. Intimate and personalized communication in podcasts is enabled by sound, as the proximity of the speaker enhances emotional resonance and a sense of intense involvement (MacDougall, 2011). MacDougall (2011) links this idea to the concept of secondary orality, which transforms the phenomenological experience of listening. This also raises the question of how the emotional dimension of political expression is realized in new media environments.

The understanding of politics as an exclusively rational process dominated by arguments and facts has been superseded in the last decade by the emergence of the so-called emotional turn in political studies. Emotions have become a key part of political engagement, as they shape collective feelings, strengthen a sense of belonging, and influence the dynamics of power in public discourse (Szabó, 2020). Privately personalized media, such as podcasts, create affective environments in which listeners experience a sense of closeness, belonging, and affective security. Political actors also often use emotionally charged narratives and metaphorical and discursive practices to mobilize support and consolidate political positions in the public sphere (Dowding, 2018; Szabó, 2020). Especially in times of social crisis, emotions act as tools of emotional self-sufficiency and partially compensate for weakened forms of everyday social connectedness (Robson, 2023). In this context, support for political actors is significantly linked to the intensity of parasocial relationships. This has proven to be a stronger predictor of political support than traditional factors such as party identification and political knowledge (Cohen & Holbert, 2018). Dowding (2018) points to the possibility of instrumentalizing emotions and proposes two conditions that distinguish persuasion from manipulation. Affective strategies carry particular weight in contemporary communication environments, especially on social media. Emotionally charged messages achieve

Chapter 6

Big Tech and the Myth of Transparency: Simulated Accountability and the Politics of Platform Governance

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines how technology corporations such as Meta, Google, and Twitter/X construct the illusion of accountability through what the authors term simulated transparency. It explores how corporate reforms including oversight boards, algorithmic audits, and transparency reports that function as symbolic performances that preserve power while appearing to promote openness. Drawing on critical political economy and media governance theories, the chapter analyses case studies across major platforms and regional contexts, highlighting how these practices reproduce systemic inequalities, particularly in the Global South. The discussion reveals that voluntary self-regulation often replaces democratic oversight with aesthetic displays of responsibility. By exposing the rhetorical and structural mechanisms of simulated transparency, the chapter calls for enforceable algorithmic governance, participatory accountability frameworks, and the reinvigoration of public-interest media as essential foundations for genuine digital democracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, a handful of technology corporations have come to dominate the digital public sphere. Meta (Facebook), Google, and Twitter/X are no

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch006

longer mere communication tools but global infrastructures mediating how information circulates, how publics deliberate, and how power is exercised. With billions of users, these companies hold unprecedented influence over the conditions of contemporary democracy. Their platforms determine what is visible, which voices are amplified, and which discourses gain legitimacy. In effect, they have become what some scholars call *quasi-sovereign actors*' entities that operate beyond traditional state boundaries while shaping fundamental aspects of social and political life.

This dominance has generated widespread anxiety about the erosion of democratic accountability. From election interference and disinformation campaigns to the monetisation of hate speech and surveillance, platforms have repeatedly been implicated in crises of public trust. Yet paradoxically, the same corporations frequently present themselves as responsible, reform-minded actors committed to transparency and accountability. They launch oversight boards, issue algorithmic audits, and craft elaborate community guidelines initiatives that appear to signal responsiveness to critics and attentiveness to public concerns.

A deeper look reveals a more troubling reality. The reforms advanced by Big Tech are often less about redistributing power or ensuring democratic oversight than about consolidating corporate autonomy. They function as symbolic gestures for public performances of accountability that provide a veneer of openness while leaving underlying structures intact. This chapter argues that such practices constitute a distinct mode of governance best described as *simulated transparency*.

While much of the critical debate has focused on the United States and Europe, the illusion of reform is not limited to the Global North. The chapter also examines how simulated transparency unfolds in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In these contexts where regulatory infrastructures are weaker, democratic institutions more fragile, and civil society less resourced the stakes of simulated transparency are even higher. Malaysian elections, disinformation on WhatsApp and TikTok, and the region's experiments with "fake news" laws demonstrate how platform reforms intersect with local politics in ways that simultaneously project accountability and entrench opacity.

By integrating both global and regional perspectives, the chapter exposes simulated transparency as a corporate strategy of legitimacy management. It demonstrates that the illusion of reform not only undermines democratic accountability in wealthy democracies but also deepens inequalities and vulnerabilities in the Global South.

Simulated Transparency: An Emerging Problem

Simulated transparency refers to reforms that are explicitly designed to appear accountable and participatory while simultaneously preventing meaningful scrutiny or intervention. Unlike genuine transparency, which empowers publics with knowl-

Chapter 7

Influencer Activism as a Resistance Network: A Bibliometric Analysis of a New Digital Actor in Mediated Resistance

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines influencer activism as an emerging form of mediated resistance within digital environments. Drawing on a bibliometric analysis of 122 Scopus-indexed articles, the study maps the intellectual structure of the field through keyword co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer. The findings reveal that influencer activism is not a uniform domain, but rather a fragmented and interconnected field situated at the intersection of communication studies, marketing, sociology, and political science. Six thematic clusters reveal core dimensions: digital infrastructures, value-driven advocacy, feminist and human-centered perspectives, branding practices, political discourse, and communication. The chapter contributes by synthesizing existing research while repositioning influencer activism as a distinctive form of mediated resistance, and by identifying gaps and directions for future studies.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch007

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, digital technologies have not only reshaped how we communicate but also how we contest and perform power (Fuchs, 2021; Castells, 2015; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Van Dijk, 2006). With the rapid expansion of social media platforms, political expression has moved beyond conventional arenas such as institutions, protest sites, and mainstream media (Gillespie, 2010; Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Nieborg & Helmond, 2019; Van Dijck, 2018). Today, resistance can unfold through everyday gestures, subtle alignments, and narrative interventions, all of which occur within the attention economies of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter). In these spaces, visibility is no longer incidental but foundational; personal stories become political acts, and influence becomes a contested yet strategic form of agency.

This transformation has redefined the contours of what counts as activism. While traditional models emphasized collective action, ideological coherence, and formal organization, digital activism thrives on fragmentation, fluidity, and affective resonance (Li et al., 2021; Suglo, 2024; Suk et al., 2019). Within this landscape, a new actor has emerged: the influencer. Often dismissed as superficial or commercial, influencers have begun to occupy a more complex role in the ecology of online resistance (Sun & Ding, 2024). Some challenge dominant narratives through personal testimony (Blee & McDowell, 2012); others align with broader movements (Sobande, 2021), lending visibility to issues that would otherwise remain ignored. Influencers, in this context, are not always loud or radical, but they are increasingly central to how dissent is made legible in algorithmic cultures (Cotter, 2019).

The literature review considers digital activism, resistance networks, and influencer activism, discussing concepts, tensions, and factors making influencers resistance actors. Traditional activism required physical presence and structured organisations where digital activism is fast and has flexible reach (Shah et al., 2013). Joyce (2010) defines digital activism as the practices drawing on technology, participating under constraints from socioeconomic and political settings.

“Digital activism” refers to connective or collective mobilisation that uses digital infrastructures for coordination, communication, and visibility (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). “Resistance” denotes oppositional and constructive practices that challenge power symbolically, discursively, affectively, and organisationally (Lilja, 2022). “Influencer activism” is the strategic use of personal visibility, storytelling, and parasocial relationships to mobilise publics for social or political goals, which is distinct from “influencer marketing”, centring on product and brand promotion.

Distributed networks giving mass access to connections and content sharing to coordinate collective action benefits digital activism. Unequal resources affect empowerment and visibility, alongside surveillance and state control aggravating

Chapter 8

Strategic Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Enhancing Green Marketing Opportunities: An Empirical Analysis Using PLS–SEM and Neural Networks

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to assess the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Green Marketing Opportunities (GMO) amid rising global environmental concerns, while examining the roles of influencing factors such as greenwashing (GW), competitive pressure (CP), and government policies (GP). The study employs a quantitative approach combining PLS-SEM and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) to analyze linear and nonlinear relationships among variables simultaneously. The study reveals that CSR is the strongest predictor of GMO ($\beta = 0.419$, $p < 0.001$), followed by CP ($\beta = 0.313$) and GP ($\beta = 0.269$). Greenwashing harms policy perception ($\beta = -0.159$). IPMA results indicate that CSR has the highest importance

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch008

and performance, whereas the effectiveness of government policies is lower than expected. The study highlights the strategic role of CSR in green marketing, warns about the harmful effects of greenwashing, and suggests that businesses adopt transparent strategies. It also recommends expanding the survey scope and refining measurement scales in future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

As environmental issues intensify, growing public awareness has driven major changes in consumer behavior and business strategies (Carrete et al., 2012). Global challenges such as climate change, pollution, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss require businesses to go beyond profit and take responsibility for environmental protection (Harangozó & Zilahy, 2015; Singh et al., 2016). Green marketing has emerged as an essential approach, involving eco-friendly products, green production, waste management, and renewable energy use (Cronin Jr et al., 2011; Thakkar, 2021). Companies like Tesla, Unilever, and Patagonia show their long-term benefits. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) further supports green marketing through ethical practices and transparency (Tanchangya et al., 2024), but must be genuine to avoid greenwashing (Bachurina, 2021). In emerging markets, limited sustainability awareness poses challenges (Carrete et al., 2012; Ofori, 2021), though government policies and global sustainability trends are driving growth (Zainal Abidi et al., 2022).

The central issue of this study is the need for empirical evidence to validate whether CSR-based green marketing strategies truly influence consumer behavior, as current business practices lack concrete assessments of their effectiveness (Tsai et al., 2020). The research addresses key gaps related to CSR authenticity, its relationship with green consumer behavior, methodological limitations, and market differences. First, although CSR is known to affect trust and perception, its direct impact on green purchasing intentions remains underexplored (Mercade Mele, 2019), especially as factors like trust, sustainability awareness, and personal motivation are not systematically analyzed (Chen, 2024). This raises the question of whether CSR-driven pressure on businesses creates real green marketing opportunities. Second, concerns about authenticity persist, as many firms practice superficial green marketing, leading to greenwashing and consumer skepticism (Parkman et al., 2018; Pizzetti et al., 2021). Third, traditional analytical methods are insufficient, prompting the need for advanced models like PLS-SEM and ANN to capture non-linear relationships (Karim et al., 2023). Lastly, green consumer behavior varies significantly between developed and emerging markets, where awareness remains limited and price sensitivity dominates decisions (Kautish & Sharma, 2019; Jaiswal & Kant, 2018).

Chapter 9

Territorial Marketing Strategies:

The Case of Visit Italy in the Enhancement of Italian Territories

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ABSTRACT

Territorial marketing is a strategic tool for enhancing and promoting a region, aiming to strengthen its identity, increase its attractiveness and stimulate economic growth. Territorial marketing helps position the region as a hub for investments, businesses and cultural initiatives, creating a competitive and sustainable ecosystem. This chapter, in the first part, provides a theoretical overview especially on the basic concepts of territorial marketing and then it will analyse several initiatives promoted by “Visit Italy”, a leading platform for the promotion of Italian tourism at national and international levels. In particular, it will explore the marketing strategies adopted, focusing on communication methods, digital tools and engagement techniques used to involve the audience. The study will examine the main dissemination channels employed, ranging from social media campaigns to multimedia content partnerships with institutions and international brands, as well as the use of innovative technologies and storytelling.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch009

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

One of the most adopted and important definitions of marketing is the one provided by Philip Kotler, an American economist, in 1967. Kotler is considered a pioneer of evolutionary theories in the field and the author of fundamental texts that have become key references in the industry (Bourassa et al., 2007). In his most renowned work, *marketing Management*, Kotler offers a simple yet explanatory definition of marketing: “*the identification and fulfilment of human and social needs*. Focusing on its role in society, marketing can be more precisely defined as a *social process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need through the creation, offering and exchange of valuable products and services* (Cova, 1997). The term process is used to emphasize that marketing is not a single action (such as product/service promotion) but a set of activities aimed at achieving a specific goal. Marketing encompasses all actions undertaken to meet needs through exchange processes (Kotler, 1972).

Today, the term marketing is closely linked to the concepts of listening, communication, value creation and relationships. It is not only a managerial process but also a social process based on the interaction between sellers and buyers. It includes all activities aimed at promoting values, satisfying the desires and needs of individuals and markets (Svingstedt & Heide, 2025). Therefore, doing marketing means delivering value and communicating with both customers (those who purchase products/services) and consumers (those who use products/services). It involves studying needs and preferences to fulfil them in the best possible way. Marketing prioritizes human needs and acts to satisfy them effectively (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2005; Changsong et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2024).

Territorial marketing is a specific sector within marketing, it was developed with the goal of acting within a well-defined area (Gouveia & Sousa, 2025). The origins of territorial marketing can be historically traced back to the promotion of areas conquered during the colonial era. Starting in the mid-19th century, the United States and Great Britain initiated territorial promotion activities aimed at attracting investments and new residents. During the world wars, promotional activities were primarily used as political tools, focused on spatial planning rather than economic revival. However, starting in the 1970s, there was a shift in public planning, leading to a new approach to territorial processes, which required new sources of funding.

Marketing techniques began to be employed to implement effective local promotion strategies (Noble & Mokwa, 1999). Initially, this approach was applied in the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. Following public administration reforms and the expansion of globalization, it was later introduced in Italy as well.

Territorial marketing refers to the set of activities aimed at defining projects, programs and strategies to ensure the long-term development of a specific geo-

Chapter 10

The Evolving Landscape of Indonesian Cinema Consumption in the Digital Age: Trends, Impacts, and Cultural Specificities

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the transformation of Indonesian cinema consumption in the digital age, a shift from passive, scheduled viewing to active, on-demand engagement. It argues that this evolution presents cultural and socio-economic paradoxes. Using frameworks such as Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Baudrillard's consumption theory, the chapter analyzes how digital platforms,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch010

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while democratizing access, also introduce new forms of algorithmic control. The discussion examines the competition between traditional cinemas and streaming services, the persistence of the digital divide, and the complex interplay between global media flows and local cultural values. The analysis concludes by offering strategic recommendations for the Indonesian film industry and charting future research directions, framing media consumption as a site of cultural politics and contestation rather than a neutral, technological adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution in the 21st century changed how people in Asia watch films. This change in perspective is seen in Indonesia. Countries with Video on Demand (VOD) and Over-the-Top (OTT) services are rapidly proliferating and transforming the way individuals view and engage with films culturally (Saggu & Mohan, 2023). Indonesian audiences, who once relied on conventional exhibition models centred on cinemas and broadcast television, now stand at the forefront of a global transformation that champions flexibility, interactivity, and personalisation. This evolution extends beyond mere technology; it reflects broader socio-cultural and economic trends that continually shape how narratives are consumed, interpreted, and incorporated into daily life (Ruohonen & Tuikka, 2021).

The Indonesian cinema industry has witnessed unprecedented shifts in distribution models, consumption patterns, and audience expectations over the past decade (Hidayat, Susilo, & Mujiono, 2023). Traditional movie theatres, once the sole gatekeepers of cinematic experiences, now coexist—and compete—with digital platforms that offer instant access to vast libraries of content. This transformation has forced cinema studies scholars to reconsider fundamental questions about what constitutes the cinematic experience, how spatial and temporal contexts shape meaning-making, and whether the communal ritual of theatre-going retains its cultural significance in an era of individualized streaming. The screen itself has multiplied and fragmented, appearing on smartphones, tablets, laptops, and smart televisions, each device reconfiguring the relationship between viewer and content.

This multiplicity of screens has profound implications for how we understand film as both art form and cultural commodity. Cinema studies must now grapple with the reality that a significant portion of contemporary film consumption occurs outside traditional exhibition spaces, challenging long-held assumptions about collective spectatorship, theatrical presentation, and the phenomenology of viewing. The intimate, private nature of streaming contrasts sharply with the public, shared experience of cinema-going, raising questions about how narrative engagement, emotional response, and cultural interpretation differ across these contexts. Moreover, the

Chapter 11

Voice of the Margins: Regional TV Newsrooms and the Reframing of Resistance in India

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the role of regional television journalism in India as a force of cultural assertion and political resistance. Unlike national networks that centralize narratives, regional channels rooted in vernacular languages highlight local struggles, protests, and marginalized voices, thereby reshaping democratic participation and media activism. Case studies from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu show how anchors use culturally resonant rhetoric and on-ground reporting to create participatory spaces of resistance. While acknowledging their susceptibility to local political pressures, the chapter emphasizes their immediacy, accountability, and community-driven approach. With digital migration to social media and OTT platforms, regional news now extends beyond borders, archiving counter-memories and amplifying subaltern voices. Positioned at the intersection of identity, power, and resistance, regional television emerges as central to reimagining India's media landscape in the 21st century.

1. INTRODUCTION

Television journalism has been an element of the public sphere in India so much that it defines the speech of the country and constitutes imaginaries of politics. The expansion of television news since the liberalization of the broadcasting industry in the 1990s is not only unprecedented, but also unbalanced as a centralized national

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch011

accountability collides with the extreme regional accounts. On the one hand, national news networks, which are mainly broadcast in Hindi and English, have turned into arenas of what Kumar and Thussu (2024) refer to as primetime nationalism, whereby the spectacle of news is tightly linked to nationalist discourses, state power, and corporate affiliations. Regional television newsrooms, which are increasingly significant but poorly understood platforms, are situated on the other and are often in opposition and complicate centralized narratives due to their vernacular language and grounded in local sociocultural contexts.

The prevalence of national networks within the Indian media system has led to the homogenisation of the coverage of the issues of the people. Increasingly, television news has been influenced by varieties of so-called judicial populism and performative coverage, Sinha (2022) argues, such that a conglomeration of courts, politicians, and media actors have engaged in the production of hype-like narratives that place visibility over content. Together with the concentration of ownership in metropolitan centers, this phenomenon has resulted in the systematic marginalization of regional voices, especially the voices of marginalized groups, in the mainstream discourse. Large networks have influence over the cities of India, but they disregard or dismiss the stories of rural and semi-urban areas, thus suppressing other ways of thinking about development, caste discrimination, agrarian struggles, and gendered violence.

The distance between the national noticing and silencing of the regions acquires a certain special significance in the present media environment where news consumption habits vary very rapidly. According to the Reuters Institute (2024; 2025), urban elites still read news in English and Hindi on reputable national brands; however, the local population has begun to lean towards the local TV stations and online media, where they can find news that prioritizes their local attitudes. It is a defamiliarization of a greater reorganization of faith and relevance in journalism: as national networks seek to project themselves as critics of the nation, local stations find a sense of place by airing where day-to-day conflict is being waged, a sense of belonging, urgency. The research question of the greatest concern in this area of activity is: how do regional television newsrooms in India, situated on the fringes of media power, replicate cultural narratives and provide counter-narratives of powerlessness?

We cannot disaggregate the question to the larger issue of representation within the Indian newsrooms. According to the *Oxfam India and Newslaundry* (2023) report, the following facts are quite intriguing about the lack of representatives of the marginalized groups in editorial and anchoring roles of the mainstream media. It adds that Dalits, Adivasis, women and linguistic minorities continue to be grossly underrepresented in decision making positions, which supports a structural bias constraining the range of voices that are represented in national news coverage. Regional television networks will more likely hire local residents who work and

Chapter 12

Media Narratives, Culture, and Environmental Identity in Northeast India: Framing the Ecological Self

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ABSTRACT

Northeast India, a region known for its beautiful landscapes, pleasant climate, historical sites, varied cultural and ethnic heritage, unique delicacies, and rich biodiversity, has been experiencing socio-economic and environmental challenges for the past few decades and is working towards addressing these issues holistically. This chapter dives into how people in Northeast India build their environmental identity through the media narratives they consume. This chapter highlights how consuming media can be a powerful psychological tool that helps shape our environmental identity, particularly in a region where traditional ecological knowledge meets modern media. By applying psychological theories of identity formation and media influence, the chapter investigates how media narratives can mould environmental identity in Northeast India. Synthesizing the insights, the chapter introduces a region-specific theoretical framework.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch012

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1. INTRODUCTION

“We moved from being a part of nature to being apart from nature.”

David Attenborough, A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future

Nestled in the beautiful hills and serene valleys of Northeast India lies a region known for its diverse cultural heritage, rich biodiversity, and enchanting landscapes. Encompassing eight states—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura—the region is often referred to as the “Seven Sisters” and their “Brother.” There are over 220 ethnic communities in Northeast India, which is often referred to as the “ethnic frontiers” of the country. This diversity in the region is shaped by its geography, historical migrations, and the sociopolitical developments over the past many centuries. The northeastern regions of India have an ethnic population whose ancestry originates from three distinct linguistic groups: Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, and Austroasiatic. The Tibeto-Burman speakers, who comprise the majority of the indigenous hill tribes, include the Naga, Mizo, Bodo, and Kuki. The plains of Assam and Tripura primarily comprise Indo-Aryan speaking communities, such as the Assamese and Bengalis (Brahmachari, 2019). The Austroasiatic language family remains distinct among the languages spoken by the Khasi and Jaintia tribes who reside in Meghalaya. The cultural diversity of the region is enriched through its diverse range of religious practices. Hinduism and Christianity retain dominance in the area, yet substantial numbers of Muslim, Buddhist, and indigenous religion followers also reside within the region (Longkumer, 2016). The adoption of Christianity by many tribal communities across colonial and post-colonial periods, particularly in Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, brought about significant changes to political and social life. Historical migration and settlement development patterns have formed crucial components that have shaped the ethnic structure. British colonial administration practiced through tea plantation development, along with administrative reforms, resulted in significant Indian inward migration, primarily from Bengal and other parts of the country. Demographic alterations and ongoing interethnic conflicts resulted from these events (Weiner, 1983). The formation of states based on ethnic identity became a political solution to self-determination demands with the creation of Nagaland (1963) and Mizoram (1987) following India’s independence (Bhattacharjee, 2018). The Northeast region holds many ethnic groups who have experienced discrimination and prejudice from Indian society, along with similar experiences from inside their own region. Different ethnic appeals have taken shape across the Northeast involving cultural protectionism, while some groups seek full self-ruling status or separate nationhood (McDuié-Ra, 2012). Recent decades have seen a rising importance of ethnic identity throughout public discussion and educational

Chapter 13

Immersive Narratives: A Netnographic Study on Tourist Experiences at the Game of Thrones Studio

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ABSTRACT

Tourist experiences at the Game of Thrones Studio explore how fans interact with physical manifestations of fictional worlds and the narrative immersion they experience. The chapter uses a netnographic approach of collecting and analyzing user-generated content from TripAdvisor reviews of Game of Thrones Studio Tours. The analysis identified key themes in tourist experiences, revealing how tour aspects contribute to an immersive experience. Thematic analysis categorized the data into dimensions of tourist memorable experience -entertainment, education, aesthetics, escapist, and serendipity. The findings show that the Game of Thrones Studio creates an immersive environment by blending physical and digital elements. Interactive exhibits, including costume and prop displays, offer tangible touchpoints. The chapter demonstrates that tourists construct their interpretations of the fictional world, influenced by their knowledge of the series and social interactions within the studio.

INTRODUCTION

People worldwide travel to different locations where they have seen films or TV shows (Batat & Wohlfeil, 2009) or to film studios (Kim, 2010) to get a glimpse of the film industry (Macdonald & Cousins, 2011). From the beginning, film audiences

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch013

were not content with watching movies or TV shows; they also enjoyed visiting film premieres or studios to gain firsthand information about how films are made.

Over the last few decades, the intersection of media, tourism, and cultural consumption has emerged as a significant area for academic study. Tourism is associated with places which have either historical, cultural, or natural significance, but with the increase in popularity of television and cinema, a new type of travel inspiration is created- screen tourism. Screen tourism is a phenomenon where audiences travel to destinations which are associated with either film or television. A significant case study in screen tourism is the HBO television series *Game of Thrones* (GOT). It premiered in 2011 and became immensely popular with a strong fan base. With the series being popular, it led to the creation of tourism opportunities at various locations, including Northern Ireland, Croatia, Spain and Iceland (Carl et al., 2019). The tour of the GOT states about screen tourism into a curated immersive environment. The tourists in the studio are not just spectators but are also co-creators who interpret the narrative world by engaging themselves (Hills, 2002).

A recent development of interest to film studios is the extraction of maximum benefit from film tourism, which has begun with film-theme parks or guided film studio tours to meet public demand. Some of the most popular theme parks are Disney theme parks located in Hollywood, Singapore, Tokyo, and Orlando, offering customers an audio-visual environment with a fictional world through narrative immersion. Narrative immersion focuses on the story's content and structure, attracting the viewer to the story and making them a part of the world. Narrative immersion in a film studio is created through an immersive narrative experience designed for tourists. The narrative experience is created as the tourist walks through the movie location, passing by and watching the interactive props and costumes that were part of the actual serial production. The tourists also have an opportunity to have their photographs taken with the memorable scenes. It also provides sensory engagement like sound effects, themed lighting and environmental effects in the studio settings with the personnel connections of handling various props used and also for recording their scenes at the studio. To sum up, it creates an experience for the tourists that could be cherished for life.

Tourism experience has become a dominant concept for both academicians and industry (Thanh & Kirova, 2017). The research interest could be justified as the tourism industry sells experiences to tourists (Kim, 2010). The study employs a netnographic approach, analyzing TripAdvisor reviews of the *Game of Thrones* Studio Tour to uncover key themes in tourist experiences. Netnography, an adaptation of ethnographic methods to online environments (Kozinets, 2010), enables the systematic exploration of user-generated content, providing insights into the authentic voices of tourists. The study contributes to the literature on screen tourism and immersive experience. It considers the concept of narrative immersion from

Chapter 14

Labour Day Special 2025: An Articulation of Fictional/ Non-Fictional Media Portrayal of Workers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter approaches media studies with questions of structural power that contribute to our ‘common sense’ of workers. The critique lies in the differentiated genres—news is deemed truthful, ‘serious,’ objective while dramas are ‘fictional’ and meant to entertain. The theory of articulation identifies news portrayal of workers as demanding, conjoined again with fictional characters and predictable conflict resolutions yet skirting contentious issues. While they don’t seem to be related, the articulation of their portrayal, even if through absences, tells a story of misrepresentation. Both media genres, tied to the official rhetoric of national development, political ownership, fragmented audience by race and commercialisation—deprive legitimate opinions and grievances of a wider space for democratic discourse. The findings displayed an ideology of social cohesion, which would be meaningless without recognising the working class who did not stand to benefit from the wealth they created and did not have a say in matters concerning their work environment.

WORKERS, UNITE?

Workers are an invaluable asset to humankind development. Issues concerning labour inevitably determine human rights such as minimum wage, social mobility,

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch014

Chapter 15

Blockchain Technology in the Art World: Ensuring Authenticity and Ownership

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ABSTRACT

Blockchain is becoming important in the art world by resolving issues such as verifying what is real, recording the ownership history and keeping art safe from theft. This chapter explains that having all the records secured on blockchain helps ensure transparent documentation of the history of an artwork which reduces the risks of it being misrepresented. NFTs and smart contracts make it possible for artists to manage their work, collect royalties if it is resold and engage in more direct sales with interested buyers. The chapter looks at how blockchain is implemented in the art world and discusses what that means for artists, dealers and collectors. It also deals with issues such as uncertain laws, harm to the environment and keeping digital assets preserved for years. The chapter examines these changes to explain in more detail how blockchain is improving and safeguarding the art world.

1. INTRODUCTION

Art has always been confronted with intractable problems that involve art makers and art collectors. Authenticity questions, provenance ownership claims and proper recording of provenance remain a bane of the industry. The authenticity is not always easy to be proven, particularly when artistic objects pass by many people during sev-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4089-0.ch015

eral years. Copies, reassignments and false claims of originality may spread among market participants, generating distrust between individuals buying and selling. In case of gaps in the history of artwork documentation, ownership issues also emerge (Oliveri et al., 2022). Inconsistent records or incomplete records in most cases make it hard to establish who the rightful owner is. Provenance as the recorded history of a piece of art is the key to both authenticity and ownership. Lack of documented provenance will lead to devaluation of artworks or even galleries and auctioneers will reject them. The other problem is theft and black trade which not only damages artists and collectors but also compromises the wholeness of cultural heritage. Combined these problems indicate the shortcomings of conventional systems of record keeping and checking in the art world (Batista et al., 2021).

Blockchain technology has come up in response to these challenges as a transformative solution. Blockchain offers a secure, transparent and tamper resistant digital ledger. The records of every transaction stored in a blockchain are encoded in such a manner that they cannot be changed making them specifically well suited in the process of ownership and provenance tracking. Registering works of art on a blockchain allows artists, dealers, and collectors to keep a record of the history of each work that will be immutable by definition (Abbate et al., 2022). This minimizes the chances of disagreements and simplifies the procedure of verifying authenticity. Blockchain also offers a decentralized system, which consists of the fact that no one authority controls the data. This aspect contributes to its validity, since everybody in the art system is capable of reading the same transparent ledger. These characteristics endear blockchain to replace the traditional paper system or centralized digital systems (Tyagi, 2023).

The importance of blockchain is not only in addressing the issues that are already there but also in changing the nature of the art market. In the conventional art scene, artists are expected to heavily depend on the services of the middlemen e.g. galleries, auction houses or agents to sell their work and to get noticed. These intermediaries are significant but deny artists and collectors direct communications (Malik et al., 2023). Blockchain technology, along with such new opportunities as Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and smart contracts, opens new possibilities in the domain of direct engagement. Artists are also in a position to sell their works to collectors at a much higher price in terms of control. Blockchain based smart contracts can also enable artists to get royalties automatically every time their creations are resold to the market. This results in a better system of fairness in which creators still have the long term value of their art (Qizi & Kamalovich, 2025).

Moreover, blockchain allows the emergence of digital as well as traditional art markets. Works of digital art that previously were hard to prove or trade safely are now able to be recorded in NFTs on blockchain platforms. This innovation has broadened the meaning of art ownership to increase the number of people who are collectors

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