

Digital Media and Their Role of Creating Values and Shaping The Public Opinion in the Modern Civil Society

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Abstract: The various institutions of the organic civil society have always contributed in shaping the opinion of the audiences and promoting their consciousness of their rights on the one hand and influencing the public policies on the other hand through working with local entities in making strategies for influencing and taking decisions about public policies. The roles and functions of the civil society are mainly supported by the different media as they provide news and information to be reached by the maximum of audiences. Nevertheless, the introduction of the internet in the early 1990s as well as the technological revolution in ICT and the internet of things (web 3.0) have reached into people's daily life in almost all its dimensions. Digital media and modern technologies have exerted remarkable influence on people's tastes and standards. They have a great role in the perceptual modulation and shaping of the public opinion. The tools of media discourse allow them nowadays to play the same role of the Institutions of social and cultural upbringing of the past. Beside the advantages of the technological revolution in what concerns the endless resources of knowledge and information in easy and accessible ways and the continuous connection to the world regardless of the time and space constraints ..., new media remain disadvantageous when stereotyping awareness and standards and assimilating them into a universal, monolithic and dominant hypostasis. In the digital era new values have been generated and the whole values system has been transformed into a distorted arena of incompatible values based on falsification, molding and distortion of consciousness. Consequently, social ties are disintegrated and the values of violence and hatred have been developed among members of the same community.

The current study sheds light on the huge transformations in modern society due to the technological development and the impact of the social media on new communities namely on new value systems. It aims at explaining the role of media in the marketing and making of information from a critical perspective. The research is based on analyzing and interpreting concrete examples of media content in the world and their impact on peoples' perception of events and their reactions to them. It is an attempt to explain and evaluate the effectiveness of media discourse in the moral system and social behavior.

Key words: Discourse, Media, ICT, Civil Society, Values system, Audiences, Public opinion

I. Introduction

Nowadays, the public opinion is largely affected and shaped by the different media in a way that they are seen to be playing the same role of the traditional social institutions including the school and family. Modern technologies have facilitated the flow of information beyond the time and space limitations. Besides, Digital media and the new communication modes have managed to attract the attention of larger portions of society; namely youth. They have provided limitless sources of knowledge and information more than ever; facilitating communication with the internal and the external worlds. The new media have remarkably raised the rate of people's knowledge and the political awareness as well as the values of global citizenship on the basis of social equality, freedom and social equality. On another hand, new media have disrupted the critical sense of the audiences who have become basically receptive. The public opinion has become more oriented and there has been a kind of shaping of this public opinion and the emergence of stereotyped awareness among people.

Consequently, the value system has witnessed a noticeable distortion as it has been marred by a couple of discordant values governed by non-horizontal relations. The people's values have been molded and falsified, the social relations have been affected to the extent that new values of violence and hatred have grown among the members of the same society. As a matter of fact, the world societies have been subjected to lots of crisis that threatened the stability of these societies and the Arab world in particular.

Digital media in the technological revolution era do play a fundamental role in the creation of a new digital public opinion instead of the organic one. Technological communication has always been considered a support to democracy; an effective tool for boosting the political practice in societies. Since the 19th century, the telegraph was considered a tool for connecting the east to the west. In the 80s mass media played remarkable roles in increasing the citizens' participation in the political life. The internet reinforced this communicational role of media and thus it resulted in a new social, economic, political and cultural situation characterized with a world with no limits. In the same way digital technologies have destroyed the geographical and time boundaries, they have also destroyed the conventional societal and state standards and benchmarks. This has opened the floor to imaginary and virtual societies wherein laws, regulations and provisions that govern the act disappear. The virtual world is sometimes closer to anarchy allowing people to do act freely with no consideration or fear of the reactions of governments or any other ethical or religious or legal authority. The virtual world or what Manuel Castells Calls "the network society" allows the users to say and do whatever they want behind some nicknames and pseudo names.

The emergence and development of the digital civil society

Basically, the term civil society implies a positive feeling of goodness and welfare; "**Acting for the sake of action**". But in politic thought, the term had been employed in different ways. John Locke used the expression "**political society**" to refer to the association formed by people and based on rules and laws to protect their property. He considers this civil society consisting of life, liberty and the estate. On another hand Carl Marx made civil society a synonym of "**bourgeois society**" while David Held states that Civil society constitutes "**those areas of social life — the domestic world, the economic sphere, cultural activities and political interaction — which are organized by private or voluntary arrangements between individuals and groups outside the direct control of the state**" (1987- 281).

In the 18th century and exactly in the enlightenment era there was a tendency of separating the civil society from the state. The state was associated with rules, punishment, tyranny and intolerance namely during the monarchial and religious ruling as well as the repressive governments. The term "civil society" later has been revived as a force for freedom and liberation in the 20th century through the thought of Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks wherein he emphasized the necessity of the free union of individuals and institutions that make the states' ideologies less oppressive and more flexible through what he calls **spontaneous hegemony**. (1971: 12)

The modern conception of civil society encompasses a range of non-governmental fields such as the associations, cultural entities, media, family life, professional associations etc. it includes almost all the fields wherein people are acting freely away from the interference or obstacles of governments and states.

The basic features of people's life have undergone substantial changes that are noticeable with regard to communication and socialization among members of society. Traditional means of communication have changed in the modern virtual society; e-mails have replaced the written letters and chat rooms took the place of family gatherings, e-cards instead of postcards etc. Therefore, human communication takes place out of the limitations of space and time: people in different time zones and different areas are able to interact regardless of distance and time variations. New communication takes place not only between two persons but directly between a person and the society in a way that was impossible before. Therefore, tens of people from Morocco for instance with their friends and relatives in Japan and America can interact at the same time and they can see

each other in a “no time no place communication”. Members of the virtual communities **“are not anchored to any particular place and time”** (van Dijk, 1997, p. 45)

Humans have managed to create a parallel world wherein people can achieve what was impossible in the real world due to time and place limitations as well as the social rules and structures. The need for a virtual world has always been a desire of people since the Greeks and ancient Egyptians; (the devils and myths as well as the world of Gods in the Olympus Mountains ...) and thus the modern virtual society is a new variety of these worlds that is worth studying through new approaches that combine social sciences with computer sciences and this is what we refer to here as digital sociology that deals with virtual digital human in the virtual society.

The evolution of computer networks and the virtual reality media have resulted in the development of a new virtual society as Van Dijk sees it; **“one of the promises of internet and other large-scale computer networks is the creation of new public spaces and communities. These spaces and communities are called virtual as they appear to be no longer tied to particular place or time”**. (1997. P.39). The modern society has become more and more digitalized and it has opened the floor for the new aspect of civil society to the extent that **“the rise of digital civil society is one of the defining characteristics of our time.”** Lucy Bernholz 2018

Virtual society or virtual community refers to any online group that shares some ideas, interests and emotions over the network. Rheingold defines virtual communities as **“social aggregations that emerge from the Internet when enough people carry on public discussions long enough and with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace”** (1993. P 5)

People in these virtual communities communicate with each other either through posting messages that are seen and contacted by huge numbers of internet users or via real-time chatting wherein they can chat; in writing or orally in a context free of the limitations of geography, religion, conventions or even ethnic constraints.

The virtual communities allow their members to develop a sense of belonging by allowing them membership through which they can follow and easily interact with each other. Besides, they develop a sense of trust as they tend to tighten their virtual relations on the basis of the shared background that are built upon. Members in these communities can interact with each other and consequently they influence and are influenced by what happens in these communities. They can express different emotions virtually. They can also support and be supported by the other members through sharing messages of condolences and sympathy in different occasions satisfying; thus, their psychological and emotional needs. In this respect, **“Digital civil society represents a new form of public space that allows for collaboration, dialogue and the exchange of ideas beyond the confines of traditional institutions.”** (Stanislav Kirschbaum 2017). Another advantage of virtual communities is that they allow a virtual permanent availability to the members who are permitted to remain connected to people over the world and throughout the day. As a matter of fact, **“Digital civil society has changed the way we think about our role as citizens and the way we engage with the world around us.”** - Beth Kanter (2010) “Likes” and “shares” are signs of appreciation and respect, “comments” and “pokes” are more used for attracting attention and agreeing or disagreeing with a person or content. Dissatisfaction and strong disagreement can be expressed through “blocks”...

In an attempt to understand the reality of virtual community, Van Dijk (1997) stated that organic communities are characterized with being restricted to tight groups (families and relatives...), they are bound to geographical and chronological boundaries wherein communication depends on both verbal and non-verbal signs. On the opposite, he claims that virtual communities **“are loose affiliations of special interest, target and discussion groups and other group (age)... that appear to work without these ties (time and space) and they are mainly based on text, data and graphics on screens”** (pp. 45- 46). Despite all these differences, virtual communities are to a great extent **“similar to organic communities as far as shared interests or goals, sustained social interaction, shared values and membership rules or norms”** (Pentina, Prybutok& Zhang,2008,p.115)

These characteristics of the virtual communities have made them more attractive and the availability of social media allowed people over the world to create friendships with whom members can share their pride and success. Facebook walls give good examples of people showing themselves through posting pictures of their

success and well-being. They do also post their CVs and certificates for various reasons. Critiques claim that the new era is based on the principle of “show yourself” through social media instead of the Greek principle of “know yourself”. It is also claimed that the society in its traditional form; wherein knowledge was the base and thought was a character, is no longer existing. Despite all these qualities of virtual communities, they **“lack face-to-face communication and anonymity”** (Postmes Spears & Lea, 2000). Yet, different members of these virtual communities go on social media for different reasons and with different goals and objectives. **“They can also have in common the same reasons for users to join them—information exchange, social support exchange, friendship, recreation”** (Ridings & Gefen, 2004).

In the realm of these changes and with the technological revolution, the organic civil society finds itself face to face with a new evolving virtual civil society that takes many of the roles and responsibilities of the traditional civil society. The virtual society allows more freedom of expression and people – in this public domain- get together on a voluntary base and can easily create institutions and organizations. These technologies have changed the world from what Marshall McLuhan called “the global village” in 1964 in describing **“the phenomenon of the world's culture shrinking and expanding at the same time due to pervasive technological advances that allow for instantaneous sharing of culture”** (p.192). They have changed the world into a happy little farm wherein the broadcasted information turns around the globe 7.2 times a second. New technological development and social media are playing an important role in educating and sensitizing masses. They allow people to know all the events over the world on different levels. Information are shared in an easy and fast manner through the net and social media that became closely related to the countries’ policies. Social media have become platforms for opinions; on the one hand, they are used by governments and political parties to express their attitudes, ideas and visions to different issues. Social media are largely used by politicians to communicate with large audiences and implicitly influencing the public opinion. On the other hand, common people interact with the information and react to them.

With the successive setbacks of the elites in different societal situations, and with the remarkable retreat positions of political parties in the real life many people, around the world, have lost confidence in the traditional public opinion. The large area of freedom granted by social media and the ease of communication and access to information between individuals and peoples have made the digital world a haven for those who have opinions and the opposite opinions. Lots of factors and events have contributed in empowering the digital public opinion and increasing its influence in the contemporary society including the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yamen ...in what was known as the “Arab spring”. The new digital public opinion has become a real power with great impact on people, societies and precisely policies. The new digital public opinion affects and is affected by the cultural, social and political conditions of the society it represents. Social media platforms have become more attractive to millions of young people over the world who are dreaming of change, of a better life, of more equality and justice... The new digital public opinion has resulted in evolution of a digital civil society able to express the largest portion of society inside the same nation or outside of it. The new digital civil society started with an idea or an opinion that is shared online to express a particular attitude or action. It is imbedded and defends an ideology that aims at a political result. The opinions and the ideas in the digital community are shared with the maximum of people online who adopt, share or defend them or comment. through people’s reactions of like, share or comment. **“The internet offers a new digital frontier where civil society organizations can innovate, experiment and leverage the power of networks to create new forms of social impact.”** (Charles Leadbeater 2008)

Unlike in the traditional civil society, the tools of the digital civil society are not under the governments’ control. Internet nowadays belongs to no one and to everyone at the same time. Sometimes people need to pay some fees to benefit from the service sometimes, they can even share connection with each other and in many times they can have access freely in a coffee or a mall... Moreover, it encompasses different people from different age groups; men and women, kids and adults with different interests and goals. This civil society has resulted in a powerful public opinion that managed to have a great impact on society; social media have managed to change the regime in Egypt for instance and it has been taken as a model in many countries. Internet itself has shifted from the readable version web 1.0 technologies based on the users playing no role on creating

online content. In the beginning of the 21st century, the emergence of web 2.0 technologies allowed users to create content or commentary media online. **“While Web 1.0-style websites are still available and used for some purposes, they have been complemented by a multitude of online platforms that allow and indeed encourage users to contribute content and share it with other users.”**(Lupton 2015: 3). A more interactive version of web 3.0 (the internet of things) permitted interconnected smart devices to communicate with each other wirelessly. With Web 3.0 more interconnections between the platforms and the objects exchanging information between sites through applications with no human intervention. **“It has been predicted that these links will eventually produce ‘data entities’ with unique identifiers, including places and objects.**(Halford et al. 2013, p. 176).

Basically, the freedom of speech and the possibility of creating associations as well as the liberty of peaceful assembly and taking part in the general debates are very crucial issues for a nation’s human rights and for the citizens aiming at conducting a change in their society. The United Nations defines the role of the civil society as preserving peace and security, contributing in achieving development as well as the promotion and respect of the rights of people. Activists in the civil society are supposed to protect and reinforce the rights of people and act on different levels: first through enhancing and promoting the citizens’ consciousness of rights then working with local entities in making strategies for influencing and taking decisions about the public policies. Civil society englobes human rights activists, NGOs and associations concerned with the general welfare, coalitions and networks dealing with children and women’s rights, and environmental issues, minorities representatives and unions etc.

All these actors of the civil society collaborate with the aim of solving problems related to corruption, poverty and social inequalities, strengthening the principles of accountability and promoting public liberties. They advocate transparency, protection of the environment and the right to development. The civil society concern in minorities is reflected in the continuous call for empowering these minority groups and combating all forms of discrimination and hatred speech. Above all civil society activists are concerned with youth empowerment and advancing social justice on the local, national and global level.

Hand in hand with these changes and with the remarkable evolution of communication and social media, the traditional civil society has witnessed a lot of regression. More and more people started to lose confidence in the organic civil society in expressing their worries and speaking out their problems. The emergence of the digital civil society is then becomes an alternative for different societies to express their worries and concerns and take appropriate decisions as David Bollier states **"Digital civil society can help us to build a more open, inclusive and democratic society that empowers citizens and gives them a voice in decision-making."** (Bollier 2014)

Media Sociology and the influences of Social Media

Despite the differences between scholars on the definition of sociology and its history, it is agreed that it is the science concerned with the study of social phenomena and the development as well as the functioning of the human society. It is the study of the social life in its globality including the complex social systems and the social stratification that is concerned with the study of the family, religion, ethics and the modern life. The issues of sociology revolve around the social life (economy, politics...) social relations and social changes. In brief, sociology is concerned with all issues related to individuals in relation to their societies. Sociology of information or media sociology is one of the important branches of sociology that focuses on the information process as a dynamic social activity that subsumes the message, its sender and receiver, the medium, the effect and the feedback.

The sociology of media is a sub-field of sociology concerned with the analysis of how mass media communication influences individuals’ views of each other, their interaction. It is the analysis of transmission and accessibility of information between individuals within communities.

Sociology of media analyses mass media in general and social media in two steps: a morphological study that deals with the analysis of the structure of each medium in terms of origin, development and spread from a social point of view. And the functional physiological study through analyzing the functional role that different media can play in the society with the aim of understanding their governing rules. In this study we are concerned with

media sociology as the science that studies media as being social phenomena. We are concerned with the analysis of the actual reality of media, i.e. the study of what is being not what should be.

Social media **“as a term used to describe the interaction between groups or individuals in which they produce, share, and sometimes exchange ideas, images, videos and many more over the internet and in virtual communities”**(Waseem 2018: 347). They refer to the platforms used by individuals and groups to build social relations with those they share the same interests or backgrounds. These platforms are extensively based on technology and are web based and that is why they are largely used by bigger portions of societies who do not find time and place obstacles. The modern smart technology and mobile gadgets (laptops, smart phones and iPads ...) made access to these platforms almost permanent and easy as individuals can be connected 24 hours a day and in all places. The easy access and the availability of these media and the messages they convey have had a remarkable effect on individuals, groups and whole communities. Lots of changes have happened on people’s behavior, attitudes, conceptions and values. Many of these effects are positive on the society especially in what concerns person to person communication wherein people can connect and reconnect with peers, partners and even old companions. They can share information, pictures and videos instantly and this has changed the life style of communities as whole.

In addition to connectivity, digital media help people ,namely students, be exposed to limitless sources of information. People’s knowledge has been enhanced and developed in different fields with less cost, less time and no mobility. Individuals can learn from each other and help one another financially and socially. The large social network provides the most recent sources of data and information about the newest events and. Innovations all over the globe. These platforms are beneficial for the users who use them for promoting their goods, experience and information. Along with these advantages, we cannot deny the noble function of social media because **“Social media can also be used for the noble causes. The public is making use of social media for contribution for needy people and it can be a quick way to help such people.”** (ibid p.352) consequently, we can assume that social media do really contribute in the making and building of communities wherein different individuals with the assets of their diversity on the linguistic, religious, cultural levels create and share contents on the various platforms. Social media users find plenty of options to choose their favorite bloggers and target them with the appropriate contents. Information and ideas are shared beyond geographical boundaries and this is how societies are driven to change and develop or at least this is how ideas and opinions are shaped in societies.

Despite all these benefits of digital media, their negative effects on society are serious and influential namely when it is a matter of people’s reputation. Simple pictures, posts or fake stories shared on the network can spoil some individuals notoriety. Some social media users are specialized in hacking these types of news and they don’t care about these issues of reputation, honesty, validity..... the big problem is when younger generations consume these contents and be influenced by some bloggers. Addiction to online networking is very harmful as any other type of addiction that might destroy people’s life. Along with this, sometimes social media platforms fail to control contents with obscene sex, violence, hate discourse...**“occasionally individuals share photographs via web- based networking media that contains savagery and sex, which can harm the conduct of children and youngsters ”** (William 2012. pp.123-141) People’s privacy is in danger in the digital age; personal data is being exposed on the platforms and different people can have access to them. These personal information can represent a danger to the owners as in cases when pictures have been used against people, or they were tracked and hurt in their families and belongings..... New forms of violence have been introduced to the modern societies such as the digital harassment and electronic bullying. Many stories of people who were victims of these evil acts. According to the American research center PewCenter, **“The greater part of the youngsters have progressed toward becoming casualties of the digital bullying over the past. Since anyone can make a phony record and do anything without being tailed, it has ended up being exceptionally straightforward for anyone to spook on the Internet.”**. Sometimes the important advantages of social media happen to be its strongest sources of problems for the individuals and groups. While many people can benefit from the business opportunities of the digital world, others are specialized in fraud and scams via the net.

So, we can observe that the modern society has become web-based and social networking is getting a routine act of individuals' and groups' life to the extent of dependency in many cases. And thus, a new value system is being produced in society. Many standards of what is good and what is bad take new perspectives within a global new society that has no geographical borders or time constraints.

Values shift in the new era of digital media

Human beings are social beings. Individuals are driven to learn how to mix, behave and adapt with their society. Socialization is concerned with integrating the individual into society and integrating society into the individual by introducing values, benchmarks and preparations that make him a social entity with identity. Therefore, addressing values from a sociological perspective implies the analysis of their influence on society as important factors that drive the social action. Society tends to provide individuals with a set of values and principles, through the processes of socialization, that serve as a reference for his conceptions, feelings and behavior. These determinants are basic for distinguishing what is desired or undesired socially.

Different scholars have given different meanings to values. Generally they are referred to as the person's principles or standards of behavior. Values are known as the moral philosophy that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Montesquieu used the term *les moeurs* (**the mores**), while De Toqueville spoke about **collective passions** (*Les passions collectives*). Emile Durkheim considers values in relation to the **collective conscious** and Max Weber spoke about the system of ideas individuals have in a given community. According to Weber, Values represent a lifestyle, characterized with being desirable and recommended, for individuals and groups who get engaged and respect them.

Values are basic indicators that guide human interaction in society. These principles and standards are originally set by the society wherein we live and are directed to manage our behavior in this society. But, the technological revolution and the digitalization of communication have resulted in a new social, economic, political and cultural situation characterized with freedom. A world that seems to have no limits and no boundaries: a world that falls outside the authority of the state. Rather, it is a world that falls outside the framework of the concept of the region in its traditional sense with its geographical borders. It is also a world that falls outside the framework of the boundaries and constraints made by either by the state or society in general. This requires reconsidering the concept of the state and society as determinants of values and principles. The virtual societies do not recognize the existence of the state or the borders of the national homeland. The legitimacy of the social action in the virtual world is not the same as that of our real world. It is a community wherein the members interact but do not meet, they interact through new and different channels that allow individuals to say and do what they like with no fear of the reaction of the community and its regulatory and ethical institutions.

Talking about values in the digital community needs to be reconsidered in a world that permits the forbidden acts and words. The digital world equates the good with the evil when allowing the members to hide from each other and from the states authorities behind some pseudo names.

In the normal society, values have five basic characteristics: awareness, subjectivity, temporal and spatial relativism, the hierarchical characteristic as well as the validity measure. A value is a cognitive perception, an emotional feeling, and an external behavior that generates a feeling towards the subject such as interest, acceptance or refusal. Besides, individuals internalize the values of their society through the processes of socialization, wherein they acquire culture, language, concepts and symbols that govern their behavior and determine their expectations and predict the responses of the others. These values ensure positive interaction between society members in the sense that the individual integrates within the society and the society integrates within the individual. Durkheim believes in the powerful force exerted by society on individuals making thus the collective consciousness that allows these individuals to bind together for social integration. He gave an example of an idol (*ma3boud*) that might be a mere stone or piece of wood that brings no benefit nor does it push any harm, yet people feel a great reverence towards it. Relativism of values is both on time and space levels: they vary according to the cultures of societies or even the sub-cultures within the same society. On another hand, values are linked to the historical development of societies in the sense that what was acceptable at one stage might be inappropriate in another stage and vice versa. Hence, values might vary according to the individuals' age in a way that what was desirable in childhood and youth might not be the same in advanced

ages and so on. As far as hierarchy of values we can claim that they vary according to the degree of their importance for both the individuals and the societies: the ladder of values is the hierarchical arrangement of a set of values that an individual or group adopt, depending on his/ their behavior in an unconscious way. Finally, It is important to know the measure of the validity of values, because they differ from each other and their differences make them in themselves subject to moral judgments. Therefore, the validity of values is related to what they achieve in terms of goals. Values are supposed to be understood through their embedded cultures not through the other cultures. That is to say values are understood from the inside and not from the outside.

The issue is that modern societies in the digital era tend to have new value systems and ethics that do not necessarily reflect the popular values of our organic societies. The traditional notions of living well and of a productive life seem to be changing in the digital world. Within the huge amount of information in the digital media, it is quite impossible to distinguish the false and misleading sources and this reflects on the misrepresentation of identities. Truth and integrity issues are in question in the cyber world. Trolling, spamming and bullying are all examples of malicious behaviors related to the juxtaposition between positive privacy and anonymity. Privacy itself is being questioned in social media. Access to the users data is permitted by developers and operators who seem to take no responsibility to provide the users with some control over the use and access to their data. Many values are shaken in the digital era; the sense of community is no longer available for users who are sharing space with individuals from the four corners of the world. People's commitment to civic responsibilities in the global society is quite confusing as individuals seem to be sharing everything but nothing in fact. The features of values we have previously stated (awareness, subjectivity, relativism, hierarchy and validity) are not applicable in the digital world. Instead, digital emotions and new values are being introduced in the virtual world to the extent that modern societies are facing a great challenge on the cultural and identity level. Individuals' behavior as well as relationships on the different social structures (family, civil society and organizations...) seems to be affected by the technological revolution. The relationships between individuals in the same society get more and more virtual: despite the fact that means of communication have facilitated contact between individuals, they have made it difficult to meet face to face in real time and in the same place. Even though it is not a matter of face to face but it implies difficulties in the social relations and duties that embody a set of values in society including friendliness, compassion, generosity, solidarity, cooperation and intimacy. On the contrary, there is a growth of individualism and isolationism in the face of the destruction of social cohesion. In the new world of digitalization, a text message from a smart phone or a laptop containing few words and emoticons tend to summarize all the relationships and emotions.

The tools in the digital society; smart phones, laptops and tablets..., have become additional sources of socialization that carry positive and negative values for the digital community which is formed of children and adolescents as claimed the UNICEF in its report in 2017 that 2/3 of internet users around the world are kids and adolescents aged below 18.

II. Conclusion

In light of this technological development and expansion known to the virtual community, we may hear, from time to time, calls to protect society from cyberspace. These calls carry in their contents the act of fear on the one hand, and the rejection of the different and the other on the other hand.

Nevertheless, this approach is closer to the act of the security establishment than to that of researchers and scholars. Approaching the phenomenon should not be based on the act of banning and forbidding due to the fear of the new virtual society, rather it should be concerned with the ability of conducting a parallel effect on individuals. This effect which at the same time makes people more interested in the virtual world in an effective way, needs to make them capable of distinguishing the good from the evil and attempt to resolve this harm.

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