



Impacts of the Expansion of New Ideas on Democracy

Stephanie Lee¹ and Carrie Donahue²

¹Palo Alto High School, ²Independent



Fig. 2. Major literature themes included in dissertation

THEMES OF RESEARCH			
Turner's Thesis	Mass Media	Social Media	Fake News
Idea that more land = more freedom, democracy, and life, so when the frontier closed, people looked to an int'l stage for expansion of ideas, life, etc. (Turner, 1893)	Mass media evolved from print to digital media in early 1900s, with TV, radio, and cinema; computers and the Internet came in the late 20th century. (Randle, 2001)	Media broadcasting is the broadcast of a one-sided message to the audience, while social media allows for two parties to interact with one another. (Carson, 2017)	Social media polarizes politics, distributes biased news and hand over rights to private corporations. (The Economist, 2017)
Societies are like organism: over time, they evolve. America is a such living organism. Westward expansion is an example of a stage of evolution. (Bonazzi, 1993)	A main theory of the media's influence is the Social Learning Theory, which states that the media actively and subtly educates the public. (Mehraj, Bhat, Mehraj, 2014)	Social media is a platform that helps businesses reach their consumer base and influences how they approach advertising. (Mount, Martinez, 2014)	Digital media is revolutionary. The Internet is fastest medium for info to spread and the easiest to fabricate information. (Burkhardt, 2017)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES

Special thanks to my mentor Carrie Donahue and adviser Dr. Jeong Choe for helping make this project possible.

References

- Bonazzi, T. (1993). Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis and the Self-Consciousness of America. *Journal of American Studies*, 27(2), 149-171. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ez.pausd.org/stable/40467257>.
- Turner, F. J. (1893). The Significance of the Frontier in American History. In *The Frontier in American History*. Retrieved from <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/archives/the-significance-of-the-frontier-in-american-history> (Reprinted from *The Frontier in American History*, The Annual Report of the American Historical Association)
- Randle, Q. (2001, August 17). A Historical Overview of the Effects of New Mass Media Introductions on Magazine Publishing During the 20th Century. Retrieved October 29, 2017, from First Monday website: <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/885/794>.
- Mehraj, Bhat, Mehraj. (2014). Impacts Of Media on Society: A Sociological Perspective., 3(6). Retrieved from International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention database. (Accession No. 2319 - 7722)
- The Economist*. (2017, November 4). Do social media threaten democracy? The Economist. Retrieved November 29, 2017, from The Economist website: <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21730871-facebook-google-and-twitter-were-supposed-save-politics-good-information-drove-out>
- Carson, J. (2017, July 31). What is social media and how did it grow so quickly? Retrieved December 10, 2017, from The Telegraph website: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/0/social-media-did-grow-quickly/>
- Burkhardt, J (2017). Combating Fake News in the Digital Age. Retrieved December 10, 2017, from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ez.pausd.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=126274669&site=eds-live>.
- Mount, M; Martinez, M (2014). Social Media: A Tool for Open Innovation. Retrieved Dec 10, from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ez.pausd.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edb&AN=97950439&site=eds-live>.
- Vidich, A (1990). American Democracy in the Late Twentieth Century: Political Rhetorics and Mass Media. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20006978>
- Grill, H (2011). Does Social Media Promote Democracy? Retrieved January 27, 2018, from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ez.pausd.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aqh&AN=79462090&site=eds-live>.
- Flamm, M (2012). Review of: What Really Happened to the 1960s: How Mass Media Culture Failed American Democracy. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24455814>
- Penn State University Press (2012). New Media, Old Money. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jinfopoli.6.2016.0066>.

INTRODUCTION

Since its beginning, the United States has always been an adventurous country; we looked to expand into new frontiers. Whether the frontiers are physical (Manifest Destiny) or more ideological (the rise of mass media), America has always been expanding its presence into new mediums. (Turner, 1893)

It is important to look at this topic because in a society which values justice and equal rights, we must identify and acknowledge any that might hinder our progress toward a more perfect union.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Fig. 1. Data summarized from the general analysis of four main readings



CLAIM: Mass Media helps EXPAND democracy.

TRUE	FALSE
- Political campaigns, delivered through social media and propagated through mass media channels, are putting more attention to minority groups in order to appeal to them. This allows minorities to actually have a voice in politics, and be represented in government. (Penn State University Press, 2012)	- Mass media reporting in politics has become more centered around generating gossip around politicians' personal lives, thus help corrupting the democratic process of voting. (Vidich, 1990)
	- Media misrepresented many of the social justice movements of the 1960s, driving a rift between activists and the larger population. (Flamm, 2012)
	- Authoritarian governments use mass media to manipulate information to the masses by tricking people into believing they know the true facts behind the story.
	- Social media platforms wield the power of censoring certain topics, since information is regulated by private companies and must abide to their policy, not the First Amendment. (Grill, 2011)

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

The negative impacts of mass and social media requires journalists to take extra steps in addition to traditional reporting to maintain the trust of the public. This is twofold: to think of ways to evade biases and to keep news on media that encourages free though (no censoring of material). I plan to contibue this research in college.

NEXT STEPS:

- Expand source list: analyze more scholarly articles, dissertations, etc.
- Incorporate a more human aspect to this paper — conduct case studies of people and social media, survey people about news preferences, etc.
- Expand grounds of research beyond mass and social media to explore the implications of the dark web.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

Observation and analysis lead to the conclusion that mass media does not help expand democracy.

In the sources analyzed, a majority agree that mass media is detrimental to democracy. Although mass and social media makes politics more accessible to minorities, mass and social media can and were used to manipulate democratic elections, drive a rift between public support and movements, and can manipulate information.

Overall, the negative impacts on democracy outweigh the inclusion of minorities. The negative implications harm a larger audience on a larger scale, while the positive implications help a smaller proportion of the population.

Therefore, social and mass media do more harm than good to the advancement of democracy.

Fig. 3. Frederick Jackson Turner is an influential historian in American history. His 1893 thesis, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, plays a pivotal role in American thought.

