

Bond University

DOCTORAL THESIS

The Social Media-State Relationship: A Blended Conceptual Framework.

Wilson, Tyler

Award date:
2022

Licence:
CC BY-NC-ND

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.



**BOND
UNIVERSITY**

The Social Media-State Relationship: A Blended
Conceptual Framework

Tyler Wilson

Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

June 2022

Faculty of Society and Design

Professor Jeffrey Brand and Associate Professor Jonathan Ping

ABSTRACT

Social media are an increasingly important factor in societies worldwide. Platforms have had a democratising effect on information sharing, in turn changing how individuals interact with one another across all facets of society. Resultingly, the fundamental political economy of power within societies has incorporated social media into the dynamic struggle for hegemony. To encapsulate this dynamic, the social media-state relationship framework and Order Index proposed in this thesis present an approach to understanding and modelling these dynamics.

Contemporary social media scholarship is invaluable in highlighting social media's impact on societies in varying phenomena – organising social movements, cultivating influencer capitalism, and the rise of Twitter diplomacy. Beyond these cases, social media has catalysed the broader data economy and surveillance capitalism – another saturated area in the literature. A gap in the literature emerges in attempting to tie the disparate threads of varying perspectives on social media together to present a unified, normative framework of the social media-state relationship.

To fill this gap, I draw upon Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four theories of the Press* as an initial conceptualisation of global media-state relationships. Antonio Gramsci's (1971) *Prison Notebooks* and Robert Cox's (1981) Neo-Gramscian perspectives on hegemonic competition in societies provide insight into how those relationships emerged historically and have been changed by social media. With the broad framework constructed, I present four models of the social media-state relationship: Free Market, Social Consciousness, Strongman, and Big Brother. Each model characterises a different social media-state relationship, inspired by Siebert et al.'s original four models, and is presented alongside a relevant case study.

The Order Index was created as an evaluative survey instrument to measure varying social media-state relationships. An experimental 2x4 quantitative study that recruited 239 Australians was conducted to validate this instrument and validate the four models. The study's findings validated the instrument and each model's efficacy for observing and measuring the social media-state relationship in differing conditions.

Thus, this thesis contributes to the literature with a characterisation of the social media-state relationship as presented in a blended conceptual framework measured by the

Order Index, which has achieved initial external validation. The thesis provides several paths for future research. Further, this framework offers a normative lens for understanding varying social media-state relationships worldwide through four models. Additionally, through the framework, insights into social media's societal impacts can be quickly illustrated to academic and non-academic stakeholders. Thus, taking a step toward closing the gap between theory and practice.

KEYWORDS

Data economy, Four Theories, media-state relations, Neo-Gramscianism, political communication, political economy, power, Social media, social media-state relationship, surveillance capitalism

DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research.

I declare that the research presented within this thesis is a product of my own original ideas and work and contains no material which has previously been submitted for a degree at this university or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

Name: Tyler Wilson

Signature:

Date:

ETHICS DECLARATION

The research associated with this thesis received ethics approval from the Bond University Human Research Ethics Committee. Ethics application numbers for the associated research are: TW00134 & TW00137.

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

No Copyright declaration. No published manuscripts were included for publication within this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The task of writing a thesis is a long process. I have come to appreciate the scale and scope involved – and the scale and the scope of the support needed to finish the task.

Patrice, my partner, has supported this endeavour and me at every turn, without question. I am certain that I would not have been able to complete the thesis without her support and encouragement. She consistently goes above and beyond, and I could not be more grateful for her. Similarly, though half a world away, my parents, Steve and Donna, have constantly offered appreciated encouragement during my thesis journey.

I could not have completed the thesis without the support of my research supervisors, Professor Jeffrey Brand and Associate Professor Jonathan Ping. Their insights and guidance have enabled me to elevate the thesis far beyond what was proposed so long ago. In particular, Jeff’s guidance throughout the experimental and quantitative aspects of the thesis has been an invaluable aid. His support has allowed me to develop further as a researcher and statistician. I never envisioned a point where I would enjoy looking at lengthy spreadsheets, but that is now the case in part through Jeff’s support.

Lastly, I would be remiss to not acknowledge my colleagues within the Transformation CoLab at Bond University and the camaraderie they have extended to me. Their encouragement, especially during the final pushes, has helped to make the journey that much easier.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page.....	
Abstract	iii
Keywords	v
Declaration By Author	vi
Ethics Declaration	vii
Copyright Declaration	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Table of Contents.....	x
List of Tables.....	xvii
List of Figures	xviii
List of Abbreviations.....	xix
Chapter 1: Introducing the Social Media State	1
1.0 Establishing the Social Media-State Relationship.....	2
1.1 Considering Social Media’s Impacts	5
1.2 Thesis Structure and Methods	6
1.3 Defining Core Terms	9
Chapter 2: Historical & Contemporary Media-State Relations.....	12
2.0 Considering Media-State Relations Literature	13
2.1 Understanding the Media-State Relationship.....	14
2.1.1 Media Influence	14
2.1.2 State Influence.....	15
2.1.3 Intermedia Relations	15
2.1.4 International Relations	16
2.2 Public Media and Mass Media: The Origin of Media-State Theories	18
2.2.1 The Four Theories of the Press	18
2.4.1.1 The Authoritarian Model	19
2.4.1.2 The Libertarian Model.....	19
2.4.1.3 Social Responsibility Model.....	19

2.4.1.4 The Soviet-communist Model.....	20
2.2.2 The Evolution of the Models.....	21
2.2.2.1 Democratic Participant.	21
2.2.2.2 The Development Media Model.	22
2.2.2.3 The Four Theories in the 21 st Century.	23
2.2.2.4 Siebert et al.'s Four Theories in Asia.....	23
2.3.3.1 Contemporary Western Examples of the Four Theories.	26
2.2.3 Neo-Gramscian Uses of the Four Theories	27
2.4 Media-State Relations Models Since the 1980s	28
2.5 Media-State Relations' Historical Evolution.....	31
2.5.1 The Early Media-State Relationship: Rome.....	31
2.5.2 The Avvisi Period	34
2.5.3 The Printing Revolution.....	35
2.5.4 The Rise of Electric and Digital Communications.....	37
2.5.5 The Digital Age Becomes the Information Age.....	40
2.5.6 The Contemporary Era's Rising Star – Social Media	41
2.6 Concluding Remarks	42
Chapter 3: Social Media's Impacts on Society.....	43
3.0 The Contemporary Literature on Social Media	44
3.0.1 Definitions.....	44
3.0.2 Social Media's Scale, Spread and Usage	46
3.0.3 Social Media at the Macro-Level	47
3.0.4 Critical Social Media Scholarship.....	50
3.1 Social Media's Impacts	52
3.1.1 Political Impacts.....	52
3.1.1.1 Elections and Voting.....	52
3.1.1.2 Revolution and Social Movements, Discourse Censorship.	54
3.1.1.3 The Rise of the Bots.....	55
3.1.1.4 Twitter Diplomacy's Implications for International Relations.	57
3.1.2 Economic Impacts.....	59

3.1.2.1	Establishing the Data Economy.	60
3.1.2.1.1	Defining Data.	60
3.1.2.1.2	Establishing the Actors.	62
3.1.2.1.3	Social Media Data Economics.	64
3.1.2.2	Social Media’s Business Impacts.	66
3.1.3	Legal Impacts.	69
3.2	Concluding Remarks.	72
Chapter 4:	Considering International Relations Theories.	73
4.0	The Realist Paradigm.	75
4.0.1	Classical Realism.	77
4.0.2	The Rise of Structural Realism.	78
4.0.3	Neoclassical Realism – Merging New & Old.	81
4.0.4	Final Thoughts on Realism.	81
4.1	The Liberal Paradigm.	83
4.1.1	Classical Liberalism.	83
4.1.2	Neoliberalism – The Response to Neorealism.	85
4.1.3	Final Remarks on Liberalism.	87
4.2	Critical International Relations.	88
4.2.1	Wendt’s Constructivism.	88
4.2.2	Marx’s Capital.	89
4.2.3	Gramsci, Cox and the Neo-Gramscian Perspective.	91
4.3	Final Remarks on Critical Theories & the Literature.	96
Chapter 5:	Constructing the Social Media-State Relationship.	98
5.0	Framing the Chapter.	99
5.1	Clarifying Terms.	100
5.2	Building the Basic Framework.	101
5.3	Establishing the State.	104
5.4	Considering the Authoritarian and Libertarian (AvL) Dichotomy.	107
5.5	Establishing the Individuals.	108
5.6	Considering the Left and Right Dichotomy.	109

5.7	Positing the Media’s Role within a State.....	110
5.8	Establishing the Global System as it Matters to States.....	112
5.9	The Basic Framework of the Social Media-State Relationship.....	113
5.10	Concluding the Core Frame.....	115
	Chapter 6: The Strongman Social Media-State Relationship.....	116
6.0	Framing the Model.....	117
6.1	Establishing the Theoretical Strongman.....	118
6.1.1	Building the Contemporary State.....	119
6.1.2	Considering the Media’s Historical Role.....	120
6.1.3	Establishing the Contemporary Media Environment.....	121
6.1.4	Synthesising the Strongman Social Media-State Relationship.....	122
6.2	Presenting the Strongman Case.....	125
6.2.1	Reviewing Contemporary Russian Governance.....	125
6.2.2	Constructing the Russian State’s Relationship with Social Media.....	127
6.2.3	Establishing the Russian Hegemon.....	128
6.3	The Russian State and the Strongman Model.....	130
	Chapter 7: The Big Brother Social Media-State Relationship.....	132
7.0	Framing the Model.....	133
7.1	Establishing the Theoretical Big Brother.....	134
7.1.1	Building the Contemporary State.....	134
7.1.2	Considering the Media’s Historical Role.....	136
7.1.3	Establishing the Contemporary Media Environment.....	137
7.1.4	Synthesising the Big Brother Model.....	138
7.2	Presenting the Big Brother Case.....	140
7.2.1	Reviewing Contemporary Chinese Governance.....	140
7.2.2	Constructing the Chinese Hegemon.....	141
7.2.3	Considering Social Media and the Chinese State.....	142
7.2.4	Establishing the Chinese State as Big Brother.....	145
7.3	Discussing the Big Brother Model.....	147
	Chapter 8: The Free Market Social Media-State Relationship.....	148

8.0 Toward Libertarianism	149
8.1 Establishing the Theoretical Free Market	150
8.1.1 Building the Contemporary State	152
8.1.2 Considering the Media’s Historical Role	153
8.1.3 Establishing the Contemporary Media Environment	154
8.1.4 Synthesising the Free Market Social Media-State Relationship	155
8.2 Presenting the Free Market Case	158
8.2.1 Reviewing Contemporary American Governance.....	158
8.2.2 Considering Social Media Platforms and the American State	160
8.2.3 Toward a Free Market Hegemon	161
8.3 Discussing the Free Market model	162
Chapter 9: The Social Consciousness Social Media-State Relationship	163
9.0 Striking a Balance Between the Libertarian and Authoritarian Poles	164
9.1 Establishing Social Consciousness	165
9.1.1 Building the Contemporary State	166
9.1.2 Considering the Media’s Historical Role	167
9.1.3 Establishing the Contemporary Media Environment	167
9.1.4 Synthesising the Social Consciousness Social Media-State Relationship.....	169
9.2 The Political Social Consciousness – United Kingdom	171
9.3 The Economic Social Consciousness – Estonia	173
9.4 The Media Social Consciousness – Australia.....	174
9.5 Final Considerations.....	176
Chapter 10: Research Methodology	177
10.0 Presenting the Methods and Research Questions	178
10.1 Designing the Research Approach	179
10.2 Considering and Operationalising the Variables	182
10.2.1 The Independent and Dependent Variables.....	182
10.2.2 The Survey Instrument & Dimensions.....	184
10.2.3 Controlled Covariates.....	189
10.2.3.1 Age.....	189

10.2.3.2 Sex.....	189
10.2.3.3 Education Level.....	189
10.2.3.4 Ideological Bias.....	190
10.3 Generating Hypotheses.....	190
10.4 Applying the Approach and Sample Selection.....	191
10.4.1 Piloting the Research.....	191
10.4.1.1 Small-Scale Pilot.....	191
10.4.1.1.1 Sampling Procedure.....	191
10.4.1.1.2 Research Procedure.....	191
10.4.1.1.3 A Note on the First Pilot.....	192
10.4.1.2 Secondary Pilot.....	192
10.4.2 Full-Scale Study.....	193
10.4.2.1 Sampling Procedure.....	193
10.4.2.2 Research Procedure.....	194
10.5 Analysing the Data.....	195
Chapter 11: Study Results.....	196
11.0 Presenting the Results.....	197
11.1 Sample Demographics.....	198
11.2 The Very Short Authoritarianism (VSA) Scale.....	200
11.3 Comparison Groups.....	201
11.4 Testing the Vignette Measures.....	202
11.4.1 Reliability Statistics.....	202
11.4.2 Correlations.....	205
11.4.2 Principal Components Factor Analysis.....	210
11.4.3 Controlling for Covariate Influences.....	212
11.5 Hypothesis Testing.....	214
11.5.1 Hypothesis One Results.....	214
11.5.2 Hypothesis Two Results.....	216
11.6 Order Index Validity.....	220
11.7 Conclusions.....	221

Chapter 12: Considering the Theory, Results, & Drawing Final Conclusions	222
12.0 Reviewing the Thesis	223
12.1 General Findings and Conclusions	224
12.2 Considering the Chapters	226
12.3 Overarching Implications	228
12.4 Contributions to Research	229
12.5 Future Research Potential	230
References	232
Appendix A: Model Characteristics	284
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet, Survey Instrument & Coding Scheme	288
Appendix C: Vignette Decks	293
Appendix D: Pilot Study Survey Logic	303
Appendix E: Full Study Survey Logic	306

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 The Four Theories Models	21
Table 2 International Relations Theory Perspectives on Media	97
Table 3 Operationalised Dimensions.....	184
Table 4 Freedom-based Dimensions, Components, and Related Measures	186
Table 5 State-centric Dimensions, Components, and Related Measures.....	188
Table 6 Distribution of Participant Ages	198
Table 7 Division of Participants by Highest Level of Education Attained.....	199
Table 8 VSA Reliability Results	200
Table 9 Eight Comparison Groups Participant Distributions	201
Table 10 Alpha Reliability for Personal Freedom Dimension.....	203
Table 11 Alpha Reliability for Corporate Freedom Dimension	203
Table 12 Alpha Reliability for State Control Dimension	204
Table 13 Alpha Reliability for Societal Statism Dimension.....	204
Table 14 Inter-Dimension Alpha Statistics.....	205
Table 15 Pearson Correlation of All Measures.....	209
Table 16 PCA Extracted Factors Variance Explanation.....	210
Table 17 Rotated Principal Components Analysis	211
Table 18 Varimax Factor Reliability at Differing Thresholds.....	212
Table 19 Linear Regression Results, Controlling for Covariates	213
Table 20 Covariate Linear Regression ANOVA	213
Table 21 Games-Howell Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test, Fictional Condition.....	215
Table 22 Games=Howell Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test, Real-World Condition	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Conceptualising the Social Media-State Relationship	17
Figure 2 A Conceptualisation of Asian States Within Merrill’s Framework	25
Figure 3 A Conceptualisation of “Western” States Within Merrill’s Framework	26
Figure 4 Conceptualising the Data Economy	63
Figure 5 Influence Systems in the Social Media-State Relationship	102
Figure 7 Research Design Breakdown	181
Figure 6 The Social Media-State Relationship Order Index Spectrum	183
Figure 8 Fictional Condition Order Index Scores.....	216
Figure 9 Order Index Scores for Real-World Condition	218
Figure 10 Fictional and Real-World Conditions Order Index Scores.....	219

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AvL	Authoritarian versus Libertarian
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
ESM	Enterprise Social Media
ISP	Internet Service Provider
LvR	Left versus Right
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PCA	Principal Components factor Analysis
RotI	Revolution of the Individual
RQ	Research Question
SMC	Social Media Company(ies)
SMP	Social Media Platform(s)
VF	Varimax Factor
VSA	Very Short Authoritarian scale

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL MEDIA
STATE**

1.0 ESTABLISHING THE SOCIAL MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The coverage of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, the rapid spread of COVID-19 disinformation, the events of January 6, 2021, in the United States have a common denominator between them – social media. Social media's impacts have been felt across society, particularly in politics, economics, and legal systems. Recognising these shifts, this thesis describes and assesses the social media-state relationship. To accomplish this aim, I position the thesis between the Communications and International Relations (IR) disciplines. Within this broad frame, I draw upon critical IR perspectives, normative media-state models, and empirical research methods. The result is a normative framework for the social media-state relationship whose four models are critical in perspective and empirically validated. Subsequently, this thesis provides insights into the social media-state relationship, a tool to evaluate the social media-state relationship, and a means of conveying the relationship's nature to non-academic stakeholders.

I draw from a Communications-based approach to social media (and media generally) to re-conceptualise traditional media-state relations for the social media-state relationship. Traditionally, in media-state relations scholarship, the impetus is placed on understanding the interactions between media and state actors and how they influence one another. In this vein, I draw from Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories* media-state models as a foundation. However, social media has redefined that relationship by fragmenting the actors engaged in the media-state relationship by democratising media production. Thus, this change has necessitated the social media-state relationship to make sense of disparate actors' interests and influences in this new environment.

In IR, theoretical perspectives tend to focus solely on states in the global system, unsurprisingly. However, within this discipline are critical perspectives that can be utilised to elucidate the complex relationship between non-state actors. I draw from the Neo-Gramscian perspective to contextualise the actors and their relationships. In doing so, I can effectively account for non-state actors' influence in the social media-state relationship.

Intuitively, states are leading actors in the social media-state relationship. Further, social media companies (SMCs) are other primary actors in this relationship. The social media-state

relationship draws distinction from traditional media-state relations in its empowerment of individuals to become effective actors within the relationship through its democratising effect on power. The traditional media-state relations field is limited in fully accounting for the rise of an individual actor to power and influence within the relationship.

Fundamentally, actors compete with one another for power in the social media-state relationship. This competition can be characterised as a political economy of power. In this political economy, three capital forms are used as a resource to accumulate power. Those capital forms are social, economic and information capital. Social capital can be characterised as a currency derived from cultural influence and positioning and the ability to organise networks as desired ([Bourdieu, 2018](#); [Castells, 2011a](#); [Siisjainen, 2003](#)). Economic capital is understood as one might intuit – currency and other financial assets – though, I understand it through a more Marxist conceptualisation of capital ([Marx, 2019](#)). Lastly, information capital is simply knowledge and the ability to leverage that knowledge for increased power in a society. Information capital is unique because the mechanisms behind its accumulation are immensely facilitated by the emergent data economy social media has catalysed ([Carrière-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). Using information, social and economic capital actors can advance their position in society to reach hegemony. Hegemony represents an actor having sufficient power to order society so that it entrenches itself as the societal norm.

Contemporary social media scholarship explains how singular actors in particular cases have accomplished this feat; however, these efforts are disparate, and their utility is impeded by the society they feature. Research on the political impacts of social media focuses on specific instances, like the 2016 American election, rather than seeking to establish a unified understanding of social media as an enabler of political influence ([Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017](#); [Badawy et al., 2018](#); [Bessi & Ferrara, 2016](#); [Howard et al., 2018](#); [Persily, 2017](#); [Polyakova, 2020](#)). The same carries through the analysis of social movements' origins and their efficacy and when considering social media's impact on the economy. The proliferation of social media have correlated with the ascent of big data capitalism, and data generated from social media users has hastened the spread of data-driven enterprises, which has received critical treatment ([Cohen, 2008](#); [Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015](#); [Darmody & Zwick, 2020](#); [Englehardt et al., 2015](#); [Fuchs, 2011b, 2017, 2018b, 2019a](#); [Gambaro, 2018](#); [Lipschultz, 2017a](#); [Lyon, 2019](#); [Schmarzo, 2013](#); [Smith et al., 2012](#); [Zuboff, 2015, 2019b](#)).

I aim to extend current literature's focus and blend historical media-state models with the insights that a more critical approach proffers. Thus, I can now highlight the gap and research questions underpinning this thesis. The questions that have emerged from considering several literature areas are as follows:

- What is the social media-state relationship, and how can it be characterised?
- What models might be developed to understand emergent phenomena around the social media-state relationship?
- How effective is the framework and its models at explaining observable phenomena around the social media-state relationship?

As indicated by my position so far, the gap I seek to fill is the lack of a unified normative framework for understanding the emergent social media-state relationship. In addressing the second question, I will provide four models that build upon previous media-state literature, particularly Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories of the Press*, and augment their analytical power with the insight afforded by International Relations scholarship's Neo-Gramscian perspective ([Cox, 1996](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). I would be remiss not to attempt to test the framework's assumptions and assertions. So, in responding to the third question, I am compelled to develop an instrument to observe the social media-state relationship.

I invoke other examples to contextualise social media's impacts across various facets of society. In doing so, I aim to elicit an understanding that this phenomenon is ongoing, evolving and merits understanding.

1.1 CONSIDERING SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACTS

Social media's impacts have been observed across all facets of society. To illustrate the social media-state relationship, I will turn toward some examples of its social, economic and information impacts to highlight what I refer to in broad strokes here. In chapter three, I go into greater detail about these impacts.

Politics have felt social media's impact in myriad ways. Social movements have greater frequency and effect. Prominent examples are the #MeToo, and #Occupy movements ([Bao, 2019](#); [Penney & Dadas, 2014](#); [Tan et al., 2013](#)). However, there have been countless examples of mass-organisation efforts facilitated by social media; more contemporary examples like the Freedom Convoys in Canada illustrate social media's continued impact ([Broderick, 2022](#); [Kurtis et al., 2022](#)). Social media have allowed specific actors to rise to the top and magnify their influence by lowering the traditional barriers to organising social movements. There has been a shift in clout to particular politicians, private individuals, and general accounts based on social following and the power derived from that following. One specific example that jumps out in this context is the ability of the #BTSArmy, the term for fans of the K-Pop music group, to exert influence on political affairs in the US, given the lack of support from the group for Trump ([Chan, 2020](#); [Hollingsworth, 2020](#)). Thusly, there is an intrinsic social capital borne from social movements in societies. Whether that capital is enough to affect change within the power structures or challenge the hegemon within the society is subject to many factors. Whether they be a band or a large-scale movement, each example illustrates how actors can utilise social capital within the power political economy to affect change and challenge the status quo established by the hegemon.

The economy has been impacted by social media. Readily, actors like Elon Musk, whose social media clout influences stock prices when he posts on a platform or moves to acquire a controlling share of Twitter, illustrate the intermingling of social and economic forces that translate to tangible market impacts ([Bruner, 2021](#); [Hsu, 2021](#); [Miranda, 2021](#)). Further, social media's economic capital potential emerges due to its transformational impact on economies by facilitating digital economies' spread. The most tangible changes have emerged from the value of user data, given that social media are a veritable treasure trove of data points, which are in turn analysed, packaged, and sold to advertisers ([Lim et al., 2017](#); [Lou, 2021](#); [Zeljko et al., 2018](#)). As a result, big data and surveillance capitalism have burgeoned. Beyond these impacts, social media platforms (SMPs) have become part of the essential infrastructure for

many businesses that have emerged and operate solely on social media due to entities like Shopify ([Dubbelink et al., 2021](#); [Hinderman, 2015](#); [Oguadinma, 2017](#)). The significant impact felt by many businesses during the recent outage across Meta's platforms highlights social media's critical role in business operations ([Bruner, 2021](#); [Hsu, 2021](#); [Miranda, 2021](#)). Similarly, the rise of influencer capitalism and the new links between freelancers online and various industries and governments worldwide highlight significant shifts in labour relations ([Lim et al., 2017](#); [Lou, 2021](#); [Zeljko et al., 2018](#)). These facets of the economic capital exchange within social media represent the broader power marketplace that social media enables.

Social media's economic impact has led to information capital increasing in value as SMPs proliferate, subsequently impacting the broader power political economy. Notably, the ability to control access to and flows from social media demonstrates social media have the capacity to protect those in power. Most recently the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent lockdown of social media discourse within Russia so that Russian atrocities do not reach the screens of Russian citizens illustrates this point ([Bao, 2019](#); [Penney & Dadas, 2014](#); [Tan et al., 2013](#)). Conversely, in different political systems, several platforms worldwide have seen the ongoing tragedy in Ukraine trend as users clamour for and consume the latest from the front. Recent events invite longer-term reflection. Here, the historical example is China and its significant restraints on expressive freedom on social media, particularly as it matters for topics that are critical of the regime or otherwise deemed undesirable ([DeLisle et al., 2016a](#); [Freudenstein, 2020](#); [House, 2018](#); [Huang et al., 2018](#); [King et al., 2013](#); [Li et al., 2016](#); [Uren et al., 2019](#)). Through the accumulation and control of information capital, actors – especially hegemony – social media can facilitate the expansion of their power within the broader power political economy.

Thus, actors acquire power through the exchange and accumulation of these capital forms within a society. Combined, the political economy of power within the social media-state relationship revolves around the accumulation and exchange of power. This understanding of power is not revolutionary, but it helps one understand how social media becomes a power facilitator. Further, this notion can be found throughout history and brings me to consider the broader structure of chapter two and the thesis.

1.2 THESIS STRUCTURE AND METHODS

Chapter two will draw out the historical impact of new technologies on the media-state relationship to highlight the distinctions between what was the cutting edge of the time and

the behemoth that social media represents. I will then provide an in-depth review of the literature on social media in chapter three – effectively, the collective efforts to understand the rapidly evolving and morphing phenomenon that serves as the basis for much of the digital economy. I also seek to establish aspects of social media that have already had a marked impact. Chapter four identifies Neo-Gramscianism as an effective means for constructing the power market as I review the leading theories in IR like Realism, Liberalism and other Critical approaches.

Chapter five presents the theoretical framework for the social media-state relationship in detail, synthesising insights taken from the literature review. In chapters six through nine, I present four models for the social media-state relationship, inspired by Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories*. The first model – the Strongman – and an associated case study are presented in chapter six. I discuss the other authoritarian model, Big Brother, in chapter seven. Whereas chapter eight presents the first libertarian model – the Free Market. Chapter nine deals with the last and most speculative model – Social Consciousness. This model, inspired by Siebert et al.'s social responsibility model, is not easily observable within contemporary states, unlike the other three. As chapter nine illustrates, a clear example of this model may emerge in the future. In each model chapter, I outline the nature of power in the political economy and who has sway within it. In doing so, the difference between societies becomes apparent.

Chapter ten presents the general methodology and rationale for the study I have conducted to move toward some form of external validity for the framework I have proposed. The methodology employed results from the general theory-then-research approach I have adopted throughout the thesis ([Lynham, 2002](#); [Reynolds, 2015](#)). Specifically, the study utilises an experimental post-test only cross-sectional quantitative design using a stimulus-response model ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). As with all research designs, there are some limitations. Chiefly, there is a Western-centricity to the framework and participant recruitment. Secondly, a decision was made to utilise casual observers rather than experts in the research. These limitations can be overcome through additional research in the future. In chapter eleven, the study's results are presented and discussed.

In the final chapter, twelve, I address the research questions that have guided the thesis. In doing so, I present a case for the normative framework I assert over the course of the thesis and its utility in conceptualising the social media-state relationship. Ultimately, concluding that the social media-state relationship is an observable phenomenon that can be measured

and understood through the instrument developed as part of this thesis. Subsequently, utilising this framework makes several areas for future research possible.

To establish the traditional media-state relationship and illustrate its existence throughout civilised history, I will look at history and past scholarship. In doing so, technology's historical influence on political economies of power will become apparent – regardless of the technologies and actors of the time. Ultimately, I discuss historical examples that illustrate social media's unique nature from previous technologies in terms of scale and speed.

1.3 DEFINING CORE TERMS

Before embarking on the thesis, it is worthwhile to bring clarify a few of the core terms that will be used. I will define them in turn here.

Social Media: I bring forward the definition I established in chapter three: any Internet-based system that allows for the perception of interactivity through asynchronous, near-instantaneous, mass engagement that facilitates the exchange and creation of ideas, beliefs, cultural products (e.g. memes), and the subsequent feedback provided and value created by such interactions.

Interaction: In the context of the social media-state relationship and this work, an interaction can be understood as any engagement (e.g., comment, reaction, and share) between users on a SMP, as discussed in chapter three.

Social Media Platforms (SMPs) are taken as any internet-based system that meets the definition of social media and is administered by a *social media company*.

Social Media Company (SMC): Any entity that owns, operates, and develops a *social media platform*, e.g., Facebook, WeChat, Twitter, VK.

Traditional Media or *Old Media* are understood as media entities that produce print, broadcast, and radio media news items.

New Media are any Internet-based news outlets, including such actors as citizen journalists.

State: Defined as per the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of State ([1934](#)) Article 1, a state should "...possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states." This formal definition is for understanding states in the global system. Otherwise, states are understood to be the embodiment of a people and their ideas.

Historic Blocs: An entity that competes for hegemony within a society. These entities represent particular groups, cultural tenets, technologies and their advocates, or simply an idea and its proponents ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)).

Counter Blocs, conversely, are rising *historic blocs* that seeks to replace the hegemonic position of the current hegemon through establishing a new cultural structure using coercion or other means to attain the consent of lesser actors ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)).

Hegemony: Attaining and maintaining a state of coerced or acquiesced dominance within a sphere of influence ([Cox, 1987](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#)).

Hegemon: A hegemon is a historic bloc with superiority over smaller actors within a state sphere and maintains its position through coercion or gaining consent (i.e., the preeminent historic bloc within a given society).

Structure: The abstract ideas that serve an institutionalised role within society that constrain individuals' actions ([Sturrock, 2008](#)). For example, free speech as a structure within a society will impede any effort to suppress expression.

Information Capital: As discussed in chapter three, information capital is understood as the amount and quality of information an actor has access to facilitate decision-making. More information capital allows an actor to perform better in the political economy of power.

Financial Capital: A classical conceptualisation of capital (Marx, 2019). Financial capital is currency and assets that can be exchanged for goods and services to facilitate capital generation. More Financial capital allows an actor to perform better in the political economy of power.

Social Capital: Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital forms a basis, and with Castells' notions of networked power, a social capital that acts as a currency used to mobilise actors within networks becomes apparent ([Bourdieu, 2018](#); [Castells, 2011a](#); [Siisiainen, 2003](#)). Social capital is acquired through reflecting the structures of the society in question and garnering greater positioning within the society. It is then spent, in a manner of speaking, to leverage an actors' network to achieve its aims. In this way, Castells' notion of networked and network-making power become highly relevant.

Power: As mentioned in chapter one, power is understood as the accumulation of differing capital forms over time. More powerful actors have greater capital reserves than smaller actors.

Political Economy of Power/Power Political Economy: For the social media-state relationship, the political economy of power is the exchange of information, financial, and social capital as part of a power accumulation process between actors. The mechanisms guiding these interactions manifest as political, social, and economic outcomes similar to traditional political economy ([Cohen, 2017](#); [Oatley, 2018](#)).

**CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY
MEDIA-STATE RELATIONS**

2.0 CONSIDERING MEDIA-STATE RELATIONS LITERATURE

This chapter synthesises an understanding of history, technological influence, and scholarship to aid our understanding of the emergent social media-state relationship phenomenon and how it can be framed.

Before the Westphalian conceptualisation of the state, a relationship existed between the sovereign and the media of the time. Ergo, the media-state relationship has long existed. As I trace the history of the media-state relationship, technology's influence on this relationship comes into focus. In short, modern challenges around media and the state – the competition for control over narratives, consumer clamour for content, and the ability to control media – are observable trends throughout human history. To frame this historical discussion, I first review media-state relations scholarship with Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories of the Press* anchoring the discussion.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

Traditional media-state relations literature is impacted by a dichotomy that is intrinsic to the bi-polar structure of the relationship. This dichotomy is typically depicted as an adversarial struggle of influence between the media and a state's social elites – politically or economically. Research in this area was spurred forth by the emergence of the CNN effect concept, the notion that media can exert influence on policy decisions through the constant focus on politically contentious issues that emerged from the 24-hour news cycle ([Livingston, 1997](#)). While the CNN effect was the basis, later research developed this notion and focused on explaining how the lack of a consensus among elites enabled media to influence state policy ([Wolfsfeld & Sheaffer, 2006](#)). Though the extent of media's influence on a policy outcome has been shown to be limited if it is presumed that if the elites are in agreement.

The principal criticism levied against the contemporary dichotomy is that this frame restricts the emergence of greater nuance and depth in understanding the media-state relationship. To counter this notion, I suggest employing a framework comprising several models, like Siebert et al. (1956) originally did. A lack of consideration for the impacts of public will on policy issues – which are influenced by the media – is another criticism. Further, a general criticism is that media-state scholarship is overly Western-centric in its focus ([Robinson, 2011](#)). This section of the literature review will address the contemporary media-state relationship from through addressing differing influences.

2.1.1 MEDIA INFLUENCE

As mentioned above, contemporary media influence is reliant upon elite dissensus. Further, it has been proffered that there are circumstances in which media exert no influence – like determining to wage war ([DiMaggio, 2015](#)). Limited media influence is typically attributed to numerous other factors influencing the policymaking process. Another hypothesised instance of when media may not exert much influence on policy issues is when those outcomes carry high economic and political costs. Conversely, it has been theorised that the media may exert the greatest impact on those policy decisions that carry minimal economic or political risk – such as where to allocate humanitarian aid or disaster relief ([DiMaggio, 2015](#); [Robinson, 2001](#); [Robinson & Taylor, 2010](#)). The current understanding around these cases is predicated upon the existence of a free media system, which returns to broader criticism of media-state

scholarship. Even in the instances in which media may exert an influence, the effect is difficult to quantify meaningfully.

2.1.2 STATE INFLUENCE

The state exerts influence on the media in this relationship. Research indicates that how much the state controls media determines how much influence it has over media (Hossain, 2015; Laursen & Valentini, 2015; Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2017). In an authoritarian system, the state exerts greater influence than in a more libertarian system. In more authoritarian systems, the state may exercise direct control over media to promote state policy and reduce internal controversy or incentivise adherence to state policy if the media are privately owned. In contrast, states in freer systems typically do not directly direct control media ([Slavtcheva-Petkova, 2017](#)). Thus, these systems must rely on official access and coherent messaging to influence the media ([Hossain, 2015](#); [Laursen & Valentini, 2015](#)).

In terms of the media-elite dichotomy, states influence media when the elites agree on a given issue. This influence may manifest as the media utilised to manufacture consent from the public on a topic. The quintessential example of this is the media being utilised to mobilise support for the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 through its support of the Bush Administration's claim that the Hussein Regime posed a significant threat to the Middle East and the world ([DiMaggio, 2015](#); [Robinson, 2001](#)).

2.1.3 INTERMEDIA RELATIONS

With media-state relations covered briefly, the next area to explore is the relationships between media actors. Often, the media is referred to as a single entity, but this is far from the case. Despite the misnomer, a significant body of research focuses on the way outlets influence each other exists. Perhaps most apt is Harder et al.'s ([2017](#)) *Intermedia Agenda Setting in the Social Media Age*, which aids in contextualising agenda-setting research within the contemporary mediascape.

Previous intermedia research holds that older mediums, like print and radio, see journalists at these outlets allow their coverage to be shaped by what their peers are covering ([Breed, 1955](#)). It is surmised that more prominent outlets can more effectively influence the coverage of smaller outlets (e.g., *The New York Times* in the US). Harder et al. (2017) explain this observation as stemming from economic and sociopsychological roots. Firstly, it is cheaper to

co-opt the reporting of other outlets, and as journalists have a similar lens from which they deem the newsworthiness of events, secondly ([Harder et al., 2017](#)).

Journalists' tendency to gauge events' newsworthiness illustrates traditional media's more prominent role as society's information gatekeepers. However, with the Internet and social media's rise, the gates have been broken down, as Rosen ([2012](#)) asserted with his appropriately titled chapter "The people formerly known as the audience." Previously those who consumed the news can now produce it due to near-instantaneous communications technologies and the digital media squares that SMPs enable. Subsequently, Harder et al.'s ([2017](#)) work became more poignant as a core finding was that online news outlets tended to be the outlets that set the agenda for slower mediums like print, radio and television. Consequently, an observed effect of traditional media following new media was SMPs' reinforced primacy in this new media environment ([Harder et al., 2017](#); [Russell Neuman et al., 2014](#)). Thus, one can infer that SMPs are currently and will continue to be significant intermedia influencers. Similarly, to keep pace with the new media environment, traditional media actors have embraced SMPs and have leveraged platforms to disseminate their press ([Fletcher et al., 2020](#)). In this way, new and old media's intermedia relationships may be magnified as SMPs catalyse an even more fractured media environment. Subsequently, this further elucidates the need to assess the social media-state relationship.

2.1.4 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Lastly, international relations ought to be considered as the media-state relationship does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, states actively influence one another's policy decisions in multiple ways, one such way is public diplomacy which has been magnified in the new media environment. Traditionally, international relations are quantified through the interactions between states (e.g., trade agreements and shared defence arrangements). Behind this are numerous theoretical approaches to explain and evaluate these instances, which I discuss at length in chapter four. However, it is currently appropriate to focus on how states influence each other through media.

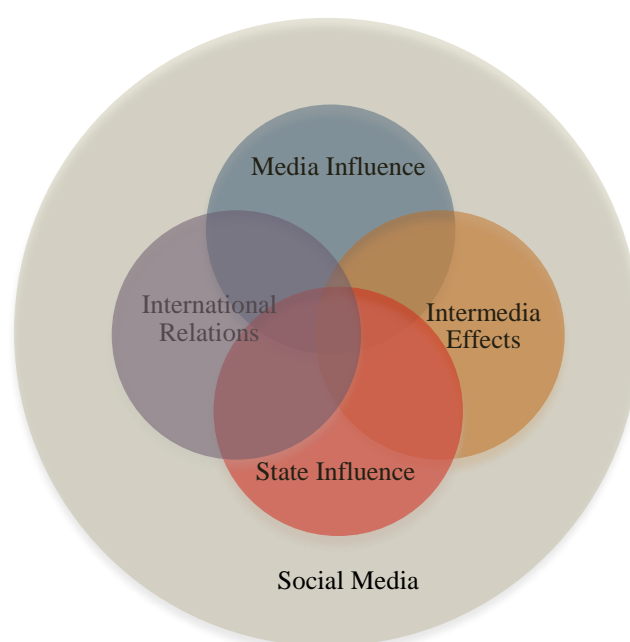
It has been observed that foreign leaders' opinions on issues may influence public opinion in another state ([Hayes & Guardino, 2011](#)). This effect has been observed to be magnified through states directly engaging foreign publics on SMPs ([Collins et al., 2019](#); [Harris, 2013](#); [Huang & Wang, 2018](#); [O'Boyle, 2019](#)). There exist several instances where states have sought to alter other

states' public perceptions by engaging in misinformation and propaganda campaigns on SMPs within the target state. Principal examples of this are the large-scale influence campaigns undertaken by the Russian government to impact public opinion in the 2016 United States election as well as the more recent efforts by the Chinese government to sway international public perceptions on the Hong Kong protests (Conger, 2019; Gleicher, 2019; Mueller III, 2019). In turn, this further supports the need to understand the social media-state relationship.

The examples above are only the latest iteration of actions undertaken by states since civilised society emerged. However, they now occur at speeds and scales previously unseen within the world, resulting from SMPs' rise. McLuhan's (1994) *Understanding Media* aids to explain the grander context in which media-state, intermedia, and international relations occur has been altered due to SMPs as a communications medium. Thus, new research is necessary to advance the global understanding of SMPs' impact. In Figure 1, I conceptualise how I understand the social media-state relationship in terms of influence spheres. In chapter five, when I present the framework's core, this conceptualisation guides informs the framework.

Figure 1

Conceptualising the Social Media-State Relationship



Note. Source: Author.

2.2 PUBLIC MEDIA AND MASS MEDIA: THE ORIGIN OF MEDIA-STATE THEORIES

The media-state relationship conceptually was first codified within Fred Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories of the Press*. However, ideas evocative of media-state relations can be traced further back, principally to Walter Lippman's (1922) *Public Opinion*. These works explored how media played a role in shaping public and political thought. Further, Siebert et al.'s (1956) effort sought to explain how various media systems formed in differing states. Since the *Four Theories* was published, numerous works have built upon its foundation. I aim to continue that tradition within the literature.

2.2.1 THE FOUR THEORIES OF THE PRESS

The original work, *Four Theories of the Press* (1956), by Fred Siebert and his colleagues, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, was published when two prevailing ideologies dominated the world – the West's capitalist, democratic view and the communist, totalitarian view of the Soviet Union. In *Four Theories*, Siebert et al. asserted that there existed four contemporary paradigms in which the press operated throughout the world – the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and the soviet-communist models (Siebert et al., 1956). To substantiate the models, Siebert et al. recounted the history and development of press paradigms around the world. In the decades after *Four Theories* was published, many scholars attempted to address the work's criticisms and refine normative press models. For instance, Denis McQuail's (1983) contributions to the discussion on the *Four Theories* gave rise to two additional models – the developmental and democratic-participant. While Siebert et al. may refer to their work as the *Four Theories*, it is perhaps better to consider Siebert et al.'s work as one theory that contains four models. (Nerone & Berry, 1995). Subsequently, the thesis is adopting a similar approach, presented in chapter five, to underpin the models I will construct later in chapters six through nine.

In this section, the original *Four Theories* propositions are reviewed and considered, followed by an examination of McQuail's (1983) models. With Siebert et al.'s (1956) models examined, expanding the discussion around the *Four Theories* to include the scholarly body of various regions of the world becomes necessary. Further, I will address past and

contemporary criticisms of the *Four Theories* and discuss alternative modelling efforts since McQuail's works.

2.4.1.1 THE AUTHORITARIAN MODEL.

Siebert et al. (1956) assert that the authoritarian model is the oldest press model. In this view, the press is regarded as subservient to the governing body and works to advance the body's interests. Press subjugation occurs by implementing laws restricting press freedom and incentivising adherence to the state narrative. Further, subjugation is achieved through using force to ensure compliance. Authoritarian systems typically seek to control overall public access to information, resulting in restrictions on foreign press operations within their territory. In short, using the press and through restricting information, the state attempts to control the "truth" its citizens are exposed to – and make it reflect the state's interests.

2.4.1.2 THE LIBERTARIAN MODEL.

The libertarian press model, as posited by Siebert et al. (1956), is the antagonist to the authoritarian model. The libertarian model presents the media as entirely free from state control. Instead, the press is accountable for their products to consumers – the state's citizens. Siebert et al., originate the model within the Enlightenment and assert that media consumers will seek information that enables reaching objective truth; therefore, the press are inclined to report on matters in a fashion that may be oppositional to the state's agenda. The oppositional position will effectively cultivate a "watchdog" role for the press regarding state actions. Further, with absolute press freedom, Siebert et al. recognises the potential for disinformation and sensationalist journalism. However, they assume that the citizen, being a rational thinker, will see through this and focus on reaching the objective truth. However, as I will discuss shortly, historical accounts undermine that conclusion.

2.4.1.3 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MODEL.

An evolution of the libertarian model, Siebert et al.'s (1956) social responsibility model depicts a press free from the state but furthers the society in which it operates. The libertarian model, in practice, had cultivated a media in which outlets were controlled by a business class focused on profits and undercutting new competition. Thus, the press's role in advancing the public good was diminished. As a result of the growing disillusionment with journalism's status in the twentieth century, several governments (notably, the United States)

implemented several guidelines on how the press ought to operate. These guidelines were expanded upon by the adoption of professional ethics codes for journalists.

Due to these reforms, press rights came to be viewed as the freedom for or to publishing rather than the freedom from state interference. Further, the state's orientation toward the press became one in which the state regulated itself to prevent it from oppressing the press. This media-state relationship perspective resulted from a shift in the philosophies within post-Enlightenment societies – people were more likely to react to emotional stories rather than engage their intellectual faculties ([Siebert et al., 1956](#)). As a result, people are more easily manipulated by demagogues. Thus, for people to contribute to society, they must be adequately informed in the most straightforward manner possible ([Siebert et al., 1956](#)). Therefore, the press must become responsible information gatekeepers for society, and subsequently, the state must afford the press the freedom to fulfil that role.

2.4.1.4 THE SOVIET-COMMUNIST MODEL.

While the traditional authoritarian model suggests that the press is beholden to the state, Siebert et al. (1956) posited an extreme form of this was present in the Soviet Union. With this distinction, they presented the Soviet-Communist press model. In the Soviet Union, the state owned the press and used it to propagate its Marxist-Leninist ideology. Thus, the model considered this press form at length, focusing on how the Soviet state maintained its control. The majority of press outlets within the Soviet Union fell under the purview of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Party – which ensured the press would support the Party's line ([Siebert et al., 1956](#)). Further, the press was tasked with presenting news in such a way as to advance the social construct that was the Soviet state, rather than report on the news in the traditional Western tradition. Perhaps unsurprisingly, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, this model fell out of the discussion; however, with the current status of Russia and China (see Table 1, p. 21), considerations of the Soviet-Communist model are being revived.

Table 1*The Four Theories Models*

Model	Press Freedom	Press Motive	Press Purpose	Historical Example
Libertarian	Extremely Free	Private profit	Provide consumers with what they wish to read/hear	United States
Authoritarian	Subservient to the State	Support the State	Report on issues in a manner to benefit the State	Russia
Soviet-communist	Arm of the State	Propagandise messages for the Party/State	Promote Party message/“truth”	China
Social Responsibility	Very Free	Common Good	Report on “truth” within a society	United Kingdom

Note. Source: Author.

2.2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE MODELS

Denis McQuail’s (1983) *Mass Communication Theory* expands upon Siebert et al.’s *Four Theories* models by establishing the democratic participant and development models ([McQuail, 1983](#)). Each model reflects the media-state relationship where they occur. The democratic participant model was an evolution of the social responsibility model within Europe and North America. In contrast, the developmental model reflected the situation within developing states.

2.2.2.1 DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPANT.

The democratic participant model asserts that the press works purely for the consumer’s benefit. Following this line of reasoning, McQuail’s democratic participant model argues all groups should have access to media that provides them critical information, rather than media

entities that serve the state or businesses ([McQuail, 1983](#)). This model rose from media consumers' discontent within libertarian societies due to the perception that media desired to promote its commercial interests over the public good. Further, this model's proponents suggest that even within the social responsibility model, the media does not achieve its aims due to its requirement to be objective, balanced, and be highly professional. When most political actors weigh in on controversial issues, the first voice quashed is that of the minority. Thus, the need for minority reporting became recognised as a focal point for the democratic participant model.

As a press model, the media within a democratic participant model would be completely free from state intervention due to legislation restricting state powers to interfere with the media. The state's primary role was to prevent the monopolisation of private media entities to allow minority outlets a competitive space in the news marketplace. Subsequently, the media's role within society would be to facilitate all members participation in the state's democracy. As well as provide people information that is relevant to them based upon their needs and desires. Lastly, media support the public by maintaining professional standards so as to not completely impersonalise the media in the consumers' eyes ([McQuail, 1983](#)).

2.2.2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT MEDIA MODEL.

Conversely, the development model posits that society's interests supersede the industry or individual groups' interests within that society. The model asserts this is achieved through rejecting authoritarian abuses and foreign domination or influence, strengthening local institutions to improve and protect cultural production, and establishing the media's aim to support national development objectives rather than focusing on entertainment or other unimportant areas ([McQuail, 1983](#)). Intriguingly, development model advocates proffer that the media may have to forfeit some of their rights for the sake of achieving national objectives. This notion is in direct contention with the models anti-authoritarianism characteristics.

The development model emerged after examining the developing world and reflect themes that emerged. The model yielded noteworthy observations from the post-colonial period. Most countries had only recently earned their independence but were still largely dependent upon the developed world for economic, cultural, and political support. In these societies, the media's role was to diminish illiteracy, worldly ignorance, and fatalism, traits associated with developing societies ([Schramm, 1964](#)). McQuail noted the development model viewed the media as a facilitating national development. If media deviated from national development

goals, the state may intervene in their operation ([McQuail, 1983](#)). McQuail's (1983) efforts built upon Siebert et al.'s (1956) work and codified two additional press models alongside the original *Four Theories* models. Taking these six models as norms for media-state relations, the following decades would see them revisited and modified.

2.2.2.3 THE FOUR THEORIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

Siebert et al.'s principal *Four Theories* models and the development and democratic participant models framed media-state relations scholarship until the turn of the twenty-first century ([McQuail, 1983](#)). The collapse of the Soviet Union made Siebert et al.'s soviet-communist model irrelevant almost overnight within the literature. Though, it has recently returned to focus within media-state relations discourse (Vaca-Baquerio, 2018).

Conversely, the libertarian, social responsibility, and democratic participant models have merged into one polarity within modern media-state literature – the libertarian pole. In contrast, the soviet and authoritarian models merged into the pole of totalitarianism. The concept of the two-polar model was initially introduced by John Merrill in 1990 and has aided interpreting the *Four Theories* models since ([Merrill, 1990](#)). Merrill's work promoted a authoritarian versus libertarian (AvL) spectrum rather than pure dichotomy. Subsequent literature has worked within the AvL spectrum and has struggled to move beyond it. Despite several substantive efforts being made to do so, as discussed by Kaarle Nordenstreng in his *Beyond the Four Theories of the Press* ([1997](#)).

2.2.2.4 SIEBERT ET AL. 'S FOUR THEORIES IN ASIA.

Understanding media-state relationships in Asia has risen with Asia states' increased prevalence in the global economy. Applying the *Four Theories* models is difficult due to the cultural differences between Western states and Asian states ([Yin, 2008](#)). Jiafei Yin provides a thorough look at the various factors that impact media-state relations in many Asian states.

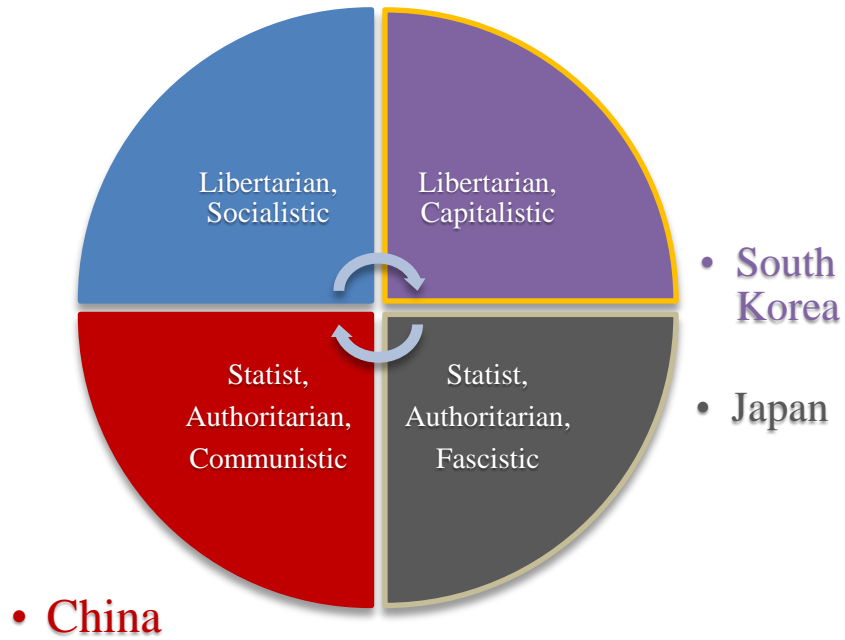
In Japan and South Korea, Yin notes the dominance of a press-gang system that breeds a culture of self-induced subservience to political powers since media need access to state officials. The cooperation between media outlets and the government, Yin asserts, helps to guide and shape public perceptions ([Yin, 2008](#)). There have been several instances where this is problematic as the media protects and advances state or corporate interests, depending on the patron a given outlet is serving; thus, leaving the general public unprepared and unaware when crises arise ([Yin, 2008](#)). John Merrill's (1990) conceptualisation of the media-state

relationship enables the visualisation of the AvL dichotomy within Western-aligned Asian states (see Figure 2, p. 25). Still, how these relationship emerge varies widely due to the cultural differences between societies ([Merrill, 1990](#)). However, South Korea is shifting toward a more Western media conceptualisation as opposed to the traditional Asian conceptualisation. This shifting press freedom results from numerous instances of scandal and journalistic failure, precipitating the need for a free, responsible press similar to the social responsibility model ([Yin, 2008](#)). This case is conceptualised within Merrill's framework in Figure 2 (p. 25).

Invoking Merrill's conceptualisation once again, the contemporary media-state relationship in China falls neatly within the authoritarian spectrum, but as a statist-communist model (see Figure 2, p. 25) ([Merrill, 1990](#)). As Yin illustrates, the Chinese government officially legislated and regulated media to encourage private outlets, the existence of state-run media, and cultivate the media's role as a governmental watchdog ([Yin, 2008](#)). These liberal policies also resulted in legislation that allowed foreign investment in entertainment media ([Yin, 2008](#)). Despite this, there are numerous instances in which the Chinese state, at the federal, provincial, and municipal level, has arrested or imprisoned reporters for reporting on the state unfavourably ([Committee to Protect Journalists, 2019](#); [Cook, 2019](#); [House, 2018](#); [Yin, 2008](#)). Further, the Chinese press freedom's progress has eroded under Xi Jinping's regime, as highlighted by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China's Annual Report ([China, 2017](#)). When Yin penned her *Beyond Four Theories* piece, Chinese media were becoming much more liberal, and had they continued that trajectory libertarian media-state relationships may have emerged in China. However, the sustained repression under Xi and the shift toward toeing the Party line is reminiscent of the soviet-communist model. Thus, Merrill might conceptualise the contemporary media-state relationship over time in China as a communist-statist one.

Figure 2

A Conceptualisation of Asian States Within Merrill's Framework



Note. Original framework sourced through (Merrill, 1990).

2.3.3.1 CONTEMPORARY WESTERN EXAMPLES OF THE FOUR THEORIES.

From the *Four Theories* model perspective, the libertarian, democratic participant, and social responsibility models manifest themselves most frequently – thus representing the libertarian pole in the AvL dichotomy. The United States represents the libertarian model, with European nations fitting the democratic participant and social responsibility models (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

A Conceptualisation of “Western” States Within Merrill’s Framework



Note. Original framework sourced through (Merrill, 1990).

The *Four Theories* catalysed research into media-state relations since its original publication ([Merrill, 1990, 2002](#); [Nerone & Berry, 1995](#); [Nordenstreng, 1974](#); [Nordenstreng, 1997](#); [Vaca-Baquero, 2018](#)). The scholarly debate on the *Four Theories* led to numerous conceptualisations that addressed the issues perceived with the original models. However, each model has fell within the overarching AvL dichotomy. It appears that Merrill’s conceptualisation enables advancing the *Four Theories* models through acknowledging the *Four Theories*’ limitations. Thus, despite facing criticisms, the *Four Theories* framework remains useful for understanding contemporary media-state relationships. Further, it helps to inform how the social media-state relationship may be assessed and characterised.

2.2.3 NEO-GRAMSCIAN USES OF THE FOUR THEORIES

In chapter one I noted that my primary theoretical influences are the *Four Theories* and Neo-Gramscianism. I have discussed the *Four Theories* at length and present Neo-Gramscianism in detail in chapter four. However, considering how the two perspectives have been previously discussed together is pertinent. There are two highly relevant instances in the literature, though there are only a few cases ([Eichenauer](#); [Lahiri, 2014](#); [Skjerdal, 2010](#); [Wu, 2016](#)). Demonstrably, sparse overlaps between *Four Theories* and Neo-Gramscian ideas illustrate the literature gap this thesis fills.

Park's ([1999](#)) work provided a critical, hegemonic understanding of how public policy is influenced by several competing entities. In this work, a discursive approach to media-state relations is presented and asserts media function as a mediator between the broader hegemonic actors in society. As part of this position, Park (1999) notes Siebert et al.'s (1956) utility in establishing normative frames of media-state systems. Given when the work was published, it did not account for social media. However, it provided insight into how a hegemonic frame can be applied to media-state relations. Interestingly, Park did not seek to construct normative frames of the relationships but provide a model for understanding public policy. I will explore other models in the next section.

More recently, Giannone ([2014](#)) utilised a Neo-Gramscian approach to contest Freedom House's conceptualisation of press freedom. Giannone concluded that Freedom House ultimately may be better understood through a neoliberal lens rather than a classical liberal lens (which I discuss in the IR context in chapter four). This work is relevant since I draw some methodological inspiration from Freedom House and others, see chapter ten.

Ultimately, Giannone utilises Siebert et al.'s (1956) libertarian model as a prop to illustrate how contemporary measurements of press freedom do not elucidate such a system and instead promote a neoliberal ideology.

Park and Giannone are two highly relevant instances in the literature for my position. Park (1999) illustrates that Neo-Gramscian hegemony has merit for media-state relations. Giannone (2014) utilises Neo-Gramscianism to conceptually undercut quantifying press freedom. I employ quantitative methods to validate the models derived from the Neo-Gramscian and *Four Theories* fusion that I present.

Lastly, as has been demonstrated throughout the discussion in this section, the *Four Theories* has a perennial, heuristic value for framing media-state relationships. Much work has been done previously to expand and develop the framework to reflect new media realities. I intend to follow the scholarly tradition and return to the roots of media-state literature and apply it to the new media environment catalysed by social media.

2.4 MEDIA-STATE RELATIONS MODELS SINCE THE 1980S

While the *Four Theories* and its derivatives have occupied a large area in the literature at a broad level, several models have been developed to understand the media-state relationship in the context of particular policies. The principal models that have explained media influence are the political contest model presented by Gadi Wolfsfeld, the cascading activation model presented by Robert Entman, and the Herman-Chomsky propaganda model ([Entman, 2003](#); [Mullen & Klaehn, 2010](#); [Wolfsfeld & Sheafer, 2006](#)). Further, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* provided a comparative framework to measure the media-state relationship within states, typically from the West ([Hallin & Mancini, 2004](#)).

The political contest model explains how the media may be levied to garner support for particular policy outcome when elite dissensus occurs (Wolfsfeld & Sheafer, 2006). Moreover, media influence disadvantages oppositional elites and exploits the news flurry around them to advance individual agendas or perspectives. This influence could manifest as governmental leaks or speeches and debates on the campaign trail during an election. Those in favour of a particular outcome may utilise media influence to manifest that outcome by exploiting elite dissensus.

The cascading activation model explains how elites leverage the media differently and is built upon Bennett's (1990) prior work on the indexing hypothesis. In this model, the keyframe – the narrative constructed around the issue – on a topic is established at the top and disseminates through other, subordinate elites until it reaches the media. At this point, media propagates and perpetuates the frame among the public to garner support for the policy agenda set by top of a state. This model predicts that the flow and exchange of ideas from top to bottom is easily achievable; however, the reverse would be challenging to attain, nor does it often occur ([Entman, 2003](#)). The cascading activation model enables potential elite dissensus. Individuals can impact the keyframe the media uses' shape or create a feedback cycle on a

policy position should dissenting elites mobilise the media to spread an opposing frame (a notion that is similar to the Neo-Gramscian IR approach discussed in chapter four).

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky present the Herman-Chomsky propaganda model as an explanation to how media are a vehicle used by elites to manufacture consent on policy (Mullen & Klaehn, 2010). Five core facets within liberal, capitalist media systems highlight this: 1) the size, profit aims, and ownership of a mainstream outlet, 2) advertising revenues exist as the primary source of income, 3) mainstream outlets' reliance on elites for news generation, 4) the existence of *flak* and public relations officials as means of social control, and 5) the numerous ideological forces that exist and are moulded to fit elite interests when necessary ([Mullen & Klaehn, 2010, p. 218.](#)). The five facets illustrate how this model frames the media's subservience, regardless of its freedom in a society, to the societal elites. Subsequently, by presenting media's motivations, the model illustrates how journalists enforce the dominant culture or elite policy desires.

Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) has served as an evolution of media models, despite not fitting cleanly within the *Four Theories* models. The frameworks provided by Hallin and Mancini's work – Polarised-Pluralist, Democratic Corporatist, and Liberal models – are couched more within the field of political economy rather than pure communications theory. This cross-disciplinary approach to modelling the media-state relations within a state has enabled a greater understanding of the media-state relationship by blending the modelling and analytical perspectives provided by communications and international relations. This theory serves as an inspiration for this thesis's approach.

The models represent the results of a multi-faceted, bi-dimensional framework. The first dimension consists of media characteristics within a state as measured by four factors: newspaper industry, political parallelism, professionalisation, and the state's role in the media system. The second dimension focuses on measuring the political system of a state through the following factors: political history, consensus or majoritarian government, individual or organised pluralism, the role of the state, and rational-legal authority. The facets mentioned in the dimensions reflect the constraints imposed on a mediascape due to market forces and political ones.

Hallin and Mancini's work, as mentioned above, provides an interesting insight into how to engage with political economy to develop models that reflect the media environment within a state. With the general insight their work provides, I can draw on their approach to bridging the disciplinary boundaries in my efforts to re-conceptualise Siebert et al.'s (1956) original work. Admittedly, one could apply build upon Hallin and Mancini's efforts to better account for the social media era. In that sense, that is my intent with engaging with Siebert et al.'s work. Effectively, the roots for contemporary media-states relations scholarship leads to Siebert et al.'s models, so it seems returning to those roots to glean insights for the contemporary environment is most apt.

To further elucidate my reasoning for opting for Siebert et al.'s models rather than engaging with more contemporary literature, is that there is a natural overlap with Gramsci's ideas that does not come through as strongly with McQuail or Hallin and Mancini's efforts. Siebert et al.'s historical focus in writing their models is approaches a sort of Gramscian take on the media environment as it relates to determining where and why power resides with a particular actor.

Lastly, I will turn to O'hara and Halls' ([O'Hara & Hall, 2021](#)) *Four Internets*, which also has set forth four models of the Internet that may or do exist. Their models are the Silicon Valley Open Internet, DC Commercial Internet, Brussels Bourgeois Internet, and the Beijing Paternal Internet. Some parallels emerge with Siebert et al.'s original formulation of the *Four Theories* and the four models I present in chapters six through nine. In particular, the overlap between the Brussels Bourgeois and Beijing Paternal Internets are apparent between my Social Consciousness and Big Brother models, respectively. Though, the models are somewhat similar, the way in which we position them is fundamentally different. O'hara and Hall position their models as they do by way of the geopolitical entity that most aptly represents the idea, something I do as it relates to the cases I apply later ([O'Hara & Hall, 2021](#)). However, through employing the Gramscian frame of hegemonic competition, I am able to situate the models within social ideal that dominates a society, rather than utilising specific actors to anchor the models. O'hara and Hall do note that as they have theorised the models, there is room for significant change as developing nations' ideas around the Internet emerge. Ultimately, O'hara and Hall do provide insight into how one may model contemporary Internets and how they are governed. I seek to expand on this idea through reframing the underlying relationships between those who govern and are governed.

2.5 MEDIA-STATE RELATIONS' HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

The media-state relationship in the Western sense is a relatively modern research area. However, such a relationship has existed throughout civilisation's history. The first clear evidence of this in Western societies is the existence of town criers who held public and private employment and the status afforded to them by the government in ancient Rome ([Bond, 2011, pp. 28-80](#)). Simultaneously, ancient Rome had what could be considered the first newspaper – the *Acta Diurna* ([Van Gessel, 1970](#)). This early media system would evolve alongside improvements in literacy and technology, with the Gutenberg printing press's advent proving particularly revolutionary. Throughout this time, there existed a relationship between those who created and delivered news media and the ruling body within the region. By tracing technological developments in the next section, the technologies' impacts on the relationship becomes clear.

2.5.1 THE EARLY MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP: ROME

During the Roman Republics' transition to the Roman Empire, circa 80 BCE to 100 CE, the early media-state relationship was characterised by *praecones*, heralds or town criers, and the way the elite of the Roman senate engaged with these *praecones* ([Bond, 2011](#)). Further, daily papers existed known collectively and colloquially as the *Acta* ([Van Gessel, 1970](#)). Siebert et al.'s Authoritarian model draws inspiration, in part, from the time period that follows this period. In examining this period closer, the roots that Siebert et al. draw upon can be traced back to Ancient Rome. However, before delving into the role of the *praecones* and the *Acta*, it is necessary to construct the political landscape in which these entities existed.

The senate governed Roman society until the Emperor rose to power ([Bond, 2011](#)). Even after Augustus Caesar's rise, senators remained elites within Roman society. Senators and members of the Equestrian orders comprised the patrician elite ([Bond, 2011](#)). The chief difference between the two patrician classes was heritage - those within the senatorial class could trace their lineage back to Romulus. In contrast, members of the Equestrian orders were so placed due to their family's wealth ([Bond, 2011](#)). Everyone else within Roman society fell into the plebeian class. These included Roman people born free, foreign immigrants, freed slaves and those still enslaved; these classes are listed according to their societal position ([Bond, 2011](#)). Social mobility came from fortunate plebeians who gained enough wealth to

warrant a position within the Equestrian orders. Plebian *praecones* becoming patricians became a point of contention within Roman society ([Bond, 2011](#)).

The *praeco* existed in two capacities – a public one and a private one – and members of the profession were typically from the freed slave or slave class ([Bond, 2011](#)). Private *praecones* spread announcements and helped organise the public much like their publicly employed counterparts. However, private *praecones* also sold their services as auctioneers, funeral criers, and propagandists for senators and their political agenda ([Bond, 2011](#)). Romans viewed *praecones* as profiting from misfortune leading to their disreputable and deceitful stigmata ([Bond, 2011](#)). Conversely, publicly-employed *praecones* aided the Roman government in disseminating important news and information to the public and were known as *apparitorial praecones* ([Bond, 2011](#)). Considering the regard of imperial employ, publicly-employed *praecones* appear to have mitigated the social stigma of those who worked privately ([Bond, 2011](#)).

Historical evidence indicates that members of the *praeco* profession often became well-connected and exploited those connections for personal gain and the gain of their patrons, at times members of the Senate ([Bond, 2011](#)). In effect, these criers allowed senators to garner favour and support at senatorial forums for their position from the public-at-large and compete to advance their position. Further, the wealth that *praecones* earned in their work allowed them to become members of the Equestrian class. Thus, they could achieve more significant political and social influence, despite the stigma attached to the profession ([Bond, 2011](#)). Similarly, this tension reflects the underlying tensions that the hegemonic Roman elites were posed by what might be understood as a counter-historic bloc in a Gramscian sense (Gramsci, 1971).

Due to socially mobile *praecos*, despite the stigmata, the state acted to limit these individuals' political influence through decrees such as the passage of *lex Julia municipalis* ([Bond, 2011](#)). Individual *praecos* prompted the state's reaction. However, wary elite's policy choices impacted the entire profession, thus influencing media-state relationship within the Roman Empire.

Alongside these town criers were a collection of daily reports and papers known as the *Acta*. The *Acta* included numerous different publications focusing on the affairs of the Senate (*Acta Senatus*), Public Assembly (*Acta Populi*), and day-to-day tedium (*Acta Urbis*) ([Van Gessel,](#)

1970). Under Julius Caesar, the *Acta Senatus* and *Acta Populi* were included in the daily releases of the *Acta Urbis*. As a result, the secrecy enjoyed by the senate eroded, leading to senators facing greater public scrutiny (Van Gessel, 1970). The policy appears to have aided Caesar's effort to frame himself as a leader of the people while diminishing the senate's appearance. Subsequently, Roman government became more influenced by democratic ideas (Van Gessel, 1970). The *Acta Urbis* under Caesar and its distribution method – couriers carrying papers to the provinces and publicly displaying them – effectively became an early mass communication system (Van Gessel, 1970).

This system created a demand for political news and information from the plebeian class, and the level of political discourse and concern within Roman society increased (Van Gessel, 1970). This free discourse was widely appreciated until Augustus took power. One of his first edicts was to remove the *Acta Senatus* from the *Acta Urbis* and re-establish the senate's secrecy (Van Gessel, 1970). This edict effectively isolated the senate from the public, thus decreasing the access any oppositional views had to communicate with the public – save for what the *praecos* disseminated. Therefore, with a greater degree of control over the information distributed within the mass communication system of the Empire, Augustus was more effectively able to construct a narrative supportive of his rule.

Thus, through socio-political constraints, characteristics of the media-state relationship within Ancient Rome begin to emerge and are reminiscent of contemporary media-state relationships. Chiefly, the direct control and use of the media– the *Acta* and the *praecos* – to propagate the emperor's desired narrative, and the subsequent acquiescence to such efforts by the citizenry and the elites alike, evokes Siebert et al.'s (1956) authoritarian model.

During Julius Caesar's reign, the modern media-state notion of elite dissensus and consensus appears, on the face, to be observable through Senator's use of *praecos* to advance their aims within the senate and mobilise plebians' support (Baum & Potter, 2019; Bond, 2011). This effect was magnified by the Julius's efforts to promote free Senate discussion within the *Acta Urbis* (Van Gessel, 1970). However, once Augustus took power and reduced the senate's efficacy as an opposition, the effect of elite contention appeared to diminish. In turn, this reinforces the explanation Siebert et al.'s (1956) authoritarian model for the media-state relationship's status in the late Roman Empire.

Continuing the Roman focus, the historical point that merits exploration is during Papal supremacy throughout the Italian region and Europe generally. This period inspired part of Siebert et al.'s (1956) authoritarian model.

2.5.2 THE AVVISI PERIOD

As time advanced, courier-connected information networks expanded to pervade the ordinary person's everyday life. Thus, these networks compounded people's voracious appetite for news and information. Unlike the Roman Empire's courier network, the networks that emerged throughout the Medieval period and into the Renaissance allowed for the private transmission of news, typically in the form of handbills and gazettes. In the case of Italy, these gazettes were known as *avvisi* (De Vivo, 2005). The system facilitated the mass dissemination of *avvisi* and peaked from the 1500s to the 1700s. State efforts to monitor and control the information disseminated along these lines peaked coincidentally. While I focus on Italy solely, similar systems evolved throughout major regional centres across Europe (Haffemayer, 1997).

In Medieval and Renaissance Italy, multiple layers of information dissemination and numerous actors attempting to control and regulate the flow of information to the masses existed. Information flowed through a network of *avvisi* writers that would be delivered to the public and other writers in Italian cities and across Europe. Conversely, in Italy foreign *avvisi* would arrive from these networks; thus, the mass transmission of news between cities and states grew (De Vivo, 2005). This system informed the public of general goings-on across the continent and the New World (De Vivo, 2005).

Italian city-states of the time would often work to regulate and control public access to information to limit threats to the governing regime (De Vivo, 2005). Further, *avvisi* authors would engage in self-censorship and avoid drafting gazettes that could be construed as overtly critical of the state (De Vivo, 2005). While city-states were mindful of information critically of them being released, the Roman Catholic Church exerted a significant influence over governance and public discourse of the time. While states would handle day-to-day affairs, the political and social hegemony of the Church enabled it to root out anything it regarded as heresy (De Vivo, 2005). A unique dynamic emerged within information exchanges as some published opinions the Church considered heretical (De Vivo, 2005).

The information environment within Italy at that time can be reconceptualised as an internationalised information market that has an extra-territorial actor, the Roman Catholic Church, attempting to regulate information flows. It had domestic actors in governments that would suppress information critical of the state and the Church insofar as the latter deemed it politically and socially expedient.

Interestingly, as numerous writers retold events from across Europe, concerns about accuracy and truthfulness emerged. Readers engaged the content in a sceptical manner ([De Vivo, 2005](#)). Since *avvisi* writers were information gatekeepers for the public this is concerning. However, it also illustrates that the information environment from some 400 years ago is not totally unfamiliar contemporarily. Further, this environment and the intervention from the state and Church is reminiscent of Siebert et al.'s (1956) authoritarian model. However, considering the Church's efforts to restrict the flow of any information deemed heretical, some elements of Siebert et al.'s ([1956](#)) soviet model were present.

2.5.3 THE PRINTING REVOLUTION

The printing press's invention by Johannes Gutenberg in 1439 and its spread coincided with the proliferation of the *avvisi* and other forms of hand-written gazettes ([Loubere, 2021](#)). It was not until the early 1600s that the first printing press-oriented newspapers appeared. However, printing's impacts were felt long before as presses altered the European information economy fundamentally ([Nunn, 2014](#); [Weber, 2006](#)).

A principal example of the problem faced by states and the Church is Martin Luther's 95 *Theses*. Luther's work is credited with being the foundation of the Protestant Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church ([Luther, 2011](#); [Marshall, 2017](#)). A cell of actors who took issue with the status quo incited revolutionary fervour by leaning on their presses' ability to communicate their ideas. Effectively, they mounted a credible (as history demonstrates) challenge to the hegemonic influence of the Church. Ultimately, this results in restructuring the hegemon and a rise of an alternative hegemonic force in the Protestant sect ([Marshall, 2017](#)). In this example, elements of Gramsci's (1971) insights become apparent, which I elaborate upon in chapter four. With such occurrences before printing presses were used for the widespread distribution of news, states' efforts to contain information flows can be understood as quashing any potential future challenge to the hegemon.

Following the printing press's rise, the news industry grew behind it. It has been touched upon previously that newspapers existed in various forms before the printing press; however, news houses sprang into existence with the advent of the press ([Eisenstein, 1980](#); [Golding, 1997](#)). This period in history marked the emergence of the commercial press, which would eventuate into today's newspapers ([Golding, 1997](#)). At this time, news houses began to print books and periodicals further facilitating knowledge dissemination at a rate that had yet to be witnessed within the world ([Nunn, 2014](#)). Broadly, knowledge proliferation created an intellectual middle class, for lack of a better term, that could challenge the reigning hegemon – whether it be the Church or later the state. Further, those who were previously engaged through the use of script mediums found a more efficient means of spreading their ideas and challenging hegemonies. These individuals are evocative of Gramsci's (1971) organic intellectuals.

So, following increased engagement with news and politics, a significant effort emerged to crackdown on newspapers' spread with several European states. Authorities intended to limit the spread of news and ideas they deemed harmful to the authority figure ([Clegg, 2001](#); [Walker, 1950](#)). Taken in the context of a hegemonic discussion, the emerging bloc of intellectual, rational thought spurred by the rapid dissemination of printing technologies provided a credible threat to Europe's autocratic regimes. So, the hegemon sought to undermine potential counter-hegemonic forces represented by the new intellectualism. History demonstrates that the previous hegemonic ordering was supplanted with the spread of Enlightenment-era ideas. This historical period marks the first time applying present media-state relations lens may elicit interpretations similar to modern states. Further, this period marks the emergence of the ideas reflected in Siebert et al.'s (1956) Libertarian model. The state adopted a proactive stance in limiting the press's ability to criticise the state. An example of this was the situation that emerged in England – presses were permitted to print most anything, so long as it did not criticise the state ([Thomas, 1969](#)).

Interestingly, this period also saw the hegemonic actors exploiting the printing presses' capabilities. The dissemination of the *Malleus Maleficarum* in the decades and century after its publication through multiple reprintings and translations is one example ([Eisenstein, 1980](#)). The book is a complete construction of witchcraft, argues for its elevation to an act of heresy and the prosecution of alleged witches as heretics ([Kramer & Sprenger, 2007](#)). With the book's spread, the Roman Catholic Church and later Protestant churches were able to capitalise on social anxieties across Europe to reassert their position as hegemonies. People acquiesced to

the protection offered by the Church at a time of turmoil; thus, the Church found scapegoating citizens as witches a valuable means to garner support ([Grazier, 2013](#)). Given that the *Malleus* contained false information, it is reasonable to infer that hegemon's engaged in acts akin to modern disinformation campaigns to protect their position. This behaviour continues today, especially in contemporary social media.

I have presented some examples of the printing press's several impacts here. However, I have illustrated that the printing press's rapid spread – and literature and news afterwards – created a new media environment in which hegemonic actors sought to staunch public information flows. Further, hegemons utilised disinformation as a means of rallying support for their status within a society. In the next section, I will move forward a significant amount of time to the emergence of electric and digital technologies.

2.5.4 THE RISE OF ELECTRIC AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Following the printing press's spread, the telegram was next significant communication technology that impacted news spread from city to city. The telegram allowed for the first means of transmitting news across vast distances relatively rapidly, thus increasing the speed at which information was disseminated across populations ([Flyverbom & Madsen, 2019](#)). So, while the printing press hastened the reproduction of books, the telegraph represented the first significant reduction of dissemination times.

While the telegraph's day-to-day impact is perhaps less tangible than the printing press, the telegraph revolutionised how news houses communicated, business was conducted and how politics was conducted ([Czitrom, 1982](#); [Flyverbom & Madsen, 2019](#)). As a result, the information world became much smaller, and national issues began to pervade the local sphere more so than before ([Carey, 1983](#)).

The telegraph gave actors with the financial means the ability to communicate in significantly quicker timeframes than those who relied on road and rail to carry their messages. Chiefly, governments and prosperous businesses benefitted the most from the ability to disseminate information rapidly ([Flyverbom & Madsen, 2019](#)). Potentially the most poignant example of the telegraph's impact was the ability for command-and-control procedures to be carried out from Washington, D.C. during the American Civil War ([Hochfelder, 2012](#)). Northern forces had access to quicker and better information than Southern rebels, allowing for more effective

war management by Northern leaders ([Hochfelder, 2012](#)). It would be easy to reframe the American Civil War as a hegemonic struggle between Northern urban-industrialism and Southern slave-based agrarianism.

Samuel Morse is noted as having recognised the potential for a global village in the future and the notion that the US would become a super-connected nation in which communication lines function as national nerves – in his vision, the telegraph served this purpose ([Carey, 1983](#)). That fantasy would quickly come to pass, perhaps at a grander scale than Morse ever imagined through social media, and it was facilitated in part due to the telegraph's rise ([Castells, 2011b](#)). The telegraph enabled the rapid point-to-point transmission of print messages.

In contrast, early radio sets represented a different revolution in communications. Radio was the first system that allowed for a sender to spread a message over a great distance to multiple receivers at a single time. Radio can be construed as analogising the town square – in which radio presenters occupied the role of the town crier and advertisers took on the part of shop barkers. Further, mass media finds its roots in radio's invention and spread ([Loubere, 2021](#)).

Radio marked a stark departure from how the average person received information – weather, politics, news and entertainment all came neatly packaged in radio broadcast format ([McLuhan, 2013a](#)). As a result, scholars began to question radio's impacts on society – this marked the emergence of modern media effects research ([Bartlett, 1947](#)). Radio also created the conditions in which entire populations could be fed a unified message that shaped their reality. Hitler capitalised on it to solidify his control over the German people, and Franklin D. Roosevelt utilised it to assuage the fears of the American people ([McLuhan, 2013a](#); [Wilke, 2015](#)). An interesting example that highlights the potential of radio was the now-infamous 1938 broadcast of *War of the Worlds* by Orson Welles and Mercury Theatre ([Heyer, 2003](#)). Welles narrated a rendition of H.G. Wells work, a story in which Martians invade Britain, leaving viewers in disbelief – many panicking, fearing that New Jersey had been invaded by Martians ([Heyer, 2003](#); [Wells, 2003](#)). This example precisely highlights the potential impacts of radio that at the time were beginning to come into focus. Similarly, social media's impacts on society are beginning to be understood presently.

Radio was the first medium that saw a dichotomy emerge regarding media control – given states controlled the airwaves, they were able to organise societies in new ways through mass media's power ([Wilke, 2015](#)). The early Soviet Union exemplifies this as radio was a state

organelle ([Loubere, 2021](#); [Wilke, 2015](#)). So, radio illustrates the first clear example of the modern media-state tensions. These tensions are attributable to the immense power of radio for the spread and control of information. Today, radio is a ubiquitous part of life, and its impacts are still felt. Radio's age as the leading technology was relatively short-lived, as it would quickly find itself supplanted by television's rise.

Radio saw speech carried over great distances, while the television saw video and audio carried over similarly great distances. Television quickly replaced radio as the foremost medium for entertainment and news consumption in nations. It is worth constraining the discourse to considering televisions' impacts on media-state relations.

First, television allowed for the ordering of society in new ways. For example, broadcasters disseminated news on evening cycles, entertainment programs emerged around primetime slots, and people engaged with television in ways they had yet to do with another medium ([McLuhan, 2013b](#)). A new form of shared experiences among a nation's people and later the world was created. Further, it afforded the state a new form of information dissemination to control – perhaps television's potential impacts were more readily recognised than radio's impacts as states enacted stronger regulations on television broadcasts rather than radio broadcasts ([Scammell, 1996](#)). Importantly, shared experiences allowed for collective elation, in the case of the 1969 Lunar Landing, and collective despair, in the case of the American war in Vietnam ([McLuhan, 2013b](#)). The Vietnam topic was so impactful that new terminology sprang forth – the Vietnam Syndrome, which connoted the rapid erosion of public support for the American war in Vietnam primarily due to broadcasting battlefield images and reports directly into American families' homes ([Simons, 1997](#)). Other nations that engaged in foreign interventions were not spared this concern ([Dixon, 2000](#)). From Vietnam Syndrome would later emerge the CNN Effect, a term coined after broadcasting images from the American-led intervention into Somalia ([Robinson, 2005](#)). In short, in the context of media-state relations, television – though highly regulated in liberal democracies – represented a departure in the historical structuring of the relationship. The impacts of visual reports led to visceral reactions by the public and mobilisation against state policy. So, the television represents a potent technology for undermining the state's hegemony.

In other nations, hegemonic actors strove for stringent control over the content disseminated through television. There was generally great success so long as the state maintained television broadcasters as an organ of government ([Mickiewicz, 1999](#)). In the case of the Soviet

Union following *Glasnost*, which became a watershed moment for journalism within the USSR, the hegemonic status of the Soviet Union was quickly challenged as truthful reporting on the state's actions was permitted ([Dejevsky, 1989](#)).

Television, much like the printing press and radio before it, revolutionised how individuals and states engaged with media. Further, radio and television grew in import with the digital age.

2.5.5 THE DIGITAL AGE BECOMES THE INFORMATION AGE

Before the 1969 Lunar Landing, the first satellites were launched into orbit ([Loubere, 2021](#)). Quickly following their success, commercial communications satellites were launched. These satellites enabled the real-time broadcast of television, and later radio, signals around the globe. Satellites enabled millions worldwide to watch the Lunar Landing simultaneously.

The expansion of communications satellites can be understood to have created a similar revolution to the telegraph. The telegraph created a media environment in which point-to-point communications were capable over vast distances. Satellites created that same circumstance for mass media systems. Thus, allowing the mass broadcast of signals via television and radio. Further, in a fashion akin to television and radio, satellite is a highly regulated communications technology ([Allison, 2020](#); [Azzarelli, 2020](#); [Freeland, 2020](#)). Through limiting access, hegemony constructs an environment beneficial to their interests, similar to the telegraph and radio. Though, unlike telegraph and radio, there are genuine concerns regarding adding satellites to space and their eventual return to earth and the harm potential there ([Jakhu et al., 2020](#); [Pelton, 2020](#); [Skinner, 2020](#)).

The next satellite revolution lies in the development of satellite systems capable of transmitting Internet signals to individuals – this revolution shrank the communication world further ([Giuliani et al., 2020](#)). It also brings me to my final example of historical communications technologies – the Internet. I will note that much like the earlier discussion on television, the following discussion summarises the Internet's impacts on communications for the social media-state relationship.

The Internet's advent sparked a revolution in how individuals interacted and consumed information, not unlike Gutenberg's press ([Leamer, 2007](#)). While the press cheapened books and promoted literacy, the Internet facilitated storing and accessing information from the

collective global consciousness. As a result, it has been asserted that the Internet enabled the massive democratisation of information and an erosion of the traditional gatekeeping roles played by print and broadcast journalist newsrooms ([Cridland, 2008](#); [Williams & Delli Carpini, 2004](#)). In the media environment created by the early Internet, traditional media sources scrambled to find footing – transitioning to online-hosted newspapers and the eventual rise of Internet-based streaming of conventional broadcasts, for instance ([Henten & Tadayoni, 2008](#); [Van der Wurff, 2008](#)). Further, with information democratisation, individuals shifted to consuming information and networking at levels yet unseen in the world ([Castells, 2014](#); [Cridland, 2008](#)). As a result, an increased collective understanding of global and societal problems emerged, leading to Internet-borne protests and movements ([Amorim et al., 2018](#); [Ghonim, 2012](#)). Regimes suffering from protests have attempted to counter these efforts through employing censorship techniques ([Amorim et al., 2018](#); [Ananyev et al., 2019](#)). Such an approach is reminiscent to the spread of Gutenberg’s press – in which hegemony reacted to the threat the new technology posed through cracking down on it. The discourse on Internet-based protests would be remiss not to focus on social media’s rise, which brings me to the next section – and a core focus of the thesis.

2.5.6 THE CONTEMPORARY ERA’S RISING STAR – SOCIAL MEDIA

The above review of historical interactions between media entities and states illustrates that several contemporary themes were ever-present in the past. Chief amongst these are state efforts to limit the spread of information that is not necessarily favourable or is deemed an outright threat. When approaching history with the *Four Theories* in mind, one can see the merit of Siebert et al.’s (1956) work for normalising discussion and understanding of early media-state relations.

The following central theme is the gradual (and more recently rapid) shrinking of the information world through increased information travel speeds domestically and internationally. Subsequently, technological development and its impact is highlighted as the third theme. While in antiquity, the means for mass communication was limited, this is not the case in the information era. History from the late Medieval period onward is marked by technological developments that facilitate communicating ideas *en masse*. Further, as the means for information to rapidly spread domestically and internationally developed, one may see the characteristics of a political economy made apparent when looking at information and knowledge economies throughout history.

Thus, it is with this in mind that it becomes imperative to turn toward the most recent development in the news world – social media. Historically, it is pretty clear that humanity – from a socio-political perspective (as per the first theme referenced above) – has yet to move beyond the struggle of hegemony maintaining their position for fear of the rise of counter-hegemonic forces. Instead, history indicates that this struggle is only exacerbated by the rise of new technological paradigms within the news and communication world. Thus, the imperative to further understand the impacts of the contemporary technological paradigm is reaffirmed.

2.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Throughout this chapter, I have reviewed the history of communications technologies and media-state relations scholarship. Media-state relations as a research area is young when considered against how history demonstrates the relationship's existence. That is to say, if there has been media and authority, there has been a media-state relationship.

Reviewing the invention of various technologies and their uses has helped to highlight how technology spurs reactions within the media-state relations dichotomy. The insights afforded here better contextualise social media's unique nature discussed in chapter three. Further, I have highlighted instances where the Neo-Gramscian approach has been applied to the *Four Theories* – though such instances are sparse. Thus, illustrating a gap in the literature that this thesis fills. Going forward, the discourse in this chapter affirms the need to assess and characterise the social media-state relationship and constructs part of the literature foundation to do so.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

3.0 THE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In this chapter, I address social media in detail and in differing ways. I start by reviewing how previous scholars have defined social media. Within this area of the literature, social media are defined in disparate terms, thus necessitating establishing a social media definition that I can apply to the social media-state relationship. With a definition established, I review several areas of past social media scholarship; this review further highlights the space to establish an interdisciplinary conceptual framework for assessing and characterising the social media-state relationship. Further, considering past scholarship elucidates the gap that this thesis fills more fully. After considering the theoretical literature, I consider previous scholarship that has highlighted social media's political, economic, and legal impacts. Subsequently, this review provides insight into how distinct models of the social media-state relationship may be characterised.

3.0.1 DEFINITIONS

The absence of a common social media definition impedes research by reducing clarity and compatibility in research reporting ([Effing et al., 2011](#); [Howard & Parks, 2012](#); [Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010](#); [Xiang & Gretzel, 2010](#)). Subsequently, previous social media scholarship has defined social media in myriad terms ([Russo et al., 2008](#); [Terry, 2009](#)). In this section, I will review previous social media definitions before synthesising them thematically into the definition I use throughout the thesis.

Scholars have defined social media through the technologies employed and tend to focus on platforms' Internet or web-based nature, and in turn aim to inextricably link social media to the Web 2.0 revolution. Further, past definitions of social networking sites (SNS) have been conflated to define social media in totality ([Boyd & Ellison, 2007](#)). Carr & Hayes ([2015](#)) distinguish this by recognising that while all SNSs are social media, not all social media are SNSs. In these definitions, increased emphasis is placed on communication mechanisms and channels and subsequent processes regarding content creation. Kaplan & Haenlein ([2010](#)) use social media's popularity as collaborative, interactive spaces to explain the Web 2.0 revolution and the departure away from individual content developers.

The Web 2.0 revolution also connotes social media's Internet basis ([O'Reilly, 2009](#)). This attribution reflects a shift in how users connect and use the Internet, subsequently social

media. Instead of relying on accessing platforms through the World Wide Web, users are engage the Internet through applications (apps) that employ different data and information transfer mechanisms than web-based systems ([Agichtein et al., 2008](#)). Effectively, the majority of users who engage with SMPs are accessing them through mobile devices utilising apps rather than web-based clients of the past ([Agichtein et al., 2008](#)).

Mobile phones that have that ability to record audio and video allow users to create content, illustrating the social components of social media definitions. Social media have been described previously as incorporating user-generated or user-created content – a departure from the curated nature of old media (newspapers or television, for instance) in which publishers moderate content. In social media’s case, content is uploaded, discussed, and refined by other users. Thus, by relying on users to generate content, social media necessitates interactivity that is not found within other media ([Howard & Parks, 2012](#); [Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010](#); [Kent, 2010b](#)).

Interactivity is influenced by users’ feelings of engagement with social mediascapes. Interactivity is achieved through having access to near-real-time feedback on user content. Further, users’ ability to represent themselves through profile services and cultivate an online persona demonstrate interactivity ([Carr & Hayes, 2015](#)). When a user’s ability to represent themselves is combined with social media’s interactivity, users are afforded channels for interpersonal communication. Thus, providing a means for users to gain social satisfaction through creating content on SMPs. Subsequently, this process perpetuates the feedback cycle social media create for users. An example of such exchange might be “user A” posting a restaurant review on an SMP and “user B” commenting on that post, creating a shared dialogue on experiences at the restaurant. Due to the social media’s public nature, other users can glean value from this content and could opt to engage with the discussion as well. In these cases, each user gain social fulfilment through providing the initial review, contributing feedback, or finding validation in the comments of users A or B.

Considering these themes, defining social media in discrete terms becomes pertinent, and perhaps aid in establishing a unified definition. The first theme is interactivity, or as Carr & Hayes ([2015](#)) posit, the *perception* of interactivity. As alluded to above, interactivity is couched in social media allowing increased participation and control within communication channels. In essence, social media should enable the users to present themselves, create a social presence, and allow for real-time interaction and feedback.

The next theme extrapolated from previous definitions is that social media are Internet-based; thus, they have a digital basis. Creating the distinction of Internet-based platforms rather than web-based is vital due to the Internet infrastructure's evolution altering how users engage the Internet and social media. Further social media allows users to participate in real-time interactions while retaining the ability to participate asynchronously as proffered by Kent (2010a). The final theme is mass communication. Social media content creation's public collaborative nature and social media's reach allow users to disseminate their ideas, beliefs, and content to billions of users globally – effectively allowing an individual global reach. However, a particular user's profile limits their reach to the confines of the platform's userbase.

Thus, social media can be defined as any Internet-based system that allows for the perception of interactivity through asynchronous, near-instantaneous, mass engagement facilitating the exchange and creation of ideas, beliefs, cultural products (e.g. memes), and the subsequent feedback provided and value created by such interactions. This definition constrains the literature review from this point forward. Social media's political, social, and economic impacts as a medium become more clear when defined as such, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

3.0.2 SOCIAL MEDIA'S SCALE, SPREAD AND USAGE

Having defined social media, I can now explore how social media have penetrated societies worldwide. Social media are an increasingly ubiquitous presence contemporarily. Enabling this is the spread of Internet connections. Notably, there are reportedly 5.2 billion Internet users or roughly 66 per cent of the global population as of January 2022 ([Internet World Stats, 2022](#)). Likewise, approximately 95 per cent of the global population has access to a mobile broadband network ([International Telecommunication Union, 2021](#)). Though, less than two thirds that number may actually utilise their mobile connection for Internet access; conversely, in many developing nations mobile Internet (and the app access it entails) is the only form of Internet connectivity ([International Telecommunication Union, 2021](#)). Consequently, it has been observed that there are 4.62 billion social media users as of January 2022, with a caveat that bots or individuals holding multiple accounts may somewhat skew this statistic (Kemp, 2022). The International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) 2021 report reflects these statistics in the nations they collected data ([International Telecommunication Union, 2021](#)).

When considering specific SMPs, Facebook is reported to have nearly 3 billion users, and YouTube comes second with 2.5 billion users as of January 2022 ([Kemp, 2022](#)). Other platforms like TikTok (1 billion users) and WeChat (1.3 billion users) represent rapidly growing platforms highlighting the diverse use and uptake of SMPs ([Kemp, 2022](#)). New platforms' rapid ascent coincides with the ITU's observations regarding younger people's Internet use; 71 per cent of the observed youth population was connected to the Internet compared to 57 per cent, generally ([International Telecommunication Union, 2021](#)). Similarly, it has been observed that social media use grew globally at an approximate rate of ten per cent between January 2021 and January 2022 ([Kemp, 2022](#)).

The above illustrates the continued growth in Internet and social media penetration across global societies. Further, more younger people are adapting to digital society indicating that there is an ever-growing reliance on SMPs and eliciting insight into how SMPs will continue alter social dynamics in the future. As nations develop capacities and more people gain access to the Internet and social media, the imperative for understanding the social media state relationship's nuances is further illustrated. To that end, I will discuss contemporary macro-level social media research.

3.0.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AT THE MACRO-LEVEL

Social media's proliferation entails its systemic impacts, resulting in the need to understand social media at the macro-level. However, most efforts attempt to apply previous media-state models to particular cases and extrapolate from there. A relatively recent attempt by D'Heer ([2016](#)) sought to establish a macro-level understanding of social media similar to how I conceptualise it. Beyond this, the most relevant macro-level contributions to understanding social media come from the critical paradigm, which I will discuss in the next section.

D'Heer ([2016](#)) constructs a method for understanding social media's impact on political communication channels between politicians, voters, and journalists. While framed at the institutional level as opposed to an individual level, this work addresses a gap in political social media by challenging the assumption that politicians rely predominately on social media to engage with voters. D'Heer's work asserts that social media functions as a tool to magnify the traditional political communication structures – that is, politicians and journalists have more robust engagement with one another, and voters are reliant on content from these sources to formulate opinions. However, D'Heer holds that social media enable voters to

engage with politicians and journalists more directly (though this is often one-way communication). As I develop my position here, I suspect that while D’Heer’s work provides insights into social media’s political impacts, social media do more than merely magnify traditional political communication. It is worth noting that I benefit from drawing upon contemporary political affairs as D’Heer’s work was submitted in 2016 and did not have that luxury.

D’Heer’s work illustrates an area in the literature close to what I am exploring. While D’Heer might be the closest purely empirical fit, there are critical scholars whose works need to be addressed. However, before I treat critical scholarship in the next section, I would be remiss to not engage with Meikle and Young’s (2017) contributions and Hinton and Hjorth’s (2019) contributions.

Meikle and Young (2017) assert a way to understand the interconnectedness of the contemporary media environment in their *Media Convergence*. In particular, their points regarding media companies in the convergent media environment, as they define it, are of use and reflect the understanding I develop of how SMCs operate within the broader political economy of power.

The first concern of businesses they highlight is where ownership rests – this is of acute concern within their analytical frame as they are focused on privately owned corporations within Western states (Meikle & Young, 2017). In this context, the concern is a matter of inter-business competition for influence and advantage within the media industry. I would posit that this extends to societies in which companies may be state-owned as well and would represent its own sort of concerns for the private ownership. I will expand on this point in my discussion in 3.1.1 and in chapters five through seven.

Next, Meikle and Young (2017) highlight the concerns around politicians’ perceptions that they need a friendly media outlet. This notion aligns with the perceptions of individuals to challenge the prevailing power dynamics and their perceived roles within the power political economy. That is, through preserving themselves by aligning with a media entity, a politician may expand their influence over the broader society. A notion that is somewhat akin to Siebert et al.’s (1956) Authoritarian model and, to an extent, their Libertarian model as well, given the individualism present within those models. Where the Authoritarian model sees the

individual as the state, the Libertarian model will see the individual as an actor that can influence the media-state relationship, given the right resources.

Similarly, Meikle and Young's (2017) final point of concern regarding users of convergent media aligns with Siebert et al.'s Social Responsibility model neatly. This concern is largely centred around the ramifications of the emerging perception that media companies are primarily focused on the profit motive rather than disseminating information and news for the public good. Thinking in more contemporary terms, this example is evocative of the ongoing efforts to regulate social media, which I discuss in greater detail when presenting the Social Consciousness model in chapter nine.

Meikle and Young's (2017) insights are invaluable in further positioning the role of SMCs within the social media-state relationship. Similarly, Hinton and Hjorth's (2019) *Understanding Social Media* provides insights into how individuals engage with social media. In this work, while focusing on means of researching and understanding the cultural forces at play, Hinton and Hjorth provide several cases that highlight a certain ephemerality emergent within social media. This ephemerality reflects the haste at which a social media community may praise and scorn an individual on the platform. In this way, the rapid exchange of capital within the political economy of power may become more tangible. That is, if the fickleness of online discourse reflects the prevailing hegemonic idea of the time, then the flux present within SMPs represents the crashing of hegemonic competition.

Hinton and Hjorth's (2019) *Understanding Media* provides a robust frame for embracing differing research approaches to social media scholarship. In their discourse on playful resistance, the sort of counter-hegemonic force that Gramsci describes, which I elaborate on in chapter four, is apparent. Through their interviews with artists, an image of the contra-Internet movement is highlighted (Hinton & Hjorth, 2019). In a Gramscian sense, this sort of resistance is levying a challenge to the Internet of Things infrastructure and Big Datafication of societies. The sort of resistance proffered by these artists, should it grow in support, may represent a robust challenge to the current structures at play within society from which a system akin to the Social Responsibility model Siebert et al. posit may emerge.

Where Hinton and Hjorth's work is of particular import it is in its effort to bridge the gap between the more positivist and critical traditions; this also holds for Meikle and Young.

Their works provide a pathway into critical scholarship and insight into how to bridge the paradigmatic gap. To that end, I now turn toward critical social media scholarship.

3.0.4 CRITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA SCHOLARSHIP

Since Gramsci and Cox inspire a portion of my theoretical frame, there is merit in exploring other critical social media scholars' perspectives. Christian Fuchs' efforts stand out in this vein. Fuchs has published several articles and books on the matter of social media, the Internet, and its implications for society from a Marxist perspective ([Fuchs, 2009c](#), [2012](#), [2013](#), [2015](#), [2016a](#), [2016b](#), [2018a](#), [2018b](#), [2021](#); [Fuchs et al., 2013](#); [Fuchs & Mosco, 2015a](#), [2015b](#), [2016](#); [Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013](#), [2015](#); [Fuchs & Trottier, 2015](#); [Trottier & Fuchs, 2014a](#), [2014b](#)). In my estimation, several themes emerge from Fuchs' works related to my efforts. So, I will present those themes and discuss them.

The first, and perhaps most crucial, theme is the apparent absence of critical media studies dealing with social media's implications for an increasingly digitised economy ([Fuchs, 2009a](#), [2009b](#), [2016b](#); [Fuchs & Mosco, 2015a](#), [2015b](#); [Trottier & Fuchs, 2014a](#)). Fuchs' earlier works identified this need. His subsequent efforts have provided a Marxist perspective on the digital economy that has emerged behind the proliferation of big data analytics and social media. Fuchs' efforts in this space provide insight into how a critical approach to social media may be implemented. Indeed, the framework I present in later chapters benefits from greater analytical power through employing a critical lens.

Fuchs has explicitly written on surveillance capitalism's implications and the commodification of individual users and user-generated content ([Fuchs, 2015](#), [2018b](#), [2021](#); [Fuchs et al., 2013](#); [Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013](#); [Fuchs & Trottier, 2015](#)). By this, Fuchs elucidates how the spread of tracking technologies enable SMCs to create user profiles and market those profiles; I expand on this in 3.1.2. My position is distinct in that it is not explicitly interested in these mechanisms; instead, I focus on providing a tool that can be used regardless of theoretical perspectives. In constructing my perspective, the Neo-Gramscian lens enables broadly understanding the competing influences on a society's structures. Thus, I am afforded the theoretical flexibility necessary for achieving a generalisable, normative perspective. In essence, the Neo-Gramscian view provides for a discursive presentation that a firmly Marxist perspective may disallow.

In Trottier and Fuchs' *Theorising Social Media, Politics, and the State* (2014b), their discourse adopts a view that might be taken to parallel Neo-Gramscianism's hegemonic considerations: "Social media are neither causes of these phenomena nor are they entirely unimportant. Rather, they are spaces of complex manifestations of power, counter-power and power contradiction" (2014b, p. 34). This idea appears to reflect Gramsci's notions of hegemony – power – counter-power, or counter-historic blocs and the efforts a hegemon undertakes to preserve itself, or power contradiction. Earlier in Trottier and Fuchs' (2014b) piece, ideas of hegemony are briefly mentioned to explain tensions in contemporary civil society. Thus, my intent to apply Neo-Gramscian notions of hegemony is affirmed within contemporary critical literature.

Another theme across Fuchs' works is applying Marxist perspectives on the digital economy to several nations' digital mediascapes (Fuchs, 2016a, 2018a, 2019b). His works have also coincided with the planned case studies – China, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which are presented in chapters six to nine. Fuchs discusses the role of user-generated discourse and the rise of nationalist sentiments online in these works. Fuchs advances a Marxist understanding of nationalism and how social media facilitate disseminating right-wing ideology and foment support for authoritarian demagoguery (Fuchs, 2018a, 2019b). I take inspiration from these efforts; however, given the departure from the Fuchs' largely Marxist lens as the analytic focal point, there is room for advancing a different interpretation of the forces at play – chiefly the hegemonic power struggle within societies.

Fuchs and other critical scholars provide a valuable foundation for me to expand and construct my approach's critical aspects. Further, their work reiterates a gap that I can fill within the literature. Fuchs adopts a Marxist political economy approach in some of his works while focusing explicitly on the capitalisation and commodification of user data and user-generated social media content. The discourse he presents is framed through the class considerations and how the upper classes, the Bourgeoisie, in the digital economy exploit the lower classes by separating their labour from the value the labour generates. In effect, this conceptualises the Marxist power political economy. I provide a conceptually distinct means to understand the power political economy through blending Neo-Gramscianism and media-state scholarship (presented in chapter two). By adopting this more-abstracted framework, there appears to be greater room in accounting for differing societies' cultural ideas than would be derived from a wholly class-centred approach. Effectively, Gramsci's notions on

hegemony allow for the necessary abstraction to conceptualise the social media-state relationship in a manner aligned with Siebert et al.'s (1956) contributions. In doing so, I establish four different models of the social media-state relationship. In Fuchs and my position, social media's ability to empower actors engaged in hegemonic competition within a society are considered. For Fuchs, it is a Bourgeois capitalisation tool; for my work, it is manifested as power within the social media-state relationship itself, a unique effect of global societies' mass digitisation.

3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACTS

3.1.1 POLITICAL IMPACTS

Significant research on social media's political impact has been conducted. This impact spans all areas of politics, whether it be micro-level, singular instances, or the macro-level structures of IR and diplomacy. Further, social media's political implications can be understood differently depending on the analytical lens used and society examined. These impacts can be characterised by numerous facets; however, I will address relevant core impacts: elections and voting, social movements, bots' rise and impact, and lastly IR. Addressing these areas illustrates social media's myriad political impacts as a point of differentiation from traditional media-state relations, reiterating my overall assertion that the social media-state relationship is a distinct entity and ought to be considered thusly.

3.1.1.1 ELECTIONS AND VOTING.

Social media have altered voting, the most basic form of political expression. Consequently, social media have influenced elections outcomes globally. A large group of researchers has sought to understand social media's election impact ([Cameron et al., 2016](#); [Enli, 2017](#); [Ferrara, 2017](#); [Franch, 2013](#); [Gomez, 2014](#); [Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017](#); [Hong & Nadler, 2012](#); [Klinger, 2013](#); [Ross & Rivers, 2017](#); [Segesten & Bossetta, 2017](#); [Skoric et al., 2016](#); [Skovsgaard & Van Dalen, 2013](#); [Vaccari et al., 2013](#)). The impact can be constructed in several stages.

Social media are observed to influence political discourse within their platforms ([Bennett, 2012](#); [Boulianne, 2015](#); [Carlisle & Patton, 2013](#); [Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012](#); [Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017](#); [Halpern et al., 2017](#); [Holt et al., 2013](#); [Hyun & Kim, 2015](#); [Lilleker & Koc-Michalska, 2017](#); [Segesten & Bossetta, 2017](#); [Sharoni, 2012](#); [Skoric & Zhu, 2016](#); [Spierings & Jacobs, 2014](#); [Tang & Lee, 2013](#); [Towner, 2013](#); [Yamamoto et al., 2015](#)). Interestingly, the relationship between political participation and

social media seems dependent upon the broader societal context. In the West, there tends to be a positive relationship between social media usage and political involvement on- and offline ([Chen & Chan, 2017](#); [Choi et al., 2017](#); [Skoric & Zhu, 2016](#); [Skoric et al., 2016](#)). However, in societies like China, the relationship appears to be negative – increased social media and political understanding leads to decreased political participation. China’s policies appear to be the leading factor ([Chen & Chan, 2017](#); [Skoric & Zhu, 2016](#)). Further, increased online engagement may lead to mobilising people offline, which demonstrates social media’s impact on election outcomes. A study by Robert Bond and his colleagues introduced political messaging into Facebook and measured the messaging’s effect on voter turnout during the 2010 US midterm elections ([Bond et al., 2012](#)). This research concluded that direct exposure to messaging has an effect; with the largest impact attributed to a contagion effect as messages pass from exposed users to other users. Subsequently, a single message can impact voter turnout, influencing an election’s outcome.

Conversely, there is concern regarding social media’s intangible electioneering benefits. Some research identifies social media’s predictive uses for determining election outcomes ([Cameron et al., 2016](#); [Franch, 2013](#)). In Franch’s (2013) work, the model helps predict election outcomes more so than traditional opinion polling techniques. Further, others have attempted to measure how candidate participation benefits polling during election cycles ([Cameron et al., 2016](#); [Enli, 2017](#); [Franch, 2013](#); [Gomez, 2014](#); [Hong & Nadler, 2012](#); [Klinger, 2013](#); [Skovsgaard & Van Dalen, 2013](#); [Stier et al., 2018](#); [Vaccari et al., 2013](#)). Beyond candidates, some research has attempted to ascertain age and social media’s impact on political participation ([Loader et al., 2014](#); [Towner & Muñoz, 2018](#); [Yamamoto et al., 2015](#)). The intangible impacts emerge when different works are considered wholly – candidates and researchers alike can leverage social media to market a campaign or measure political sentiment.

More broadly, it has been posited that SMPs create bridging capital (links across social groups), as per Putnam (2000), instead of bonding capital (links within social groups) ([Carlisle & Patton, 2013](#)). Social media tangibly impact election outcomes and processes. So, social media have a democratising effect like other Internet- or web-based systems ([Abbott, 2013](#); [Baker & McEnery, 2015](#); [David, 2015](#); [Gilmore, 2012](#); [Kyriakopoulou, 2011](#); [Sani & Zengeni, 2010](#)). As such, I infer that the literature suggests an increase in political participation through social media, when taken with its bridging capital context, may lead to increased political homogeneity and participation over time. Putnam’s ideas of social capital, admittedly

contrast with how I have defined social capital currently with my foundation drawing upon Bourdieu and Castells. However, this more cooperative forth of interacting within the political economy of power the contemporarily exists may be a future development as hegemonic ideas change. Subsequently, this notion evokes the Social Consciousness model I present in chapter nine. For now, I turn to the other forms of political participation.

3.1.1.2 REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, DISCOURSE

CENSORSHIP.

Social media allow individuals to quickly organise amorphous responses to issues within society. These responses are highlighted by organisers' ease at mobilising large amounts of people during the Arab Spring and protests over corruption in China, Russia, and the Philippines. The Umbrella Movement, more recent protests in Hong Kong and the Black Lives Matter protests worldwide are other examples ([Lee et al., 2015](#); [Reuter & Szakonyi, 2015](#); [Rohde et al., 2016](#); [Shirky, 2011](#); [Walsh, 2020](#)).

Social media's potential is not just in its ability to mass-mobilise protesters, but through establishing a shared awareness amongst protesters ([Shirky, 2011](#)). Beyond just knowing that other protesters are there, individuals know that other protesters acutely understand what the circumstances are in that moment. The understanding stems from the speed information disseminates among the group. For authorities, activists' disseminating information may be problematic dependent on how free a society is online, as encapsulated by the cute cat theory of digital activism ([Zuckerman, 2008](#)). This theory posits that any action taken to restrict activists' access to Web 2.0 tools may inadvertently impact the average user and thus create more awareness or support for the movement's cause. Conversely, this theory asserts that for those reasons, any strategic activist ought to use those tools for that same reason.

Research efforts have attempted to quantify social media's effect on social movements beyond the anecdotal evidence presented thus far. Tan et al. ([2013](#)) developed a multi-pronged methodology for quantifying various facets of how social media impacted Occupy Wall Street's evolution through Twitter. In this research, they concluded that certain actors held a disproportionate share of the Twitter-sphere. Further, monitoring Twitter activity may prove a viable tool for forecasting a planned event's strength and vitality. From an analysis standpoint, each facet has its own merits. However, the value of Tan et al.'s (2013) work lies

in that it created an early means of quantifying social media's impacts on social movements and measuring their efficacy. Drawing upon Twitter again, Aguilera et al.'s (2013) research on the Spanish 15M movement illustrates how movement participants' interactivity impacts the overall message's cohesion within the Twittersphere. Further, Aguilera et al.'s (2013) contribution provides insight into how movement discourse evolves over time online instead of providing a cross-sectional perspective.

Beyond social media's broader impact on social movements, some research, such as Lee and Chan's (2016) work on the Umbrella movement, has focused on how individuals used social media to participate ([Anduiza et al., 2014](#); [Bennett et al., 2014](#); [Coopman, 2011](#); [Juris, 2005](#); [Lee, 2015](#); [Lee & Chan, 2015](#); [Penney & Dadas, 2014](#); [Salem, 2014](#); [Skoric & Poor, 2013](#); [Tufekci & Wilson, 2012](#); [Valenzuela, 2013](#); [Valenzuela et al., 2012](#)). This research demonstrated how individuals utilised multiple social media channels to support the movement. Thus, providing insight into how individuals use social media to influence a movement's discourse.

A large body of research focuses on social media's impact on social movements from inception to organisation and action. Applying this insight to Neo-Gramscian hegemonic competition and the broader power political economy, it becomes evident that hegemonic actors can use and control social media to their advantage. Thus, varying social media-state relationships are implied by this segment of the literature.

However, social movements and individual social media participation are not the only way discourse is influenced. In recent years, the number of artificial intelligence (AI) or *bot* accounts operating on social media has risen. In some cases, private actors orchestrate large-scale influence campaigns using bots; in other instances, states orchestrate them. In the next section, I address social media bot's impact on international relations.

3.1.1.3 THE RISE OF THE BOTS.

I have established how individuals mobilise through social media engagement. However, the social mediascape is increasingly becoming filled with non-human actors – *bots*. These bots are programmed to operate so that the average user may have difficulty ascertaining the user's humanity. Recently, there has been an explosion of research into the issues and opportunities that bots pose ([Badawy et al., 2018](#); [Bakir & McStay, 2018](#); [Bessi & Ferrara, 2016](#); [Bradshaw & Howard, 2018](#); [Gorwa & Guilbeault, 2018](#); [Hinds, 2019](#); [Jiang & Vetter, 2020](#); [Keller et al., 2020](#); [Luceri et al., 2019](#); [Lukito, 2020](#); [Nisbet & Kamenchuk, 2019](#); [Pratama & Rakhmawati, 2019](#); [Salge & Karahanna, 2018](#); [Shao et](#)

[al., 2018](#); [Starbird et al., 2019](#); [Stieglitz et al., 2017](#); [Uyheng & Carley, 2019](#); [Varol et al., 2017](#); [Vosoughi et al., 2018](#); [Woolley, 2016](#); [Yang et al., 2019](#)).

The first facet is how bots operate and how to detect them. The literature suggests that contemporary bots exist continuously and may be deactivated and reactivated as needed – as in the cases of the 2016 US election and the 2017 French election ([Ferrara, 2017](#)). Further, bot operations may be limited by their programmer’s target knowledge. In Ferrara’s (2017) work, it was noted that bots’ limited impact in France was due to their prior targeting aimed at the American alt-right. Research on how bots penetrate human social networks on Twitter during the 2018 US midterm elections also supports this notion ([Luceri et al., 2019](#)). In these cases, and more broadly, bots have been recorded to interact on platforms through sharing user content with a large following. They may also directly engage with individual users to advance a particular agenda ([Abu-El-Rub & Mueen, 2019](#); [Arnaudo, 2017](#); [Badawy et al., 2018](#); [Gorwa & Guilbeault, 2018](#); [Guilbeault, 2016](#); [Jiang & Vetter, 2020](#); [Luceri et al., 2019](#); [Schlitzer, 2018](#); [Shao et al., 2018](#); [Uyheng & Carley, 2019](#); [Varol et al., 2017](#)). Conversely, resulting from bots’ proliferation, there has been significant research into how to detect bot interference in discourse, specifically political discourse, before there is an impact ([Abu-El-Rub & Mueen, 2019](#); [Arnaudo, 2017](#); [Badawy et al., 2018](#); [Badawy et al., 2019](#); [Gorwa & Guilbeault, 2018](#); [Pratama & Rakhmawati, 2019](#); [Salge & Karahanna, 2018](#); [Uyheng & Carley, 2019](#); [Varol et al., 2017](#); [Yang et al., 2019](#)).

Increasingly, research illustrates how bots are deployed and speculates as to why actors use bots. Disinformation campaigns enable actors to discredit opponents politically or economically while cementing their own position ([Bakir & McStay, 2018](#); [Benkler et al., 2018](#); [Bennett & Livingston, 2018](#); [Bradshaw & Howard, 2018](#); [Gallacher et al., 2018](#); [Hinds, 2019](#); [Jiang & Vetter, 2020](#); [Keller et al., 2020](#); [Lukito, 2020](#); [Nisbet & Kamenchuk, 2019](#); [Prier, 2017](#); [Shao et al., 2018](#); [Starbird et al., 2019](#); [Vosoughi et al., 2018](#); [Wang et al., 2018](#)). Perhaps more concerning is that extranational actors can employ bots to influence domestic political affairs ([Badawy et al., 2018](#); [Keller et al., 2020](#); [Nisbet & Kamenchuk, 2019](#); [Woolley, 2016](#)). These campaigns’ impacts rely upon emotion and other human capacities rather than the technologies themselves, indicating a need to address these concerns if they are to be countered ([Badawy et al., 2019](#); [Bakir & McStay, 2018](#); [Nisbet & Kamenchuk, 2019](#)).

In this section, I have illustrated that social media’s political impacts are no longer solely influenced by humans on platforms. Further, this section has highlighted research on who employs, engages, and is influenced by them while using social media and potential impacts

on elections and political participation. Beyond this, emergent research on detecting and countering bot operations was presented. Taken in a broader context, a pattern of social media's political impact domestically and how international actors exert influence on domestic affairs emerges. Therefore, the power political economy is further highlighted through the need to have sufficient capital reserves to effectively leverage bots; subsequently, serious hegemonic actors are likely to have those reserves. Further, social media's political implications on IR begin to emerge through bots' proliferation. In the next section, I explore social media's overt impact on IR.

3.1.1.4 TWITTER DIPLOMACY'S IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

Social media's spread globally has led governments and politicians to establish themselves on platforms worldwide. As a result, efforts have been made to characterise and understand social media's role in diplomacy in the last decade. The literature on social media's impacts can be divided into several subsections. However, for the social media-state relationship, it is pertinent to draw specific attention to how social media have impacted public diplomacy (PD) efforts and how states engage one another on social media. Social media-oriented diplomacy is often described using the terms Twitter Diplomacy or "Twitplomacy" ([Burns & Eltham, 2009](#); [Dumčiuvienė, 2016](#); [C. Duncombe, 2017](#); [Henry, 2012](#); [Malasenkova & Lavrov, 2019](#); [O'Boyle, 2019](#); [Šimunjak & Caliandro, 2019](#); [Su & Xu, 2015](#); [Torrealba, 2015](#)).

The literature's evolution on social media and PD can be understood in two stages – earlier literature indicates a desire to understand how to leverage social media for PD ([Archetti, 2010](#); [Dale, 2009](#); [Gregory, 2011](#); [Hayden, 2012](#); [Kenna, 2011](#); [Lichtenstein, 2010](#); [Martin et al., 2013](#); [Srivastava, 2013](#); [Xiguang & Jing, 2010](#); [Zhang, 2013](#); [Zhong & Lu, 2013](#)). Whereas, recent literature evaluates social media's PD effectiveness ([Abdullakkutty, 2018](#); [Barnett et al., 2017](#); [Bjola, 2016](#); [Collins & Bekenova, 2019](#); [Downing & Ahmed, 2019](#); [C. Duncombe, 2017](#); [C. E. Duncombe, 2017](#); [Goundar et al., 2020](#); [Gray & Potter, 2019](#); [Hänska & Bauchowitz, 2019](#); [Iakhnis & Badawy, 2019](#); [Jones & Mattiacci, 2019](#); [Kragh & Åsberg, 2017](#); [Misra, 2019](#); [Pohan et al., 2016](#); [Potter, 2018](#); [Tsvetkova, 2020](#); [Wasim, 2016](#)). The discourse on social media and PD indicates that states tend to use their social media presence within a country as one-way communication channels to promote their respective agenda. Zaharna and Uysal ([2016](#)) model this concept as state-centric, state-based communication and represents translating traditional PD efforts' into the social media equivalent. It has been noted that this approach does not necessarily take advantage of social media's two-way

communication potential to better engage target audiences for PD ([Collins & Bekenova, 2019](#); [Collins et al., 2019](#); [Dodd & Collins, 2017](#); [Kampf et al., 2015](#); [Shahin & Huang, 2019](#); [Stegemann, 2016](#); [Strauß et al., 2015](#)).

Further, Zaharna and Uysal's (2016) work enables understanding the nuances between state PD and their respective publics. Opposing the traditional state-centric, state-based approach is the public-centric, public-based approach. The example the authors utilise is the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey, an event where the state response to domestic protests resulted in harm to Turkey's international reputation, resulting in diplomatic problems for Turkey ([Park & Lim, 2014](#); [Simons, 2015](#); [Zaharna & Uysal, 2016](#)). Expanding on Zaharna and Uysal (2016), Jones and Mattiacci ([2019](#)) highlight how non-state actors can leverage social media to achieve legitimacy through online international support. As asserted by Jones and Mattiacci, non-state actors promote their agenda and highlight the state's misdeeds on social media to achieve this. This position aligns with Zaharna and Uysal's (2016) public-centric, public-based approach, albeit as a more extreme example. The two models discussed here represent illustrate the social media-state relationship's international aspects. Further, they provide insight into how external actors may incite domestic tensions as with the literature I have discussed previously.

The Gazi park case represents how a domestic non-state actor may leverage the SMPs to gain a position in which they can deny a state access to social capital. As I noted above, foreign non-state actors may leverage SMPs to influence publics through amassing a following with like-minded individuals within a given state. As Shea and Lee ([2022](#)) note, this is likely the most common and tangible form of non-state-actor centric PD. This represents an avenue in which a state may find itself threatened and reflects Castells' ([2007](#)) insight that the contemporary media environment represents a legitimacy challenge to states, globally. Further, I would be remiss if I did not recall my earlier reference to Elon Musk in chapter one. If a private individual can tweet something that has an impact on share markets, then not only is there a political threat to the state, but an economic one as well. In this sense, Twitter diplomacy represents, in a tangible sense, a challenge to the traditional state-centric, rules-based international order.

Next, considering how states engage within foreign social mediascapes, presented in Shahin and Huang (2019), becomes pertinent. This study explored the performance aspects of state-based PD efforts. An examination of the United States' engagement with friendly states,

allied states, and rival states was conducted. Interestingly, the perceptions of national identities and which state is considered a friend, ally or rival in other mediums was found to carry over and influence social media discourse. This understanding provides insight into how states engage with one another and their respective publics on social media. This position was further supported by Iakhnis and Badawy (2019), which found that leaders' social media interactions mirrored democratic peace theory's assertion that democracies will embrace one another generally ([De Tocqueville, 2003](#); [Kant, 1970](#); [Levy & Thompson, 2011](#); [Paine, 2003](#)).

However, research illustrates how leaders' interactions and rhetoric alters diplomatic language and code on social media. It has been established that diplomats and leaders worldwide typically engage one another on social media using traditional diplomatic language ([Jönsson & Hall, 2005](#); [Nick, 2001](#); [Park & Lim, 2014](#); [Šimunjak & Caliandro, 2019](#); [Strauß et al., 2015](#)). This changed after Donald Trump's election as US president, initiating a debate on whether diplomatic language should be reassessed for effectiveness on social media ([Ott, 2017](#); [Šimunjak & Caliandro, 2019](#)). It is worth noting that Trump's Twitter behaviour aligns with Shahin and Huang's (2019) work, despite the rhetoric adopted.

The literature reviewed illustrates a picture of how the social media-state relationship regarding IR emerges through considering leader interactions, public-state interactions and states' PD operations. In turn, it can be understood as the exchange of information capital and broader hegemonic competition between domestic and international actors.

3.1.2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

This section addresses social media's economic impacts. Social media's rise marked the data industry's rapid growth, and social media companies (SMCs) have established themselves as major market actors. So, I will review data's impact on markets and social media's role.

Beyond the social media data industry, there are other ways social media have had a tangible economic impact – some businesses exist purely due to the capacity SMPs provide. I explore how social media companies' day-to-day operations. Further, organic advertising, in the form of user-generated social media content, allows businesses to meaningfully engage the discourse market, which affects their standing in the broader social media-state relationship political economy.

3.1.2.1 ESTABLISHING THE DATA ECONOMY.

3.1.2.1.1 DEFINING DATA.

To effectively understand the data economy and how social media affects that market, it is first essential to establish how I understand data. So, I adopt the view that data is an information facet that can be leveraged in completing a task, paraphrasing Carrière-Swallow and Haksar ([2019](#)). They note that the definition is rather vague; however, this definition allows the discussion to shift into the broader paradigm of information economics - Carrière-Swallow and Haksar point toward Stiglitz's ([2002](#)) work for additional context.

From Stiglitz's work (2002), I can establish how I conceptualise information capital. Stiglitz (2002) notes there is a fundamental issue within economics insofar as there is an assumption of perfect information. Economics assumes that all actors have access to a complete picture for making decisions, whether that be hiring a particular individual or deciding on a new expansion ([Stiglitz, 2002](#)). From my perspective, the Realist notion (discussed further in chapter four) that actors are consistently operating on imperfect or limited information betrays the concerns that emerge with the perfect information assumption. Instead, assuming an imperfect set of information becomes a valuable tool for explaining market failures. Further, this highlights a gap in understanding how actors within markets operate illustrated by the telegraph discussion in the last chapter – those with access to better information provided by quicker telegraph lines performed better than those who relied on older communications systems ([Flyverbom & Madsen, 2019](#)). So, therein resides older economics' flaw and what Stiglitz sought to remedy. Further, this reflects information as capital in the power political economy as I conceptualise it due to those with more information outperforming those with less. Ergo, capital begets capital or information begets better information.

Understanding that market actors are operating on imperfect information leads to a gap within the market that can be exploited – commodifying information. Returning to the data definition presented above, data sold on the market becomes a part of a market actor's decision-making matrix and takes many forms, thus necessitating the broad definition.

For social media, an advertiser or other market actor may find value in understanding users' interests on a particular platform so that they can have more targeted (thus more effective) advertising. With this understanding of data and initial insight into its potential value, I explore the contemporary data economy.

3.1.2.1.2 ESTABLISHING THE ACTORS.

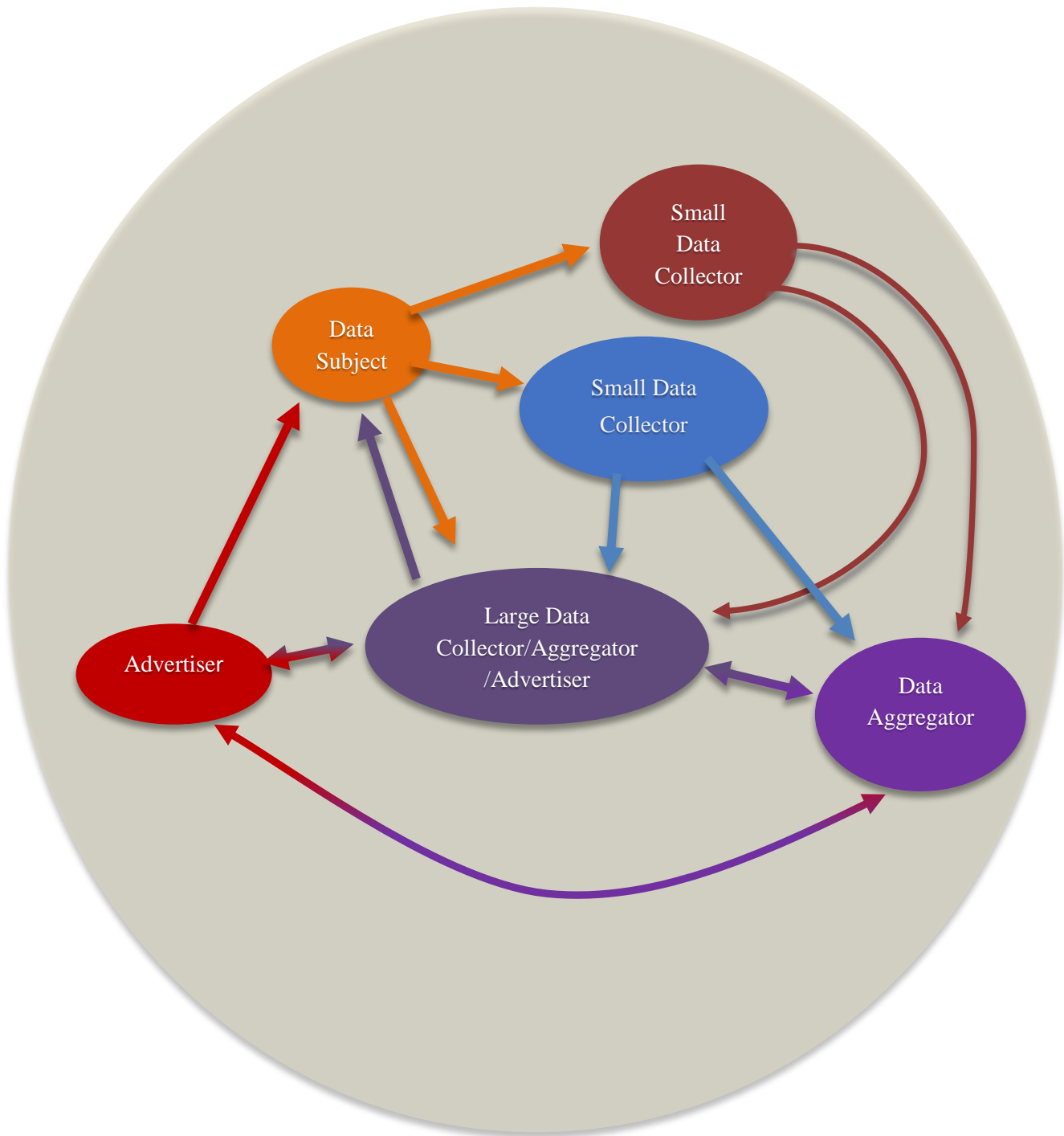
The data economy can be divided into core actors – collectors, aggregators, and subjects ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). It is worth noting that these divisions are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they connote the activities an entity undertakes. Data collectors record information from their customers or other entities they engage ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). Collected data can range from minor to astronomical in scale, depending on the collector's capacity. For instance, a small business that digitally records transactions becomes a data collector. More significant examples would be Facebook, Google or Amazon – all of which use mass surveillance of users' activities explicitly to create large datasets, i.e. surveillance capitalism ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#); [Fuchs, 2011a](#); [Zuboff, 2015](#)). In this sense, Facebook and Google are also aggregators. However, data aggregators generally acquire data points to create a large dataset and leverage that dataset within the market – Acxiom (now LiveRamp Holdings) is an example ([Bambauer, 2013](#); [Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). This company purchases smaller data points and mines data to develop consumer data profiles that they sell to businesses and advertisers ([Bambauer, 2013](#)).

Lastly, the data subject is the person whose data is targeted by aggregators and collectors. Usually, the subject is a consumer ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). The data gleaned from the subject is processed and stored within a dataset the collector or aggregator possesses. Generally, individual data is meant to be de-identified and anonymous. However, aggregators add value by reidentifying the anonymised data to create distinct subject profiles. Aggregators accomplish this through cross-referencing data to construct a profile of an individual user ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)).

From Figure 4 (p. 63), the interactions that occur between various actors become clearer. The cycle starts with a data subject leaving a data trail from online or economic activity – browsing the web or shopping in-person and online. This data exhaust is collected through businesses the subject interacts with or the general data trail left by visiting various websites or using social media ([Fuchs, 2011a](#); [Lyon, 2019](#); [Zuboff, 2015](#)). Further, a small company might record a subject's transaction history. These entities are represented as small data collectors in Figure 4 (p. 63).

Figure 4

Conceptualising the Data Economy



Note. Author's representation of the data economy's actors. Generally, data subjects' information is taken by collectors and aggregators then repackaged and sold to advertisers. These advertisers then target ads to subjects – creating a cycle that leads to the generation of new data.

Conversely, telecoms, internet service providers (ISPs), and SMCs are represented as large data collectors in Figure 4 (p. 63). Given these companies' nature, they are also aggregators – especially in the case of SMCs and big tech companies like Google. While small and large collectors acquire data, aggregators process and organise that data into a marketable package – data subject profiles, at scale. Aggregators, in turn, sell access to the datasets and profiles to advertisers and marketers. These entities then leverage the data profiles for better advertising results, creating new exhaust from subjects – beginning the cycle anew as indicated in Figure 4 (p. 63). The ebb and flow of data points between collectors, aggregators, and advertisers is not a one-way process – there are constant data transactions explicitly intended to create more accurate consumer profiles. This abstraction, with some examples, provides insight into how the data economy functions, which underpins the power political economy of the social media-state relationship. In the next section, I explore social media's role in the data economy further.

3.1.2.1.3 SOCIAL MEDIA DATA ECONOMICS.

Social media platforms are prominent in the data economy. The data exhaust from a single user is large and can be quickly catalogued and analysed to build a user profile. Given platforms with millions or billions of reported users like Facebook and Twitter, the potential benefits of data profiles at that scale warrant investing in the infrastructure to conduct data analytics ([Carriere-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#); [Cheng, 2020](#)). In short, SMPs' scale and the data generated by the users can contextualise the definition for *big data* ([Diebold, 2012](#)). Further, this reflects social media's unique nature as compared to earlier communications technologies.

As a big data enterprise, social media facilitate building profiles that help advertisers target advertisements to potential customers. SMPs hold those data profiles in-house, removing the need for an aggregator ([Alaimo et al., 2020](#); [Gambaro, 2018](#); [Schmarzo, 2013](#); [White & Boatwright, 2020](#)). Instead, SMPs can market highly targeted advertisements to advertisers, which is social media's practical commercial application ([Bucher, 2012](#); [Cohen, 2008](#); [Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015](#); [McNamee, 2020](#)). Thus, selling an advertisement in the data economy relies on technological innovations spurred by social media's rise.

SMPs exercise significant power over users ([Cheng, 2020](#)). That power is at times intuitive – banning users who violate guidelines, for instance. Platforms' less intuitive power is filtering

what content users see – while there is now a growing body of research on *filter bubbles*' impact, the mechanisms behind the bubble merit consideration here ([Buhmann et al., 2020](#); [White & Boatwright, 2020](#)). Through employing algorithms with machine-learning capabilities, platforms create a largely automated, data-based feedback cycle designed to promote user engagement ([Bucher, 2012](#); [Cohen, 2008](#); [Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015](#)). The goal, subsequently, is to ensure users stay looking at the platform – view time is turned into advertising time. Machine-learning is based on improving the algorithm's analytic and predictive power through using user data to best estimate what engagement action the user may take and rewarding correct predictions. For example, clicking on a video, liking a post, or following an advertisement link are predicted and rewarded ([Buhmann et al., 2020](#); [Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015](#); [Fuchs, 2011a](#); [Lyon, 2019](#); [McNamee, 2020](#)). This process is automated, and given the algorithm's processing speed, billions of calculations occur within a few seconds. Algorithms are also capable of selling advertisement spots on a user's platform feed ([Alaimo, 2021](#)). As a result, a micro-auction market where advertisers bid for individual advertisement spaces at the algorithm's speed has emerged ([Alaimo, 2021](#)).

Algorithm data is derived from a user's data exhaust ([Schermer, 2011](#)). While user data is technically anonymised, using available metadata facilitates accurately constructing individual user profiles ([Schermer, 2011](#)). Further, accuracy is improved through cross-referencing different devices – if a user logs into Facebook on their home pc, mobile phone, tablet, and work computer, the device registries are recorded and associated with that user ([Schermer, 2011](#)). Other metadata areas are employed to improve accuracy as well. For instance, the geographic information associated with a particular IP address ([Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015](#); [Lyon, 2019](#); [Tufekci, 2014](#)). In my case, I would not be surprised if a my profile has an association of where I live and where I work; those are, after all, my two most frequent unique signatures.

Beyond processing metadata, platforms employ tracking cookies to better understand users' browsing behaviours – if a user has not logged out of their session on a SMP (or otherwise taken steps to restrict what cookies are stored on their device), then platforms can track user interactions on other webpages ([Englehardt et al., 2015](#); [Sy et al., 2018](#)). Further, integrating social media logins for third-party content providers expands this capacity ([Krämer et al., 2019](#)). In this case, websites allow user validation and account creation through login-with-Facebook-like functionality ([Krämer et al., 2019](#)). Doing so indicates that third-party content provider is likely

in a data-sharing agreement with the platform ([Krämer et al., 2019](#)). In turn, a user's profile can be further refined. So, effectively the anonymised profiles likely know an individual user in all but name. Ergo, they are technically anonymised but functionally not.

Through understanding the data economy, a few underlying themes emerge. Fundamentally, the data economy is functionally synonymous with surveillance capitalism – owing to the mass collection of data and obtaining data through surveilling users' online activities ([Zuboff, 2015](#)). Further, the scale and scope of the data exhaust exploited for advertising and other commercial purposes are unmatched with any other communications technology – once again, furthering my position that distinctly considering the social media-state relationship is needed. Lastly, I have only covered the data economy in the context of social media here. A growing body of work highlights the data economy's implications more generally ([Alaimo, 2021](#); [Fuchs, 2011a](#); [White & Boatwright, 2020](#); [Zuboff, 2019a](#)). Beyond data commodification, there are other ways social media have permeated the economic sphere. In the next section, I explore how social media have penetrated business operations.

3.1.2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA'S BUSINESS IMPACTS.

I discuss two areas that social media have business ramifications here. The first is how social media have permeated day-to-day business operations; specifically, these platforms are called enterprise social media (ESM). The second is how business approaches have adapted to attract customers.

To first understand how ESM are utilised within a workplace, it is necessary to define them. Bearing in mind my earlier definition of social media, generally, some parallels emerge with Leonardi et al.'s ([2013](#)) ESM definition:

Web-based platforms that allow workers to (1) communicate messages with specific coworkers or broadcast messages to everyone in the organisation; (2) explicitly indicate or implicitly reveal particular coworkers as communication partners; (3) post, edit, and sort text and files linked to themselves or others; and (4) view the messages, connections, text, and files communicated, posted, edited and sorted by anyone else in the organisation at any time of their choosing. (p. 2)

Generally, ESM are functionally similar to general social media. ESM's purpose is different since they are explicitly designed for internal interactions among employees within a business

rather than general public interactions. Examples of ESM are Microsoft's SharePoint and Yammer, and Tibbr ([Leonardi et al., 2013](#)).

A growing body of research indicates ESM's workplace impact. Principally, the literature points to increased collaboration rates, knowledge-sharing, and socialisation among employees when compared to other communications channels ([Cai et al., 2018](#); [Leidner et al., 2018](#); [Moqbel & Nah, 2017](#); [Yee et al., 2021](#)). This research reflects the general notion that social media have a democratising effect on information. Other research indicates some ESM have some drawbacks. Chiefly concerns over increased *cyber-slacking* emerge ([Liu & Bakici, 2019](#); [Nusrat et al., 2021](#)). Effectively, ESM's use mirrors the benefits and risks that have been identified with general social media use. Further, similar concerns over the adoption and engagement with ESM and social media have broadly been identified in workplaces.

Fundamentally, ESM's proliferation represents a mass departure from historical channels for collaboration and communication within workplaces, like in-person meetings, email, and web-based forums ([Leonardi et al., 2013](#)). Instead, ESM's utility has prompted a communication shift within organisations large and small ([Leonardi et al., 2013](#)). As a result, the underlying dynamics and hierarchies within organisations have changed. Considering ESM as part of the social media revolution, I conclude that ESM's ability to alter workplace behaviour and culture far outstrips previous technologies.

This cursory exploration of ESM is intended to highlight the observation that SMPs permeate businesses and have fragmenting communication within businesses. This exploration frames the discussion on how companies engage with external social mediascapes. If businesses have changed their internal operations, it follows their external operations have shifted as well.

Within the literature, there are several trends that demonstrate these external shifts. Firstly, businesses have adapted to the new media environment by directly engaging with platforms, i.e., company-managed social media accounts. Secondly, through leveraging the data economy for improved advertising returns. Thirdly, engaging social media *influencers* for advertising illustrates another shift. Lastly, community-based branding strategies have emerged and spawned enterprises. At a broad level, these shifts indicate a restructuring of business advertising and engagement with customers.

Contemporarily, businesses likely have a social media presence. Potential consumers are likely to engage with businesses online first before visiting the brick-and-mortar location or shopping online (Lim, 2021). Further, most people will not consider applying for a job without first looking at the company's online presence ([Lim, 2021](#)). A recent study by Squarespace indicated this trend is likely to continue and grow as younger generations put greater emphasis on online presence over brick-and-mortar ([Lim, 2021](#); [Squarespace Communications, 2021](#)). Other recent research has supported these findings ([Goldring & Azab, 2020](#)). The most effective businesses leverage social media by cultivating a brand community ([Du Plessis, 2017](#); [Ho & Wang, 2020](#); [Kaur et al., 2018](#); [Naidoo & Potgieter, 2017](#)). Further, businesses position themselves on SMPs as advocates for particular causes to gain traction with other communities online. This process evokes Putnam's (2000) bridging capital. Further, businesses that engage SMP users likely see a benefit online ([Jones et al., 2015](#); [Kahar et al., 2012](#); [Nakara et al., 2012](#); [Stockdale et al., 2012](#); [Taneja & Toombs, 2014](#)). In short, companies that leverage social media's interactivity to engage users can establish greater credibility online, which translates to better business performance.

Businesses have become central actors within the data economy through building digital communities and improving their online reach. Subsequently, companies become similar to advertisers as outlined in Figure 4 (p. 63). However, large businesses benefit from investing in big data analytical infrastructure and algorithmic development ([Dell'Anno et al., 2016](#)). The return on this investment is akin to that of other advertisers, per the earlier discussion on the data economy.

Further, businesses' online advertising practices differ from more traditional advertisements. An advertising campaign in the contemporary social mediascape aims to go viral – so stunt-based advertising has risen for promoting engagement and drawing attention ([Gómez, 2014](#); [Himmelboim & Golan, 2019](#)). Beyond stunts, advertisers are finding ways to leverage social movements within their advertising campaigns ([Pittman et al., 2021](#)). The principal vehicle for advertising is targeted advertisements predominately displayed on SMPs.

The third facet of business' advertising shifts is uniquely possible because of social media's capabilities – using influencers to promote products ([Lim et al., 2017](#); [Zeljko et al., 2018](#)). Social media influencers are prominent users on a platform and have large followings. These users function as gatekeepers and community leaders in which their followers take cues on what to buy, support or otherwise how to act – simply put, these users influence other users ([Lou,](#)

[2021](#)). Early influencers did not need to disclose that they were being paid to promote a product or brand ([Kay et al., 2020](#)). Now, in many countries, there exists a disclosure requirement if the influencer is paid. Regardless, businesses leverage influencers' social media reach to cultivate support for their brand and improve their social media brand community ([Kay et al., 2020](#)).

Lastly, there are some cases where individuals have transitioned from user to influencer to entrepreneur. Individual users have leveraged the social capital they have gained by building online followings to transition into operating by-and-large wholly digital businesses ([Le, 2018](#)). Rather than managing a brick-and-mortar shop, businesses borne from influencer communities leverage eCommerce platforms and social media's reach to minimise operating and advertising costs ([Le, 2018](#); [McMillan, 2020](#); [Spencer et al., 2014](#)). These businesses represent the digitisation of historical process – a group of people collectively identify a potential gap in a market, and then occupy it. With social media's advent, the process differs due to the immediate reach and scope these newly-founded enterprises possess ([McMillan, 2020](#); [Spencer et al., 2014](#)). This immediacy is indicative of a democratising effect social media has on capital and entrepreneurship.

Throughout this section, I have highlighted social media's impact on businesses' internal and external communication channels, collaboration, and engagement. Thus, strengthening the overarching notion that there is a need for distinctly considering the social media-state relationship. In the next section, I will transition to discussing social media's impacts on legal matters and conducting law.

3.1.3 LEGAL IMPACTS

The last area I address is social media's impacts on jurisprudence. Some differences have emerged in social media's legal handling and laws on SMCs. In this segment, I will review this area of the literature. From this review, understanding social media's contemporary and future legal impact is clearer.

Courts in the United States have attempted to fit social media within traditional legal frameworks, for instance ([Henderson, 2017](#); [Lipschultz, 2017b](#)). The first manner addressed is regarding individuals' online speech rights. Primarily, courts and other regulatory bodies have leaned toward individual's rights to free expression and speech. Numerous court cases

have considered social media as the digital equivalent of a physical residence (Henderson, 2017). This metaphor illustrates how courts conclude that users have certain rights and freedoms regarding how their speech is accessed and used against them. Matters regarding employment have been adjudicated as regulators have ruled in employees' favour after they criticised their employer online and faced professional repercussions. Henderson (2017) aptly summarises the legal situation regarding speech and social media as "a slip of the tongue has simply morphed into a slip of the thumb" (p. 16). Henderson (2017) also notes that future legal cases will be impacted by determining the intent behind and meaning of emojis and other digital speak. A final aspect to consider when it comes to assigning speech rights and responsibilities in the United States is the distinction of SMCs as distributors rather than publishers of the content on their platform. This distinction impacts arbitration on intellectual property rights, account ownership, and platform content ownership since an effective legal framework is yet to be fully established (McNealy, 2017; Olson, 2017). More critical is the impact this has on regulating SMPS as virtual public squares. Currently, there is no legal compulsion for SMCs to conduct their platforms in a manner akin to physical public spaces (Barclay, 2017).

At this point it is worth turning toward social media's second impact on law in the United States – privacy and data. Two significant facets merit consideration: how SMCs acquire and use user data and individuals' privacy rights on SMPs. Germany and the European Union provide the most robust examples of data protections (Lipschultz, 2017a). The EU adopted the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2016, influenced by earlier regulations like those found in Germany. The German approach is primarily derived from a history of data collection and abuse. As such, it has developed relatively strong data protections for its citizens. The GDPR aims to ensure European people have greater control over their digital presence and data. Chiefly amongst these aims is providing the *right to be forgotten* (European Parliament, 2016). Subsequently, this has brought the EU into conflict with American tech companies due to conflicting interpretations on what legal frameworks govern data management (Kayali, 2019; Lipschultz, 2017a). Further, the EU appears intent on advancing individual rights on SMPs beyond their current inception.

The American approach to data protection and users' privacy rights can broadly be understood by the analogue of the American Wild West. Individuals have little-to-no control over their data's management (Arnold, 2018; Leetaru, 2018a, 2018b; Timberg et al., 2018). Courts have attempted to establish some precedent regarding privacy, yet the same issues plaguing

privacy concerns in the physical world manifest in litigating privacy concerns in the virtual world ([Hartzog, 2017](#); [Lipschultz, 2017c](#)).

For both aspects of speech and privacy, a tangible impact on arbitration has already been identified by court systems. There is ethical concern over lawyers and judges engaging on social media about ongoing cases ([Packer, 2017](#)). This concern also arises with jurors and how they research the parties in cases. Further, there is debate over using mobile phones and other internet-capable devices' in the courtroom as there is a growing desire within journalism to live tweet or blog court proceedings ([Packer, 2017](#)). Thus, I conclude that social media's impact is not purely in jurisprudence but also extends to its observers.

Turning outside the West, it is worth examining the Chinese social media system and the legal frameworks binding it. In China, the state has adopted social media to facilitate surveillance and population monitoring. So, data protection rights there are solely managed by the government. However, there is a specified intent to counter any narrative deemed damaging to the state ([Lipschultz, 2017a](#)). Further, businesses are required to cede certain rights if they wish to establish a SMP within Chinese cyberspace, chiefly access and data management. Some Western companies have agreed to this; Google is one such company ([Lipschultz, 2017a](#)). I discuss China in detail in chapter seven.

Through reviewing this literature, the themes of social media's legal impact emerge. The first theme is its ability to magnify an individual's speech. What previously would have been a whisper to a colleague or a private conversation between interested parties now has the potential to reach hundreds or thousands of people. It has been illustrated previously how this could impact vested parties, and it is fair to expect this issue to affect societies around the globe. This synergises with the second theme – an expectation of privacy and control over one's data. The last theme that emerges is ownership – and the responsibilities ownership entails – of virtual spaces that serve as public forums ([Barclay, 2017](#)). SMCs are generally not legally compelled to ensure free and fair access to their forum ([Barclay, 2017](#)). This concern may be one of the most significant challenges to resolve when ascertaining social media's legal implications on matters of speech and expression rights.

It is currently unclear how social media will ultimately be regulated, but the literature demonstrates the discussion on social media's legal impacts is far from settled and is constantly evolving. Further, Lipschultz ([2017b](#)) encapsulates this well: “the international

distribution of unfiltered media across a mosaic of legal systems and structures means technological freedom as a trend is colliding with governmental, corporate, organisational and individual desires to control messages” ([p. 238](#)).

3.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Throughout this chapter, I explored contemporary literature related to understanding and modelling social media’s impacts on politics, economics, organisations, and institutions. Further, I have studied social media’s impacts on various aspects of day-to-day life. While I did not explicitly discuss social media’s social impacts, each facet explored belies social media’s societal impacts.

Social media are a constant within the lives of at least three billion people, as noted in 3.0.2. Social media’s adoption by people has been unmatched by another technology in history. Further, no technology has fundamentally altered how individuals engage with politics, economics, and legal affairs as quickly as social media ([Mascaro et al., 2016](#)). The result is a not-so-subtle restructuring of how individuals engage one another, businesses, and the state itself. Debate, protest, buying and selling have all fundamentally shifted to match social media’s capabilities, betraying a foundational change in the power political economy.

Further, the data economy has been catalysed by the prosumer’s rise and the data generated by this new form of digital labour ([Ahluwalia & Miller, 2014](#); [Fuchs, 2014](#); [O’Neil & Frayssé, 2016](#)). This new market and labour form further support my position that social media represent a shift in society meriting a distinct framework – the social media-state relationship. Additionally, social media’s implications for political engagement and observed legal consequences provide further support for this conclusion.

As a result of this review of social media scholarship and the study of media-state relations literature in chapter two, I have established the distinctions between traditional media-state relations and the social media-state relationship. Social media exist in a transnational, global space. Thus, their implications reach far beyond the borders of one state. With this in mind, exploring IR theories to better understand the social media-state relationship is necessary. Such exploration enables augmenting my analytic lens to better understand social media globally.

**CHAPTER 4: CONSIDERING INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS THEORIES**

This chapter addresses prevailing IR theories. Ultimately, I find that Neo-Gramscianism has the greatest applicability to the social media-state relationship. To reach that conclusion, I present the paradigmatic theories of Realism and Liberalism and leading critical approaches. Discussing these perspectives provides necessary insight into the IR discipline's leading theoretical perspectives, given the thesis's interdisciplinary underpinnings, and provides a broader understanding of IR literature fields. Further, I present why Neo-Gramscianism has the greatest utility in analysing the social media-state relationship. I first address the Realist paradigm and its various forms with that in mind. From that review, I determine that the Realist perspective does not fully account for SMPs given its state-centric perspective, thus limiting its utility for analysing the social media-state relationship. A similar conclusion is reached after reviewing the competing Liberal paradigm. Lastly, addressing prominent critical approaches, like Constructivism and Marxism, elucidates perspectives that dissent from the primary paradigms. In reviewing these perspectives, I find more potential applicability to the social media-state relationship than the Realist or Liberal approaches. However, wholly adopting one of these perspectives restricts some integration with the broader *Four Theories* consideration I have adopted. Ultimately, this leads me to review Neo-Gramscianism and conclude it is the most applicable to the social media-state relationship.

4.0 THE REALIST PARADIGM

In this section, I discuss the Realist paradigm and its iterations. Ultimately, I conclude that its core premise limits the approach's applicability to the social media-state relationship.

Fundamentally, the Realist tradition is rooted in a Hobbesian understanding of human nature and by extension to states' operations. It is worth noting that aligning Thomas Hobbes directly to Realism is a recent development within the literature (Douglas, 2020). Before addressing Realism's iterations, exploring this insight is merited.

To understand Hobbes's position, it is first necessary to consider Thucydides' position.

Thucydides was an ancient Athenian general who is credited as being the father of scientific history and political realism (Crane, 1998). Thucydides' position is that humanity is

fundamentally pessimistic – the international system exists in anarchy, with neighbours fearing one another gaining a power advantage. Thucydides concludes that the strong ought to rule over the weak to bring order to the international system (Thucydides & Crawley, 2012).

Effectively, Thucydides is explicitly concerned with a rising security dilemma. As I discuss shortly, this mirrors a concern Realists find themselves forced to rectify. Instead, security

dilemmas remain a consistent source of anxiety for states, so steps must be taken to minimise the risk. At a basic level, Hobbes's position mirrors Thucydides' position. Though, Hobbes finds traction by dissenting from Thucydides' perspective on human nature (Hobbes, 1973).

The dissent occurs in recognising that while the world may exist in an anarchical state, survival and power acquisition are not humans' sole desires. Instead, Hobbes sees in this pessimism an underlying desire for peaceful coexistence in the international system (Douglass, 2020; Hobbes, 1973).

In the dichotomy between Thucydides and Hobbes, a parallel emerged within the Realist paradigm at its inception and is undergoing a revival in contemporary literature. By my estimation, the dichotomy is couched within the degree of pessimism toward humanity. If a concession is made toward a brutish interpretation of human nature, perhaps the international system is doomed to competition. However, if brutish tendencies are recognised and a desire for long-term improvements manifests, then perhaps movement toward a more peaceful international system will occur. I am not the first to spot this parallel, and while reviewing Realism's iterations this contention becomes more apparent.

From here, I present differing forms of Realism and interrogate their utility for the social media-state relationship. The first step in this presentation is highlighting the themes that exist across multiple Realist perspectives. Jack Donnelly (2000, pp. 6-9) has provided a rather insightful summarisation highlighting those themes brilliantly. The summaries presented there distil several key Realist scholars' perspectives into the assumptions underpinning their approaches. Regardless of Realist form, from Donnelly (2000, pp. 6-9), it is clear that there are several fundamental themes present across differing perspectives. Realism is based on pessimistic assumptions on human nature as discussed earlier. These assumptions see humanity drift toward evil acts – greed and violence, generally, as a matter of course. The root of this evilness lies the motive – self-preservation (Donnelly, 2000, pp. 6-9). Intrinsically, self-preservation is an understandable response to external circumstances. Thus, Realists conclude human nature employs a rationality that assumes the necessity for evil acts.

Since states are comprised of people, then states will tend toward evil acts like greed and violence. The Realist assumes this as the primary condition for actors who comprise the international system. States' desire for self-preservation is deemed a rational pursuit and established as a core national interest. Self-preservation is quantified in numerous ways, but most typically, it involves acquiring power – a state must make itself strong so no other state will threaten it (Donnelly, 2000, pp. 6-9). Power is another concept that has been defined in many ways, but most Realist definitions revolve around obtaining greater economic and military capabilities – money fuels the state domestically and internationally, and a strong military keeps threats at bay (Donnelly, 2000, pp. 6-9). Then, national interests are used to observe and interpret states' actions. Effectively, Realists hold that states move to advance their national interests through policies.

Since no power exists over states, the Realist is left to adopt a state-centric position for analysing the international system. This position evokes the Hobbesian anarchial system once again. Anarchy is a cacophony of state interactions, all moving to advance competing national interests. Noting that there are finite resources in the world and in the political sphere, the Realist often considers their state within the international system through a hierarchy determined by relative power (Donnelly, 2000, pp. 6-9). The strongest states rest atop this hierarchy; the weakest reside at the bottom and are vulnerable to exploitation. If one state advances its position in the order, then another loses out.

The Realist views states as absolutely sovereign entities free to operate as they see fit. Contemporarily, the absence of a robust global governance system supports Realism's state-centricity and anarchical perspective on the international system. The Realist concedes that this system begets hostility and recognises the need for institutions to constrain state actions. So, from Donnelly's (2000, pp. 6-9) and my above discussion, I distil Realism generally into the following:

- States are made of people, and people tend toward evil acts. So, states tend toward evil.
- States seek survival in an evil world by acquiring power – the most vital national interest.
- There is no international system large enough to assuage state fears around survival.
- States are the most prominent actors; therefore, they should be the focal point for any discussion on power.
- States can calculate their relative power based on their position in the global hierarchy.
- States must recognise that a gain of power is a loss for another state and vice versa.
- Any policy that leads to power acquisition should be adopted to improve state standing in the global hierarchy.
- Ultimately, national interest supercedes concerns over the evilness of a policy.

Throughout the remaining review of the traditions within the Realist paradigm, these themes underpin the discourse. Though, at this stage it is becoming apparent that Realism's usefulness for the social media-state relationship is limited. However, continuing the review is necessary for that conclusion to be reached safely.

4.0.1 CLASSICAL REALISM

Classical Realism represents the first iteration of Realist thought. This approach can be traced to Hans Morgenthau's (1985) *Politics Among Nations*, originally published in 1948. Further, it stems from the scholarship Morgenthau's work inspired.

The axiom that guides all states is the balance of power. In this delicate balancing act, states develop interests that improve a relative measure of power. Power here is defined in terms of material resources – money and weapons, broadly. As such, acquiring these resources becomes a core interest for states to guarantee their survival. Pursuing these resources, mainly weapons, can alarm and worry neighbours. In this sense, Morgenthau (1985) outlines the security dilemma. The dilemma leads to fear, anxiety, and distrust between states – effectively increasing the likelihood of conflict ([Carr & Cox, 1946](#); [Morgenthau & Thompson, 1985](#)). It is worth noting that the pursuit of power, whilst ideally undertaken solitarily, can be supported through alliances. If relative power cannot be advanced further for fear of a neighbour's retribution, enlisting another state's aid by alliance becomes meritorious. This strategy was apparent throughout the Napoleonic era as Europe became a checkerboard of strategic alliances – meant to dissuade competing states from warring with one another.

This system was observable and worked well, for a time, by the Classical Realists' measure. However, they noted that the standard power calculation no longer applied with nuclear weapons. The potential for nuclear arms races and the destruction entailed fundamentally altered the security dilemma. Numerous thinkers recognised these risks and asserted that international systems contraining nuclear arms were necessary ([Carr & Cox, 1946](#); [Morgenthau & Thompson, 1985](#); [Niebuhr, 1986](#); [Schwarzenberger, 1951](#)). Further, this notion fits calculus of power acquisition well – as a global limit on power potential would increase the likelihood of a state's survival. As evidence of this idea's support within Classical Realism, Morgenthau hailed the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922's success. The treaty sought to limit the number of warships major naval powers could build ([Morgenthau & Thompson, 1985](#)).

In my estimation, contemporary Realism effectively divorces the discourse on pursuing alliances and international institutions' merits from how a Classical Realist may justify pursuing these policies. This conclusion brings me to consider Neorealism's centrality within the contemporary Realist paradigm.

4.0.2 THE RISE OF STRUCTURAL REALISM

Kenneth Waltz's ([1979](#)) *Theory of International Politics* represented the next step in the Realist tradition – a Realist approach that asserted international structures were what elicited states' responses. The fundamental assumptions of an anarchical system and that states, at a

basic level, will pursue survival become structures that constrain states' actions. Waltz's Structural Realism is also known as Defensive Neorealism.

The Defensive Neorealist asserts that states are the key actors on the international stage, similar to a Classical Realist. However, this mainly is because states are the only actors that are similarly constructed and can reliably be afforded capabilities within the international system ([Waltz, 1979](#)). Capabilities and capacities are constructed similarly to Classical Realism's concept of power. Further, the international system begets a balancing of capabilities – a balancing of power. Fundamentally, Defensive Neorealism asserts that an anarchical system constrains core states' behaviour as they seek to guarantee their survival. In surviving, states expand upon their capabilities relative to other states within the system. Capabilities are taken to reflect their relative power within the international order.

Where the Defensive Realist carves out their position is the assertion that states are effectively held hostage by the international system's structures. When presented with a global challenge and a straightforward solution, states will conclude that if all states were to move in concert to address the challenge, then everyone benefits. However, in surrendering autonomy and assuming that every state cooperates, a state risks becoming vulnerable to states that do not cooperate. Robert Jervis uses Rousseau's Stag Hunt dilemma to illustrate this point ([Jervis, 1978](#); [Rousseau, 1984](#)). The dilemma posits that two hunters are faced with the choice to hunt a stag or hare, but the only way to hunt a stag is with another's help ([Rousseau, 1984](#)). Intuitively, the better choice would be to cede some autonomy and work together; however, without explicit knowledge of the other's intentions, the hunters opt to hunt the hare, over the better stag ([Rousseau, 1984](#)). The backdrop in which Jervis' work occurs is the Cold War and nuclear proliferation – states recognise that it is a mutual interest to disarm, but for fear of another state not disarming, states retain their nuclear capability.

Similarly, intuiting what another hunter in the Stag Dilemma will do – whether that intuition is well-reasoned or not – leads to faulty decision-making and misreading another state's intent and capabilities. The Defensive Neorealist is intrinsically concerned by this prospect. They assert that merely acquiring capabilities does not lead to anxiety but rather that other states misread the intention behind developing capabilities ([Jervis, 1978](#); [Waltz, 1979](#)). If state X is developing its capabilities, state Y assumes it must be for nefarious purposes – because each state is out to improve its standing. However, state X's actual motive may be to shore up its defences for safety. If state X is not transparent in its intent, it may inadvertently spur the

security dilemma between states X and Y to harden. To reframe it – the Defensive Neorealist takes the view that misunderstanding capabilities’ purposes and extent, leads to hostilities between states. The solution, much like in the Stag Hunt, is cooperation – disarmament and dialogue. However, the fear of being vulnerable, due to the international systems’ structures, leads states to act detrimentally to the well-being of all. If states made themselves impregnable – effectively, maximise their relative security capability – then the security dilemma would be solved ([Jervis, 1978](#); [Waltz, 1979](#)).

Waltz (1979) notes that the fundamental solution is to affect structural change. Those who are best able to affect structural change have the greatest capabilities, relatively speaking. However, maintaining the status quo may align with strong states’ interests, despite the risks. Thus, those less capable states are left to affect change. However, without the capability to make meaningful gains, the structure will remain unchanged. John Mearsheimer ([2001](#)) expands upon this reasoning and draws sharp distinctions between Defensive Neorealists in his *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

Mearsheimer’s efforts spawned Offensive Neorealism, an opposite to the Defensive perspective. Mearsheimer points to the Cold War and the World Wars’ impacts on regional politics worldwide to further elucidate how strong states act. In those cases, he finds issues can be distilled to great power competition – a perennial concern within anarchical international system. By Mearsheimer’s estimation, states strive for regional hegemony and are encouraged to do so. In obtaining regional hegemony, they strengthen their prospects for survival. In this sense, states are incentivised against resigning themselves to the status quo and instead are motivated to adopt aggressive policies ([Mearsheimer, 2001](#)). Though there is the caveat that not all states can pursue hegemony – this is a constraint of the relative distribution of capabilities and the system’s anarchical nature ([Mearsheimer, 2001](#)). However, states that obtain hegemony become great powers and their actions invariably affect the system. Further, Mearsheimer asserts that a regional hegemon’s interest is to actively limit the emergence of other regional hegemons, since another hegemon would jeopardise the great power’s current position ([Mearsheimer, 2001](#)). In short, Offensive Neorealism holds similar core assumptions to Defensive Neorealism. However, Offensive Neorealism concludes that a state’s best course of action is to maximise its capability by gaining power rather than maximising its security potential.

4.0.3 NEOCLASSICAL REALISM – MERGING NEW & OLD

In an attempt to expand upon Classical Realist thought and augment Neorealism, Gideon Rose outlined a school of thought he termed Neoclassical Realism ([Rose, 1998](#)). In this position, the Neoclassical Realist considers domestic factors influencing a state by including human nature's impacts on domestic politics and leaders themselves into the broader discourse on states' foreign policies. In the Neorealist vein, Rose (1998) asserts that states may signal to one another their intention, but the message that states act upon is influenced by leader perceptions and other domestic perceptions. Ultimately, this leads to an imperfect response to another state's clear intentions. Due to the misidentified intent and the policy that emerges in response, states find themselves trapped in a dilemma where anarchy prevails, and mistrust of one another remains – much like the Classical and Neorealist perspectives conclude.

4.0.4 FINAL THOUGHTS ON REALISM

Throughout reviewing the Realist paradigm, it is clear that the theory has great utility in the IR realm. However, potentially applying Realism in the social media-state relationship is limited. Classical Realism is explicitly focused on the global sphere, which precludes its consideration. This holds for both Neorealism's Offensive and Defensive approaches. When considering Neoclassical Realism, its inclusion of domestic concerns brings it closer to the social media-state relationship, but it suffers from the paradigm's limitations.

While Realism's differing forms enables considering institutions' roles within a society, the ability to account for their influence is limited due the paradigm's state-centric perspective. Since social media represent a form of international media, Realism would be predisposed to concerning itself with how social media impacts the state, rather than adopting a system interpretation of social media. This notion is reiterated by social media not being monolithic institutions that states established. Instead, contemporary SMPs are operated as private entities – something that Realism, in practice, tends to ignore. Rather, the Realist likely would assert that accounting for private companies is subsumed by the state's primacy.

Reviewing the Realist perspective has proved a thought-provoking exercise, but ultimately affirms my suspicion that Realism's utility is limited for the social media-state relationship. Realism discredits the role of non-state entities, like SMPs, instead opting to preference the

state. In doing so, this relegates SMPs to a menial role within society or as something to be quashed to protect the state. This conclusion leads me to evaluate the other major paradigm within IR theory, Liberalism.

4.1 THE LIBERAL PARADIGM

As with the Realist tradition, I determine that the Liberal paradigm would be limited in the insight it elicits for the social media-state relationship. To arrive at that conclusion, I consider the paradigm wholistically. Contemporarily, Neoliberalism is the primary school within the Liberal paradigm. This position emerged initially from Robert Keohane's (2005) *After Hegemony*. I will go into detail on the Neoliberal position shortly. However, first tracing the roots of Neoliberalism back to the original Liberal paradigm is necessary. To construct the Classical Liberal position, it is necessary to review the Enlightenment scholars whose works shaped the position for centuries and provided a framework for its application internationally.

4.1.1 CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

Within the Liberal paradigm, scholars that more strictly adhere to Enlightenment-era thinkers like Adam Smith and David Hume tend to apply what is known as Classical Liberalism (Hume, 2003; Smith, 1863). Scholars from the early and mid-twentieth century, like Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, made substantial advances to the Classical Liberal IR tradition (Hayek, 1996; Mises & Ludwig, 2005; Von Mises, 1972). The Classical Liberal can be distilled into a few core tenets by drawing on these scholars' works. First, it is worth considering the Classical Liberal position's ground-up nature. Next, considering its implications at the state scale becomes essential. Then, discussing state's expectations within the international arena is merited. After which, Classical Liberalism's tenets should be clear – so, I can conclude its veracity my research.

Fundamentally, Classical Liberals base their position on the individual – underpinning all interactions between individuals, organisations, and states. As such, understanding what rights individuals ought to be afforded and human nature at a general level is crucial. The Classical Liberal holds that there are certain natural rights individuals are entitled to – life and person, liberty, property and possession (Beauchamp, 2000; Haakonssen, 1989; Hume, 2003; Smith, 2010). Individuals ought to be able to freely express themselves – politically and religiously. Further, people ought to be free to engage in economic activity as they see fit so long as it does not impede another person's natural rights. The state's role in these interactions is to ensure those rights are protected from infringement – whether from individuals within the state or without (Hume, 1907; Smith, 1863).

Drawing from Hume and Smith's works, there are certain characteristics associated with human nature that are inescapable and failing to account for them would be detrimental. To an extent, accepting humanity's fallibility is fundamental. While ideally, humans are perfectly rational creatures, this is demonstrably not always the case ([Hume, 1907, 2003](#); [Smith, 2010](#)). Routinely, individuals fail to maximise their potential utility in decision-making, a notion that a perfectly rational creature would always pursue. While individuals make less-than-optimal choices, there is a further concern – individuals rarely have anywhere near enough information to make perfect decisions. So, the Classical Liberal holds that due to imperfect information and imperfect rationality, humankind is prone to err. This fallibility merits recognition, and a system that accounts for it ought to be established. Through this perspective, a more-realistic view of how human nature can impact states and international relations emerges ([Hume, 2003, 2011](#); [Mossner & Ross, 1977](#); [Skinner, 1993](#); [Smith, 1863](#)).

Classical Liberals understand states' rise as a spontaneous ordering that occurs due to rationally self-interested individuals interacting with one another ([Hume, 1830, 1907](#); [Smith, 1863](#)). Effectively, notions of how individuals may best engage with one another emerge as agreed upon arrangements that get carried throughout a society's history. These arrangements are usually classed as systems of morality, traditions, and the rules of law from which a national identity emerges and binds people together. As such, a state's formation results from the interactions between individuals eventually coalescing into a culture ([Cliteur, 2000](#); [Gray, 2013](#); [Greaves, 1974](#); [Hayek, 1996](#); [Hume, 2003](#); [Mises & Ludwig, 2005](#)).

Classical Liberals adopt the perspective that the same faults with human reason manifest at the international level. Leaders rarely have perfect information and are limited by their rational capabilities when making decisions – so, misunderstanding and conflict will arise. This concern is exacerbated by the potential for tensions when states make self-interested decisions. Further, conflict resides within the human condition's core – tribes have been warring against one another for supremacy since pre-civilisation, after all, so says the Classical Liberal.

Classical Liberals hold that since states are the most useful vehicle for the maintaining individuals' natural rights, then a system that promotes this state capacity is essential ([Cliteur, 2000](#); [Gray, 2013](#); [Hayek, 1996](#); [Hume, 2003](#); [Mises & Ludwig, 2005](#); [Smith, 1863](#)). This position is where the international system's ordered anarchy gains utility. The current system provides adequate freedom for states to pursue their interests and provides a means for cooperation.

Through cooperation, states can facilitate the commerce's spread and protect the individual. Further, cooperation may see the creation of alliances and other international arrangements. The Classical Liberal sees this as a good thing while being sceptical of these arrangements' longevity (Skinner, 1993; Smith, 1863). Assuming sustained cooperation's failure betrays the fundamental assumption that conflict is an integral part of human nature.

Coalescing interactions between self-interested states result in a spontaneous order, similarly to how individuals' actions result in the creation of nations, states and cultures. The result is a system that balances power, which prevents the rise of a hegemon or global governance structure (Cliteur, 2000). As Smith asserts, the creation of men of the system, global enforcers, and the single greatest potential erosion of individual freedoms result from strong international institutions (Smith, 1863). Thus, the Classical Liberal sees cooperation *and* conflict as useful tools for ensuring most individuals' long-term freedom.

So, the Classical Liberal's approach affords the individual an almost sacred position within their calculation. States should be limited insofar as they should exist to guarantee their citizen's rights. Otherwise, the state should default to non-interference. This logic has merit, and there is immediate utility in analysing states through the Classical Liberal's lens. However, the analytical utility is precisely the issue with the theory's applicability to the social media-state relationship. The Classical Liberal position, perhaps due to the moral roots of the theory, leads to a reductive discourse – state A ought to be applauded, whereas state B ought to be chided. Given the scope of the social media-state relationship, a lens that gives a great deal of analytical breadth is necessary.

With the conclusion that Classical Liberalism can limit the flexibility of the models I propose, it is safe to conclude that I should focus elsewhere. So, considering the prevailing perspective within the Liberal paradigm – Neoliberalism – becomes relevant.

4.1.2 NEOLIBERALISM – THE RESPONSE TO NEOREALISM

The Neoliberal position, as asserted by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1973), is rooted in Classical Liberalism. However, there are clear distinctions between the positions. The first distinction is abandoning the assumption that sustainable cooperation is improbable. The next builds from this first assertion and is used to reject the notions asserted by Hegemonic

Stability Theory. Finally, the Neoliberal position argues the role economic entanglement can play in providing the necessary lubricant for cooperation.

The Neoliberal asserts that due to the world's economy becoming more globalised and the spread of international institutions, sustained cooperation becomes the preferred *modus operandi* for the world. The mechanism behind this sustained cooperation is complex interdependence ([Dorussen et al., 2016](#); [Keohane & Nye, 1973](#)). The concept represents a departure in the Neoliberal position from the Classical one wherein human nature is no longer centrally considered. This change is attributable to Neoliberalism sharing the same fundamental assumptions of Structural Realism ([Keohane, 2005](#); [Keohane & Nye, 1973](#)).

Complex interdependence asserts that while states may be the best foci for analysing the international system, there are numerous channels for interactions between individuals, transnational organisations, and states that create lead to an increasingly complex system ([Dorussen et al., 2016](#); [Farrell & Newman, 2019](#); [Keohane & Nye, 1973](#); [Oatley, 2019](#)). Subsequently, it becomes disadvantageous to break off entanglement. Applying this to international institutions and regimes, the Neoliberal position is thusly – the costs are high at first, but once the foundation is set, it becomes less costly to maintain cooperative channels than break them off ([Keohane & Nye, 1973, 1987](#)). Thus, states interested in maintaining at least tacit commitment to the institution do so since it is in their interest. From this assertion, the Neoliberal position refutes Hegemonic Stability Theory – which asserts that only a robust global hegemon can provide the necessary structure for international cooperation to be viable ([Keohane, 2005](#)). Instead, Keohane posits that international institutions are not so frail as to collapse without a global hegemon ([Keohane, 2005](#)). Thus, the Neoliberal infers that if the institutions offer a suitable alternative to a global hegemon, cooperation can be sustained – lessening conflict ([Dorussen et al., 2016](#); [Keohane, 2005](#)). This point is of stark contrast to the Classical Liberal, who may go so far as to assert that war is beneficial for humanity ([Hume, 1907](#); [Smith, 2010](#)).

Through complex interdependence, the Neoliberal finds that a laissez-faire international regime and national-level approach to the global economy is perhaps the best one ([Dorussen et al., 2016](#); [Keohane & Nye, 1973](#); [Oatley, 2019](#)). An increased complex interdependency provides for mutual benefits between states and an avenue to support individuals, subsequently.

4.1.3 FINAL REMARKS ON LIBERALISM

Within the Neoliberal tradition, sustained cooperation through establishing complex international regimes and institutions becomes the mechanism for structural international change. Neoliberalism's approach provides potential solutions that may benefit the international community, but recently Keohane has reckoned with Neoliberalism's global impact ([Colgan & Keohane, 2017](#)). Being cognizant of that, it is reasonable to look more closely at the theory's potential for the thesis. Largely, the same limitations that the Classical Liberal position and Realist tradition are constrained by apply to the Neoliberal position. The Realist and Liberal paradigms' prescriptive nature is where the limitations ultimately lay. Since the paradigms explain the international system so states can formulate rational policies – this is no surprise. While Liberalism may consider non-state actors, its state-centricity limits adequately elucidating the social media-state relationship. Thus, since I seek to establish a framework for the social media-state relationship, the utility in employing the Liberal or Realist paradigms is minimal. As a result, I can now safely conclude that it is necessary to depart from the Positivist paradigms and begin reviewing leading critical theories.

4.2 CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Now that I have reviewed the Liberal and Realist paradigms, I address the Critical paradigm. The first theory I discuss is Alexander Wendt's Social Constructivist view. Next, I will present Karl Marx's work, whose contributions still find traction in today's Critical IR approaches. From there, I will engage with Antonio Gramsci's works and Robert Cox's advancement of Gramsci's ideas. Through this discussion, I reach the conclusion that the Neo-Gramscian perspective provides the greatest utility for the social media-state relationship.

4.2.1 WENDT'S CONSTRUCTIVISM

Wendt's (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics* emerged in response to Waltz's Structural Realism. Wendt's Constructivism attempts to establish three empirical anarchy structures explained by emergent individual state structures and their relation to culture ([Wendt, 1999](#)).

Wendt posits three forms of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian ([Wendt, 1999](#)). In Wendt's view, the Hobbesian construction is where enmity pervades. Lockean anarchy entails rivalry – competition, not outright hostility. Lastly, Kantian anarchy is a system in which friendship between states rises. Wendt traces an anarchy's evolution to an individual's common-sense realisations of the world and how they engage with one another. Thus, he establishes an anthropomorphised vision of the state that is intuited by the Realist and Liberal paradigms' state-centricity and self-interest assumptions ([Kratochwil, 2006](#)). Therefore, Wendt explains the dichotomy guiding Realist and Liberal calculations of state actions – it is a matter of Self against the Other ([Wendt, 1999](#)). If the Other is understood to be intent on killing the Self, then a Hobbesian culture of anarchy exists. If the Other is intent on undercutting the Self, then Lockean anarchy is present. Lastly, if the Other intends on cooperation and mutual support, Kantian anarchy prevails. Ultimately a Hobbesian, Lockean, or Kantian structure emerges internationally, which then constrains global state interactions.

Wendt's perspective is useful for understanding the social aspects of state interactions that Realist approaches have historically discounted, and Liberal approaches have only generally included within their view. However, the Wendtian Constructivist has been criticised by others within the Constructivist school for conceding too much to other realist theories

([Guzzini & Leander, 2005](#); [Kratochwil, 2006](#)). In this instance, realism refers to those theories tethered to observable or material phenomena as compared to idealist approaches that ascertain the intangible to understand the world ([Kratochwil, 2006](#)). Wendt has noted this concession and notes that he utilises some scientific realism ideas when constructing his position ([Wendt, 1999](#)). Broadly, Wendt's approach emerged as a rebuttal and critique of Waltz's (1979) *Theory of International Politics*. Wendt's approach is a potent tool for providing a serious Constructivist frame for IR. I can appreciate the mechanisms Wendt establishes for constructing the structures behind states and the international system. Wendt's insights on constructing structures may be useful to contextualise aspects of the social media-state relationship. However, holistic integration of this framework may preclude limit some of the flexibility needed to elucidate the social media-state relationship's nature, considering Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories*' influence.

Wendt's approach represents one significant critical approach within IR theory scholarship. Numerous other theories within the Critical paradigm trace their roots to the next theorist I address – Marx.

4.2.2 MARX'S CAPITAL

Marx's works have found renewed interest in IR and others areas ([Fuchs, 2019a](#); [Gu, 2020](#); [Maffettone, 2021](#); [Musto, 2020](#); [Pitts, 2017](#); [Sclofsky & Funk, 2018](#)). Historically, Marxism has been criticised for reducing IR to purely economics as explained by the tensions between the classes of capitalists and labourers ([Brewer & Marx, 1984](#)). Despite criticisms, Marx's writings retain significant influence on the world today. In *Capital*, Marx (2019) establishes a formulation of value, commodities, capital and its accumulation. His work constructs the notion that the surplus-value of labour is extracted from labourers and retained by capitalists as profit ([Marx, 2019](#)). Understanding this process makes it evident that labourers within the capitalist system are exploited ([Marx, 2019](#)). Eventually, by Marx's surmising, the capital system will halt, and a labour revolution will occur in which workers abandon capitalism in favour of a classless system.

For that conclusion, Marx first establishes the notions of use-value and exchange-value. Use-value is taken to be the inherent qualitative value of an object given its usefulness; iron has many potential uses, so the expression of its use-value is relative to the market it is offered, for instance ([Marx, 2019](#)). To quantify this value relative to the market, Marx establishes

exchange-value. This value is used to establish the market value of a particular item. Carrying the iron example forward (and to paraphrase Marx's example), if I were to offer one iron ingot and someone were to offer two bushels of corn for it, then two bushels of corn have the same exchange-value as one iron ingot ([Marx, 2019](#)). In markets where a currency system exists, it is deducible then two bushels of corn and an iron ingot, ought to be worth the same amount of currency – for simplicity's sake, five dollars. The five dollars of value then represents an easily quantifiable exchange-value for the corn and iron. Marx asserts that given the two objects have the same exchange-value and are thereby replaceable with one another, a third commonality must exist. In Marx's mind, this third commonality is labour ([Marx, 2019](#)).

Later in *Capital*, Marx establishes the nature of absolute and relative surplus-value. Absolute surplus-value is directly aligned with the surplus value of labour extracted by capitalists and taken as profit ([Marx, 2019](#)). To illustrate this, assume a worker is paid one dollar an hour to operate a machine that produces five dollars an hour of profit. While the worker appears to be paid a wage associated with the value of his labour, this is not actually the case. To operate the machine, assume a capitalist needs three dollars' worth of goods for an hour's operation. Thus, for goods and labour, the capitalist has to invest four dollars. However, the capitalist earns one dollar in profit in this one hour that results from the surplus-value of labour. To establish this as absolute surplus-value, Marx notes that the labourer has no claim over this profit as they do not own the means of production or purchase the goods necessary for production ([Marx, 2019](#)).

Conversely, relative surplus-value is more abstract and emerges from technological or social development in an industry. By Marx's estimation, if new developments occur in industry x , resulting in a greater productivity, thereby lessening labour's value, then costs across the industry ought to decrease over time. This cheapening of costs is then a factor in understanding the overall calculation of surplus-value extracted from labour as profit. Thus, Marx establishes a cycle of capital accumulation that illustrates how by using variable and fixed capital, the capitalist can generate new capital. This cycle is based on the extraction of profit from surplus-value of labour. The origin of the surplus-value of labour, and the notion that labour itself is the commonality in which exchange-values of commodities are triangulated, are two principal criticisms that Marx struggled to defeat ([Brewer & Marx, 1984](#)).

While Marx posited the capitalist system of his time resulted from social forces associated with contemporary production methods. That is to say, Marx asserted that historical social relations were based on economic relations and a materialist lens. As society advanced, the needs of the individual became diversified to a greater degree. In the Neolithic age, subsistence was the primary function of labour. Pastoral society's rise created a division of labour. The division of labour illustrated that someone who had become a farmer could not be a full-time carpenter as well ([Marx, 2019](#)). By creating roles within society, an economic system emerged based on the trade of objects necessary for subsistence ([Marx, 2019](#); [Marx & Engels, 1970a, 1970b](#)). Marx holds that as technological improvements occur, new divisions in labour are created, facilitating the creation of new labour classes and societal interactions. The most straightforward comparison here is that of the agrarian economy instead of the industrialised economy – or farms compared to factories.

Marx's views on economics and materialism underpin several approaches within the Critical paradigm, most notably within the Frankfurt School ([Slater, 2020](#)). More generally, Marxist approaches emerge in various fields of study such as historiography, economics, sociology, art, and literary criticism ([Becker, 1984](#); [O'Hara, 1999](#); [O'Laughlin, 1975](#); [Sheehan, 2007](#)).

Ultimately, a Marxist perspective has utility at certain points. Marx's works is limited beyond analysing and understanding labour exploitation. Fuchs, as discussed in the last chapter, proves a useful example for this point – the Marxist lens is strong for explaining and identifying issues with labour and its value ([Fuchs, 2019a](#)). However, as a systemic theory, it falls a bit short as illustrated by the strong critiques that have been offered ([Roemer, 2013](#); [Sweezy, 1942](#)). I can appreciate Marx's ideas; however, the lens does not provide the flexibility required to provide a systemic approach to social media-state relations successfully. Now, I turn to Antonio Gramsci's (1971) *Prison Notebooks* and the later work of Robert Cox, which built upon Gramsci's efforts.

4.2.3 GRAMSCI, COX AND THE NEO-GRAMSCIAN PERSPECTIVE

Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* occupies a space within the Critical discourse that was elevated by Cox's contributions ([Cox, 2019](#); [Gramsci, 2007](#)). In this section, I explore both the Gramsci's original formulation of perspective and Cox's later advancements leading to the Neo-Gramscian lens.

Gramsci wrote the *Prison Notebooks* over his twenty-year imprisonment ([Schwarzmantel, 2014](#)). Gramsci found himself taken as a political prisoner due to his views and role as the leader of the Italian Communist Party ([Schwarzmantel, 2014](#)). Gramsci's writings traced the Italy's history from ancient Rome until his time. Further, Gramsci drew inspiration from Marx – however, he viewed Marx's works through the same lens that he viewed the others – as a historic bloc that was bound to emerge. The historic bloc, and how it emerges, are critical components to understanding the Gramscian approach ([Schwarzmantel, 2014](#)).

Gramsci asserts that society's structures result from several social, political, and ideological factors coalescing around a unified abstraction that advances a group's perspective within a society ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). In the case of Marxist thought, Marx's abstract ideas and their resonance with workers allowed for a group to transform into a historic bloc. A historic bloc emerges from the society's intellectuals' efforts; by Gramsci's measure, intellectuals within a society can be understood in two forms – traditional and organic ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). Traditional intellectuals are those who explicitly engage their intellectual faculties to generate new knowledge to augment society's historic knowledge reservoir – academics, scientists, philosophers, for instance ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). This is not to exclude the role of artists, writers, and other creatives as they serve a different function. Further, Gramsci also considers lower-level bureaucrats as traditional intellectuals since they fulfil the same role within society – preserving the current societal order ([Gramsci, 2007](#)).

Gramsci's construction of social order arises when a historic bloc becomes hegemonic within a society. Explicitly, Gramsci's formulation of society is one in which historic blocs are in hegemonic competition with one another. Rather than hegemonic competition being one of overt hostility and sudden change – through his view, a war of manoeuvre – Gramsci sees this hegemonic competition as most likely one of passive revolution and gradual change ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). So, the traditional intellectual's role in Gramsci's view is that of preserving and enhancing the current hegemonic historic bloc's position. Gramsci views this position as the civil society that results from constraints placed upon how subservient members of society think and act ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). Put another way, traditional intellectuals unify individuals' ideas and disorganised entities within society. The current hegemon is protected through traditional intellectuals' efforts to constrain society's thinking to ideas that support the contemporary hegemonic historic bloc ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). Conversely, organic intellectuals function differently.

Organic intellectuals antagonise traditional intellectuals. Organic intellectuals are thought leaders within a subordinate historic blocs ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). The organic formulates, develops, and organises a thought system for those who are subservient to the current hegemonic historic bloc. In doing so, the organic facilitates a loose group of entities transforming into a historic bloc capable of competing with current hegemon ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). Recalling the example of Marx, Gramsci asserts that Marx is an organic intellectual for the working class. Gramsci draws inspiration from Marx for constructing his critical perspective on Italian society ([Gramsci, 2007](#)).

Hegemonic competition occurs through passive revolution and is seldom the result of a direct conflict (recall the hegemonic conflict within the Realist perspective, for instance). As Gramsci viewed it, passive revolution occurs by supplanting norms and relations within a society which is facilitated by technological and knowledge advancements ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). The emergence of capitalism and the free market from Enlightenment thinkers' works is a ready example of Gramsci's position. The free-market, capitalist system became a historic bloc occupied by the capitalist class and their supporters. Over time, their preference for society's order came to dominate instead of a feudal system. This transition was facilitated by the organics of the time – Smith, Locke, and Rousseau ([Gramsci, 2007](#)). When Gramsci was writing, the followers of a free-market, liberal ideology would have adopted the role of traditional intellectuals as the liberal position was hegemon.

Gramsci's assertion on intellectuals' roles and competition between historic blocs is a flexible perspective that allows for deeper insights into the social forces within society's politics and economics. Robert Cox noted that Gramsci, perhaps unsurprisingly given his incarceration, was less focused on the international application of his ideas ([Cox, 1983](#)). Cox asserted that Gramsci's ideas were applicable to IR and established a means of understanding the international system through a core-and-periphery formulation of Gramsci's hegemonic competition between blocs ([Cox, 1983, 2019](#)).

Internationally, a state's core sphere of influence is one where the state can comfortably influence other states within it. At the edge, or periphery, of this sphere of influence, is where hegemonic tension and clashes emerge as states compete to retain peripheral states to another would-be hegemonic bloc ([Cox, 2019](#)). Readily, the bipolarity of the Cold War international system illustrates this idea. The numerous efforts to retain influence over smaller states and the emergence of proxy conflicts between the West and the Soviet Union highlight peripheral

competition. It stands to reason that a similar occurrence can be observed with the increasing tensions between the United States and China contemporarily.

Cox retains the state-centricity present within the Liberal and Realist schools of IR theory ([Montalbano, 2021](#)). However, applying the Gramscian perspective on states leads to an understanding of transnational cooperation and conflict that is more inclusive than the Liberal or Realist paradigms. While a state may be the focus, it may not necessarily be the hegemonic historic bloc in its civil society. Put another way, a state may be acting internationally on behalf of its hegemon.

Cox holds that hegemony is achieved through two factors – coercion and consent. Achieving hegemony domestically or internationally through coercion is intuitive – force or the threat of force, is used ([Cox, 1983, 2019](#)). Consent, can manifest as the wilful acceptance by smaller actors to a bloc's hegemony, or at least acquiescence to the bloc's hegemony ([Cox, 2019](#)).

The Neo-Gramscianism that Cox promotes has been critiqued, particularly by Peter Burnham, though those criticisms appear to be missing in the nuance of Gramsci's hegemony. Burnham ([1991](#)) asserts that Cox's extension of Gramsci's work is merely a pluralistic analysis of global capital that overly relies upon the dominant ideology theory. Throughout his critique, Burnham ([1991](#)) points toward other works that have drawn inspiration from Gramsci, but it appears to me that Burnham is ignoring the role played by Gramscian superstructures within the approach. To elaborate, Burnham points to the example of post-WWII reconstruction United Kingdom as a case where Neo-Gramscianism fails. He offers a robust set of instances that demonstrate the flow of capital between the United Kingdom and seeks to claim the position that these capital flows are not indicative of a distinct hegemonic order at play. I would contest that assertion as it seems to me that the broader capitalist superstructure centred around the ethico-political belief of capital exchange, derived from a Gramscian historic bloc of capitalism, more than sufficiently explains the flow of goods. If, as Burnham ([1991](#)) notes, that a hegemon were to enforce its interests as a general interest for all of acquiescing society, then of course the continual flow of capital into the coffers of the capitalist hegemons aligns within that expression of social and capital relations within the UK.

Further, while Burnham does pose a serious critique of Cox's approach, his fundamental argument appears to rely on asserting an overestimation of ideology's role in the expression

of capital and social relations. If one takes ideology as Burnham has constructed it, then this analysis is accurate. However, this analysis stops short of fully considering the implications of a hegemonic ideology on the cultural structures of a society. That is to say, the hegemonic ideal of the UK had been capitalistic in nature for centuries before WWII. To assert that post-WWII reconstruction is a departure from this norm is to say that the war led to a new hegemonic idea and ideology becoming supplanted within UK society. In short, Burnham's critique offers valuable insight into some limitations posed by Cox's contributions to Neo-Gramscianism but does not sufficiently discount the value the approach holds for interpreting relations between states.

Considering the utility of the Neo-Gramscian view in the scope of interpreting domestic and international forces and factors, it stands to reason that integrating this perspective within the lens that Siebert et al. (1956) established makes the most sense. In the next section, I will extrapolate the reasoning.

4.3 FINAL REMARKS ON CRITICAL THEORIES & THE LITERATURE

Throughout this chapter, I reviewed IR theory's paradigms and leading Critical approaches. As a result, I have concluded that the Neo-Gramscian view, due to the perspective's domestic and international applications, holds the greatest utility for my efforts. Considering the evolution of media-state relations studies and technology that has spurred the relationship's development, a parallel emerges between Neo-Gramscianism and Siebert et al.'s (1956) work. Further, given that Gramsci and Cox treat knowledge and technological advancement as valuable tools for explaining the establishment of a historic bloc, Neo-Gramscianism can readily be applied to the social media-state relationship.

To better illustrate these considerations, Table 2 (p. 97) summarises how the paradigms and Neo-Gramscianism would treat the media's role. From the summarisation, one can infer how social media are likely to be viewed by the paradigms. When framed thusly, Neo-Gramscianism's utility becomes more evident. In the next chapter, I begin constructing the conceptual framework for the social media-state relationship.

Table 2*International Relations Theory Perspectives on Media*

Viewpoints	Realist School	Liberal School	Neo-Gramscianism
Role of the State	Maximise relative power internationally to ensure the highest chance for state perpetuation.	Focuses on international cooperation – politically and economically – to facilitate the democratisation of the world; rejects power politics.	Ensure the perpetuation of the current historic bloc through coercive means and ensure hegemony.
Role of the Media	Endeavour to assuage and ensure the maintenance of order within the domestic sphere to not hinder the state.	Support the aims of the international state through free reporting on matters; media entities are encouraged to be commercial in nature.	Function as a coercive tool of the historic blocs to manufacture acquiescence to the dominant historic blocs' attempts at obtaining hegemony.
Approach to Media-State Relations	Media-state relations may be state-dominated and see the media subjugated to the state.	Media-state relations are likely to see the state adopt a laissez-faire view of the press to encourage private enterprise.	Media-state relationship can be characterised by the media entities being made subservient to prevailing historic blocs and rival blocs – the media becomes a tool in the class struggle.

Note. Author's summary of theory views on the role of media.

**CHAPTER 5: CONSTRUCTING THE SOCIAL MEDIA-
STATE RELATIONSHIP**

5.0 FRAMING THE CHAPTER

Following the literature review, it is evident that assessing and characterising the social media-state relationship is a task that necessitates a conceptual framework. In this chapter, I establish the general framework that underpins the models I present in chapters six through nine. Thus, this chapter advances a broader theoretical conceptualisation of the social media-state relationship, and the subsequent competition for power it entails. The framework I construct draws upon Gramsci (1971), Cox (1981) and Siebert et al.'s (1956) works primarily. Though, I draw from other scholars' perspectives to elucidate a concept where needed.

A close reading of the *Four Theories* allows one to see the parallels between Siebert et al.'s media-state models and hegemonic competition as presented by Gramsci and Cox ([Cox, 1987](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#); [Siebert et al., 1956](#)). Siebert et al.'s (1956) significant efforts to illustrate the historic processes that led to the emergence of each media-state system evokes Gramsci's approach of looking to the past to understand the present circumstance.

Social media are part of a broader historical trend. Through conceptualising social media as historic blocs in a Gramscian sense, it is possible to elucidate a series of complex relationships between SMCs, SMPs, states and other actors. Further, I can account for social media in a global frame through this approach. Social media compound the transnational diffusion of ideas which are a critical concern in the contemporary information era – a notion elaborated upon in 5.8.

In this chapter, I establish my perspective on authoritarianism and libertarianism (AvL) in a manner reminiscent of John Merrill's efforts ([1990](#)). Further, I construct a perspective on left- and right-wing (LvR) politics to explain socio-economic concerns within a society. In considering AvL and LvR, I gain insight into how best to position the social media-state relationship models I propose. With these ideas in mind, I synthesise disparate disciplines, perspectives, and ideas into a unified frame for constructing social media-state relationship models. Siebert et al. (1956) provide the four basic models that I re-conceptualise within the Neo-Gramscian perspective. Ultimately, the framework I establish is akin to a critical theory, as Cox describes it, instead of a problem-solving theory ([Cox, 1981](#)). However, in the spirit of Cox, through understanding historic blocs' emergence and competition, I can elucidate

insight into what future societal shifts may entail for their publics in the social media-state relationship.

To achieve these aims, I first establish a set of definitions for the terms I use in this chapter and the coming ones. After which, I construct the general framework. Next, I develop and explain various facets of the authoritarian and libertarian, left and right views. Once these steps are accomplished, I then synthesise the competing ideas into a generalised framework suitable for developing the models in the coming chapters.

5.1 CLARIFYING TERMS

This section defines the key terms I use as the discourse evolves throughout this chapter.

5.2 BUILDING THE BASIC FRAMEWORK

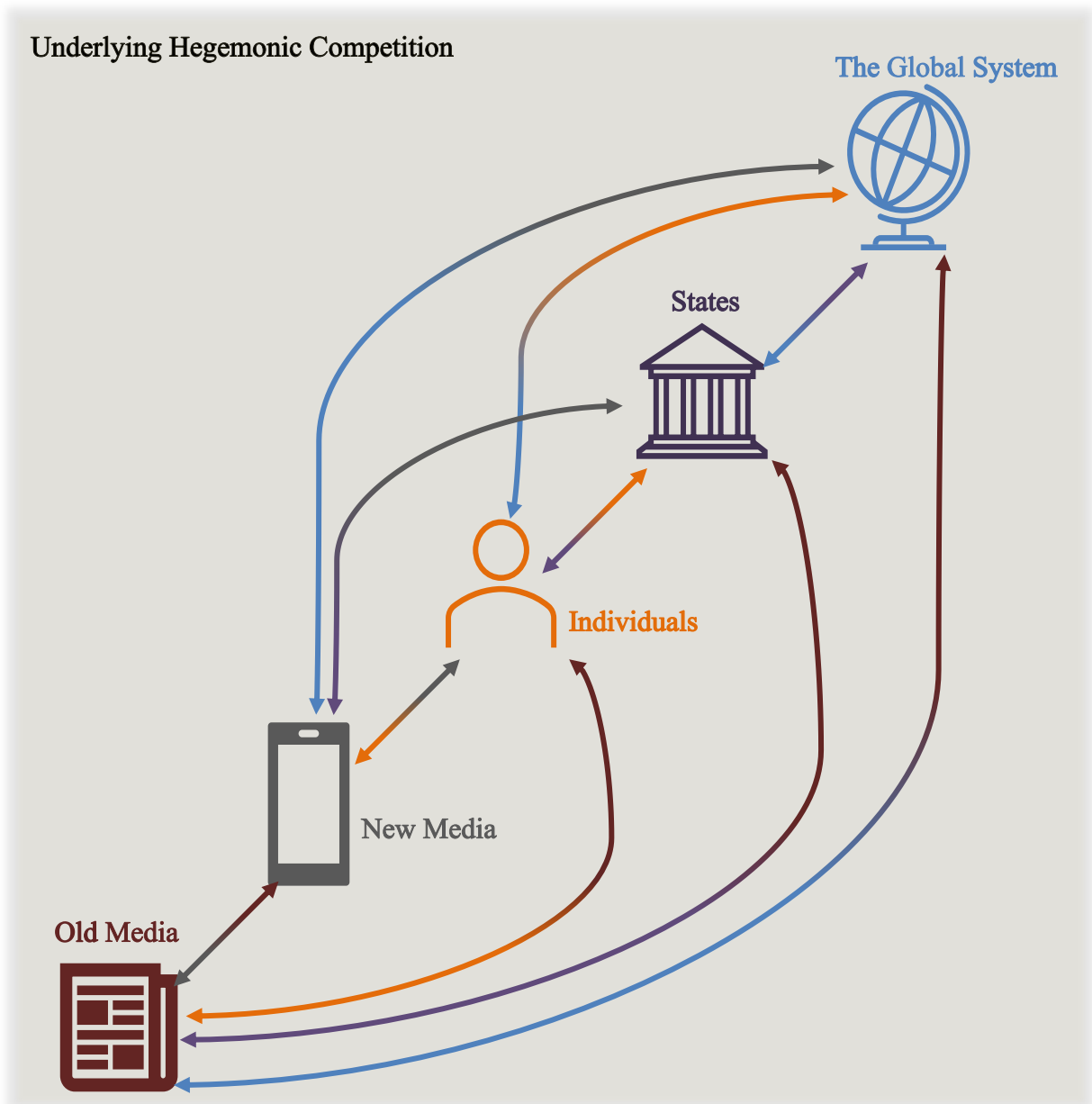
With the terms clarified, I move toward establishing the basic framework guiding chapters six to nine. Fundamentally, some basic assumptions anchor my approach. Firstly, states operate in a global system. The global system is comprised of states acting independent of one another but are influenced by each other's actions. Out of the first comes the second assumption – that states exist. I will establish how states come to exist in the next section.

The third assumption is that states influence people and entities within their physical, political and digital territory. Affording state control over their digital space is similar to how the UN Convention of the Laws of the Sea was modified to address states' air and space concerns ([Barnes & Barrett, 2016](#)). Stemming from this, the state retains the capacity to influence society's production forms. Due to this, the state interacts with its citizens, and subsequently citizens are afforded a mechanism to interact with the state. The last core assumption is that states are the embodiment of a people. Thus, people subsequently retain the capacity to influence the state.

From these assumptions, two conclusions emerge – states influence the global system, and people have the potential to influence states. Thus, individuals can influence the global system. These conclusions guide my construction of states and historic blocs' roles in the global system, which I consider further in 5.8 and in each model. For now, in Figure 5 (p. 102), I present a rudimentary representation of this system of influence, considering the media's role in the presentation.

Figure 5

Influence Systems in the Social Media-State Relationship



Note. This is the Author's representation of the basic framework employed and is meant to illustrate the systems of influence within a society and globally. Each arrow represents the interaction between the entities labelled, while the square represents the underlying competition between Historic Blocs for hegemony. The arrows' gradient lines illustrate the influence flows between each entity within the system, e.g. old media influences individuals and individuals influence old media.

When considering Figure 5 (p. 102), some aspects need elaboration. As presented, a single individual can exercise influence on the global system. However, individuals are classed as single persons or organisations (e.g., an individual organisation). To that end, Figure 5 (p. 102) illustrates a system in which individuals are influenced by media's pressure, the state, and the global system whilst simultaneously influencing media, states and the global system. The relationships' dynamics may fluctuate in strength, which helps elucidate the differing models.

Further, this concept is central to traditional media-state relations scholarship, as I outlined in chapter two. There have been limitations in considering the scale of change represented by social media when considering them along with SMCs. Through this perspective, I establish social media's role in the social media-state relationship. First, however, it is necessary to establish the state itself.

5.3 ESTABLISHING THE STATE

A state is the manifestation of the people it represents. States may be made of many nations or a singular nation ([Roeder, 2012](#)). In either case, cultural facets within a state emerge over time that guides how that state operates. This section will extrapolate the processes that lead to a state's eventuation, which emerge with the rise of historic blocs that order society and the state. It is necessary to return to the rise of civilisation, at least at an abstract level, to fully establish the rise of historic blocs within a state.

When considering humanity's transition from a hunter-gatherer system relying on nomadism for survival to an agrarian society, fundamental differences emerges. Society's survival mechanisms differ, primarily due to the population's scale which burgeons when stationary, agrarian civilisations form ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#); [Marx, 2019](#)). However, in both societies, the principal aim is to replicate production necessary for society to continue and grow – producing food, water, shelter and whatever else is deemed essential for life to thrive ([Cox, 1987](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#); [Marx, 2019](#)).

In agrarian society, population booms to the point where, a division of labour becomes prudent ([Marx, 2019](#)). However, before that division of labour can exist, certain conditions must be met. Fundamentally, a group of people needs to have some entity that has the authority to lead. This is understood as an early hegemonic competition.

For simplicity's sake, I posit early village heads and tribal chieftains as autocrats, and subsequently hegemons. Their support is cultivated through the rise of traditions that have been, historically, the result of an oral tradition regarding laws, transfer of power, and deference to authority. Those individuals charged with preserving a people's oral history are traditional intellectuals ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). So, achieving legitimacy by right of tradition, the autocrat can structure society. Given that private property did not emerge as a formal legal concept until the Enlightenment, it can be inferred that the autocrat controls the village's territory and production ([Aylmer, 1980](#)). So, therein lies the ownership of production that enables a division of labour. Since the autocrat can dictate the land's use, they can assign people to work the land. Now, the autocrat may not solely determine how to utilise their material resources best – traditional intellectuals may counsel the autocrat's decision-making, for instance. In doing so, these intellectuals help perpetuate the current autocrat's hegemony by guiding decisions that garner further support from the people ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). Put

simply, the chief and their advisors are interested in staying in their position, so they develop ways to protect their position.

Over time, different individuals work to fulfil society's growing needs, leading to innovations and inventions that improve society. The society's division of labour allows people to be inventive. These people are likely employed or otherwise supported by the autocrat with the aim to facilitate replicating the production of life's necessities. Further, stemming from the division of labour, individuals are able to adopt roles that generate aspects of culture – storytelling, music, and writing. New cultural developments would lead to organic intellectuals emerging. If the hegemon does not engage the threat posed by the organic intellectuals, then the hegemon may find themselves supplanted by a new historic bloc. This instance is effectively a passive revolution in the Gramscian sense ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). Internal cultural developments are not the only threat a hegemon faces.

With a growing population, ideas and technology, a desire for territorial expansion develops. Further, growing societies evolve beyond tribes into state-like entities that can protect themselves from others and impose their will upon weaker societies. From these interactions a global system of war and trade emerges. Historically, existential conflicts existed between early states, reinforcing this notion ([Raaflaub, 2008](#)). Over time, through conflict and trade, a society's people encounter new ideas. As with internal cultural developments, imported ideas result in organic intellectuals advancing their acceptance in society. Thus, new instances of hegemonic competition emerge as various counter blocs act against the hegemon. If the hegemon is unable to fend off a threat, then it faces replacement. While an autocrat being replaced by a usurper is a quick example, there are broader forms of hegemony. The rise of private property as an ideology is a strong illustration of how a historic bloc can be gradually supplanted by a new one. Private property and capitalism's rise replaced the feudal system that existed for centuries beforehand in Europe ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). Put simply, new ideas lead to new challenges to the hegemon's power – they may emerge domestically or from abroad. In either case, the hegemon works to protect its position.

While I have not yet drawn this distinction explicitly, it is worth noting that throughout history, the state has functionally been synonymous with the leader of the time – this harkens back to the famous line by the French monarch, Louis XIV of France, *L'état c'est moi* or I am the state ([Rowen, 1961](#)). It is important to distinguish between particular autocrats, the *idea* of autocracy and the idea of the state. Historically, most societies can be structured as follows:

the idea of autocracy is hegemonic, with the idea of the state (and its subsequent mechanisms) subservient to the hegemon; the individual autocrat is merely how the hegemonic idea of autocracy is expressed.

Conversely, the rise of private ownership of production means saw the hegemonic idea of autocracy replaced by the idea of private ownership, which altered the state's form and function. Similarly, the contemporary state holds significant sway over society, but it is likely a means in which the hegemonic idea expresses itself. In this context, competition within the power political economy becomes clearer, as do potential hegemons in the four models I present later. For now, since the discussion has shifted toward public and private ownership and control, I will shift focus to the framework's authoritarian and libertarian aspects.

5.4 CONSIDERING THE AUTHORITARIAN AND LIBERTARIAN (AVL) DICHOTOMY

In the context of the social media-state relationship, authoritarianism is understood in its usual terms – the vestment of power within strong state organelles that one individual typically controls. In some cases, an oligarchy may exist. Generally, this authoritarian bend within society leads to a suppression of individual freedoms ([Glasius, 2018](#)). It can also be thought of as restricting free enterprise. Further, for media and news, this may manifest as the mandated or self-imposed censorship of stories critical of the autocrat or government.

Traditionally, the opposite of authoritarianism is libertarianism. In libertarian societies, people operate with great freedom from state involvement in their lives. This concept harkens back to Enlightenment-era liberals' views on the state ([Hume, 1907](#); [Smith, 1863](#)). In these societies, free political expression and a free market are expected. Thus, when taken as a dichotomous understanding of the society's ordering, the authoritarian side of the spectrum can be understood as state control and intervention. This notion is reminiscent of Merrill's ([1990](#)) conceptualisation of authoritarianism. Conversely, the libertarian side is taken to be less control, specifically over individuals' actions. Authoritarianism and libertarianism manifests in nearly infinite ways when considering minutiae of society. However, by establishing a framework for quantifying a society's autocratic and libertarian tendencies, it is possible to differentiate between an authoritarian society and a libertarian one. Understanding individuals' roles within society is necessary for such a framework.

5.5 ESTABLISHING THE INDIVIDUALS

As I established in 5.2, an individual is a single person within a state or some organisation - a charity or business, for instance. Individuals are generally private or public. Private individuals advance interests not wholly aligned with the state's, such as personal or industry interests. Individuals the state employs are public individuals. If public individuals advance private interests, then they transform into private individuals. So, a politician that adheres to the state's message is not a private individual. Whereas a politician that operates on behalf of another entity – say, a particular industry or oppositional political party – acts as a private individual. Generally, public individuals are functionally synonymous with the state so long as they merely occupy the space the hegemonic state historic bloc creates. Once they are private individuals, I can distinguish them as actors opposing the hegemon's position in a Neo-Gramscian sense.

If states utilise their traditional intellectuals (i.e., public individuals) to generate consensus on a new approach or changes to government, then it follows those individuals can affect change upon states, and subsequently historic blocs. Changes do not occur in a vacuum, so that action's ramifications are likely to be felt by others in the global system to differing extents. Outside of the hegemonic historic bloc, private individuals generate organic intellectuals – singular thinkers or entire industries moving to establish a counter bloc to the current hegemonic historic bloc. In these instances, a passive revolution emerges. However, it is equally possible for a rapid revolution to occur. The French Revolution is an example of a rapid revolution or Gramscian war of manoeuvre (Gramsci et al., 1971) In either case, organic intellectuals emerging from private individuals facilitate supplanting the current hegemon with a new one. It is possible in states that individuals are content with the status quo. These individuals are part of historic blocs that consent to the current hegemon's position ([Cox, 1987](#)).

In this vein, political tensions between individuals can emerge. A left- and right-wing political dichotomy can be used to frame these tensions. So, it is now time to discuss this dichotomy's nature.

5.6 CONSIDERING THE LEFT AND RIGHT DICHOTOMY

Traditionally, the political spectrum's left and right (LvR) wings are represented in a dichotomous fashion. On the left, therein lies beliefs and thoughts put forward by thinkers such as Marx and Gramsci, contemporarily ([Bobbio, 1996](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#); [Marx, 2019](#)). This side is understood as having socialist or communist leanings. Conversely, the spectrum's right side is closer in nature to authoritarianism and totalitarianism – it is usually associated with social and economic conservatism or traditionalism ([Bobbio, 1996](#)).

When Enlightenment thinkers were writing, their beliefs were closer to the left-wing of the spectrum – they opposed large-scale state intervention into citizen's lives. In contrast, the conservatives of their time would be those content with the monarchical system. Today, the right-wing occupies a space similar – at least in economic terms – to that of the Classical Liberal; this is primarily due to Neoliberalism's emergence as norm that is conserved by right-wing politicians. Interestingly, the contemporary left-wing of the political spectrum represents those who support a larger degree of state intervention into society, which is opposite to what would be taken as the right-wing during the Enlightenment ([Bobbio, 1996](#); [Thompson, 1997](#)). As I touched on in chapter four, a society's organic intellectuals become the traditional intellectuals if they rise to hegemony. With this change in a society's structures, what was once the edge of progressive thought then becomes conservative thought's foundation.

Contemporarily, the left- and right-wing dichotomy serves a valuable role in quickly quantifying socio-political beliefs among individuals in a state and what policies a state may enact. So, when taken in conjunction with the AvL spectrum, an effective means of observing a state's facets is readily available; this observation frame can then be extrapolated upon for analysis. Thus, inferences can be made about the society's hegemonic structures, what historic blocs function within it, and the broader societal hegemonic competition. In the next section, I will contextualise the media's role in this context.

5.7 POSITING THE MEDIA'S ROLE WITHIN A STATE

Throughout this section, I establish the media's broad societal role. It is worth noting that the same frame that I construct can likely be applied to any particular aspect of a society, assuming the necessary foundation is laid. This premise has been previously noted as part of the analytical strength and flexibility a Coxian approach enables ([Cox & Sinclair, 1996](#)).

There is a tendency to view the media as a monolith. However, as demonstrated in chapter two this is not the case. From a technological perspective, I will treat old and new media as the same. Where I draw a distinction is on how media are conceptualised. That is to say, principal historic blocs I consider are understood as the *idea* of a state-run media and the idea of a privately owned media. Within these broader blocs are the ideas of profit-motives, truthful reporting and an oppositional media, for instance. These varying sub-ideas fluctuate in priority and supremacy within the broader idea of media. However, generally, these ideas are what illustrate the broader idea of media's characteristics. So, the idea of a privately-owned media will likely have a profit-motive as a strong tenet.

I temporarily adopt a state-centric approach to consider the media's role. So, in Gramscian terms, the state, and its views, operates as the hegemonic historic bloc within society. Media within this society are likely to respond to the hegemon's demands. The demands and the media's response are governed by what ideas of media exist within society. If the society has an authoritarian bend, there may be the idea of a state-run media. If private media exist, the state may have to coerce them to cooperate. Conversely, if there is a libertarian bend, the idea of a private media is likely prevalent. So, there may be resistance to the state's demands relative to how private media perceive the state (like demanding oppositional media publish only positive stories). The response to and demands placed upon media represent the traditional media-state relationship. In contemporary society, the media's various mediums and the diversity in media individuals complicates the media-state relations frame. I construct old and new media as a monolithic historic bloc. This construction presents a way forward using the idea of media as a monolithic bloc while respecting the premise that media is comprised of individuals.

The hegemon exerts influence on media individuals through coercion or gaining consent their consent. Media individuals can function as both traditional and organic intellectuals ([Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). In the traditional intellectual context, media individuals are public individuals –

they work to support the hegemon through reinforcing the hegemonic idea. In the organic context, media individuals are private individuals – they oppose the hegemon. Organic intellectuals are how counter blocs form, private media individuals serve this function through resisting the hegemon’s demands and publishing reporting against the hegemon. Through these efforts, organic intellectuals (private media individuals) coalesce people’s thoughts into the idea of some change. Immediately, the idea of a revolutionary press opposing an authoritarian regime comes to mind. Through the spread of the idea of revolution, the hegemon is threatened and must take actions to quash the counter bloc.

When considering Gramscian old media individuals solely, media individuals’ impact is most likely to be limited to the state’s domestic area due to their mediums. However, broadcast journalism, as it emerged and exists due to communication satellites’ aid, extends certain media individuals’ impact beyond the domestic system and potentially into the global system. This leads to states potentially restricting foreign media individuals’ access to their societies since that reporting may be considered a threat. This threat perception applies to new media. New media are the product of the information age and exist as Internet-based agencies. Since the Internet is highly globalised, new media individuals are intrinsically globalised ([Block, 2004](#)). Particularly, as in chapter three, SMPs potentially allow individuals access to the global societies’ publics. Subsequently, hegemonic historic blocs in states have responded in myriad ways to new media individuals’ emergence. I expand upon these responses in chapters six through as part of the four models I present.

The Internet, and subsequently social media, has facilitated single persons’ rise as media individuals. In turn, a highly-decentralised, fragmented media affords organic intellectuals the (cyber)space to organise and form counter blocs in an unmatched way. The most poignant example of SMPs’ potential in this context is the Arab Spring protests, as described in chapter three ([Tudoroiu, 2014](#)). Further, while the production means associated with the data economy might be retained by states or private SMCs, some control over the production means for creating and disseminating ideas – through online interactions – resides with singular media individuals. The conflict that emerges herein is elucidated by the social media-state relationship, which I expand on in chapters six through nine. For now, I explore the global system’s impact on hegemony within a state.

5.8 ESTABLISHING THE GLOBAL SYSTEM AS IT MATTERS TO STATES

The global system is comprised of states interacting with one another to achieve various ends. Further, states are not the only actors in this system – numerous multi-national companies, non-state groups, and intergovernmental bodies operate within the global system. Each actor influences the others, though that influence will differ in each case. I reviewed several theories that seek to explain these interactions in the last chapter.

Fundamentally, states result from the structures established by traditional intellectuals to perpetuate the societal hegemonic historic bloc. Given that these structures result from ideation and cultururation within a society, these structures constrain individuals' socialisation similar to Wendt's Constructivism ([Wendt, 1999](#)). Subsequently, these actions reinforce the current hegemonic historic bloc. To reiterate, the force behind hegemonic change is a new hegemon rising from an organic-led counter bloc.

Historically, ideas crossed borders through conflict and trade. In this sense, the global system influences states. Examples would be the USSR exporting Soviet ideology during the Cold War and likewise efforts by the United States ([Tsokhas, 1980](#)). In these cases, a stronger state influenced a smaller state and made them subordinate to their interests by achieving hegemony through coercion or consent (Cox, 1981). Moreover, the same process occurs domestically within a society as states wrestle with other states and individuals from the global system impact on their hegemony. Subsequently, states' engagement with the global system is characterised by states protecting their domestic hegemony. In doing so, states adopt foreign policies that reflect the ideas of the current hegemonic historic bloc. If the idea of free trade and enterprise is hegemonic, then a foreign policy of trade may be pursued. Conversely, if the idea of domination is hegemonic, then overtly or subtly, a foreign policy of conquest may be pursued. These are two broad examples to elucidate how foreign policies may be understood. In essence, the *ideas* that are hegemonic are expressed through the state, and those occupying the state's space. These *ideas* risk conflict with others as differing societies interact with one another. Over the next few chapters, I will present how various hegemonic historic blocs express themselves through their influence on state operations domestically and globally. With the major facets considered, I can turn toward presenting the core of the social media-state relationships framework I propose.

5.9 THE BASIC FRAMEWORK OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The social media-state relationship reflects advances in communications technologies and SMPs' fundamental impacts on the global state system. At no point in human history could individuals routinely interact with other individuals worldwide ([Chayko, 2020](#); [Jarrar & Awobamise, 2021](#)). The rate of information and knowledge exchange globally presents myriad challenges for states. The rapid spread of dis- and misinformation on the Covid-19 pandemic compared to dis and misinformation's spread with the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic is a potent example of my point ([Kyere & Kankam, 2021](#)).

States interested in controlling their cyberspace to restrict information flow are faced with increasingly more complex technical challenges. Conversely, states that promote open dialogues are constrained by what garners individuals' attention. In both instances, further complication emerges when considering the SMCs behind SMPs. In many societies, SMCs are foreign enterprises that present unique challenges for the current domestic hegemon. Similarly, if hegemon's can bring foreign SMCs into their sphere of influence, then the hegemon's position is solidified in this new media environment by reducing the external threat. In either case, hegemonic historic blocs are faced with an influx of competing ideas at a scale and speed that is unmatched. This notion underpins the fundamental urgency for understanding the social media-state relationship.

When considering individuals' roles in the social media-state relationship, there has been no point in history where the average individual has the potential to affect change on the scale it exists today. Further, people are more likely to rely on SMPs than traditional media to acquire information ([Greenwood et al., 2016](#); [Harder et al., 2017](#)). Subsequently, old media individuals are now influenced by the quicker SMPs to find newsworthy events, as discussed in chapter two. So, the idea of SMPs has supplanted the *ideas* represented by old mediums within the broader media historic bloc, indicative of this is the emergence of SMPs as a primary source for news ([Andi, 2021](#); [Walker & Matsa, 2021](#)). Further, due to the number of ideas flowing into societies, more organic intellectuals are likely to appear and organise counter blocs. SMPs' impacts in facilitating social mobilisation highlight this, as presented in chapter three. In the power political economy context, organic intellectuals' ability to accumulate the social capital necessary to engage in hegemonic competition by forming counter blocs is

significantly higher in the new media environment. Fundamentally, the threat posed by counter blocs may at its highest, resulting in myriad reactions from hegemon the world over. In chapters six through nine, I characterise those reactions.

Moving beyond these considerations, the rapid information flow has altered the nature of accumulating information capital, as per the discussion on the data economy in 3.1.2. Gaining information capital enables hegemonic historic blocs or challengers to advance their position through its exchange for other capital forms – ultimately resulting in a power increase within the broader power political economy. States may have to expend power in this political economy to maintain supremacy, doing so potentially enables challengers to acquire more power. While this balance has existed in history, the social media-state relationship increases a hegemon's potential precarity.

5.10 CONCLUDING THE CORE FRAME

Throughout this chapter, I established the core characteristics of the social media-state relationship. Below, I frame the rationale that draws the distinction between old and new media, thus necessitating a conceptual framework for the social media-state relationship as presented here:

- The traditional scope of media-state relations deals with old media.
 - SMPs and SMCs represent a new historic bloc that has supplanted old media.
 - SMPs allow for the global input of information into a state.
 - As a result, there are increased organic intellectuals within that state.
 - Greater organic intellectuals within a state represent an existential challenge for hegemonic historic blocs as more counter blocs form.
 - So, social media's potential to affect change is significantly different from old media mediums.
-
- Therefore, social media represent a distinct relationship than traditional media-state relations.

In chapters six through nine, I will apply the ideas I have outlined here to re-conceptualise Siebert et al.'s (1956) original four media-state models within the Neo-Gramscian perspective for the social media-state relationship. In chapter six, I present the Strongman model, reframing the authoritarian model. The Big Brother model is presented as a re-conceptualisation of the soviet-communist model in chapter seven. In chapter eight, I reframe Siebert et al.'s libertarian model for this framework as the Free Market model. The last model is the Social Consciousness model, inspired by the social responsibility model, which merits particular consideration. The four models represent different aspects of the social media-state relationship and provide a response to RQ1, as presented in chapter one.

**CHAPTER 6: THE STRONGMAN SOCIAL MEDIA-
STATE RELATIONSHIP**

6.0 FRAMING THE MODEL

In this chapter, I construct the first of the more authoritarian models. The Strongman model draws from the authoritarian model by Siebert et al. (1956). This model reflects a growing trend in some societies to embrace a strongman-style of politics and apply it to the social media-state relationship, which is where the inspiration for naming this model *Strongman* originates ([Lai & Slater, 2006](#)). To present the Strongman model, I establish a template from which tenets for this model can be distilled. After completing the theoretical presentation, I transition to a contemporary analogue for the Strongman model – the Russian Federation. Over the course of the discussing Russia, the parallels between the theoretical and the physical become apparent. After finishing the case presentation, I make final observations before moving to the next chapter.

6.1 ESTABLISHING THE THEORETICAL STRONGMAN

In Siebert et al.'s ([1956](#)) original presentation of the authoritarian model, significant efforts were made to trace authoritarianism's historical prevalence from Plato to Hitler. Siebert et al. concluded that authoritarianism is the foundational form of government, and the control of the autocrat extends to the media as well. From my presentation in chapter two, a similar conclusion can be inferred. In this section, I construct a hypothetical history of the Strongman state. In doing so, an understanding of how the contemporary Strongman emerges from its historical roots is elucidated.

If one traces the Strongman state's history, they will likely find a narrative that mirrors most early nations – one in which some form of ruler emerged to guide the fledgling nation, bringing about an autocratic regime in some form. In most cases, this early form of governance is likely to be the norm, and as progress occurred within the Strongman state – technological, knowledge, and cultural -ideas shifted. The Strongman state reached its peak power during a feudal period where a strong aristocracy centred around a monarch could expand the country's territory, unify the nation, or otherwise improve the people's status through significant technological or social developments. This period could be likened to the Napoleonic Wars, Italian Unification, or Peter the Great's Table of Ranks ([Collier, 2003](#); [Grab, 2003](#); [Reyfman, 2016](#)).

As time progressed and other states emerged that could challenge the Strongman, the idea of autocracy would wane in support leading to a diminished society, domestically and internationally, as new *ideas* emerged to challenge the Strongman hegemonic order. The Age of Exploration and its emergent great power competition comes to mind here ([Head, 2017](#)).

Corruption and hardship may have led to a revolution or a peaceful transference to a new form of government – a democracy or some variant otherwise. The signing of the Magna Carta, the American and French Revolutions, and the Bolshevik Revolutions illustrate my point here ([Drew, 2004](#); [Goodwin, 1965](#); [Nazaretyan, 2017](#)). These instances represent the idea of autocracy (or monarchy) being supplanted by a more democratic idea. The new democratic hegemony would eventually wane, allowing the idea of autocracy to rise again. This historical development pattern might evoke some contemporary states' histories, I will look at one such case later. However, highlighting this general pattern provides a position from which the current Strongman state can be established.

6.1.1 BUILDING THE CONTEMPORARY STATE

A state's history is where its contemporary governing structures are derived – reflecting the ideas within that society. In the Strongman case, an idea of authoritarianism is present in the contemporary state. However, the idea's expression is distinct from typical authoritarianism. In the Strongman case, the idea of autocracy has come to be synonymous with the idea of a single person, which has led to an idealised version of this person, a strongman version, becoming hegemon. Consequently, the idea of the state (in whatever form it takes) is subservient to the strongman idea. Generally, maintaining the strongman idea's hegemony is the work of traditional intellectuals. They achieve this through socialising the citizenry into the idea's necessity and suppressing dissent. This notion may manifest as traditional intellectuals asserting that the strongman idea is the only way for the society to reclaim its past zenith, for instance ([Rowland, 2019](#)). These efforts can be understood as one of the early capital accumulation steps within the power political economy – the generation of social capital. To contextualise this to the Strongman state, an individual rallies people to their cause by leveraging nationalism and patriotism while positioning themselves as the primary vehicle for that return to greatness. Through cultivating support for their ascent, the Strongman acquires the social capital necessary for asserting their hegemony.

As the Strongman becomes more entwined with governing mechanisms, an expansion of state powers is likely. These new powers aim to affirm the Strongman's dominance over the economic, legal, political, and security domains. Effectively, this is the exchange of social capital into other capital forms accumulate more power within the state's power political economy. Thus, the Strongman hegemon expands its plurality and approaches a monopoly on economic, information, and social capital within society. Now, there may be some divergence in the laws' nature and, in particular, their application. Likely, there will be a return to repressive laws where economic and political freedoms are restricted for the sake of national security. A continuation of this represents another probable outcome – individuals who aid the hegemon are rewarded with a more secure position within the state. So, business individuals or political individuals affirming the Strongman's desires or advancing the Strongman's interests in return for some form of self-enrichment ([Gleason, 2010](#)). Subsequently, the Strongman idea aligns other historic blocs with itself and gains consent to its hegemony, reducing the threat to its position. Considering the state's economic aspects further, the Strongman may use state powers to nationalise or otherwise force out businesses

that do not support the Strongman. Conversely, businesses that support the Strongman are likely to maintain private ownership and be rewarded for their continued support.

To further cement themselves, the Strongman will expand the state's military and police for two primary reasons – firstly, expanding security capabilities allows the Strongman to exert greater influence abroad and resist the global system's influences. Secondly, it enables greater capacity to suppress any emergent organic intellectuals' efforts within the state from forming counter-historic blocs. So, having the capacity to enforce the new legal regime, through cracking down on critiques of the Strongman, the state can pre-empt threats to its hegemony. As part of restricting criticism, the Strongman dissolves or limits political parties to those that it approves. Further, public expression of political beliefs or ideas that are deemed threatening or offensive to the Strongman's hegemony are restricted — in effect, creating a culture of public censorship. On the note of censorship, it becomes pertinent for me to shift focus onto the media within the Strongman model.

6.1.2 CONSIDERING THE MEDIA'S HISTORICAL ROLE

Media's history in the Strongman state follows a similar trajectory to the general history. Where the idea of autocracy is prevalent, media were a wholly state-owned practice. Other media may have existed – organic intellectuals spreading pamphlets or papers, for instance. However, the state retained the capacity for large-scale information dissemination. The idea of state-dominated media is the norm for media individuals until a new idea emerges. So, while the traditional system may be evoke a Roman system as illustrated in chapter two, the new system derived from a revolution of the individual (RotI) in which the ideas of individual rights and private property take hold, an example would be the European Enlightenment ([Bond, 2011](#); [De Vivo, 2005](#); [Eisenstein, 1980](#)). The same holds for the Strongman state's democratic institutions, ideas of press freedom would erode allowing the return of ideas of state-dominated media as before the RotI. Residual private media ownership exists in contemporary society to an extent, however. A notion I will explore in detail shortly.

The media's historical role in the Strongman state changes as technology advances and media capacities increase. Societal demands of media individuals change – media for entertainment is expected to emerge in addition to government messaging ([Clegg, 2001](#)). While the RotI media individual is likely to criticise or question the state, such instances would become rarer and invite retribution as press freedom eroded. As a result, the historical tendency to not

criticise the Strongman remains strong, which, brings me to discuss the contemporary Strongman media environment.

6.1.3 ESTABLISHING THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Advances in communications technologies are create new ways to confound the Strongman hegemon. In the Strongman model, the media is a subordinate bloc to the hegemonic Strongman bloc. While creating the Internet and social media might elicit challenges within the state, the Strongman hegemonic bloc can leverage traditional intellectuals to subdue any potential threat to its position.

The Internet can democratise information, and democratised information can present a desire for free expression or facilitate the emergence of organic intellectuals who can threaten the Strongman's position. However, these efforts are stymied by legal regimes that restrict digital political expression. By pressuring SMCs that promote critical discourse through threats, fine, and imprisonment, the Strongman leverages the state to coerce the social media historic bloc's subordination. The punishments for anti-hegemon discourse may extend to individuals and dissuade public dissent wholly.

While the state might not directly censor political speech online, coercion promotes the idea of self-censorship and regulation by SMCs. As alluded to above, the Strongman rewards those media individuals who go beyond mere acquiescence and actively promote the Strongman's hegemony. So, media individuals in the Strongman model propagandise on the Strongman's behalf. The process may manifest as promoting stories that paint the Strongman in a favourable light or through promoting state-run journalism on their platforms. As a result, a cascade effect where people not engaged in the hegemonic competition actively consent to the Strongman's hegemony occurs (i.e., they have been propagandised).

Alternatively, they become apathetic to politics and, in turn, passively acquiesce to the Strongman's hegemony. Though, some people may be motivated to pursue alternative media individuals, which may lead to the emergence of organic intellectuals, but their impact is rarely meaningful due to the Strongman's hegemony. Beyond social media's propaganda potential, SMPs have the capacity to collect copious amounts of user data. The Strongman, as part of its legal regime, requires or incentivises the divulgence of that user data to pre-empt organised dissent within the society.

The Strongman would leverage the Strongman idea on social media to promote their societal hegemony. Subsequently, this cultivates a cult of personality centred around the Strongman. Further, the Strongman may engage in dis- or misinformation campaigns regarding its rivals to undermine and discredit them. Excluding the state's active efforts, SMP users who interact on social media and support the Strongman reinforce the Strongman's hegemony through memes and aggrandising the Strongman. As a result, an organic cult of personality can emerge online. Since information spreads so quickly on social media, the Strongman idea on social media is likely to be based, at least partially, on myth – misinformation. In turn, the Strongman idea is further elevated and cheered. Regardless of manufacture or organic occurrence, these efforts likely reflect the nationalist rhetoric that the Strongman initially promoted. So, the Strongman's supporters actively work to generate social capital for the Strongman, which further allows the Strongman to influence the power political economy.

Fundamentally, the Strongman will aim to control the discourse online and by media individuals to protect itself. As I have presented here, the application of state power is directly or indirectly related to achieving that aim. To achieve its aims, the Strongman subordinates media individuals. Further, the Strongman erects hurdles for foreign media individuals, as foreign interests are likely counter to the Strongman's aims. As a result, the general media system in the Strongman state becomes somewhat closed in nature and becomes reflective of the truth that the Strongman assents to – one that promotes its position. With the media's role constructed, I can now synthesise the general Strongman social media-state relationship.

6.1.4 SYNTHESISING THE STRONGMAN SOCIAL MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The Strongman social media-state relationship is characterised by strongman politics ([Lai & Slater, 2006](#)). For this model, there needs to be a historical appetite for autocratic governance, or the Strongman's historic bloc will need to manufacture such an appetite to establish itself as hegemon. In this presentation of the social media-state relationship, the hegemon is the Strongman idea that has subsumed the state by becoming entwined with a single individual, generally. A Strongman idea may be promoted as part of a small group of individuals asserting their hegemony, as in the case of oligarchies. The Strongman state exercises significant direct and indirect influence on SMCs and SMPs. The intent is to cultivate an

online discourse reflective of the narrative, or truth, that the Strongman desires to promote within the society. In turn, this socialises individuals into acquiescence and consent for the Strongman's continued hegemony.

The greatest threat to the Strongman is external influence from the global system. As a result, the Strongman's efforts to control the narrative will extend to blocking foreign actors from engaging in the Strongman state's online discourse. Naturally, there are means to evade these restrictions like the use of virtual private networks or the emergence of a unique online language ([Hobbs & Roberts, 2018](#); [Ji & Knight, 2018](#)). If the Strongman has the capacity to, they strive to create a national Internet that limits global influence. Doing so allows the Strongman to create a controlled media environment. Subsequently, this further expands the Strongman's power, and creates an imbalance in the relationship with media individuals.

The Strongman's supporters benefit from doing so – to reframe this in Coxian terms, those subordinate blocs that actively promote the Strongman's hegemony become the core of the Strongman's sphere of influence within the society ([Cox, 2019](#)). The subordinate blocs can be understood as business interests, SMCs, and old media companies. These entities then expand the sphere of influence for the Strongman through their efforts to promote the Strongman's position. In short, the Strongman model is characterised by the Strongman idea's domination and control through leveraging the state and other blocs.

Explicitly regarding media, the Strongman idea relies on the centrality of the state-dominated media idea. Remaining private media are leveraged by providing economic incentive, effectively appealing to the profit motive. Effectively, the Strongman provides preferential economic agreements with those who actively support the Strongman's position. Those agreements might take the form of a lack of regulation over digital advertising or user data sales – save for selling it beyond national borders and ensuring the state has access to it. Otherwise, coercive means, like threat of dissolving private businesses, are retained as options, since such notions are encapsulated within the state-dominated media idea.

The Strongman model entails represents an individual embodying the state, so this relationship is primarily contextualised in how social media impacts the idea of that individual and how the Strongman leverages social media to entrench themselves. To distil the Strongman social media-state relationship into a few core ideas (broader characteristics are included in [Appendix A](#)):

- The system of governance is highly authoritarian in function, with power exercised by a single individual or small group primarily.
- Society, through history or manufacture, supports the idea of autocratic governance.
- Social media are highly regulated and controlled by the state through laws targeting the platforms or the companies behind the platforms.
- The digital mediascape is littered with pro-Strongman messaging whether the Strongman or their supporters promote it or it occurs organically as a by-product of the restricted discourse (people talk about what they can).
- The digital mediascape is removed from the global Internet framework to suppress foreign influence as best as possible.
- The Strongman works with SMCs to root out potential dissenters to limit domestic challenges to its position.

I will now consider it against a contemporary example of the model – the Russian Federation.

6.2 PRESENTING THE STRONGMAN CASE

Several steps are needed to understand the Russian state and Russian social media. The first is to establish the contemporary Russian governing structure. As part of this, it is necessary to establish the power structures within the Russian government, the political process and participation, and the state's relationship with industry. After establishing the Russian state, I discuss Russian social media, and consider state engagement with SMCs. Further, it is necessary to consider how the Russian state utilises SMPs. In understanding the state, social media, and the hegemon, I can elucidate the Russian social media-state relationship – which, I posit mirrors the Strongman model.

6.2.1 REVIEWING CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN GOVERNANCE

Understanding contemporary Russian governance, requires exploring how the current regime's rose. Explicitly, I focus on post-Soviet Russian history. This period is where the foundations for the current Russian state's structures are found, and framing those structures is necessary to understand the current regime.

Following the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's state systems remained inundated with former Soviet officials. In turn, people in power before the collapse were exercised influence on the new democratic systems ([Noriega, 2016](#)). As a result, Russia's potential for democratic freedoms was quickly curtailed. Instead, a system of delegative democracy emerged in the early years of the Boris Yeltsin administration ([Noriega, 2016](#)). This system would be further entrenched within the structures of Russian governance under Vladimir Putin throughout the early 2000s ([Noriega, 2016](#)). The shift in governance away from democratisation toward authoritarianism can be attributed to the authoritarian legacy of Russian culture and society generally due to the Tsarist and Soviet history ([Gel'man, 2015](#)). Effectively, the historical tendencies within Russia gravitate toward authoritarianism, facilitating the process of de-democratisation that Russia has experienced under the Putin regime. In effect, the return of the idea of autocracy to hegemony.

The question now is how the Putin regime guided the Russian state toward authoritarian practices rather than embracing a new democratic tradition. During the early years of the regime, efforts were taken to consolidate the Duma and Federation Council's power behind Putin's Unity Party, later United Russia ([Noriega, 2016](#)). In both party iterations, steps were

taken to depoliticise the party, instead opting to vest the party structure within Putin in a manner evocative of Louis XIV – *le Parti c'est moi* ([Rowen, 1961](#)). This approach would facilitate a form of Caesarism at worst or delegative democracy in the best case, depending on how it is measured. In either system, the result is the leader as the focal point for national unity. In turn, the idea of autocracy becomes conflated with the Strongman idea – they become viewed as one in the same, allowing Putin to co-opt the idea of autocracy's hegemony and insert himself into its place.

Some have asserted that Putin's efforts stem from a desire to prevent the Balkanisation of the Russian state, given the presence of ethnic tensions ([Noriega, 2016](#)). Regardless of the reason, in the intervening years, Putin consolidated the state structures to a form of manual control in which significant portions of the state's functionality ultimately lead back to him or his circle of closest advisors. The tools used for power consolidation, aside from the incorporation of different smaller parties initially are reminiscent of more traditional authoritarian mechanisms – using rigged elections, managing political competition through allowing a loyal opposition party, using the media and police to promote the state's role (i.e., Putin's role), restricting foreign-funded NGOs access to Russia, and shifting toward a top-down approach of appointing local leaders, for instance ([Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2016](#); [Mikhail & Aleksei, 2016](#); [Noriega, 2016](#)). These practices have become more normalised in the last decade, resulting in a shift away from a society governed by the rule of law. Instead, what has arisen is one in which political and economic elites operate on the informal understanding that the state is to remain unchallenged and, as a result, they will benefit from the privileges afforded through the state's support ([Noriega, 2016](#)). In this sense, Putin's strongman idea has attained the consent of those most likely to oppose him through an arrangement that ensures their contentment with the status quo. Through promoting the economic capital growth of core subordinate blocs, the hegemon can co-opt their capital for the power political economy as they work to advance the hegemon. The social media industry's rise within Russia has been subsumed within the broader structures to support Putin's regime, which has implications for the Russian social media-state relationship.

6.2.2 CONSTRUCTING THE RUSSIAN STATE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Occurring concurrently with the USSR's collapse and the transition of the Russian state was digital society's rise. Russian society has incorporated aspects of digital society within its day-to-day like most parts of the world. However, some facets of digital Russian society warrant exploration, especially with the rise of SMCs and SMPs. To reiterate, since Putin is so entwined with the Russian state, they have become functionally synonymous in this context.

The principal facet is the Russian state's engagement with social media. The state's position on social media can be best understood in a formal capacity through the *Information Security Doctrine* decree ([Christensen, 2018](#)). In this decree, the Russian state establishes its interests, perceived threats, and how the state intends to manage its interests and threats ([Christensen, 2018](#)). In this sense, it affords the state greater control over the Russian information environment; ergo, it allows the state to accumulate more information capital to utilise within the power political economy.

Compared to some parts of the world that have defaulted to American-based SMCs, like Facebook and Twitter, Russian social media are mainly home-grown, and platforms like vKontakte (VK) or Odnoklassniki (OK) garner the largest user bases ([Eferin et al., 2019](#)). There are a few reasons for this – one is a nationalist sentiment leading toward a hesitancy to adopt foreign platforms ([Baran & Stock, 2015](#)). State policy regarding foreign-based SMPs has also compounded the reluctance to adopt foreign platforms ([Stadnik, 2021](#)). As a result, the government has exercised greater control over the content present on SMPs by limiting the spread of content critical of the state or Putin ([Polyakova, 2020](#); [Sanovich, 2017](#)). At times, the state has influenced the discourse directly through commissioning digital content to achieve more support for Putin and what he embodies within Russia, effectively cultivating a cult of personality ([Fedor & Fredheim, 2017](#)). Through constructing a cult of personality, Putin's strongman idea is expanded, affording him greater social capital in the power political economy.

The Russian government has previously taken steps to restrict foreign SMP usage by requiring that SMPs operating in Russia must physically base the servers they use within

Russia ([BBC News, 2016](#); [Bennetts, 2019](#)). This is an important detail as it would allow the government to ensure adherence to the Sovereign Internet law that the Duma has adopted. As part of the law, the Russian government has required ISPs to implement deep packet inspection (DPI) equipment within its infrastructure ([Khrennikov, 2019](#)). DPI allows the government to bypass the provider itself, block internet traffic to specific websites, and redirect it as it chooses ([Khrennikov, 2019](#)). So, taken in conjunction with the physical server requirement, the intent is to control Russian user access to foreign SMPs to a greater degree than is currently available. It is worth noting that the Sovereign Internet law empowers the government to create a nationwide intranet cut-off from the global Internet ([Stadnik, 2021](#)). The intent is to protect Russia from any large-scale external influence. The vague wording and the power the law provides the state helps cement the notion that the state exercises considerable influence over SMPs, resulting in a state-dominated social media-state relationship ([Christensen, 2018](#)). Notably, the restriction of foreign social media in Russia following its invasion of Ukraine reflects this desire further ([Ghaffary, 2022](#)).

6.2.3 ESTABLISHING THE RUSSIAN HEGEMON

The Russian hegemon is best understood as Putin due to Putin's centrality within the Russian state's operations ([Treisman, 2018](#)). Further, the generalised acquiescence of social, political, and economic elites to the state, which Putin embodies, indicates the status and power within Russian society afforded to Putin. This observation supports the notion of Putin resting atop the Russian power structure. In turn, this is further supported by the acquiescence of the citizenry toward the Putin regime. It is worth noting that this acquiescence may be a result of the de-politicisation of the population; however, research shows that support for Putin and his government has improved over the last few years ([Noriega, 2016](#); [Savin & Solovyeva, 2020](#)). So, a level of consent to the hegemonic status that Putin has achieved within Russia from the citizenry exists.

Putin does not reside as a purely uncontested hegemon. A counter-historic bloc that revolves around establishing more democratic norms within Russia does exist, though its traction within society is marginal. Recent events regarding Alexei Navalny support a couple of notions ([Moroz, 2020](#)). The first is that the Russian hegemon is particularly interested in curtailing unsanctioned opposition, which indicates perceived threats posed by those lesser actors that are not fully loyal to the current hegemon. Secondly, the events indicate the existence of a counter-hegemonic force within Russian society that has gained traction.

However, the subordinate blocs that may be understood as encapsulating the business, political, and social elites within Russian society appear not to have moved away from the hegemon in a Coxian sense. This notion is supported within the context of the social media-state relationship through the large acquiescence to the hegemon's demands and the support for perpetuating the hegemon by the subordinate historic blocs (i.e., SMCs).

To summarise the hegemonic relationships within Russia, the hegemon can be concluded as Putin and the idea of his regime, which enjoys the subservience of Russian society across all levels due to the preponderance of power it has amassed within Russia's power political economy. However, those who are farthest from the regime's core – those individuals who do not consent or reject the current hegemon – have been swayed toward a counter-hegemonic bloc that can be represented as unapproved opposition to the current hegemon. This process, in turn, illustrates a potential shift in the dynamics of Russia's power political economy.

6.3 THE RUSSIAN STATE AND THE STRONGMAN MODEL

As constructed above, Russia yields several themes underpinned by a specific idea – Putin’s strongman idea. Out of this idea emerges a great deal of support across several facets of the citizenry – at least publicly – which further enables the hegemon. Lastly, the use of state power to close off information circuits within the society, monitor the citizenry, and diminish the role of a legitimate opposition further foments an authoritarian society, protecting the strongman idea. Subsequently, this translates to the social media-state relationship within Russia.

The Russian state has engaged in massive information manipulation campaigns across the globe ([Hulcoop et al., 2017](#)). The aims and results of these campaigns reflect a general desire within the Russian state to disrupt the political discourse of adversarial powers and diminish the risk of politically-oriented protests within Russia and its neighbours ([Fedor & Fredheim, 2017](#); [Hulcoop et al., 2017](#)). In turn, these efforts support the long-term existence of the current hegemon – Putin and his strongman idea.

Russian authoritarianism manifested as a concerted effort to concentrate and expand the executive office’s power (i.e., Putin’s power) ([Noriega, 2016](#); [Wren & Stults, 2009](#)). In turn, the state’s Duma has adopted a more minor and increasingly superficial role. Further, this has facilitated Putin’s rise as an autocrat. Considering Russia’s history and the apparent predisposition for autocracy, this may not be unexpected. The trend toward authoritarian practices within the state at a general level coincides with the characteristics present in the typical Strongman state. When the state’s efforts to control social media are considered, Russia’s proximity to the Strongman model becomes more apparent. To this end, I have established that the Russian state is explicitly interested in monitoring and exerting influence over local social media as well as disrupting foreign social mediascapes. So, this further reflects the Russian state’s fit to the Strongman model.

The presence of mechanisms and desire to create a closed intranet within Russia further supports the existence of the Strongman model, as the state restricts information flows on SMPs, allowing the construction of a beneficial narrative. This notion is reflected in the Sovereign Internet law. As a result, characteristics associated with restricted access to, distortion, monitoring and propagandising information, especially of a political nature, can be seen in the state’s actions ([Hulcoop et al., 2017](#); [Mikhail & Aleksei, 2016](#); [Moskovskaya & Soboleva,](#)

[2016](#); [Zherebtsov & Goussev, 2017](#)). Further, this creates a pro-hegemon dynamic on SMPs, with only approved dissent permitted through the censors ([Ognyanova, 2018](#)). Interestingly, the leadership struggle at VK highlights the presence of self-censorship within Russian SMCs ([Staff, 2014](#)). In this instance, company shareholders moved to wrestle control from the company's founder, resulting in those who are closer to Putin installed as majority shareholders ([Ivanova, 2021](#); [Staff, 2014](#)). This event may have been tied to the platform's history of providing a space for unsanctioned dissent from the state ([Staff, 2014](#)). Since the changeover, VK has realigned more so with the hegemon's overall aims.

As illustrated here, the Russian state and its hegemonic relations appear to align with the characteristics one may expect to see within the Strongman social media-media state relationship model. Through considering Russia, the broader context of the Strongman model as a representation of authoritarianism becomes a bit clearer. Given the need for a cult of personality, nationalist sentiments, and a reliance on traditionalism for the roots of the hegemon, the Strongman state tends to occupy a more right-wing space in the LvR dichotomy as framed earlier. So, it now becomes pertinent to turn toward the left-wing mirror – the Big Brother state.

**CHAPTER 7: THE BIG BROTHER SOCIAL MEDIA-
STATE RELATIONSHIP**

7.0 FRAMING THE MODEL

This chapter addresses the other authoritarian model of the social media-state relationship I present, the Big Brother model. The Big Brother model uses Siebert et al.'s (1956) soviet-communist model as a foundation, before developing from there. The soviet-communist model that Siebert et al. (1956) presented fomented criticism for being biased and later a product of its time (Muller, 2021; Nerone & Berry, 1995). To minimise those criticisms, I seek to present a general, objective framework. Given that Siebert et al. presented the soviet-communist model while the US was at a time of cold war with the Soviet Union, the biases make sense but ultimately undermine their presentation. The Soviet Union represents a departure from Russia's historical characteristics, and contemporary governance is a return to those roots, as discussed in chapter seven (Kenez, 2016; Wren & Stults, 2009). Contemporarily, China is the closest fit to the Big Brother model's characteristics. The model's namesake is drawn from Orwell's works, and the appropriateness will become clear over the chapter (Orwell & Fromm, 1961). However, first, it is necessary to consider the history at a general level of a theoretical Big Brother state before going forward. Next, I discuss the People's Republic of China in the Big Brother context. Subsequently, the parallels between the theoretical and the physical will, again, be made apparent. Finally, I draw conclusions before moving to the next chapter.

7.1 ESTABLISHING THE THEORETICAL BIG BROTHER

The Big Brother state would follow a somewhat similar history regarding technological and culture development as to the Strongman state in the last chapter. An autocratic system emerged, where a difference in systems is likely due to the emergence of strong idea of collectiveness within the society – external threats or a robust central culture and pride emerged that entrenched the idea of collectiveness further. So, while some collectivist tendencies may exist in the Strongman model, the Strongman would see an idea of the individual prevail related to power in the society. Conversely, the Big Brother state would see collectivist idea manifest stronger than the individualist idea.

Big Brother is shielded from the global systems influence mechanisms. Conflict with other states may have existed, but the Big Brother state was a strong regional contender and able to resist conflict's impacts. This history reinforced the national identity and broader collectivist ideas in Big Brother society. Subsequently, Big Brother remained relatively isolated from the global system. In turn, governance and economics ideas emerged that were different than in states influenced by the global system. Over time, the Big Brother would engage with the global system, presenting new ways of thinking that challenged the hegemonic historic blocs within the Big Brother state. An imported idea of left-wing ideology that capitalised upon tenets of the collectivist idea would replace the collectivist idea's hegemony within the Big Brother state. The left-wing ideology would support two central tenets of the Big Brother state's culture – national pride and collectiveness. For it to be genuine, this ideology's agents would have to be organic intellectuals who emerged from the Big Brother state and rose to pre-eminence. Their rise may have been through active or passive revolution. In either case, a historic bloc centred around a left-wing ideology rose to hegemony. As I move to the contemporary era, this historic bloc has further entrenched itself.

7.1.1 BUILDING THE CONTEMPORARY STATE

The contemporary structures that form Big Brother draw from the social predispositions that emerge over time. The approach taken to establish the Big Brother hegemony is different from the Strongman case. Since the hegemonic idea of Big Brother differs a bit from the society's history, the idea needs consistent maintenance. Consequently, the Big Brother hegemon relies more greatly on traditional intellectuals to unify and ingrain the hegemonic idea across the society. Thus, the roots anchoring Big Brother's hegemony tend to be

shallower than the Strongman. In turn, this creates a system where the Big Brother hegemon utilises state powers more broadly, going so far as to intervene in all facets of life.

Big Brother's political reforms rely upon using intellectuals to support Big Brother's hegemony through a unilateral governance regime that limits dissenting voices. The intellectuals take inspiration from authoritarian regimes and go further to establish rival organs for political expression, but Big Brother is likely to exercise control over the formation and continuation of those rivals. In turn, this limits the effectiveness of these organs as genuine expressions of dissent within the society. However, it grants Big Brother the façade of democratic legitimacy for its actions; ergo, Big Brother represents the collective will. In doing so, this further supports Big Brother's hegemony.

Big Brother does not officially rule by fiat. Instead, it will use the political institutions to approve various legal reforms that expand state power, similarly to the Strongman state. These reforms grow Big Brother's control over the means of production in several industries through nationalisation, or significantly expanded oversight and control powers. Where privatisation occurs, the state retains some ownership as part of its oversight. In doing so, the hegemonic idea is expressed as protecting the common good. Effectively, where the Strongman positions itself as the state, Big Brother positions itself as the society. While these new regulations manifest the coercive elements of maintaining its position within society, Big Brother establishes preferences for its agents – much like the Strongman. Briefly turning to Orwell's *1984*, these endeavours might be understood similarly to the treatment of those within the Party compared to those who reside outside it (Orwell & Fromm, 1961). In this case, Big Brother incentivises becoming subsumed within its historic bloc, which in turn tethers individuals to Big Brother's hegemonic longevity.

Through expanding its control, the Big Brother historic bloc pursues greater surveillance capacity for monitoring and countering efforts to form a counter-historic bloc. In this instance, the state's capacities to root out would-be organic intellectuals before they can threaten the Big Brother hegemony. Much like the Strongman model, the Big Brother system – given that it finds perpetuation in unity – enacts significant punishments on those who break from its historic bloc to suppress dissent. These efforts coincide with the public expression of political ideas and the nature of the discourse within the society. The Big Brother historic bloc appropriates old media individuals as part of the broader state bloc, since controlling mass media capabilities are effective for promoting political and ideological

unity among the citizenry. So, most media are state-owned and operated. Privately-owned media, if any remain, take their cues from the state for fear of retribution. The new media environment represents a unique challenge for the Big Brother historic bloc. Big Brother's solution is to invest heavily in closing off the national cyberspace from global cyberspace — resulting in much greater control over online discourse.

Control is achieved by empowering the state to directly censor ideas, events, and other discourse in the online environment. Further, Big Brother restricts foreign influence through subordinating foreign interests — that is to say, foreign operators are forced to comply with Big Brother or be barred from operating within Big Brother's cyberspace. The Big Brother historic bloc directly engages online to promote ideological unity — I construct this in more detail shortly. For now, I focus on media's role within the Big Brother state.

7.1.2 CONSIDERING THE MEDIA'S HISTORICAL ROLE

Given a shared historical pattern, it is safe to assume that media's historical role within the Big Brother state follows the trajectory of the Strongman media to a point. A RotI would have occurred that prompted a departure from the older hegemon; however, the RotI's impacts are eroded by the Big Brother idea's emergence.

The historical differentiation occurs between the two models in instances where a revolutionary press emerges. By this, I refer private media individuals' using press mediums to promote dissenting political positions. In several states' histories, instances of such actions may be common. However, these efforts' efficacy is augmented by extemporaneous factors — war, famine, mass poverty or hardship. These factors weaken the hegemon of the time's position so that organic intellectuals can disseminate their ideas and foment a revolution. In the Big Brother state, normally-fringe media gain traction and become a vehicle for proliferating support for the counter-hegemonic force that the Big Brother historic bloc represents at that time. Given the media's centrality in the ascent of the Big Brother historic bloc, media individuals that work to support Big Brother transition to traditional intellectuals that support the new hegemonic order. Subsequently, it now becomes relevant to present the contemporary media environment.

7.1.3 ESTABLISHING THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The contemporary Big Brother media environment is one of mass surveillance and state control. As I mentioned earlier, the Big Brother state leverages its powers to root out dissent as it begins to form. In a practical sense, the state heavily regulates social media content and the Internet. These regulations impact SMCs' data responsibilities as well. There is a coincidence between the Strongman and the Big Brother models in this instance. However, the degree to which the Big Brother state exercises control over user data and the expectations placed upon media individuals is far more significant.

Big Brother allocates a multitude of resources to prevent dissemination of any information it deems harmful online. Where the Strongman dreams of shaping their narrative, Big Brother succeeds. The chief delineation here is that the Big Brother state has the means of producing sterilised cyberspace. The purpose for doing so is two-fold.

Constructing a digital system in this form facilitates controlling the overarching societal narrative, which functionally monopolises social and information capital for Big Brother. This outcome is derived from the need to unify society around the Big Brother idea. The second purpose is much like the Strongman model, Big Brother surmises that the most significant threat is the influx of foreign ideas. In restricting global influence, Big Brother curtails potential disunity. However, even in the most sealed of systems, there will remain means to evade the state's barriers. So, dedicated individuals can avoid Big brother's restrictions. In cases where people actively evade cyberspace regulations, individuals may face state reprisal. Otherwise, these individuals may generate organic intellectuals. Much like the Strongman system, if ideas and observations from the outside pierce the system, then those individuals may be able to move from their subaltern status within society and evolve into a counter-historic bloc. Subsequently, this leads to a cat-and-mouse game between those individuals seeking to challenge the status quo and state agents monitoring Internet activity ([Hobbs & Roberts, 2018](#); [Ji & Knight, 2018](#)).

With social media's ability to order society, the Big Brother state proliferates SMPs with accounts and channels to disseminate the pro-hegemon message. Going beyond this, the state employs agents and, if the means exist, bots to aid in manufacturing a public outpouring of support for Big Brother. In turn, this creates the perception of great support, which depresses the expression of antagonistic views in public. A side effect of this may be individuals

recognising that they are effectively being propagandised and a resultant resignation to the status quo. While this is not the ideal – as active consent is desired – Big Brother is supported by individuals' acquiescence. In short, the contemporary Big Brother media environment can be characterised by significant state influence and control, overtly and covertly, within the system. Subsequently, Big Brother utilises considerable coercive means to maintain its position.

7.1.4 SYNTHESISING THE BIG BROTHER MODEL

The Big Brother model is characterised by its Orwellian nature. This social media-state relationship model is another instance of state control and domination pervading the system. Fundamentally, as was the case with Siebert et al.'s (1956) presentation of the soviet-communist model, the Big Brother model represents an extreme manifestation of the authoritarian side of the spectrum. Rather than relying on ideas of tradition and autocracy, the Big Brother model relies on ideas of collectivism and totalitarianism.

Where the Strongman relies on private ownership to indirectly create a narrative within society that serves the hegemon, Big Brother takes a much more direct role. This role manifests through greater state social media engagement and a larger regulatory framework controlling SMCs and SMPs. All intended to arrange society so the Big Brother idea is perceived to embody the people's collective will rather than solely represent the hegemon's interests. This is a subtle but essential distinction between the two authoritarian models I have presented. As I noted before, where the Strongman is the state, Big Brother is the society.

The Big Brother hegemon is expressed through a socio-political entity with political authority; as I mentioned earlier, which uses government's political power to expand all capital forms within the power political economy to further strengthen its position. From this position, it remakes society so that its hegemony is seen as natural and necessary. The Party from Orwell is a helpful representation of how the Big Brother idea is expressed in the society ([Orwell & Fromm, 1961](#)). In this case, the state is subordinate to the Party idea, which is the main vehicle for expressing the Big Brother idea. Thus, the distinction between the Strongman and Big Brother becomes clearer.

While there may be fundamental respect for private ownership, there is a significant degree of state ownership and control over industry. In an idealised case for social media, the state

would monopolise or nationalise SMPs. Otherwise, the state rewards those who support the hegemon and punish those who do not, similar to the Strongman model. As a result, private media individuals are likely to adopt a role akin to the traditional intellectual within Big Brother's society. In turn, this expands the hegemon's position. So, to distil the Big Brother model to a few core traits ([Appendix A](#) contains a broader list):

- The governmental system is highly totalitarian, with power centralised around a Party or other political entity.
- The hegemon relies on a political ideology or similar notion for its position within society rather than drawing from a historical will to power.
- Significant effort is taken to control the information flow within the society to reflect a positive view of the hegemon.
- Social media are highly regulated and controlled, leading to mass state surveillance for rooting out and removing dissent.
- The state utilises official and unofficial means to propagandise its citizenry within the social mediascape.
- The digital society is functionally secluded from the global Internet ecosystem.

With these basic postulates in mind, I present the case that seemingly matches the Big Brother model – China.

7.2 PRESENTING THE BIG BROTHER CASE

In this section, I apply the Big Brother model to China. Over the course of this discussion, it becomes apparent that on the face, the Chinese state aligns with the Big Brother model of the social media-state relationship. To reach that conclusion, I consider contemporary Chinese governance, which leads to constructing the Chinese hegemon. Next, I consider social media's role within Chinese society. Ultimately, I can synthesise these areas to affirm China aligns with the Big Brother model of the social media-state relationship.

7.2.1 REVIEWING CONTEMPORARY CHINESE GOVERNANCE

Several facets I discuss illustrate how the Chinese government maintains its centrality within Chinese society. The Communist Party of China (CCP) has maintained control over the government since 1949 ([Baptista, 2021](#); [Eastman, 2019](#)). Initially, this was accomplished through negotiating with smaller political parties. However, in the mid-1950s, the CCP began consolidating political power, resulting in the minor parties having diminished power. Today, eight minor parties represent multiple facets of discourse outside the CCP's party line and represent democratic ideals within China's legislative structure ([Baptista, 2021](#)). These parties allow for tacit official criticism of the CCP's policies; however, the power wielded by minor parties is relatively slight. The CCP's role in selecting the minor parties' leadership renders what tangible political threat the parties could play moot. As part of the selection process, the CCP vets potential candidates to exclude any potential dissenting voice from being too loud or too powerful ([Baptista, 2021](#)). So, this leads to functionally one-party rule over China. In effect, this allows the CCP to position itself as the Big Brother idea, politically, and pre-empt any potential threat to its hegemonic position. Perhaps the most potent example that highlights this position is the minor parties voting unanimously to amend the constitution to remove term limits, effectively allowing the current CCP leader and Chinese President, Xi Jinping, to remain in office as long as he wants it ([BBC News, 2018](#)).

Beyond the political concerns, other cultural historic blocs that impact Chinese society influence Chinese politics and social mediascape. The two blocs that are at the forefront are Mianzi and Guanxi. Mianzi is the notion of *face* within Chinese culture – specifically, the concept entails the consideration of a person's honour, behaviour, social status, authority, and prestige. Mianzi is given as a sign of respect and withheld as a sign of disrespect ([Buckley et al., 2010](#); [Li, 2020](#); [Smith, 2012](#); [Zhou & Zhang, 2018](#)). Thus Mianzi has facilitated a system where

individuals seek to avoid losing face as best as possible. It is worth noting that there is a similar concept of Lian, defined similarly to Mianzi. For the purposes here, it is essential to note the role of Mianzi (or Lian) in individuals' social behaviours of individuals. These behaviours guide how broader organisations, like the CCP itself, base decisions. The second historic bloc that merits discussion is that of Guanxi. Guanxi represents social networking, standing amongst peers and families, and is manifested as an exchange of gifts or favours between people ([Chang, 2011](#); [Lin, 2001](#); [Smith, 2012](#)). Thus, the use of Guanxi, coupled with concerns around Mianzi, incentivise behaviours that beget affirming connections to authorities so that one is protected. At the regional or societal level, Guanxi and Mianzi underpins interactions between industry and government ([Buckley et al., 2010](#); [Chang, 2011](#); [Smith, 2012](#); [Wang, 2016](#)). So, the transference of economic, social and information capital to the hegemon by lesser actors to garner favour expands the CCP's position with the Chinese power political economy, whilst further entrenching the Big Brother hegemony.

7.2.2 CONSTRUCTING THE CHINESE HEGEMON

The Chinese hegemon is the idea of the CCP as an entity that has the collective's best interest at heart. Thus, the CCP functionally expresses this hegemonic idea. Further, the CCP has used its position to expand government powers and organise society in such a way as to propagate the idea's hegemony. The CCP operates in a largely totalitarian fashion, leading to a large degree of government involvement in most aspects of life within China.

If there were a robust democratic tradition within China, then the minor political parties might be a credible threat to the CCP's power. Since the CCP monitors these parties' membership and oversees their leadership roles, these parties' potential the CCP's hegemonic status is neutered ([Baptista, 2021](#)). Furthering supporting this conclusion is the observation that the minor parties' leaders have also been CCP members simultaneously, which is contra to the rules of those parties ([Baptista, 2021](#)). As a result, the CCP's hegemonic status is further cemented from a political perspective by the existence of a faux opposition.

Turning to Chinese society's business aspects, the CCP wields significant legislative power over businesses. I discuss how this power manifests in social-media-related industries in the next section; for now, I consider government and business relations broadly. A plan announced by the government signalled an expansion of anti-corruption and competition measures employed by the state ([Chow, 2015, 2017](#); [Leung, 2015](#); [Smith, 2016](#)). Further, the

government has adopted a more rigid stance on foreign interests' involvement in Chinese business dealings ([Analytica, 2021](#); [Chow, 2017](#); [Collins, 2020](#)). The events indicate a departure from the CCP's last five-year plan, which saw an increased desire for international partnership and investment. Some factors may have changed the calculus used to decide what to focus on by the government, such as the recent trade war with the United States ([Zeng & Li, 2019](#)). However, it may prove an effective means of rallying other subservient hegemonic blocs to the hegemon's side through stoking nationalist fervour across the citizenry.

On the point of rising nationalism, the CCP leverages state powers to promote a nationalist narrative on social media, in turn further entrenching the hegemonic idea ([Chen & Yang, 2018, 2019](#); [Chin, 2018](#); [Kuang, 2018](#)). State media are highly prevalent within the Chinese mediascape due to the Great Firewall; a system of policies and technologies explicitly employed to monitor, block and reduce two-way traffic on China's Internet ([DeLisle et al., 2016b](#); [House, 2018](#); [Jiang, 2016](#); [Qin et al., 2016, 2019](#); [Stockmann et al., 2020](#); [Uren et al., 2019](#)). The Great Firewall's potential is magnified by the restrictions placed upon private media and tech firms. These restrictions incentivise supporting the Party's message rather than promoting dissent. Subsequently, Chinese media space is dominated by state-run media and voices that support the Party message. Chinese social media have not escaped these policies.

7.2.3 CONSIDERING SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CHINESE STATE

The systems that have facilitated state domination in the traditional mediascape within China have been applied to the social mediascape (Chen & Göbel, 2016; Jiang, 2016; Keane, 2016; Qin et al., 2016; Uren et al., 2019). Tech companies that manage SMPs within China are subjected to increasingly stringent regulations under the Xi administration. The most recent example of this is the investiture of the state with the power to revoke licenses or otherwise fine tech companies that mishandle user data or facilitate its transfer overseas (Analytica, 2021; Haldane, 2021; Hu, 2021). There are potentially significant ramifications for China's SMCs as they may have run afoul of the law due to their industry's nature. At a minimum, the new rules create an onerous environment in which SMCs must be significantly more cognizant of how they handle data harvested from users.

The new legislation is part of a larger legal structure designed to restrict critical discourse and limit the encroachment of foreign voices. As was the case with traditional media, the closed-circuit nature of the social mediascape facilitates Chinese state domination within the space.

Further, through facilitating an explosive growth period, the Chinese state created an environment in which large tech corporations (for instance, Tencent QQ, which manages China's most prominent platform— WeChat) that managed SMPs grew to become monoliths. In turn, this led companies' willingly supporting the government's censorship and monitoring regimes. It appears that the companies that enjoyed the absence of regulation have started to face strict regulations. The aforementioned state power of striking down licenses is augmented by the state buying shares in companies like ByteDance, which owns TikTok, to gain a seat on the board of the company. Further, augmenting state power is the chilling effect that the laws' user data aspects have on Chinese-based SMCs' potential international expansions (Feng, 2021; Haldane, 2021; Hu, 2021; Yang & Goh, 2021). These state efforts reflect a broader shift toward aligning the emergent user data industry, social media discourse, and digital economy with older industries. While SMPCs find themselves obligated to act under the state's newly established rules, the same is not always true for the users.

Users have endeavoured to defeat the monitors and censors employed within the Chinese social mediascape. A recent case of this is the censoring of Winnie the Pooh in China due to a comparison between the character and Xi Jinping (Freudenstein, 2020; Lams & Weile Zhou, 2020). Before the censor, dissidents used the images of Winnie the Pooh to mock the regime under Xi. A second example is the Emperor Xi meme that spread in response to the constitutional amendment that removed presidential term limits. A third example comes from the #metoo movement and the attempts to organise and promote related discourse in China. The meme in question is Rice Bunny – it emerged in response to the censoring of #woyeshi (literally me too) within Chinese social media (Babones, 2017; Bao, 2019). Rice in Simplified Chinese is “mi,” and bunny is “tu,” pronounced as an English speaker may intuit it. Thus, using rice and bunny imagery allowed users a creative way to defeat censors, at least until the censors were adjusted (Bao, 2019).

Recalling the earlier discussion on Mianzi, censoring Xi-inspired memes is logical – any mockery damages the Xi's face, and subsequently that of the CCP as a whole. The Rice Bunny meme is slightly different, but a consideration of the political and cultural facets quickly reveals the motivation to censor memes. Protests and dissent illustrate discontent and disunity within China – something counter to the CCP's promoted narrative. Thus, allowing any attempt to organise or dissent to be vocalised on social media could be interpreted as the

regime losing face. Therefore, it is possible that losing face may harm the CCP's hegemonic status, given Mianzi's power within Chinese society. Subsequently, censoring the Rice Bunny memes is an appropriate course of action. Thus, the Chinese approach to its social mediascape illustrates its similarity to the Big Brother model.

Alongside the meme's rise within China, the influencer's rise has had implications for the Chinese social mediascape. Social media have facilitated influencers' rise more so than any other communication technology. The interactions between influencers, their followers, and others on Chinese social media are particularly unique. Influencers facilitate spreading the Party message across and within platforms while also providing a means for a critical voice being shared (Huang et al., 2018). Unsurprisingly, it is oftentimes beneficial for influencers to spread the Party message. However, given platforms' over-inundation with pro-regime voices, doing so is met with criticism and derision from followers and other users, deeming the influencers CCP mouthpieces, effectively (Huang et al., 2018). Conversely, when an influencer promotes a critical voice, users tend to latch onto that message and effectively use the influencer's clout as cover for expressing their disdain (Huang et al., 2018).

While influencers provide an avenue for criticising the regime online at a national level, voices critical of local or regional level administrators are typically tolerated in the Chinese social mediascape (Qin et al., 2017). These voices manifest as accusations of wrongdoing and corruption on China's SMPs (Qin et al., 2017). Previous research has highlighted a pattern that has emerged around this culture – when a direct accusation is made, there tends to be the announcement of an arrest or investigation within the following year (Qin et al., 2017). Effectively, the CCP benefits from knowing what officials to monitor and investigate to remove any potential reputational damage and removing corrupt officials. Further, when removing these officials, the Party elicits the image of cleaning out the corruption within the regime for the sake of the Chinese people (Qin et al., 2017). Thus, this is one example of how the system maintains the CCP's hegemony in China. Further, through employing agents to operate on platforms and monitor the platforms' discussions, the CCP's administration gains information on potential dissidents. As a result, the state can take steps to quash any potential organised resistance. These efforts are a natural evolution of the government's policies to monitor and regulate discourse on traditional media and elucidate the social media-state relationship within China.

7.2.4 ESTABLISHING THE CHINESE STATE AS BIG BROTHER

In the contemporary era, there is an expansion of state authority and resources to restrict the information flow among the Chinese citizenry and limit external influences. The desire to create a controlled environment in which the hegemon dictates the overarching narrative invokes the Big Brother model fundamentally. Aligning with the Big Brother model's characteristics ([Appendix A](#)), monitoring and censoring content online at the scale within Chinese social media may be called totalitarian. This notion is supported by the existence of state agencies that seek to monitor, regulate, and censor social media discourse and provide oversight on companies that violate the state's laws. Given the state's willingness to fine companies that violate laws on data leakage, it appears that the regime is confident in its status as the hegemon and can use coercive methods with little fear of damaging their hegemonic status. The rapid expansion of coercive techniques as an avenue to maintain power further highlights the parallels between the Big Brother model and contemporary Chinese social media-state relations. Further, this highlights the disparity present between hegemonic actors in the Chinese power political economy – currently, the CCP holds a functional monopoly.

The use of official and unofficial accounts and channels across the various SMPs, especially coupled with the restrictions placed on would-be dissenting voices, allows for the hegemon to weave a narrative that promotes itself within the society to further cement its hegemonic position within China. Further, it provides a means to limit any potential avenue for a counter-hegemonic force to mount a serious challenge. When considering the Big Brother model's characteristics ([Appendix A](#)), a shift toward a more isolated digital system to protect the CCP's hegemonic status from any potential external threats clearly aligns with the model. Further, by leveraging social media at lower levels of governance, the regime can strengthen its position within the society by improving its image with the lesser blocs through prosecuting corrupt officials (i.e., the CCP's represents the collective will). Ultimately, the systems employed within China appear to be inspired, in part, by the cultural considerations that have shaped interpersonal and interinstitutional interactions within the society. As a result, the calculus used to perpetuate the CCP's hegemonic status appears primarily based on creating and maintaining a strong face, or *Mianzi*, for the Party with the public and the businesses. These efforts are further supported by private enterprises' desire to maintain their status; thus, the thoroughly exercising *Guanxi* becomes a norm. Subsequently, the Chinese

system sees lesser hegemonic blocs incentivised to garner favour with the hegemon for protection and prosperity. Given the Orwellian inspiration for the model, positioning the hegemon as the protector of lesser blocs within society – through creating a societal narrative that reflects that idea – parallels contemporary Chinese society’s social media-state relationship ([Orwell & Fromm, 1961](#)).

7.3 DISCUSSING THE BIG BROTHER MODEL

While there are demonstrable parallels between China and the Big Brother model, it is worth considering what other modelling efforts have suggested about China – in doing so, external support for my assertions may be found. Freedom House’s Freedom in the World and Freedom on the Net reports serve as source of external verification for what I propose. Further, there may be utility in considering other reports that have been published recently, such as those published by Transparency International, CATO, and the V-Dem Institute.

Considering Freedom House’s reporting, political freedom in the form of the electoral process and free political speech is lacking in China ([House, 2021a, 2021b](#); [Repucci & Slipowitz, 2021](#); [Shahbaz et al., 2021](#)). What has been presented above is consistent regarding the political landscape within the Big Brother model. Further, most aspects of political, legal, and social life are influenced by the state to a great degree – further supporting China’s fit for the Big Brother model. In the context of the Internet, with consideration given to social media, the pattern continues to be affirmed – in the Freedom on the Net 2021 profile of China, the state is observed as having exerted a great deal of legal pressure on tech companies, social media, and individual platform users insofar as censoring, monitoring, and punitive actions are concerned. The posited fit between China and the Big Brother model coincides with the Freedom on the Net 2021 findings. The V-Dem Institute’s dataset across several indicators on political freedom online reaffirm Freedom House’s assessment as well as the results posited by CATO’s Human Freedom Index; in turn, this lends further support for the Big Brother model ([Alizada et al., 2021](#); [Vásquez & McMahon, 2020](#)). Lastly, Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2020 highlights the role played by trading favours with the Chinese government – this supports the assessment that the lesser hegemonic blocs work to support the hegemon and garner favour in exchange for protection and services ([Transparency International, 2021](#)). Overall, there appear to be various indicators that coincide with the Big Brother assessment for China.

This chapter represents the conclusion of the two authoritarian models I propose. In the LvR dichotomy, the Big Brother model represents a more left-wing position. A generalised framework of the Big Brother model and a matching case are presented throughout this chapter. In the next chapter, I discuss the first libertarian model – the Free Market.

**CHAPTER 8: THE FREE MARKET SOCIAL MEDIA-
STATE RELATIONSHIP**

8.0 TOWARD LIBERTARIANISM

This chapter and the next will shift the discourse's focus. In chapters six and seven, I framed models that represent authoritarianism. In this chapter, I present the Free Market model, which embodies a highly libertarian social media-state relationship. Traditionally, a society that has higher degrees of freedom does not manifest a high degree of authoritarianism (Siebert et al., 1956). While this generally may be the case, there are some caveats. In the case of the Strongman model, the hegemon ignores the market to perpetuate itself. In this instance, the economy is free, but the motive is different. As a result, a free market may exist technically; however, it may not be free in the spirit in which a free market is referenced usually.

The Free Market model I propose is focused on the general case – a society that values an individual's economic freedom and endeavours to promote that value. Given that I am drawing from Siebert et al. (1956), the parallel between the Free Market model I present and the Libertarian model should quickly appear. However, in Siebert et al.'s (1956) conceptualisation, the state's classical liberal functionality takes precedent within the model. Throughout this chapter, I will present the case that the state is not the hegemon; instead, businesses function as the hegemonic historic bloc. I follow the same structure as the previous chapters – I present a hypothetical, generalised framework for the Free Market model. Then, I build a generalised history that leads to the model's development before establishing its hegemonic actors and the nature of the social media-state relationship. Next, I present a case that matches the model – the United States. Lastly, I present some final observations before transitioning into the next chapter.

8.1 ESTABLISHING THE THEORETICAL FREE MARKET

Siebert et al.'s (1956) presentation of the libertarian model falls into a similar trap to the soviet-communist model they present. Their presentation favours the outcomes that a libertarian approach begets, predominately due to the interconnectedness between democratic governance and a free-market system. Considering Siebert et al. (1956) published the *Four Theories* in the US during the Cold War, these biases are unsurprising. Further, there is a reliance on the assertions that truth and reason will prevail in a libertarian framework. Social media's rise has put that assertion to the test, especially given the rise of post-truth politics and its implications for societies ([Hannan, 2018](#)). The worry is well-founded, especially given the immense influence SMPs have on the public narrative within the Free Market model. Over the following few sections, I frame the influence's implications.

First, for brevity, the Free Market state's historical development pattern is generally taken to follow a similar path as with the previous two models in chapters six and seven. However, the difference emerges at the inception of the idea of private property and, subsequently, private capital during the RotI. In the Free Market state, these ideas thrive and achieve hegemony within the society. Put another way, those organic intellectuals who advocate for reason, capitalism, and libertarian economics rise to traditional intellectuals' status effectively in a similar vein posited by Siebert et al. (1956). Private ownership's emergence contributes to the rise of a middle class and eventual capitalist class. Subsequently, as these ideas spread, the state cedes a portion of its potential power within the broader power political economy. Effectively, the state's hegemony within society begins to decline.

To present this position more fully, I must expand upon what I mean when referring to the capitalist class. I understand the capitalist class in the general usage – those who use their capital to invest, grow, and gain greater wealth as opposed to a wage worker who is reliant on selling their self for a wage. In a society that forms a capitalist economic system, people express the capitalist idea in varying degrees – that is to say, some individuals acquire vast amounts of capital and others operate on a much smaller scale. In either case, capital accumulation is how those individuals achieve and maintain their status within society. Subsequently, it becomes the capitalists' core interest to minimise the state's role in overseeing their activities as the state retains the power of taxation and the necessary preponderance of violence to ensure tax is enforced. On this point, I distinguish Siebert et al. ([1956](#)) from my position regarding the Free Market model's nature. As I mentioned

previously, the libertarian model asserts the classical liberal argument that the state exists to protect people from infringing economic rights. However, classical liberals function as traditional intellectuals in a capitalist society. Thus, they work to advance the capitalist hegemon's position within the society, and further entrench the power of those who have accumulated significant wealth. As traditional intellectuals' ideas permeate society, the impact alters the foundations of the culture in question; so, there is an affectation of social, political, and economic beliefs and perceptions within the society that works to advance the historic bloc.

In short, since capitalists become the hegemon within the Free Market society, it follows that they would endeavour to minimise the strength of their biggest threat – the state. In this instance, the hegemonic historic bloc subjugates the state through using the economic capital wielded by the capitalist individuals. Contemporarily, this can be understood as lobbying, bribery, public relations campaigns, and other approaches that generally rely on buying influence or swaying a political decision. In doing so, those within the hegemonic historic bloc cajole the individuals comprising the state bloc into advancing the hegemon's position. Effectively, the hegemon exchanges some economic capital for increased social capital and greater power in the society. It is worth clarifying here that this approach functions within societies with robust democratic governance. In these societies, the hegemon can target particular politicians and align them with their interests, rather than in an autocracy or totalitarian state where the potential for influence is limited.

I have presented the rationale for weakening the state. However, this is not the whole enterprise – that is, weakening the state is not mutually exclusive with leveraging the state to strengthen the hegemon's position. This idea is manifested in creating (or abolishing) laws and regulations that guide economic activity. In doing so, the hegemon can maximise its position within the society and further advance its core interest of capital accumulation. The desire to maximise capital also leads to an interest in expanding the influence of the capitalist historic bloc beyond the state's borders. So, it is likely that the hegemon will coerce the subjugated state into pursuing an expansionistic trade policy and, if necessary, conquest to ensure access to new markets. There is a drawback that threatens the Free Market hegemon, however. The necessary openness invites foreign threats to the capitalist hegemon's position. If the society has a democratic and libertarian approach, the hegemon may find itself limited in what steps it can take to undercut the influence of external actors – as doing so may

damage the hegemon's position within society. Effectively, the Free Market hegemon is one that prioritises gaining and using economic capital to acquire other capital forms to advance its position within the power political economy. At this point, it becomes relevant to consider the state's function in the Free Market model.

8.1.1 BUILDING THE CONTEMPORARY STATE

The hegemon in this model is not the state but rather the capitalist class idea. With that as the starting point, it is easier to ascertain the state's subordinate role. However, it is worth noting that the state still retains a significant capacity to influence the society – precisely, why the hegemon works to subjugate the state bloc. In this case, the state retains the ability to make laws and enforce them. However, rather than being oriented toward the public good or advancing a Realist-based national interest, the state – being subverted by and subjugated to the hegemon – works to advance the hegemon's interests. Thus, the contemporary Free Market state is contextualised by the manifestations of state power as they act on society.

At a broad level, the state exists to establish the structures within society and provide the basic foundations for societal relations and interactions. This foundation is constructed through establishing various laws and regulations governing nearly all aspects of society. Given that the Free Market state likely emerges from a democratic tradition politically, it is worth elaborating on the nature of this point first.

Politically speaking, the state adopts a position that promotes freedom of expression for political speech and other aspects of life like religion and arts. In doing so, the hegemon gains more avenues to pervade the societal fabric – if people are allowed to express themselves, then there exists a market for the goods that allow them to do so. In this respect, it enables the capitalist idea to expand to other markets within society; ergo, capitalists gain more means of accumulating wealth, promoting their continued hegemony. From political expression comes the need to ensure citizens can participate and express themselves well, thus necessitating higher education levels. So, the state will establish education standards and aims – those aims promote support for the societal order, subsequently the hegemon, through socialising citizens into the current hegemonic ideas. Thus, furthering the hegemon's position by ensuring that the bloc can adopt new adherents and supporters into it. A tertiary benefit of ordering education in such a way as to support the status quo is to ensure that there are adequate human resources for the capitalist class to utilise as part of their capital

accumulation efforts. With education considered, it is relevant to consider how the citizenry engages with the hegemon and state through media.

8.1.2 CONSIDERING THE MEDIA'S HISTORICAL ROLE

When dealing with the media's historical role in the Free Market model, there is a deviation from the authoritarian models. Whereas authoritarian regimes will likely repress press freedom, the Free Market model represents those instances where a thriving, commercial media emerges. This media system is tied to the idea of private property rights and private industry as part of RotI reforms within the society. Further, it reflects a capitalistic, market-oriented economic order created by the state. From this perspective, the media's role is categorically different from the Strongman and Big Brother models. The media's private and commercialised nature necessitates a different core calculus – profit. Further, in this model, several newspapers and other media outlets emerge due to the free media market. Thus, there is competition between outlets for readership and, subsequently, paper sales to maximise an outlet's paper and advertisement revenues. In the case of the Free Market model, the state takes a hands-off approach and allows the media market self-determination.

The emergent news market in the Free Market model is dominated by stories that garner readership. Since people are drawn to highly evocative, sensationalist stories, those stories are prevalent. As a result, a feedback loop is created within the media marketplace – media are profit-focused, consumers purchase sensationalist stories, and the cycle repeats. Without a formal professional code of ethics, journalists in this system take more liberties with the truth to make for a more exciting story – the examples that come to mind in this context are newspapers in England printing stories of witches and werewolves and the emergence of yellow journalism in the United States ([Czitrom, 1982](#); [Eisenstein, 1980](#); [Walker, 1950](#)). In giving readers what they want, media facilitate the transfer of economic and social capital to the hegemon. A side effect of this media system is that there may be some state accountability generated. Stories critical to the public, especially those of high news value from an entertainment or information perspective, filter into the feedback loop between consumers and media producers. Thus, an early independent oversight system of government activities emerges. Though, the intent behind such actions is couched in a perceived increased profit margin rather than an obligation toward truth and government oversight.

The power dynamic in the historic Free Market media-state relationship favours the media due to a lack of state engagement and the media's ability to criticise state policy. Further, the media's commercialisation aligns it with the hegemonic capitalist idea, and media individuals aid in expressing this idea within the society. These dynamics continue into the contemporary era.

8.1.3 ESTABLISHING THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

In the contemporary Free Market media environment, the state's laissez-faire approach prevails. Subsequently, social media's emergence is marked with little to no oversight as SMPs develop and proliferate. When these SMPs are established, they focus explicitly on generating the most profit. Similarly, to historic advertisement demand, SMPs adopt a platform model that promotes user engagement to maximise advertisement opportunities and revenues for the SMC; Facebook's business model illustrates this notion ([Cohen, 2008](#)).

Further, given that the contemporary era contends with big data enterprises, SMPs engage the data economy, as outlined in chapter three. As a result, individual users' activities on the platform become commodified and sold to advertisers. Further, given the social media's ubiquity, traditional media systems become reliant upon these quicker platforms for news cues and enhancing reach. A back-and-forth emerges between traditional media and SMPs in that traditional media rely on SMPs for enhancing their ability to generate profit, but they also become consumers of the advertising product sold by SMPs. Resulting from these intermedia effects is the maintenance of SMPs' centrality within the new mediascape. Further, the platforms' highly commercialised nature and social mediascape leads to smaller platforms being pushed out of the market, and a handful of large, widely popular platforms dominate.

With little oversight, one of the genuinely libertarian aspects of this model emerges – foreign interaction. Where the authoritarian models contain restrictions on foreign access to their mediascape, the Free Market's independent nature begets an increased rate of foreign interaction. Subsequently, users in this model can interact with foreign individuals, governments and entities otherwise at a pseudo-individual level due to the platforms' discourse mechanisms. Simply put, the average citizen of a Free Market state can comment on foreign states' activities and words as states are likely to maintain a presence on the Free Market's SMPs. So, there is a highly open communication system emergent in the Free

Market model. The combination of laissez-faire oversight, high rates of privatisation and foreign interaction create interesting dynamics within the social media-state relationship in the Free Market model.

8.1.4 SYNTHESISING THE FREE MARKET SOCIAL MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The Free Market is unique compared to other models of the social media-state relationship. The society's structure is ordered such that power within the relationship rests predominately with corporate SMPs rather than the state. Several reasons enable such structuring within the relationship, and I will establish them in turn here.

The first reason deals with the Free Market society's openness. Society is organised around the individual's value and role, which has facilitated the rise of private commercial enterprises. These large private entities represent most of the social media market space. Further, this openness is tied to a system of open or citizen governance. So, the Free Market society's government comprises a variety of competing interests. Governments that are subject to routine changes in leadership are vulnerable to external influences in the form of the financial backing of officials who represent the interests of moneyed entities. To relate this to the social media-state relationship, SMPs can utilise their capital to ensure the continuity of the state's laissez-faire approach to their specific industries. With that in mind, SMPs may only be able to influence the state to paralysis on oversight issues – which is sufficient for perpetuating their role within the society.

SMPs' position within the society also explains the Free Market social media-state relationship. SMPs are actors that would reside within the broader hegemon of capitalist actors. Due to the society's free market, financial wealth (economic capital) is likely to concentrate into a few hands throughout the society, given the prevalence of big data industries, those companies that can engage data in a meaningful way are likely to quickly rise to prominence within the capitalist historic bloc ([Carrière-Swallow & Haksar, 2019](#)). The power that results in this context enables a significant degree of influence on the state. So, in short, the power achieved through capital accumulation allows SMPs to become integrated within the capitalist historic bloc of the Free Market state. While influencing governance

matters, SMPs' ability to acquire other capital forms in the power political economy allow them to exert more significant influence within the society.

SMPs' information collection capabilities allow them to influence society's broader order. Through their predictive algorithms they can facilitate the dissemination of particular perspectives within society. In this way, they become traditional intellectuals in the Gramscian sense. It is important to note that they are also part of the hegemonic bloc and not solely subservient actors. What allows for duplicity is the mechanism in how society is ordered – advertising and engagement. The algorithms SMPs employ are tuned to promote specific ideas – these requests result from advertising agreements with other entities from the capitalist historic bloc. Members of the historic bloc purchase the right to promote specific content. Often, this will deal with commercial advertisements; however, the promotion of political messaging enables the preservation of the current societal order under the capitalist hegemon. I have previously pointed to Cambridge Analytica as an example ([White & Boatwright, 2020](#)). Beyond this, SMPs, due to a lack of state oversight, are incentivised to spur users' engagement to maximise profit generation for the platform; subsequently, the occurrence of bots and divisive materials is much higher. Bots are employed to promote messaging, which aids in generating engagement, and leads to the spread of ideas that can potentially undermine the state's societal role ([Bessi & Ferrara, 2016](#); [Howard et al., 2018](#); [Jiang & Vetter, 2020](#)). Given the society's openness, the likelihood of foreign actors engaging in such practices is also high – another avenue through which the state is undermined. However, the profit motive, a core component of the capitalist hegemony, encourages SMPs to take such actions.

In short, the desire to preserve their position within the Free Market as hegemon spurs SMPs to influence the government directly through financing and supporting sympathetic politicians. Further, the profit-motive spurs SMPs to sell advertisements that are more likely to sow discord within the polity, which further undermines the state's authority.

Subsequently, the balance of the social media-state relationship is tipped toward SMPs such that the state is functionally subservient to the capitalist hegemony, of which SMPs are a part. Thus, the Free Market model can be distilled into a few broad traits ([Appendix A](#) has more characteristics):

- The system of governance is highly democratic, with state power diffused across elected officials.

- Officials are expected to rely on financial backing to maintain their positions.
- Social media and commercial data sectors are functionally unregulated.
- The digital mediascape is filled with mis- and disinformation from various domestic and foreign sources.
- The digital mediascape is highly open, allowing for discourse between domestic and foreign entities.
- The Free Market hegemon works through the state and by countering it to maintain its position within society.

With this conceptualisation of the Free Market model in mind, it is time to turn toward interrogating an exemplar – the United States.

8.2 PRESENTING THE FREE MARKET CASE

In this section, I consider the theoretical Free Market model and a real-world analogue, the United States. As in the previous chapters, I follow a similar structure in that I first focus on American governance in the social media-state relationship. Then, I consider how best to position private actors' roles within the model. From there, I can construct the Free Market hegemon and work toward discussing the US as an example of the Free Market model. Through considering these facets, it becomes apparent that the US aligns with the Free Market model.

8.2.1 REVIEWING CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN GOVERNANCE

American social media governance, and subsequently the data economy, is varied widely. As it matters for the social media-state relationship, I will endeavour to establish the relationship's primary facets that exist from the state's perspective. The first area is the nature of the American government itself. Broadly, the US government is structured as a representative democracy in which the maintenance of the state is entrusted to elected officials who handle day-to-day governing. Underpinning this system is a far-reaching state bureaucracy. As a result of this formation, the American system is more susceptible to changes within the broader polity. The US government routinely changes a portion of its representatives through elections, allowing it to adapt to the changes within America more quickly. However, this creates a vulnerability due to the shift in how elections are conducted in the United States – each election cycle has seen an increase in campaign spending to new heights, with the most recent elections cresting over the ten-billion-dollar threshold ([Toner & Trainer, 2021](#)). Thus, with an increased need for more finance, those with the necessary economic capital are the ones who can most greatly affect political change.

The ability for capital to influence politics is a hallmark of the American electoral system ([Toner & Trainer, 2021](#)). This notion illustrates the US government's role as a representative organ for special interest groups that can secure votes on issues that impact them. Historically, this is represented by the government siding with business over labour or maintaining the status quo over reform and change ([Milkman, 2013](#); [Smith, 2003](#)). Practically, this leads to a government that is at times paralysed due to the competing interests within the major political parties. The government maintains the status quo through the resultant inaction, reflecting a characteristic of the Free Market model.

Throughout American history, new technologies have necessitated government action. US policy on digital communications is the most pertinent to consider here and can be divided into two broad categories. The first deals in copyright law. The US government has adopted numerous copyright codes before the Internet's creation, however the adoption of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA of 1998), the abandonment of the net neutrality rule by the Federal Communications Commission in 2019, and the 2020 adoption of the Copyright Alternatives in Small-Claims Enforcement Act and Protecting Lawful Streaming Act are major instances of American law preferencing business interests' ability to recoup potential lost profits ([Adams, 2017](#); [Congress, 1998](#); [Federal Register, 2021](#); [Madigan, 2021](#)). These policies trend toward chilling speech online within the US for fear of legal liability. To that end, addressing the other broad category becomes pertinent – free speech protections. Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act is a critical component of the discussion as it underpins how users and platforms interact online ([Foundation, N.D.](#)). Principally, it reflects the US government's desire to shift the onus of legal liability for online discourse wholly onto the user whilst shielding the platform. This policy has been the recent target of some political groups in the US due to a perception that platforms are no longer neutral actors due to their removal of Covid-19 misinformation ([Yang, 2021](#)). To an extent, the more prominent role in content mediation taken by platforms reflects a cultural change that has been spurred forward by the pandemic. Further, this behaviour in conjunction with the protections afforded by Section 230, have provided SMCs, like Facebook, an avenue to develop their own quasi-judicial frameworks ([Klonick, 2020](#)). Coupled with platform enforcement mechanisms, SMCs begin to acquire a sort of sovereignty over their platform not wholly unlike states and their physical territory. In this way, beyond the influence efforts undertaken by the capitalist hegemon within the US, SMCs as part of that hegemon start to coerce acceptance of their positioning within American society. Ultimately, however, the US Government's policies' root is a desire to advance or shield particular interests from an increased legal burden – highlighting their subservience to the role of capitalist hegemon. It is worth noting that the Platform Accountability and Consumer Transparency Act, should it be eventually adopted, may represent a government shift in taking a more significant role overseeing SMPs ([Miller, 2021](#)).

In this section, I have highlighted central laws adopted by the US government to point toward the state's apparent focus – advancing business interests in America. This focus betrays whom the government advocates for and represents. With that in mind, the hegemonic status

of the state is somewhat suspect within American society. The American government can make and enforce laws and maintains a functional monopoly on violence within the state, so its functional role may be likened to that of a hegemon due to the government's sovereignty. However, given that the power behind the government is situated within the hands of those with capital, it becomes more difficult to assert that the US government is the hegemonic entity within American society. Rather the conclusion that is supported is that the government is a subservient entity working to propagate another entity's hegemony – which, I assert is the capitalist historic bloc. In the next section, I will explore this facet further.

8.2.2 CONSIDERING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND THE AMERICAN STATE

To understand how SMPs engage the social media-state relationship, it is necessary to establish America's Internet structures. Unlike other countries, the US relies on a system of privatised infrastructure to form the core of its Internet infrastructure ([Freedom House, 2022a](#)). The decision to privatise critical telecommunications infrastructure reiterates the US government's business focus. A similar policy around the repeal of net neutrality reflects this change as well. Through the repeal of net neutrality, privatised Internet infrastructure, and free speech protections reliant upon requesting SMPs to act, the US government effectively removes itself from an oversight role for online communications and activities. There are clear concessions made in the context of national security laws – which are the exception to the broader laissez-faire rule. Similarly, commercial user data has few regulations ([Kemp, 2020](#)). It has been observed that there are robust protections for health data, but aside from that, individual digital privacy is subject to the data collector's willingness ([Frakt & Bagley, 2015](#); [Kemp, 2020](#)). As a result, a strong user-data economy has emerged within the US, incentivising the expansion of SMPs' capacities to collect, store, and commodify user data ([Schmit et al., 2019](#); [Schmit et al., 2021](#)). Broadly, this reflects a disproportionate balance of power in the social media-state relationship toward SMPs.

Social media in the US functions with significant freedoms, with the primary constraint on user activity being a platform's community guidelines. Platforms have recently taken a more prominent role in policing the content generated by their users through cracking down on misinformation and disinformation – in some instances going so far as to ban Donald Trump, a former US President, from platforms ([Tannenbaum, 2021](#)). So, there is significant freedom

from domestic pressures on SMPs in the United States; instead, they are free to influence as they see fit. The indication from these instances is that SMPs are comfortable in their position in America and do not seem to worry about retaliation or regulation from the US state, which further supports that SMPs, as part of the capitalist historic bloc, are hegemonic within the society.

8.2.3 TOWARD A FREE MARKET HEGEMON

The existence of a capitalist historic bloc comprised of businesses in the US, which SMPs are affiliated, is the hegemonic force within American society. There are a few reasons for this conclusion, as I have already presented – predominately, the US government’s laissez-faire approach to the social media-state relationship and business in general.

Through financing candidates that reflect and advance their interests, SMPs and the broader capitalist historic bloc can perpetuate themselves by countering any significant policy pushes that would limit them. Further, the lack of regulation on SMPs gives platforms significant power to shape narratives. The way SMPs alter the narrative, it seems, is largely unintentional, but has consequences that have been observed previously. Accidental influence is most likely attributable to a lack of regulation and a drive for profit. It is in the hegemon’s interest to maximise profit, so it is a reasonable action to accept payment for political advertisements from campaign supporters, advertising requests for content that is at times steeped in misinformation or disinformation and restrict content that risks leading to a market-lockout overseas. Unfortunately, these actions chill speech and stymie political discourse in the US, and research demonstrates that SMPs have an impact on political polarisation ([Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021](#)). Consequently, a paralysed government cannot act and has its authority undermined. The consequences of SMPs’ profit-motive result in the broader polity fragmenting into bubbles of like-minded users, which paralyses the polity similarly to the government. So, the social status quo is maintained, with the potential for social deterioration exacerbated – the erosion of meaningful political discourse or maintenance of the status quo results in acquiescence to the capitalist bloc’s hegemony by the broader polity. In turn, they further entrench and perpetuate their hegemony.

8.3 DISCUSSING THE FREE MARKET MODEL

As I have illustrated throughout this chapter, the US is an example of the Free Market model. Capitalist actors and SMPs subvert the state and limit its ability to counter the capitalist idea's hegemony, despite the state otherwise being sovereign. To that end, through action and inaction, the state is a tool of perpetuating the SMPs and capitalist bloc's hegemony. In this instance, the hegemon's accumulated power is so great that it is capable of countering any meaningful dissent to its position through a liberal application of economic capital and exploiting its information capital resources collected from users. By dominating the power political economy within the US, business interests can arrange society to garner support for their activities. This point is highlighted by the growing degree of individualism in society, reflecting a trend away from state intervention. Such cultural trends aid in the perpetuation of the capitalist bloc's hegemony as the most likely counter-hegemonic force is a robust state seeking to reign in the excesses of the Free Market. In short, the capitalist hegemony in the United States is expected to perpetuate itself, barring any unforeseen circumstance that jars the public resulting in the emergence of a new cadre of organic intellectuals that can threaten the hegemon's position.

In the next chapter, I will present the final model – Social Consciousness. This model represents the emergence of a strong counter-hegemonic force that can usurp the Free Market hegemon's position and reign in excesses. Further, the Social Consciousness model represents the second, and final, libertarian model I propose.

**CHAPTER 9: THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIAL
MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP**

9.0 STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE LIBERTARIAN AND AUTHORITARIAN POLES

The final model I propose turns toward the future and is derived from Siebert et al.'s (1956) Social Responsibility model. Throughout this section, I establish the Social Consciousness model; this model reflects the changes Siebert et al. (1956) observed when journalists in the United States reformed and established a professional code of ethics. Broadly, this model reflects a society that has taken significant steps to rein in SMPs' influence, and subsequently the hegemonic capitalist idea, through a combination of oversight measures the state establishes. So, while this model falls on the libertarian spectrum, it reflects a blend of state intervention and freedoms on platforms. The approach taken to present this model in that I use examples from the United Kingdom, Estonia and Australia to illustrate aspects of the Social Consciousness model. The reason these societies are considered is that they each have taken steps toward manifesting this model, but do not wholly fit the model's characteristics. The UK has demonstrated a step toward the political aspects of Social Consciousness. Estonia adopted policies evocative of the economic aspects of the Social Consciousness model. Lastly, Australia has adopted policies that characterise the Social Consciousness model's media aspects. Through considering these disparate states' approaches, the characteristics of a wholistic Social Consciousness state are further elucidated.

9.1 ESTABLISHING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Similar to the previous models, the Social Consciousness society's historical development is akin to the other states until a RotI event occurred, which sparked societal reforms. Given the society's libertarianism, the Social Consciousness state has a history of individualism, private ownership and capitalism. However, this model represents a departure from the Free Market model's ideals. At some point following the RotI, the society reformed some of its individualistic nature. These reforms manifest as labour reformations to rein in an excessively capital-oriented society. So, a robust framework of worker protections and individual rights would be present within the society, though the protections' efficacy may be suspect in the contemporary era. The most straightforward way to encapsulate this idea is that of far-reaching worker unionisation. Through unionisation, a pro-social historic bloc is formed by organic intellectuals.

Turning toward the media, labour relationships likely shift toward greater protections for journalists. However, the press still engages in sensationalist media practices within the society as that achieves the aims of the profit-motive for media outlets. With a societal shift toward a more collectivist stance, this capitalist journalism system faces challenges. Out of those challenges, a system of media reforms around truth, accuracy, and a professional code of ethics emerges – elevating the journalism profession and the quality of media consumed by individuals. Siebert et al. (1956) point to the reformation that occurred in the United States to make their point on the Social Responsibility model; I refer to that example as well to illustrate this notion. The historical example from the US helps to understand the reforms necessary to shift from the Free Market model to the Social Consciousness. This case reflects a tip in the balance of the media-state relationship toward the state. The Social Consciousness society witnessed a history of pro-social reforms that have been achieved through collective political actions, which were then codified through a transfer of authority. For this to occur, a robust democratic tradition must exist within the state that is relatively shielded from the influence of capital and entities that monopolise the societal power political economy. Effectively, the state, in the Social Consciousness society, represents a counter-hegemonic actor that usurped the capitalist idea's hegemony within its society. This new hegemonic idea is the pro-social idea. Therefore, rather than the state being subservient to business interests, businesses cede to the state. With this notion in mind, I will turn toward constructing the contemporary state within the Social Consciousness society.

9.1.1 BUILDING THE CONTEMPORARY STATE

The Social Consciousness state is a representative form of government derived from a robust democratic tradition. In this instance, democracy allows for the expression of multiple perspectives through several parties functioning within the houses of government. In this regard, the Social Consciousness state is like those governments that have a parliamentary system. In these instances, the governing system's fractured nature limits the influence of one particular faction unless they can strike a compromise with other factions. So, where the Free Market state represents a significant deal of influence on the state due to special interests swaying politicians, the Social Consciousness state is shielded from a high degree of that influence through disparate political parties and a robust democracy.

The labour and individual rights heritage within the society results in the state taking a larger role, rather than the Free Market's laissez-faire approach. This role manifests through a mixture of socialist and capitalist policies adopted across industrial sectors. So, critical-to-life sectors like healthcare, water, energy, and education are likely to see significant state oversight if they are not wholly nationalised. The telecommunications sector may exist in a similar position within the society, where tension emerges around SMPs' role, which I elaborate upon later. The blend of socialist and capitalist policies results in respect for an individual's rights as the state guarantees those rights and promotes individual autonomy.

The Social Consciousness state promotes information exchange domestically and abroad. There is a high degree of knowledge and information exchange within the society that the state facilitates through protections on speech and trade. Subsequently, the state garners closer relationships with societies in the broader global community. However, there are restrictions on foreign entities' ability to interfere within the society in terms of trade and social influence. So, while trade and diplomacy are tolerated and cultural exchange promoted, the Social Consciousness state has significant restrictions on foreign states' abilities to disseminate information. In short, foreign actors are welcome, so long as they do not try to undermine the state.

The Social Consciousness state promotes the pro-social idea's hegemony through the policies it adopts. Where the Strongman, Big Brother, and Free Market (albeit to a lesser extent than the former two) models prioritise overt or subtle coercion, the Social Consciousness model reflects hegemony that preference consent. This consent is attained through part of the pro-

social idea's expression within society; that is, it promotes positive outcomes for individual citizens. Thus, through ensuring the contentment of the citizenry, the state becomes an effective vehicle for achieving consent for the pro-social idea's hegemony. With this conceptualisation in mind, I can turn toward considering the historical media system and its formation in the contemporary era.

9.1.2 CONSIDERING THE MEDIA'S HISTORICAL ROLE

Historically, Social Consciousness media entities have operated similarly to the Free Market model following the RotI. So, a system of privately-owned media driven by a profit-motive. There would also be a propensity to publish far-fetched or out-right false stories so outlets could sell papers. However, as society advanced technologically, in education, and social outcomes, there was a recognition that the media's behaviour was detrimental. Thus, internal development within media sectors results in professional ethics codes – of which a commitment to veracity is a part. In that event, as occurred in the US during journalism's professional renaissance, the societal view of the media's role shifted from muckrakers and tabloids to respectable news people – a notion that continues contemporarily. ([Brand & Pearson, 2001](#); [Flew, 2014](#); [Murphy, 1978](#); [Siebert et al., 1956](#)). This perspective shift is facilitated through the state adopting laws designed to assign the media an independent, informative role within society rather than a wholly profit-centred one. While this distinction may seem slight, it is in this professional elevation that the Social Consciousness media finds the pro-social hegemonic idea taking root.

Media are obligated to adapt to the new expectations within and without the industry. As a result, the media become government watchdogs and information gatekeepers. Through rigorous editorial and reporting practices, the news disseminated to the public contributes to cultivating an informed polity and checking state excesses. In this context, media-state relations and their tensions begin to emerge as traditionally understood (discussed further in chapter two). Thus, the notion that media affects state policy takes root and permeates the contemporary media environment.

9.1.3 ESTABLISHING THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

New technologies invariably necessitate new regulations around they are leveraged within the society. This holds when considering social media technologies as well. Social media are a

relatively young technology, and as illustrated in chapter three, legal systems are slow to adapt. With that in mind, I conclude that the Social Consciousness state positioned within the world today is more likely to betray the characteristics of the Free Market model than the Social Consciousness model. I expand upon this point in detail when I present the cases later in the chapter; for now, it suffices to note that only basic steps have been taken toward the Social Consciousness model contemporarily. Instead, in this section I establish the themes of the theoretical Social Consciousness's contemporary media environment.

The Social Consciousness state adopts an active role in maintaining and overseeing SMPs. It is foreseeable that the idealised example of this model operates SMPs as nationalised utilities. Short of that occurrence, privately held SMPs regulated as a public utility more than a media entity would exist. As I noted in chapter three, the SMPs' rise has led to a shift in how citizens engage with one another in social, political, and economic activities. The Social Consciousness state is aware of these impacts and works to mitigate and leverage them for society rather than as purely commercial enterprises, reflecting the pro-social idea. SMPs might best be understood as melding a national Internet network and national news broadcaster into one regulatory framework and entity in these instances.

By advancing this role for SMPs, the state guarantees ready and free access to SMPs and their benefits. These benefits are connectivity, information-sharing and dissemination, and increased economic output across all levels of users, which aids the state in perpetuating itself in the Social Consciousness model. Further, it allows the state to retain a plurality of the power in the social media-state relationship power political economy. The reasoning for this is that by promoting fair access to accurate information online, the citizenry is better informed, and a better-informed electorate is better for the pro-social idea's hegemony. Further, increased connectivity within the society allows the state to communicate and disseminate necessary information with the citizenry in a rapid manner. Such systems have been observed through state-wide text messaging and Facebook's crisis response functionality ([Verhulst & Young, 2017](#)). In the Social Consciousness state, the government leverages these capacities in times of need to ensure individuals are supported. Subsequently, due to the pro-social focus within the state's actions, further support for the state is cultivated.

Lastly, in the current economic system, enabling and supporting small-to-medium enterprises in their digital endeavours through the maintenance of the necessary infrastructure to maximise their success garners consent to the state's hegemony. So, in the Social

Consciousness state, the contemporary social media environment is quite different to the other models – social media are leveraged as a public utility for the common good, rather than as a purely commercial entity or means of controlling the citizenry. In the next section, I will elaborate on the mechanics behind this relationship.

9.1.4 SYNTHESISING THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS SOCIAL MEDIA-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The historic bloc that exerts the most significant influence on the state is a pro-social historic bloc comprised of actors representing a cultural desire for such structures within society. This influence is contrasted by the Free Market model, in which individualism is taken to an extreme form to promote and protect the capitalist historic bloc within the society. The pro-social hegemon within the Social Consciousness state makes great efforts to ensure people are afforded a fair chance and are constrained only insofar as it adversely impacts others within the state. In the context of the social media-state relationship, the Social Consciousness hegemon influences the state to adopt a regulatory framework that prohibits exploitative user data practices, the use of digital discourse to harm fellow citizens, restrict uncompetitive market behaviours, and limit the spread of domestic and foreign mis- and disinformation. In practice, the state may create or maintain an SMP that functions as a public utility over a profit-oriented commercial entity. Similarly, privately held SMPs would be obliged to adhere to the same regulations that lead to increased pro-social outcomes rather than the enrichment of those who own the platforms.

To that end, in minimising the individuals' exploitation and promoting outcomes that are best for the most people, the pro-social hegemon can further gain the consent of the populace for its hegemony. An affirmation of this consent would be the continual election of individuals to the government with similar values. So, while there may be some deviation in specific policies – what budgetary items are prioritised, for instance – the politicians' underlying beliefs align with the hegemon's cultural pro-social tendency. As a result of the government's continued support, the hegemonic idea leads to policies that further ingrain the pro-social culture. Consequently, this limits counter-hegemonic forces' abilities from within and without to gain traction within the Social Consciousness state.

To summarise this model, the pro-social hegemon leverages the state to maximise outcomes for its citizens. In turn, this leads to increasing consent for its hegemony and diminishes the ability of counter-hegemonic forces to challenge the pro-social hegemon. These broad aspects can be distilled into a handful of traits (a longer list is presented in [Appendix A](#)) that will reflect this social media-state relationship:

- The system of governance is highly democratic, with power diffused across elected officials.
- Society, through history and contemporary manufacture, supports pro-social governance.
- Social media area highly regulated public and private industry targeted toward platforms or the companies behind them to constrain excessive profit-motivated behaviours.
- The digital mediascape is filled with accurate information and is much less frequently dominated by mis- or disinformation.
- There are robust exchanges between foreign and domestic individuals in the digital space insofar as those exchanges do not engage in mis- or disinformation.
- The Social Consciousness hegemon is expressed through the state and SMPs to promote pro-social user outcomes.

Further, it is worth noting that most of the power is held by the pro-social hegemon. This power manifests as the hegemonic ideas' ability to influence elected officials' actions. Subsequently, the state wields significant power through data, information and capital. As a result, the hegemon can maintain its status. Given that there is no perfect example for this model since it does not exist yet within the world, I utilise examples from those nations advancing toward it in the next few sections.

9.2 THE POLITICAL SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS – UNITED KINGDOM

Some aspects of the United Kingdom's approach to social media following the US 2016 election and the Covid-19 pandemic illustrate the political facets of the Social Consciousness model. In the wake of the 2016 Cambridge Analytica scandal, the UK government sought to understand how fake news impacted the country's political fabric. The culmination of this effort was the release of the Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee's (DCMS) Disinformation and fake news report in 2019. The leading recommendation for this report was the creation of a compulsory ethics code for SMCs behind SMPs that are then placed under the purview of an independent regulator ([House of Commons Digital, 2018](#)). This recommendation highlights the contemporary observation that there is a lack of oversight on social media, and SMCs are not compelled to advance the common good. Considering history, this mirrors the evolution of the journalistic ethics codes in the post-World War era, in which journalists were obliged to exercise greater care in the information they published and disseminated ([Joseph & Nerone, 2013](#)). In the context of the Social Consciousness model, this represents a shift in SMPs' behaviours toward pro-social outcomes, rather than solely seeking to maximise profits.

The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, a subgroup within the DCMS, published a paper highlighting how deepfakes and audio manipulation can be leveraged alongside disinformation channels, like bot accounts, to create more potent and far-reaching disinformation campaigns ([Innovation, 2019](#); [Schlitzer, 2018](#); [Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020](#)). Manipulations like this have been previously observed during the Brexit referendum and were part of Russian efforts to sow discord in democratic societies ([McKay & Tenove, 2021](#); [Trithara, 2020](#)). The decision to study and devise a policy on these issues illustrates a step toward the Social Consciousness model that enables the state to promote the pro-social outcome of fair access to accurate information online. Similarly, the Disinformation report from DCMS called for the reformation of UK election laws to mitigate such content's potential impact on UK democracy ([House of Commons Digital, 2018](#)). Conversely, this aligns with a pro-social hegemon's aims.

These examples help highlight the shift toward Social Consciousness. It is worth noting that the UK enacted several policies that run counter to the characteristics of the Social

Consciousness model but still advance an authoritarian sentiment within the society. Chiefly is the expansion of state surveillance capacities for users online, vesting border forces with the authority to search users' devices upon entry into the country, and the legalisation of bulk data collection practices by intelligence agencies. While these policy decisions reflect the presence of greater state involvement, they do not align with the pro-social outcomes that the Social Consciousness hegemon would be like to pursue.

The laws presented in this section illustrate the political efforts within the UK that simultaneously advance and retreat positioning the UK within the Social Consciousness model. In the next section, I turn toward Estonia to consider some economic policies that reflect Social Consciousness.

9.3 THE ECONOMIC SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS – ESTONIA

Estonia's government has rapidly marched toward e-governance. As part of this, Estonians have digital IDs that enable them to easily receive personalised services through the use of the X-Road data management system, an example of this is Estonian first responders using patients' medical history at the emergency site to improve treatment. The system Estonia has developed is predicated on robust user data protections ([Heller, 2017](#)).

Several of the local laws adopted were aimed at aligning Estonia with European Union standards under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Electronic Communications Act (ECA) ([Riigi Teataja, 2004](#); [Voigt & Von dem Bussche, 2017](#)). Through the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) and the Data Protection Inspectorate (AKI) agency, the government stores large amounts of data collected from Estonians ([Riigi Teataja, 2019](#)). However, the AKI serves as an oversight mechanism to ensure that access to that data is restricted to lawful uses only and upholds the digital rights of Estonians. To that end, Estonians enjoy the right to know what data is collected and stored about them and who has access to that data. Estonians' data protections reflect characteristics of the pro-social hegemon of Social Consciousness. However, some Estonian policies, like in the UK case, impede its consideration as a Social Consciousness state. Predominately, the lack of restriction on mis- and disinformation has allowed the social mediascape of the country to become rife with such information. At least one political party in Estonia has been observed to use misinformation for political ends ([Freedom House, 2022c](#)). In this context, highly liberalised information on Estonian social media reflects a trend close to the Free Market model rather than the Social Consciousness. The rates of mis- and disinformation impede the veracity of the information Estonians consume, which undermines the robustness of the political discourse and democracy in Estonia, as it has in other nations.

Estonia has made more significant gains than the UK toward manifesting Social Consciousness but is still far from entirely positioning itself within that model. Their progress is demonstrated by a robust digital society and the expansion of individuals' data rights. However, the prevalence of misinformation and its impact on civil discourse in the country illustrates steps backward. With that in mind, it seems pertinent to shift toward discussing Australia, as they have taken steps toward addressing misinformation and the media's role on social media.

9.4 THE MEDIA SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS – AUSTRALIA

Like the UK and Estonia, Australia has made strides toward Social Consciousness. Adopting the News Media and Digital Platforms Bargaining Code represents Australia's single most significant step. Conversely, the response by Facebook to the Bargaining Code's adoption demonstrates the distance that exists between Australia and Social Consciousness. Beyond that, the anti-defamatory laws that Australia has adopted appear to advance Australia's positioning to an extent; however, a closer inspection illustrates the potential harm caused by such laws (House, 2022b). Further, in response to the Christchurch, New Zealand attack in 2019, the Australian government adopted a more robust framework requiring content hosts to remove material flagged as exceptionally violent as soon as the platform knows of the content's existence ([Freedom House, 2022b](#)). The impetus for this framework was the use of Facebook to live-stream the attack and other platforms spreading recordings afterward. Each of these aspects represents some facet of Social Consciousness.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has established a framework to require providers to block URLs related to violent content and facilitate coordination of such activity with the ACMA ([Freedom House, 2022b](#)). These efforts reflect a desire to restrict and control content deemed harmful to society. While there may be a debate over content censorship, this action generally demonstrates a trend toward Social Consciousness as it is designed to promote socially acceptable content and minimise harm to users. There exists the potential for the state to abuse the authority it vested itself by expanding definitions of harmful content to that which a governing coalition deems as such; however, such a move would likely reflect a compromising of Australia's democratic tradition — in turn, demonstrating the rise of an authoritarian counter-hegemonic actor.

Similarly, Australia's anti-defamatory framework has been expanded through precedent to make SMPs and other content hosts liable for third-party content on their platforms ([Freedom House, 2022b](#)). This approach illustrates the state's compulsion to make companies adopt a more rigid stance on policing their platforms. However, this poses the distinct risk of limiting the content that is created on platforms — there may be pre-emptive filtering of content through the use of AI, which may stymie political discourse ([Ceccanese, 2022](#)). Further, defamation laws that favour those claiming defamation may limit the ability of platforms and traditional media sources to publish stories that are firmly within the public interest for fear of legal retribution ([Freedom House, 2022b](#)). Thus, these laws can require accurate reporting,

which would promote a better-informed polity – if and only if the laws are not so aggressive as to chill public interest reporting. In short, the Social Consciousness state may adopt laws in this vein but provide significant constraints on the potential for abusing the legal framework. As it stands currently in Australia, the potential for abusing legal mechanisms to dissuade public interest reporting is high, so these policies ultimately pull Australia further from Social Consciousness.

Lastly, the Bargaining Code represents a direct action toward clawing back some power wielded by the Free Market capitalist hegemon that dominates Australia. The response by Facebook during the negotiations signifies how robust the capitalist hegemony is and Australia's distance from Social Consciousness ([Morrison, 2021](#)). The Bargaining Code established a mechanism for Australian media to receive payment for news content leveraged by SMPs and other aggregators ([Nicholls, 2020](#)). The concern was that since aggregators were providing snippets of the news stories on their search results or as part of social media content, users were less likely to follow links to the news entity's website; in turn, this leads to a loss of ad revenue for the news entity whilst the aggregator reaps a fiscal benefit. The Bargaining Code would have obliged platforms and aggregators to notify news entities anytime there was a change in search algorithms and potentially how that may affect the news entities. Given the Bargaining Code's perceived threat, Facebook suspended access to news, government, and emergency pages on the platform for a week (Morrison, 2021). During this time, the government agreed to amend the language of the Bargaining Code to be more favourable to platforms rather than news entities (House, 2022a). To date, some of the concerns highlighted around the Bargaining Code have occurred – larger platforms have benefited while smaller media entities have lost out ([Ketchell, 2022](#); [Wilkie, 2021](#)).

In the context of hegemonic competition, there was a pro-social outcome in that the government sought to rebalance the economic power dynamics between aggregators and smaller news entities. This outcome reflected a step toward Social Consciousness. However, Facebook's ability to coerce the government into amending its stance illustrates the lack of power the seemingly emergent pro-social historic bloc has when pitted against the capitalist hegemonic bloc's entrenched power. So, this demonstrates that Australia is firmly within the Free Market model, despite some attempts to move toward Social Consciousness.

9.5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout this chapter, I presented the Social Consciousness model. Contemporarily, this model is not reflected in any one society. However, some states have adopted laws that hint at the transition toward the model. This apparent trend is reminiscent of the historical shift in the traditional media-state relationship in which journalists moved into a proper watchdog role within society by providing public-interest, truthful reporting on government activities. Until a time is reached when a state has organised social media to promote a better-informed polity, the Social Consciousness model is unlikely to be observed. However, the presentation in this chapter illustrates the characteristics of this model ([Appendix A](#) contains a list of those characteristics).

More broadly, I have framed four models derived from previous literature over the last few chapters. To contextualise them for the social media-state relationship, I have adopted an interdisciplinary approach grounded in several literature fields that has facilitated creating a blended conceptual framework. The models I have presented elucidate the underlying themes within varying conceptualisations of the social media-state relationship, much like Siebert et al.'s (1956) original *Four Theories* did. Utilising this conceptual framework, I can work towards providing some primary means of observing the four models. In the next chapter, I set out a research methodology that enables moving beyond face validity, as established through the case studies, for the models through the creation of an instrument designed with the framework in mind.

CHAPTER 10: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

10.0 PRESENTING THE METHODS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter, I frame the research design and rationale for the thesis's empirical objectives. A theory-then-research approach has generally guided my work so far, given its efficacy for facilitating the creation of new contributions to the literature ([Lynham, 2002](#); [Reynolds, 2015](#)). This approach synergises with the aim to contribute to the theoretical discourse on the social media-state relationship. To reiterate, the research questions (RQs) guiding the work so far and going forward are:

RQ1: What is the social media-state relationship, and how can it be characterised?

RQ2: What model(s) might be developed to understand emergent phenomena around the social media-state relationship?

RQ3: How effective is the framework and its models at explaining observable phenomena around the social media-state relationship?

Research question one has primarily been addressed in the theoretical discourse presented in chapters five through nine. In those chapters, I established the framework for four models that appear to have face validity – much as they did when the *Four Theories* was initially published. However, face validity alone does not sufficiently support the models. Thus, addressing RQ2 and RQ3 becomes relevant and the focus herein.

10.1 DESIGNING THE RESEARCH APPROACH

To provide meaningful answers to RQ2 and RQ3, I employed an experimental post-test only cross-sectional quantitative 2x4 factorial design using a stimulus-response model.

Participants' responses were recorded through newly created survey instrument (Appendix B). This approach had several reasons meriting its use, which I will go through in turn. This design, with slight variations, was employed in two pilots before upscaling to a larger online panel provided by Qualtrics.

An experimental approach allows for more robust conclusions to be reached, especially regarding sampling and population distribution. Further, this approach allows for easier replication in future endeavours ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). Since I aim to validate the framework's models, a readily replicable methodology is a crucial criterion.

Adopting a post-test only approach lessens the time burden on participants and speeds data collection. Beyond the practical benefits for participants, there are methodological benefits to this approach. The eight comparison groups are equally distributed, which aids analysis. Further, biases are mitigated by randomly allocating participants to the groups ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). Since there is not a pre-test stimulus, participants cannot be sensitised to the stimulus, so there is no risk of a test-retest effect on the post-test data collection.

Some limitations needed mitigation. Principally, the risk of study mortality posed a critical concern – I will discuss this in greater detail for the first pilot study later. This concern was mitigated by employing Qualtrics' online panelling services, ensuring equivalent groups and adequate sample size. Further, external validity may be threatened when employing this approach; however, by using a random online panel that is then randomly allocated to one of eight comparison groups, these threats are mitigated ([Papineau, 1994](#); [Smith & Noble, 2014](#)).

The reason for employing a quantitative approach, rather than other qualitative methods, was similar – ease of data collection and lessening participants' burden. From an analysis perspective, quantitative data readily allows for a series of statistical tests to be performed on the data and enables the potential for inferences to be drawn from the data ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). Further, I drew some inspiration in how to approach the research design from Freedom House and other organisations, which employ quantitative aspects in their research (Freedom House, 2022a). While Freedom House employ an approach akin to a Delphi model for their research, generally, I utilise a random online panel to collect my data. This is aligned with the

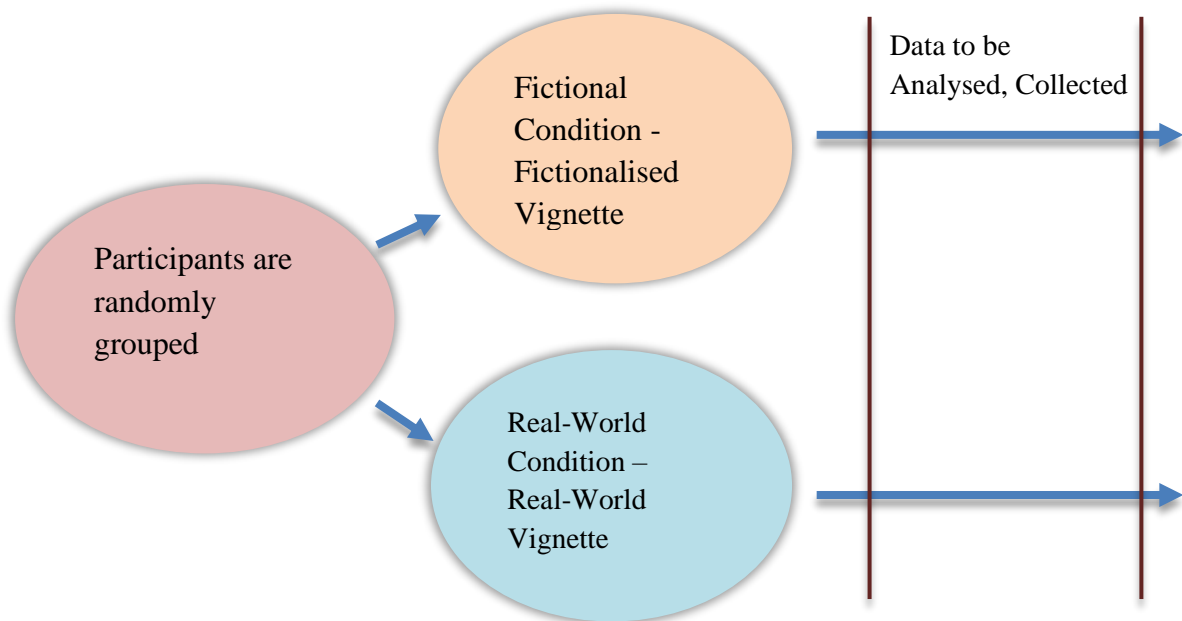
literature, since my primary aim is to validate the Order Index and its measures ([Ansolabehere & Schaffner, 2014](#); [Atkinson et al., 2004](#); [Lazarus et al., 2020](#); [MacKenzie et al., 2011](#); [Schein & Bauer, 2019](#)).

A stimulus-response model aligns with employing a vignette-based study ([Ganong & Coleman, 2006](#)). In this instance, the vignettes provide the stimulus, and the section of the survey instrument corresponding to the vignette serves to record participants' responses. The vignettes are derived from the models presented in chapters six through nine and the cases discussed alongside them. An idealised instance of each model was represented in a fictionalised case vignette. The real-world model analogues were used to draft the other set of vignettes. This approach reflects the research design's 2x4 factorial aspects ([Ganong & Coleman, 2006](#)). The rationale behind this choice was predicated on a desire to ascertain the real-world observability of the models.

Four vignette decks were developed comprising two vignettes each ([Appendix C](#)). The first deck represented the Strongman model, the second deck represented the Social Consciousness model, the third represented the Free Market model, and the last deck represented the Big Brother model. In each deck, the first vignette was the fictional one, and the real-world vignette was the second. The fictional vignettes' presentation was uniform insofar as the nation was concerned; the difference was that of the narrative about the nation. The second vignette represented the real-world analogue. In deck one, Russia was presented to participants; deck two saw the United Kingdom presented to participants; deck three contained the United States; finally, deck four contained China. In each of these cases, the general flow of the narrative followed the corresponding fictional vignette. The principal difference between the vignettes within the decks was whether one was a fictionalised or real-world example. The 2x4 research design utilised is broadly illustrated below in Figure 7 (p. 181).

Figure 6

Research Design Breakdown



Note. This figure depicts the generalised format of the research design employed. Inspiration for this presentation comes from Creswell and Creswell (2018).

10.2 CONSIDERING AND OPERATIONALISING THE VARIABLES

This section discusses the variables for the research and operationalises them. I first present the independent variables, followed by the dependent variables. Finally, I discuss the covariates affecting the project.

10.2.1 THE INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Reflecting the 2x4 research design, there are two independent variables. The first is the fictional or real-world condition, indicating what vignette form participants will receive. The second is the specific model vignette participants will receive. The second variable has four possible conditions: Free Market, Social Consciousness, Strongman or Big Brother. These two independent variables create the 2x4 design and illustrate the eight possible comparison groups (e.g., fictional Free Market or real-world Free Market).

The principal dependent variable is participants' responses measured by the Order Index. The Order Index comprises four dimensions: Personal Freedom, Corporate Freedom, State Control, and Societal Statism. Differing values in the Order Index reflect the four models presented in chapters six through nine.

Order, conceptually, is an extension of the hegemonic competition that underpins each model. The societal hegemon maintains the ability to order (arrange) society to protect and expand its position ([Cox, 1987](#); [Gramsci et al., 1971](#)). This ability is magnified by social media. Beyond this extension, order evokes rules and structure. This aspect of order is prevalent within IR literature in the form of the rules-based international order in which states operate and the theories discussed in chapter four ([Brommesson & Ekengren, 2020](#); [Mearsheimer, 2019](#)). Effectively, order stems from historic blocs' competing to gain hegemony to order society in a way that is beneficial to them.

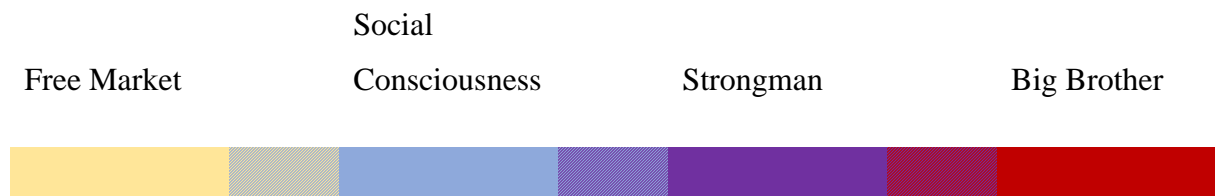
In the case of the Free Market model, the capitalist hegemon orders society limit the state's influence. Conversely, the Big Brother model entails a state-imposed societal order that reflects the desires of the Party hegemon. The Strongman model reflects the autocratic order promoted by the strongman's hegemony. Lastly, the Social Consciousness model reflects an order indicative of a pro-social hegemon.

The prediction is that the Order Index will progress along a spectrum, as presented below in Figure 6. So, lower values in the data will reflect more libertarian models, whereas higher values will reflect authoritarian models. Figure 6’s illustration reflects a contemporary spectrum that treats libertarianism on the left and authoritarianism on the right and is reminiscent of Merrill’s (1990) conceptualisation.

To determine the Order Index value, four dimensions are measured. The first dimension is Personal Freedom, intended to represent individual users’ freedoms. Next is Corporate Freedom, which relates to business freedoms. The third dimension is State Control and corresponds to direct state involvement in the social media-state relationship. Finally, the fourth dimension is Societal Statism and is intended to quantify social tolerance for direct state involvement in social media. How these dimensions are operationalised is presented in Table 3 (p. 184). The data for each of these dimensions are derived from Likert-type questions classed as ordinal data. However, scale-based statistical tests are still applicable and are routinely used ([Sullivan & Artino Jr, 2013](#)). So, the data are treated as scale during analysis.

Figure 7

The Social Media-State Relationship Order Index Spectrum



Note. Author representation of the progression of the models. Given the Authoritarian and Libertarian framing of the spectrum, the Free Market – extreme libertarianism – model is set at the lower end of the spectrum. The higher end of the spectrum represents the end of the authoritarian side – the Big Brother model.

Since the social media-state relationship models represent an intangible idea that permeates society, it is best to distil the models into observable characteristics ([Appendix A](#)) that are indicative of the society’s order. Through observing order, insight into the hegemon, and subsequently the model, can be achieved. Thus, discussing the dimensions that are employed to observe order in greater detail is the next step.

Table 3*Operationalised Dimensions*

Dimension	Operationalisation
Personal Freedom	Observations on individual users' speech freedoms, user privacy rights, and freedom to associate with others online
Corporate Freedom	Observations on corporate business freedoms, degrees of private ownership, and the freeness of the market
State Control	Observations on state involvement on social media – censorship, content creation, regulations on social media companies – as well as business regulations and individual rights protections
Societal Statism	Observations on corporate compliance with state law and individual acceptance and reliance on the state for information

Note. This table presents a general understanding of the indices and their components.

10.2.2 THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT & DIMENSIONS

Each dimension corresponds to specific measures within the survey instrument ([Appendix B](#)). The measures are derived from characteristics discussed in chapters six through nine. Drafting the measures with the models in mind should sharpen their effectiveness; however, their validity will need to be ascertained ([Sue & Ritter, 2007](#)). The first two dimension broadly deal with freedom; the next two deal with state control.

The Personal Freedom dimension comprises three components – speech freedom, user privacy rights, and freedom to associate (see Table 4, p. 186). In the social media context, speech freedom is understood as the freedom to express general thoughts and beliefs, political opinions, sentiments, and beliefs without state interference ([Baker, 1989](#); [Barendt, 2005](#); [Segado-Boj & Díaz-Campo, 2020](#)). Providing individual users with increased control over who sees their content, when it can be taken down and who generally has access to their profiles represents

how user privacy rights are understood ([Regan, 2020](#); [Roberts, 2011](#); [Rodríguez & Lemus, 2019](#)). Finally, the freedom to associate is understood as the freedom to organise oneself and associate with anyone without state interference online ([Das, 2018](#); [Kleven, 2004](#)). Models associated with less state interference (i.e., Free Market and Social Consciousness) will have greater Personal Freedom. Models associated with more state interference (i.e., Strongman and Big Brother) will have lower Personal Freedom.

The Corporate Freedom dimension comprises three core components – business freedoms, private ownership, and market freedoms. Table 4 (p. 186) outlines how the measures correspond to these aspects and how they are indexed. Business freedoms are best understood as businesses' ability to operate their enterprises as they see fit with relative freedom from state interference ([Stucke, 2017](#); [Zhang, 2012](#)). Private ownership is understood in the context of where ownership of SMCs resides – in the hands of private individuals or public enterprises on the state's behalf. Lastly, market freedom in the social media-state relationship is understood in terms of regulations, or the lack thereof, on user data and social media industries – effectively, market freedom can be understood as the presence of a free market or not ([Friedman, 2010](#); [Narveson, 1995](#)). As before, in the case of the Free Market and Social Consciousness models, given their libertarian bend, there is an association with greater Corporate Freedom. The inverse holds for the Strongman and Big Brother models.

Table 4*Freedom-based Dimensions, Components, and Related Measures*

Dimension	Component	Survey Instrument Measure
Personal Freedom	Speech Freedom	On social media platforms in Country X, how much are users able to share their political ideas or opinions?
		On social media platforms in Country X, how much are users able to protest or criticise the government?
	User Privacy Rights	On social media platforms in Country X, how much can users expect to control their content?
		On social media platforms in Country X, how much can users expect privacy on the platform?
Freedom to Associate	On social media platforms in Country X, how much are users able to interact with foreign individuals, companies, or governments?	
Corporate Freedom	Business Freedoms	Regarding social media companies in Country X, how much are companies free to control their platforms?
		Regarding social media companies in Country X, how much are companies required to share user data with the government?
	Private Ownership	Regarding social media companies in Country X, how much are companies privately owned?
	Market Freedoms	Regarding social media companies in Country X, how much do companies trade or sell user data?
Regarding social media companies in Country X, how much do companies do business with foreign individuals, companies, or governments?		

Note. This table represents the assumed indices related to freedoms within a state before factor analysis. "Country X" as presented to participants was either "Ustia" for the fictional groups or "Russia," "United Kingdom (UK)," "United States (US)," or "China."

The remaining two dimensions address state-related concepts – State Control and Societal Statism. These dimensions, their components and the associated measures can be found in Table 5 (p. 188).

The State Control dimension consists of business regulations, individual rights, and narrative control. Business regulations are understood as state laws and restrictions on business actions regarding buying and selling user data ([Arora, 2019](#); [Hintz, 2015](#)). Protections for individuals' rights is understood as the state ensuring that user privacy is protected from state, corporate, and other entities' interests ([Chauhan & Kshetri, 2021](#); [Trebble-Greening, 2019](#)). Lastly, narrative control reflects the social media culture present in terms of discourse censorship and state propaganda ([Gunitsky, 2015](#)). The Free Market and Social Consciousness models are associated with lower levels of State Control. Whereas the Strongman and Big Brother models are associated with greater State Control.

The Societal Statism dimension consists of corporate and individual acceptance of the state. Corporate acceptance of the state is observed through how much businesses operate on behalf of the state regarding content monitoring, censorship and general compliance with social media laws ([Jung & Kim, 2006](#); [Rothschild, 2013](#)). Individual acceptance, however, is understood as user reliance on official sources for information about news and events and pro-state sentiment that is expressed on social media ([Guo, 2019](#); [Pavlíček, 2013](#); [Tapsell, 2021](#); [Wang, 2020](#); [Wang & Mark, 2016](#); [Williams et al., 2018](#)). The model associations continue where less Societal Statism corresponds to Free Market and Social Consciousness models, whereas higher Societal Statism aligns with the Strongman and Big Brother models.

Table 5*State-centric Dimensions, Components, and Related Measures*

Dimension	Component	Survey Instrument Measure
State Control	Business Regulations	Regarding the government in Country X, how much do they regulate the trade of user data?
	Individual Rights	Regarding the government in Country X, how much do they control privacy rights for social media users?
	Narrative Control	Regarding the government in Country X, how much do they participate in social media?
Regarding the government in Country X, how much do they monitor social media activity?		
Regarding the government in Country X, how much do they censor social media activity?		
Societal Statism	Corporate acceptance of the state	Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much do companies monitor content for the government?
		Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much do companies censor political content?
		Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much do companies follow social media laws?
	Individual acceptance of the state	Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much do users rely on government officials for information on social media?
		Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much do users support the government on social media?

Note. This table represents the assumed government control and tolerance indices within a state. "Country X" was presented to participants as either "Ustia" for the fictional groups or "Russia," "United Kingdom," "United States," or "China." Measures are not listed by appearance order in the survey instrument; instead, they are grouped by relevant aspect.

10.21.3 CONTROLLED COVARIATES

This research controls for: age, sex, education level, and authoritarian sentiments. I define them in turn in this section.

10.2.3.1 AGE.

Age is defined as the measure of time that has passed since being birthed and quantified in years, usually taken at the time of data collection. Age is a participant attribute. This attribute is measured with 10-year age groupings as recommended by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75 and over) ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014](#)). A modification of the presentation will occur to account for only including adults in the research and the likelihood of having participants over 65 years old. So, the final bands presented to participants are 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+. The data collected regarding the age variable can be considered ordinal.

10.2.3.2 SEX.

Sex is an attribute associated with participants. Sex is defined in biological terms as per the ABS classification; thus, it is defined as “the classification of living things, generally as male or female, according to their reproductive organs and functions assigned by chromosomal complement” ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016](#)). Therefore, sex is recorded as male, female or another term to account for non-binary sexes. The data collected here is categorical and is treated as categorical during analysis.

10.2.3.3 EDUCATION LEVEL.

Education level is the years of formal education completed by a person. This attribute is associated with participants. Education is presented in an ordinal fashion with the following response bands: primary education, secondary education, certificate level, advanced diploma and diploma, bachelor’s degree, graduate diploma or certificate, a postgraduate degree. These bands are derived from ABS standards ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001](#)). The Education variable is indicated with a question that provides these response bands as possible answers.

10.2.3.4 IDEOLOGICAL BIAS.

Ideological bias is controlled through an indexed scale variable derived from the six measures from the Very Short Authoritarianism (VSA) scale as presented by Bizumic and Duckitt (2018). The coding procedure follows Bizumic and Duckitt's procedure. So, the indexed variable is understood as a higher score resulting in a greater degree of pro-authoritarian sentiments, whereas a lower score would decrease authoritarian sentiments.

10.3 GENERATING HYPOTHESES

Two primary hypotheses with four branches each have been developed to facilitate answering the research questions. These hypotheses reflect the broader factorial design underpinning the research and allow for validating all aspects of the framework and its four models. They are as follows:

- *Hypothesis 1 (H_1):* Participants in the four fictional comparison groups will score differently on the Order Index to validate the model.
 - H_{1a} : Participants in the Free Market condition will score the lowest.
 - H_{1b} : Participants in the Social Consciousness condition will score the second lowest.
 - H_{1c} : Participants in the Strongman condition will score the second highest.
 - H_{1d} : Participants in the Big Brother condition will score the highest.
- *Hypothesis 2 (H_2):* Participants in the four real-world comparison groups will score differently on the Order Index to validate the model.
 - H_{2a} : Participants in the Free Market condition will score the lowest.
 - H_{2b} : Participants in the Social Consciousness condition will score the second lowest.
 - H_{2c} : Participants in the Strongman condition will score the second highest.
 - H_{2d} : Participants in the Big Brother condition will score the highest.

The two primary hypotheses reflect the aims of RQ2 and RQ3. Specifically, H_1 and H_2 provide an avenue toward external validation of the models as well as determining how effective the instrument that I have developed is in quantifying the models. In determining the response to those two questions, a more-robust answer for RQ1, characterising the social media-state relationship, can be reached.

10.4 APPLYING THE APPROACH AND SAMPLE SELECTION

I address the recruitment, sampling, and research procedures across the three studies in this section. First, I will cover the two pilots; then, I will present the final, full-scale study procedure.

10.4.1 PILOTING THE RESEARCH

The following sections will outline the pilot studies' methodologies. As a note, for all pilots, appropriate ethics clearance was sought from the Bond University Human Research Ethics Committee.

10.4.1.1 SMALL-SCALE PILOT.

A small-scale pilot utilising a convenience sample was chosen as the first means of testing the instrument and vignettes. The choice to use a convenience sample was to ensure the survey instrument and vignettes' basic functionality before scaling to a more extensive study ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). This study tested the fictional condition of the four model vignettes.

10.4.1.1.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE.

Participants were invited to participate in an online survey from students enrolled in courses that the research team had access to at Bond University. Given budgetary constraints, convenience sampling was employed to allow for a more robust sampling protocol in the later full-scale study. This approach has limitations insofar as generalisability is concerned; however, given that this pilot aimed to verify the instrument's functionality, this sampling approach is merited.

To avoid issues around power imbalances, I arranged for a coffee voucher from an on-campus café as compensation. Twenty participants were the recruitment goal for this study, and this broke down to five participants in four groups – five participants per model. Prospective participants were directed to a Qualtrics-hosted online portal which contained the participant information sheet (PIS) and the survey instrument (See [Appendix B](#)).

10.4.1.1.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE.

After being presented with the PIS, those who continued to complete the survey implied consent to use their data. Acquiring consent in this manner is a common practice in

anonymised online surveys ([Alessi & Martin, 2010](#)). Participants completed the survey online via the Qualtrics survey hosting platform. The survey logic is attached in [Appendix D](#). Below, the general flow is outlined.

First, basic demographic questions were presented to participants for their completion. After this, the first portion of the VSA instrument was presented to the participants. Participants were shown a foil question before proceeding on to the vignette and measures associated with the vignette. Participants received one vignette randomly allocated via the Qualtrics platform's randomisation functionality. While generalisability was not a concern for this pilot, it ensured the survey functioned as intended in the later studies.

After completing the vignette measures, participants were presented a second foil question and the remainder of the VSA instrument. To ensure anonymity, participants in pilot one completed a final self-generated identification code question as a means of receiving their compensation ([Direnga et al., 2016](#)). A code list and the key were provided to relevant lecturers to ensure that the participants could receive compensation. After the pilot closed, the lists were destroyed.

10.4.1.1.3 A NOTE ON THE FIRST PILOT.

Despite the convenience sampling protocol employed, there were issues obtaining participants required to test the full functionality of the survey instrument. While the final participant count for this study reached 19 out of the goal of 20, the bulk of responses appeared to be non-genuine due to short completion time, straight-lining, and non-completion of survey instruments ([Leiner, 2019](#)). As a result, study mortality was high and a second pilot was deemed necessary.

10.4.1.2 SECONDARY PILOT.

Between the first and second pilots, some changes were made to the survey instrument due to the change in sampling protocol. I will outline the differences in this section.

A quota sampling protocol was used based upon approximately ten per cent of the total study's target sample size (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The criteria for the quota were broad— at least high-school educated (or equivalent) adult (18+) Australians with approximately equal groups of male and female participants. While there are concerns

regarding generalisability, this method works well with Qualtrics' panelling options and ensures a robust dataset for analysis.

As before, participants were presented with an information sheet and gave their implied consent by completing the survey. This pilot was also completed on Qualtrics online survey platform. Given that participants in this study were accessed through Qualtrics' panelling services, compensation was provided by Qualtrics per their compensation schema. The larger sample meant all eight comparison groups were tested before upscaling as opposed to testing only the four fictional condition groups in the first pilot.

The program of study measure was removed from this pilot due to the change in sampling population. However, the rest of the survey remained unchanged and was administered the same as the first pilot (see [Appendix E](#) for the survey flow logic). The survey instrument required no adjustments after reviewing the data generated from the pilot, so the study was scaled up to full.

10.4.2 FULL-SCALE STUDY

The full-scale study sought to recruit 240 participants to distribute equally across randomly assigned groups. This sample size would allow for sufficient statistical power to be achieved within my budgetary constraints as determined through the use of *a priori* sample size calculations for 2x4 ANOVA research completed within GPower 3.1.

10.4.2.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE.

The sample population for this study was the same as the second pilot – adult Australians who held at least a high school education or equivalent and an equal division between male and female participants. A quota-sampling procedure was employed with Qualtrics online panelling services to obtain this sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualtrics arranged compensation for participation per their compensation schema.

Generalisability is an issue with quota sampling ([Creswell & Creswell, 2018](#)). As it concerns this research specifically, some demographic factors like ethnicity or nationality are not controlled. However, given the broad criteria and randomisation procedure, threats to the research's generalisability are partially mitigated. Tables 7, 8 and 9 in Sections 11.1 and 11.2, respectively, outline the demographics of the full-scale study population, which demonstrate the broad representation of the Australian population included within this study.

10.4.2.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE.

The research procedure for the full-scale study remains unchanged from the second pilot. Final data collected from respondents was controlled for non-genuine responses as part of the agreement with Qualtrics. As a result, occurrences of hasty completion, completion bots, straight-lining, and other forms of non-response patterns were accounted for within the data ([Leiner, 2019](#)).

As before, the survey instrument was hosted within Qualtrics' online surveying platform. Participants were presented with a PIS, and completing the survey implied their consent to participate in the research. Generally, participants first completed a block of demographic questions, then the first set of VSA instrument measures, followed by the first foil question. Then, participants were randomly presented a vignette to read and then the measures associated with the vignette were presented ([Appendix E](#) contains the display logic). From this point, the second foil question and the remainder of the VSA instrument were presented ([Appendix B](#)). The following section will outline the data analysis procedure.

10.5 ANALYSING THE DATA

This section outlines the analysis approach used for data obtained within the full-scale study. All analysis was conducted within SPSS v28. The first step was to recode the necessary measures for analysis ([Appendix B](#)).

Following this first step, descriptive statistics were conducted. Means and standard deviations were computed for each measure next. Once these initial steps were completed, reliability tests using Cronbach's α were conducted on the dimensions' index variables and the VSA measures. Cronbach's α is widely understood to ascertain the internal reliability of measures within studies ([Tavakol & Dennick, 2011](#)). The information gleaned from these tests informed what measures to retain or remove for later analytical steps. After the adjustments were made, bivariate correlations were computed on all remaining measures to ascertain the dataset's characteristics better.

The next step was to conduct principal components factor analysis (PCA) using varimax rotation to better understand how respondents were interpreting the questions. As part of controlling for ideological bias and other covariates, a simple linear regression was conducted. The factors from this test were computed into variables for hypothesis testing. The last preparatory step was to correlate the PCA factors to the predicted dimensions to ascertain the relationship between predicted and observed factors. Following this correlation step, the PCA factors were used to redefine the predicted constructs. The aim was to augment my initial understanding and construction with the observations from the data. Next, hypothesis testing for H_1 and H_2 was completed using analysis of variance tests. The next chapter presents the results of this research.

CHAPTER 11: STUDY RESULTS

11.0 PRESENTING THE RESULTS

In this chapter, I consider the study's findings for evaluating the social media-state relationship through the Order Index. Generally, H_{1a-d} and H_{2a-d} were supported, which provides confidence in the Order Index as a construct. Further, the survey instrument that was created to observe the social media-state relationship was reliable and its validity, preliminarily, is established. In turn, this supports the overall Order Index's merits as an instrument for observing social media-state relationships. To reach these conclusions, several aspects of the data needed to be analysed. I first consider the sample's demographic data before establishing the data's reliability. After establishing reliability, I shift toward understanding the measures' relationships, and dimension reduction to minimise the instrument's measurements whilst maintaining its statistical power. These steps culminate in testing the hypotheses, which were fully supported by the data. Thus, over this chapter, I establish the Order Index's efficacy for observing the social media-state relationship.

11.1 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Overall, 239 participants were recruited for this study. The sample comprised a diverse mix ages, sexes and education levels. Age is depicted below in Table 6; a plurality of the sample fell within the 25-44 age ranges (44.8%, $n = 107$).

Table 6

Distribution of Participant Ages

Age Range	N	%
18-24	24	10.0%
25-34	53	22.2%
35-44	54	22.6%
45-54	30	12.6%
55-64	32	13.4%
65+	46	19.2%

Note. $n = 239$.

Male participants accounted for 48.5 per cent of the sample ($n = 116$) and female participants accounted for 50.6 per cent ($n = 121$). Two participants (0.8%) were non-binary. Lastly, a plurality of participants reported secondary education was their highest education level (28%, $n = 67$), with representation across all education bands (Table 7, p. 199).

Table 7*Division of Participants by Highest Level of Education Attained*

Education Level	N	%
Secondary Education	67	28.0%
Certificate Level	50	20.9%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	30	12.6%
Bachelor Degree Level	56	23.4%
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate Level	15	6.3%
Postgraduate Degree	21	8.8%

Note. $n = 239$.

11.2 THE VERY SHORT AUTHORITARIANISM (VSA) SCALE

The VSA is presented as an indexed variable comprising six measures ([Bizumic & Duckitt, 2018](#)). Given that the VSA is used later in hypothesis testing, assessing its reliability is appropriate. Cronbach's alpha was computed for the initial six measures ($\alpha = .61$). While the alpha value could have been maximised through the removal of the VSA 1 measure (see Table 8), the decision was made to retain all six measures given they are part of a previously validated instrument; jettisoning a measure may compromise the reliability of the measures in uncontrolled ways ([Flake & Fried, 2020](#); [Hayes & Coutts, 2020](#)). Following the reliability results, a VSA indexed variable was computed using all six measures.

Table 8

VSA Reliability Results

VSA Measure	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VSA 1	23.36	52.33	.11	.66
VSA 2	25.89	42.58	.45	.52
VSA 3	24.23	46.08	.35	.56
VSA 4	24.33	46.66	.41	.54
VSA 5	25.56	42.87	.36	.56
VSA 6	23.03	46.55	.42	.54

The skewness and kurtosis of the demographics data were accounted for next. For age, the skewness (.17) was normal, but the data were platykurtic (-1.23); indicating that the age statistic had a somewhat flatter distribution; so, there was greater uniformity in the distribution. The skewness (.09) for sex was also normally distributed; however, the data were also platykurtic (-1.56). Once again, this indicates greater uniformity in the distribution between sexes. The skewness (.43) and kurtosis (-.93) were normally distributed in the data. Lastly, the skewness (.00) and kurtosis (.33) for the VSA Index was normally distributed.

11.3 COMPARISON GROUPS

The eight comparison groups resulting from the 2x4 factorial design were statistically equal. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to ensure equality across the eight comparison groups (Table 9). No statistically significant differences were observed between groups on the VSA index or on participants' ages, sexes, education levels. The groups are Free Market-Fictional, Free Market-Real, Social Consciousness-Fictional, Social Consciousness-Real, Strongman-Fictional, Strongman-Real, Big Brother-Fictional, and Big Brother-Real.

Table 9

Eight Comparison Groups Participant Distributions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	24.766	7	3.538	1.309	.247
	624.431	231	2.703		
	649.197	238			
Sex	3.139	7	.448	1.713	.107
	60.484	231	.262		
	63.623	238			
Education	24.150	7	3.450	1.342	.231
	593.725	231	2.570		
	617.874	238			
VSA Index	15.697	7	2.242	1.321	.241
	392.143	231	1.698		
	407.839	238			

Note. Overall n =239. Free Market-Fic n =30. Free Market-Real n =30. Social Consciousness-Fic n =30. Social Consciousness-Real n =29. Strongman-Fic n =30, Strongman-Real n =31. Big Brother-Fic n =29, Big Brother-Real n =30.

11.4 TESTING THE VIGNETTE MEASURES

Several observations were made while testing the vignette measures ([Appendix B](#)).

Principally, the predicted dimensions did not wholly align with the observed dimensions, a conclusion reached through principal components factor analysis (PCA). Similarly, the data was found to be reliable and there were several significant correlations across measures and dimensions. The final meaningful observation came from controlling the data for hypothesis testing – people’s ideological bias did impact Order Index scores, but the variance was not high enough to impact the objectivity of the vignette measures. Ultimately, this stage of analysis allowed for deeper insights into the dataset’s characteristics and created a process for removing unreliable, ineffective measures.

11.4.1 RELIABILITY STATISTICS

The dataset’s overall reliability must be ascertained before moving to hypothesis testing.

Reliability statistics, intuitively, help determine if the measures are consistently (i.e., reliably) yielding a similar result. I employed Cronbach’s alpha to determine reliability as it is intended to determine the internal consistency of scale measures – that is, determine if they are consistently observing the same phenomena (i.e., the measures are unidimensional). Further, before validity, beyond face validity, can be ascertained, it is necessary to determine reliability as reliability is a necessary component of more robust forms of validity ([Carmines & Zeller, 1979](#)).

Since I have four dimensions, comprised of four subscales, I need to compute the alpha statistic for each dimension. This initial step enables understanding the consistency of the individual dimensions with the aim of achieving acceptable reliability ([Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994](#)). Alpha for the Personal Freedom (Q1_1-5, [Appendix B](#)) dimension was observed to be .88 (Table 10, p. 203). With high reliability, I retained the five measures for the Personal Freedom dimension.

Table 10*Alpha Reliability for Personal Freedom Dimension*

Measure	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1_1	19.28	38.18	.73	.86
Q1_2	19.03	36.64	.81	.84
Q1_3	19.10	40.97	.64	.88
Q1_4	18.66	40.36	.67	.87
Q1_5	19.25	39.54	.75	.85

Note. Base alpha for all measures = .88. See full measures in [Appendix B](#).

The Corporate Freedom (Q2_1-5, [Appendix B](#)) dimension was observed to have an alpha of .55 (Table 11). However, if measure Q2_2 was removed, alpha was observed to be .71. So, Q2_2 was removed from the Corporate Freedom dimension in favour of improving reliability.

Table 11*Alpha Reliability for Corporate Freedom Dimension*

Measure	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q2_1	15.79	16.21	.59	.29
Q2_2	15.33	28.20	-.11	.71
Q2_3	16.60	20.26	.39	.45
Q2_4	16.91	21.87	.25	.52
Q2_5	16.45	17.98	.55	.34

Note. Base alpha for all measures = .55. See [Appendix B](#) for full measures.

For the State Control dimension (Q3_1-5, [Appendix B](#)), alpha was observed to be .66, initially. After removing measure Q3_4, alpha was observed as .76 (Table 12, p. 204). So, four measures were retained for the State Control dimension.

Table 12*Alpha Reliability for State Control Dimension*

Measure	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q3_1	18.64	20.92	.56	.52
Q3_2	18.53	24.65	.41	.60
Q3_3	18.04	22.06	.57	.53
Q3_4	19.77	28.37	.08	.76
Q3_5	18.41	22.35	.50	.56

Note. Base alpha for all measures = .66. Refer to [Appendix B](#) for full measures.

Lastly, the Societal Statism (Q4_1-5, [Appendix B](#)) dimension was observed to have an alpha of .71 (Table 13). All five measures were retained for this dimension.

Table 13*Alpha Reliability for Societal Statism Dimension*

Measure	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q4_1	17.48	24.86	.43	.68
Q4_2	17.49	22.91	.52	.64
Q4_3	17.81	23.60	.47	.66
Q4_4	17.60	22.09	.62	.60
Q4_5	18.31	26.16	.32	.72

Note. Base alpha for all measures = .71. See [Appendix B](#) for full measures.

After assessing each dimension's internal consistency, it is then necessary to determine if each dimension is measuring a unique phenomenon. This requirement stems from the multiple dimensions contained within the overall scale. To determine this, inter-dimension alpha was computed. If the internal alpha statistic reported above exceeds the observed inter-dimension alpha statistic, then an independent dimension is observed within the data. The inter-dimension alpha was observed to be .48. As illustrated in Table 14 (p. 205), removing no dimension would sufficiently increase the inter-dimension alpha statistic to exceed any of the four dimension's alpha statistic. Thus, the Personal Freedom, Corporate Freedom, State Control, and Societal Statism dimensions are concluded to be independent dimensions.

Table 14*Inter-Dimension Alpha Statistics*

Dimension	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Personal Freedom	53.41	115.52	.46	.43
Corporate Freedom	42.85	100.63	.04	.65
State Control	38.41	70.33	.39	.29
Societal Statism	39.87	65.09	.51	.14

Note. Base alpha for all dimensions = .48.

Since the dimension data are reliable, I have confidence in constructing the Order Index as a unidimensional scale. However, first it is necessary to better ascertain the underlying relationships between the dimensions and measures.

11.4.2 CORRELATIONS

A Pearson's bivariate correlation was conducted to understand the relationships among the remaining 18 measures ([Wooditch et al., 2021](#)). Several significant relationships emerge when reviewing the Pearson correlation results, as presented in Table 15 (p. 209), demonstrating relatively strong relationships among measures within and between dimensions. Since the data are correlated, this necessitates a further factor analysis (discussed in the next section) to reduce dimensionality within the data and further elucidate the relationships between measures.

Each measure of the Personal Freedom dimension correlated at the $p \leq .001$ level. The measures were:

- Q1: Regarding social media platforms in Country X, to what degree:
- Q1_1 – Are users able to share their political ideas or opinions?
 - Q1_2 – Are users able to protest or criticise the government?
 - Q1_3 – Can users expect to control their content?
 - Q1_4 – Can users expect privacy on the platform?
 - Q1_5 – Are users able to interact with foreign individuals, companies, or governments?

This result provides confidence in rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0); therefore, the measures relate to one another, particularly between the dimensions. So, understanding the

correlations' strength becomes pertinent ([Akoglu, 2018](#)). The highest correlation coefficients for Q1_1 were when Q1_1 was correlated with Q1_2, $r(237) = .80$, and Q1_5, $r(237) = .72$. Both results can be interpreted as a strong positive relationship. As Q1_1 relates to Q1_3, $r(237) = .44$, and Q1_4, $r(237) = .48$, a moderate positive relationship was observed. Similar relationships occur when preferencing the relationship between Q1_2 and its correlations against Q1_3-5, and so on. Ultimately, there is a moderate-to-strong positive correlation between each of the measures. Simply put, this indicates that each measure observes the Personal Freedom dimension.

Each measure of the Corporate Freedom dimension was observed to have a statistically significant relationship at $p \leq .001$. The measures were:

Q2: Regarding social media companies in Country X, to what degree:

Q2_1 – Are companies free to control their platforms?

Q2_3 – Are companies privately owned?

Q2_4 – Do companies trade or sell user data?

Q2_5 – Do companies do business with foreign individuals, companies, or governments?

So, again H_0 is rejected, which leads to the conclusion that the measures are related, particularly within dimensions. The highest observed correlation coefficient was the moderate positive relationship between Q2_1 and Q2_5, $r(237) = .53$. The other measures demonstrated a weak positive relationship. The second highest values were between Q2_1 and Q2_3, and Q2_3 and Q2_5; for both the observed $r(237)$ value was .38. So, while the relationships between the Corporate Freedom measures were not as strong as the Personal Freedom dimension, the Corporate Freedom measures appear to observe the same factor.

The State Control measures correlated at the $p \leq .001$ level. The measures were:

Q3: Regarding the government in Country X, to what degree:

Q3_1 – do they regulate the trade of user data?

Q3_2 – do they participate in social media?

Q3_3 – do they monitor social media activity?

Q3_5 – do they censor social media activity?

The highest correlation coefficient was observed when considering Q3_3 and Q3_5, $r(237) = .59$, $p \leq .001$. Otherwise, each measure correlated with others in the dimension at a minimum r of .23 with $p \leq .001$. So, again, a statistically significant weak-to-moderate positive correlation was observed. In turn, this points to an underlying factor that the measures observe, which is taken as the State Control dimension.

The last dimension is Societal Statism, which consists of measures Q4_1-5. The measures were:

Q4: Regarding obligations to the government in Country X, how much:

Q4_1 – do companies monitor content for the government?

Q4_2 – do companies censor political content?

Q4_3 – do companies follow social media laws?

Q4_4 – do users rely on government officials for information on social media?

Q4_5 – do users support the government on social media?

The correlation of the measures in this dimension indicates some early concerns. The significant relationships within the dimension had a p -value of at least .020, meaning H_0 can be rejected at the .05 level. However, there was no significant relationship observed between Q4_5 and Q4_1-2. With that being said, a moderate-positive relationship was observed between Q4_1 and Q4_2, $r(237) = .61$, $p \leq .001$. Otherwise, the remaining measures weakly-to-moderately correlated with one another, as illustrated in Table 15 (p. 209). There appears to be an underlying factor that guides participants' responses to the Societal Statism dimension's measures. However, further analysis is warranted to better determine the relationships between the predicted and the observed dimension.

After reviewing the dimensions individually, considering the cross-dimensional relationships was pertinent. First, I considered the Personal and Corporate Freedom dimensions, since they nominally concern freedom. The strongest cross-dimensional relationship observed was the moderate-positive correlation between Q1_5 and Q2_1, $r(237) = .59$, $p \leq .001$. The remaining significant correlations were weak to moderately positive with the highest observed $p \leq .020$ (Q1_5:Q2_4, $r(237) = .15$), the remaining measures were significant to at least the .01 level. This result hints at an underlying cross-dimensional factor between Personal and Corporate Freedom dimensions.

The most surprising correlation result was the weak negative correlation between Q1_4 and Q2_4, $r(237) = -.22$, $p \leq .001$. This result implies that as Q1_4 goes up, Q2_4 goes down and vice versa. The implication of this finding is that higher Personal Freedom dampens Corporate Freedom to sell user data, and the inverse is true. Subsequently, increased Corporate Freedom may lead to lower Personal Freedom. Since the observation is small, future research is merited to determine if that is the case. Overall, there appears to be a distinction between the dimensions – however, a broader underlying factor influences the Personal and Corporate freedom dimensions, which I suspect is freedom broadly.

I turn my attention to the cross-dimensional correlations for the State Control and Societal Statism dimensions. The highest observed correlation coefficient between dimensions was the moderate positive relationship between Q3_5 and Q4_2, $r(237) = .63$, $p \leq .001$. There was no significant correlation between Q3_3 and Q4_5. The remaining correlation relationships were statistically significant, with p -values ranging between .035-.000. For the measurement set as a whole, H_0 can be rejected at the .05 level, so the measures correlate to one another in varying degrees. From these results, there appears to be some underlying factor at play. Given the State Control and Societal Statism dimensions' natures, I suspect a broader conceptualisation of authoritarianism influences participants' responses. Nevertheless, further consideration of the observations is warranted.

Table 15

Pearson Correlation of All Measures

	Q1_1	Q1_2	Q1_3	Q1_4	Q1_5	Q2_1	Q2_3	Q2_4	Q2_5	Q3_1	Q3_2	Q3_3	Q3_5	Q4_1	Q4_2	Q4_3	Q4_4	Q4_5
Q1_1	1	.80**	.44**	.48**	.72**	.57**	.35**	.20**	.43**	.15*	-.11	.22**	.43**	.10	.33**	.10	.08	-.18**
Q1_2	.80**	1	.55**	.54**	.75**	.55**	.33**	.18**	.50**	.14*	-.11	.24**	.41**	.13*	.34**	.12	.12	-.17**
Q1_3	.44**	.55**	1	.71**	.49**	.31**	.21**	-.05	.27**	-.03	-.04	.14*	.12	.17**	.13*	-.12	.16*	-.24**
Q1_4	.48**	.54**	.71**	1	.54**	.24**	.19**	-.22**	.22**	.08	-.02	.27**	.18**	.19**	.20**	-.08	.08	-.29**
Q1_5	.72**	.75**	.49**	.54**	1	.59**	.41**	.15*	.52**	.07	-.13	.23**	.38**	.17**	.32**	.10	.17*	-.20**
Q2_1	.57**	.55**	.31**	.24**	.59**	1	.38**	.29**	.53**	.08	-.11	.15*	.24**	.12	.17**	.11	.06	-.13*
Q2_3	.35**	.33**	.21**	.19**	.41**	.38**	1	.32**	.38**	-.18**	-.20**	-.11	-.05	-.08	-.02	.11	-.03	-.08
Q2_4	.20**	.18**	-.05	-.22**	.15*	.29**	.32**	1	.37**	-.24**	-.26**	-.30**	-.16*	-.23**	-.21**	.05	-.12	.01
Q2_5	.43**	.50**	.27**	.22**	.52**	.53**	.38**	.37**	1	.09	-.09	.03	.14*	-.01	.12	.11	.10	-.03
Q3_1	.15*	.14*	-.03	.08	.07	.08	-.18**	-.24**	.09	1	.38**	.53**	.46**	.39**	.44**	.31**	.39**	.26**
Q3_2	-.11	-.11	-.04	-.02	-.13	-.11	-.20**	-.26**	-.09	.38**	1	.41**	.23**	.22**	.22**	.29**	.27**	.25**
Q3_3	.22**	.24**	.14*	.27**	.23**	.15*	-.11	-.30**	.03	.53**	.41**	1	.59**	.54**	.49**	.25**	.40**	.05
Q3_5	.43**	.41**	.12	.18**	.38**	.24**	-.05	-.16*	.14*	.46**	.23**	.59**	1	.40**	.63**	.35**	.41**	.14*
Q4_1	.10	.13*	.17**	.19**	.17**	.12	-.08	-.23**	-.01	.39**	.22**	.54**	.40**	1	.61**	.15*	.39**	.08
Q4_2	.33**	.34**	.13*	.20**	.32**	.17**	-.02	-.21**	.12	.44**	.22**	.49**	.63**	.61**	1	.30**	.44**	.09
Q4_3	.10	.12	-.12	-.08	.10	.11	.11	.05	.11	.31**	.29**	.25**	.35**	.15*	.30**	1	.48**	.38**
Q4_4	.08	.12	.16*	.08	.17*	.06	-.03	-.12	.10	.39**	.27**	.40**	.41**	.39**	.44**	.48**	1	.38**
Q4_5	-.18**	-.17**	-.24**	-.29**	-.20**	-.13*	-.08	.01	-.03	.26**	.25**	.05	.14*	.08	.09	.38**	.38**	1

Note. * = correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** = correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). See [Appendix B](#) for full measures.

11.4.2 PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS FACTOR ANALYSIS

After adjusting for reliability, the remaining 18 measures were subjected to principal components factor analysis through varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation ([Abdi & Williams, 2010](#); [Kaiser, 1958](#)). The correlation results initially confirm that the measures are observing differing dimensions. With that knowledge, I utilise PCA to further reduce the data's dimensionality, and maintain as much information as possible. Subsequently, this facilitates understanding and interpreting the dataset's characteristics. PCA relies on linear combinations of the data and prioritises fitting as much information as possible into the first factor (i.e., principal component). After the first principal component is derived, further rotations allow for determining the subsequent principal components. Thus, index variables that account for the largest variance in the data can be constructed. PCA was chosen over other methods of factor analysis (like exploratory factor analysis) since the data's dimensionality was primarily understood through initial correlations and dimension reduction was the aim ([Osborne, 2015](#)). The PCA's initial eigenvalues indicated that the first four factors explained a total of 64.91 per cent of the variance (28.63%, 20.14%, 10.52%, and 5.62%, respectively), see Table 16 below. Following rotation, the four components accounted for 21.59%, 20.01%, 12.11%, and 11.19%, respectively (64.91% total); further, there was no cross-loading of factors on any measures, see Table 17 (p. 211). The four factors produced by the PCA yielded a result that accounted for a sufficient degree of variance in the data. So, the conclusion that the four dimensions of Personal Freedom, Corporate Freedom, State Control, and Societal Statism influence the dataset can be supported.

Table 16

PCA Extracted Factors Variance Explanation

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Variance	Cumulative %
	% of			% of			% of		
1	5.15	28.63	28.63	5.15	28.63	28.63	3.89	21.59	21.59
2	3.62	20.14	48.77	3.62	20.14	48.77	3.60	20.01	41.61
3	1.89	10.52	59.29	1.89	10.52	59.29	2.18	12.11	53.72
4	1.01	5.62	64.91	1.01	5.62	64.91	2.01	11.19	64.91

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 17*Rotated Principal Component Analysis*

	Component (Varimax Factor, VF)			
	1	2	3	4
Q2_1	.77			
Q1_1	.75			
Q1_5	.74			
Q1_2	.74			
Q2_5	.74			
Q2_3				
Q2_4				
Q4_2		.79		
Q3_5		.78		
Q3_3		.78		
Q4_1		.70		
Q3_1		.67		
Q1_4			.86	
Q1_3			.85	
Q4_5				.75
Q4_3				.72
Q4_4				.68
Q3_2				

Note. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Rotation. Values below .63 are suppressed, per Comrey & Lee (1992).

In Table 17, a correlation matrix from the PCA rotation is presented. Values under the .63 (very good) threshold established by Comrey & Lee ([Comrey & Lee, 1992](#))(1992) are suppressed. The .63 threshold was utilised to maintain overall reliability (Table 18, p. 212), while still enabling dimension reduction. When the .63 threshold was applied to the varimax factors (VFs), VF 1 was observed to have an alpha of .88. Similarly, VF 2 was observed to have an alpha of .84 and VF 3 had an observed alpha of .83. These results indicate that the factors have a high degree of internal consistency in this configuration. VF 4 was observed to have a moderate alpha of .68. If Comrey & Lee's (1992) .71 (excellent) threshold is applied, reliability for VFs 1, 2, and 3 was maintained; though to a lesser degree for VF 2 and 3 (Table 18, p. 212). However, VF 4's alpha dropped to .56 at the .71 threshold. Thus, maximising dimension reduction sacrifices dimension reliability. Therefore, utilising the

slightly lower .63 threshold maximises possible dimension reduction whilst maintaining reliability. Subsequently, three additional measures (Q2_3-4, Q3_2) were excluded from the dataset.

Table 18

Varimax Factor Reliability at Differing Thresholds

Varimax Factor	Cronbach's Alpha at .63	Cronbach's Alpha at .71
	Threshold*	Threshold*
VF 1	.88	.88
VF 2	.84	.80
VF 3	.83	.80
VF 4	.68	.56

Note. *Thresholds are recommendations from Comrey & Lee (1992), .63 = very good and .71 = excellent.

So, with reliable VFs presented, the next step was to determine the relationship between the VFs and the predicted dimensions. From the correlation matrix, VF 1 was defined as the Corporate Freedom dimension, given the measures that comprise the factor (Q1_1,2,5 and Q2_1,5; [Appendix B](#)). VF 2 was defined as State Control due to the measures comprising the factor (Q3_1,3,5 and Q4_1,2; [Appendix B](#)). VF 3 was considered as Personal Freedom due to the measures comprising the factor (Q1_3,4; [Appendix B](#)). Lastly, VF 4 was defined as Societal Statism due to the measures loaded onto the factor (Q4_3-5; [Appendix B](#)). With the VFs assigned, I computed the Order Index utilising the new VF-adjusted dimensions for hypothesis testing.

11.4.3 CONTROLLING FOR COVARIATE INFLUENCES

Age, sex, education level and ideological bias were controlled as covariates that may influence Order Index score results through a simple linear regression test ([Boone & Boone, 2012](#); [Cattaneo et al., 2018](#)). Particular concern was paid to the potential for ideological bias to influence participants' responses, observed through the VSA measures. The VSA measures were indexed to represent participants' underlying ideological bias. Age, sex, and education level were dummy coded to enable regression analysis, since the variables represent categorical data ([Alkharusi, 2012](#)). From Table 19 (p. 213), the only significant regression

observed was when ideological bias was controlled along with the other covariates. However as shown in Table 20, the effect of ideological bias is non-significant. Thus, when the covariates are controlled, their impact on the overall Order Index is limited, providing confidence in the scale's objectivity.

Table 19

Linear Regression Results, Controlling for Covariates

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.04 ^a	.00	-.01	2.01	.00	.18	2	236	.836
2	.09 ^b	.01	-.02	2.02	.01	.33	5	231	.896
3	.20 ^c	.04	-.01	2.01	.03	1.48	5	226	.198
4	.30 ^d	.09	.04	1.96	.05	12.01	1	225	<.001

Note. a. Predictors: Sex; b. Predictors: (Constant), Sex and Age; c. Predictors: (Constant), Sex, Age, and Education Level; d. Predictors: (Constant), Sex, Age, Education Level, and Ideological Bias (VSA Index)

Table 20

Covariate Linear Regression ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.44	2	.72	.18	.836
	Residual	950.56	236	4.03		
	Total	952.00	238			
2	Regression	8.14	7	1.16	.28	.960
	Residual	943.86	231	4.09		
	Total	952.00	238			
3	Regression	38.04	12	3.17	.78	.667
	Residual	913.96	226	4.04		
	Total	952.00	238			
4	Regression	84.36	13	6.49	1.68	.066
	Residual	867.64	225	3.86		
	Total	952.00	238			

Note. a. Predictors: Sex; b. Predictors: (Constant), Sex and Age; c. Predictors: (Constant), Sex, Age, and Education Level; d. Predictors: (Constant), Sex, Age, Education Level, and Ideological Bias (VSA Index)

11.5 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Generally, H_{1a-d} and H_{2a-d} were supported by hypothesis tests using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). I will elaborate on the tests' results in detail over the next sections.

11.5.1 HYPOTHESIS ONE RESULTS

H_1 predicted that participants in the four fictional comparison groups will score differently on the Order Index, validating the model. The first hypothesis tested the four fictional vignettes. The grouping factor for testing the hypothesis was vignette group with each vignette presenting one of the proposed models. The vignette was the independent variable. The Order Index was the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA.

In testing the comparison groups, the variance assumption was violated, which means that the tested data were not normally distributed or were not homogeneous. So, Welch's ANOVA was used to account for this violation ([Delacre et al., 2019](#)). The Welch test for vignette model's impact on the Order Index score was significant, $F(3,62.77) = 7.51, p = \leq .001$. The Welch statistic is sufficient to reject the critical F value of 3.63 ($p = .01$). Thus, this test's *null* is rejected in favour of the test hypothesis ([University of Sussex, 2005](#)). In other words, vignette exposure affects the Order Index score, thus indicating a distinction between the models. A Games-Howell post hoc comparisons test was utilised to account for the variance violation ([Ruxton & Beauchamp, 2008](#)). The Games-Howell post hoc differs from the Tukey's Least Significant Difference post hoc test in that it does not assume normal distributions nor homogeneity in the data; instead, it accounts for the variance assumption violation through a ranked pairwise comparison of variances and observations ([Hilton & Armstrong, 2006](#)).

The results of the Games-Howell test are outlined below in Table 21 (p. 215). Some significant findings emerged from this test. First, the libertarian models appear to be harder to distinguish between one another as indicated by the non-significant results between the Free Market and Social Consciousness groups. This result was observed on the authoritarian side as well. The most significant differences ($p \leq .002$) were between the poles – Free Market and Big Brother. Free Market was also significantly different from the Strongman model ($p \leq .005$). When Social Consciousness was independent, the most significant difference was found with Big Brother ($p = .014$). There was a significant result at the .1 level between Social Consciousness and Strongman models ($p = .052$).

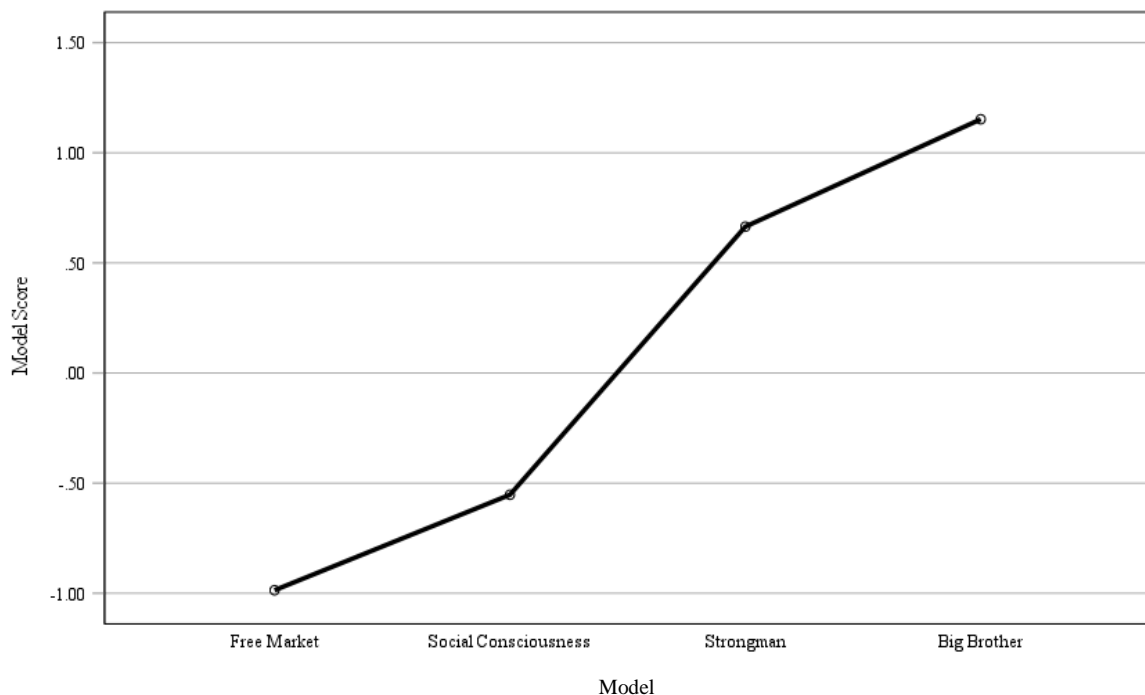
Table 21*Games-Howell Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test, Fictional Condition*

(I) Model	(J) Model	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Free Market	SC	-.43	.40	.704	-1.50	.63
	Strongman	-1.65	.47	.005	-2.90	-.41
	Big Brother	-2.14	.54	.002	-3.59	-.69
Social Consciousness	Free Market	.43	.40	.704	-.63	1.50
	Strongman	-1.22	.46	.052	-2.44	.01
	Big Brother	-1.71	.54	.014	-3.14	-.27
Strongman	Free Market	1.65	.47	.005	.41	2.90
	Social Consciousness	1.22	.46	.052	-.01	2.44
	Big Brother	-.49	.59	.842	-2.05	1.08
Big Brother	Free Market	2.14	.54	.002	.69	3.59
	Social Consciousness	1.71	.54	.014	.27	3.14
	Strongman	.49	.59	.842	-1.08	2.05

As indicated by Figure 8, each model's Order Index score is distinct from one another. The trend in Order Index scores reflects the prediction that the lowest value, the freest model, is the Free Market. The second lowest is Social Consciousness. The second highest is the Strongman model. Lastly, the highest Order Index scores were observed for the Big Brother model. Thus, this appears to indicate a fair amount of support for H_{1a-d} and H_1 overall.

Figure 8

Fictional Condition Order Index Scores



11.5.2 HYPOTHESIS TWO RESULTS

H_2 predicted that participants in the four real-world comparison groups will score differently on the Order Index, validating the model. The second hypothesis tested the four real-world vignettes. The grouping factor for testing the hypothesis was vignette group with each vignette presenting one of the proposed models. The vignette was the independent variable. The Order Index was the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested using a one-way ANOVA.

As before, the variance assumption was violated, so, Welch's ANOVA was used again (Delacre et al., 2019). The Welch test for vignette's impact on Order Index score was significant, $F(3,62.3) = 26.22, p \leq .001$. The Welch statistic is sufficient to reject the critical $F = 3.63$ (p

$\leq .01$), so this test's H_0 is rejected ([University of Sussex, 2005](#)). This result indicates that the vignette significantly impacts the Order Index score, thus indicating a distinction between the models, which preliminarily supports H_2 . As before, a Games-Howell test was conducted to compensate for the variance violation.

The Games-Howell test for H_2 is outlined in Table 22. The results indicate significant differences between the Free Market, Strongman and Big Brother models. When Free Market was independent, the results for Strongman and Big Brother were significant at the .001 level. Interestingly, as before, there was no significant difference between the Free Market and Social Consciousness. The same holds when considering the differences between the Strongman and Big Brother models.

Table 22

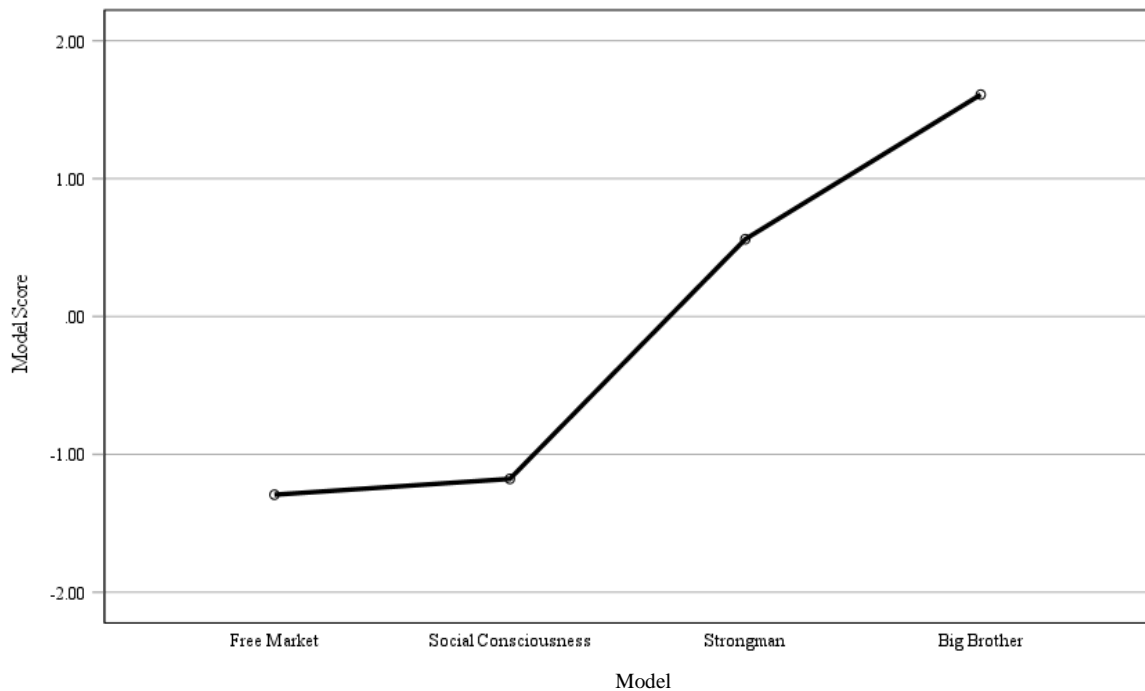
Games-Howell Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test, Real-World Condition

(I) Models	(J) Models	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Free Market	Social Consciousness	-.11	.27	.974	-.83	.60
	Strongman	-1.85	.36	<.001	-2.80	-.91
	Big Brother	-2.90	.38	<.001	-3.91	-1.89
Social Consciousness	Free Market	.11	.27	.974	-.60	.83
	Strongman	-1.74	.38	<.001	-2.75	-.73
	Big Brother	-2.79	.40	<.001	-3.85	-1.72
Strongman	Free Market	1.85	.36	<.001	.91	2.80
	Social Consciousness	1.74	.38	<.001	.73	2.75
	Big Brother	-1.05	.46	.117	-2.27	.17
Big Brother	Free Market	2.90	.38	<.001	1.89	3.91
	Social Consciousness	2.79	.40	<.001	1.72	3.85
	Strongman	1.05	.46	.117	-.17	2.27

From Figure 9, generally, the expected trend is observed. The difference between the Social Consciousness and Free Market models is slight, which was also expected. I foresaw difficulties in establishing a real-world representation of the Social Consciousness models, and subsequently for people to observe it, due to no clear example of the model in existence. So, a distinction emerges between the libertarian and authoritarian wings, and one emerges between the four models. Ultimately, the pattern predicted by H_{2a-d} is observed. Thus, the result suggests a fair amount of support for H_{2a-d} , that participants in the real-world condition's scores will align with the predict ranking.

Figure 9

Order Index Scores for Real-World Condition



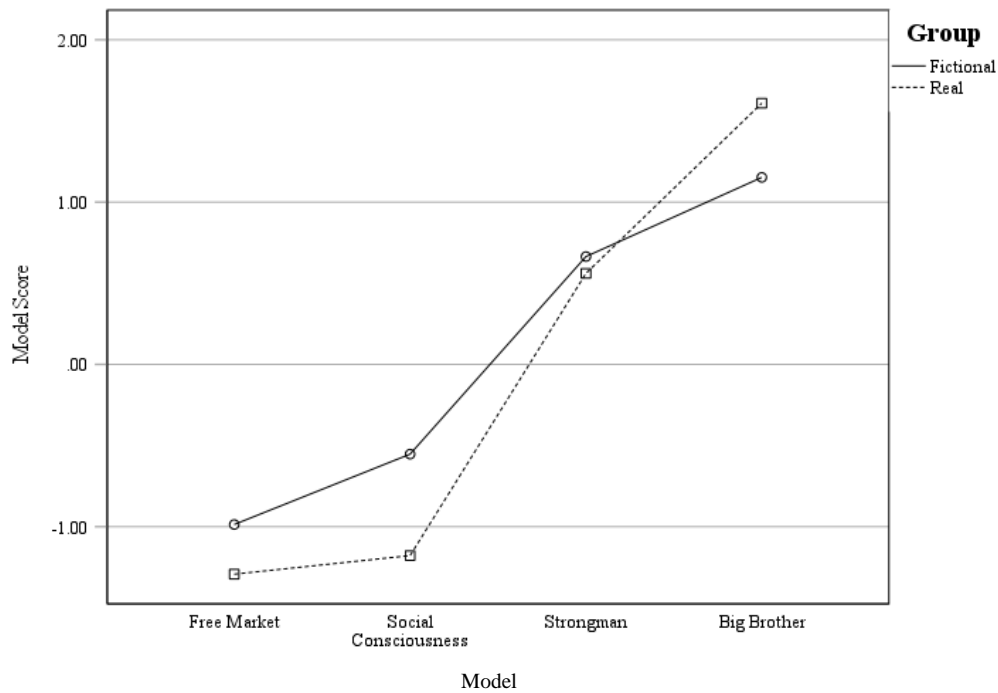
A natural extension of hypothesis one and two's results is that there is no difference between the fictional and real condition. To confirm this, a 2x4 factorial ANOVA was conducted using the vignette models and fictional or real-world conditions as independent variables to determine their impact on the Order Index score (Meirelles et al., 2003). The result did not find a significant difference between the fictional or real-world conditions in any model, so H_0 is accepted here.

When the two groups are plotted together on a graph, the discrepancy between the fictional and real-world representation of Social Consciousness model becomes apparent. However,

when considering the other three models, their close approximation indicates ease in identifying them, whether they be fictional or real, see Figure 10. Subsequently, this further affirms the conclusion that the framework's models are readily observable by the casual observer.

Figure 10

Fictional and Real-World Conditions Order Index Scores



11.6 ORDER INDEX VALIDITY

The Order Index is concluded to have a degree of construct validity as theorised and observed. This conclusion is reached through considering Messick's (1990) six facets for construct validity: content, substantiveness, internal structure, external structure, generalisability, and social consequences. Firstly, the Order Index reliably assesses the content it was meant to observe as indicated by the support for H_1 and H_2 ; ergo, it has content validity. Secondly, given that the results from the hypothesis testing align with the theoretical framework developed as part of the thesis, the Order Index is substantive. Thirdly, the Order Index's dimensions (Personal Freedom, Corporate Freedom, State Control, and Societal Statism) are internally consistent and distinct, as discussed in 11.4.1. Thus, the Order Index's internal structure considerations are met. Fourthly, the Order Index is sufficiently divergent from the VSA Index ($r(237) = -.23, p \leq .001$). This establishes the discriminant validity of the Order Index given that the Order Index and VSA are sufficiently distinct constructs theoretically (Bizumic & Duckitt, 2018). Therefore, the external structure is sound. Fifthly, given the sample size and demographics, the Order Index results can be generalised, at least, to the broader Australian population – providing an initial indication of its generalisability. Further, supporting this is the use of a 2x4 factorial design. This approach allows testing the Order Index in multiple potential conditions. Since the Order Index functions as intended and was tested on a representative sample of the Australian population, some generalisability can be asserted. Lastly, Messick posits that pursuing validity is not enough, researchers ought to be mindful of the consequences of the labels and constructs they develop and ensure the tests have merit (Messick, 1990). The Order Index has intrinsic value in conceptualising how the Neo-Gramscian approach considers differing ideas of order within society and has utility in bridging the critical and empirical gap. Thus, the Order Index's intrinsic value merits its use; ergo, it has positive social consequence. Ultimately, through considering Messick's (1990) six facets, the Order Index's construct validity is preliminarily affirmed.

11.7 CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the framework's models align with participants' responses to the survey instrument. H_1 and H_2 are supported by the tests. When controlling for the covariates as part of hypothesis testing, the conclusion can be reached that the survey instrument elicits objective responses in either fictional or real-world conditions, independent of covariates. Thus, the survey instrument is objective and reliable for observing the social media-state relationship.

The Order Index instrument was observed to be reliable, and its construct validity is preliminarily established. It is worth noting that due to methodological limitations, I cannot fully establish construct validity as convergent validity cannot be determined. However, establishing discriminant validity allows confidence in asserting a degree of construct validity. Further, the instrument was reduced by five measures, whilst retaining its statistical power and multidimensionality. Thus, the Order Index now comprises 15 measures, spread over four dimensions, rather than the initial 20 measures. A more efficient instrument will facilitate future research through further alleviating participants' burden. Further, it will reduce costs associated with data collection, allowing for more robust sampling procedures. Thus, further validating the Order Index is a future research area.

Broadly speaking, the study results indicate that the theoretical models developed as part of the social media-state relationship framework I propose are observable in the world today by the casual observer. This conclusion further advances the need for understanding the social media-state relationship; and, more importantly, provides a tool for assessing the relationship.

**CHAPTER 12: CONSIDERING THE THEORY, RESULTS,
& DRAWING FINAL CONCLUSIONS**

12.0 REVIEWING THE THESIS

The thesis I have presented asserts a meaningful, applicable normative framework for the social media-state relationship. I considered the history of communications technologies, media-state relations, and hegemonic competition to accomplish this. Further, I sought to build upon past scholarship by identifying the disparate nature of social media scholarship and provide a means of unifying disparate areas of scholarship utilising Siebert et al.'s (1956) original *Four Theories* framework as a starting point. Extending my framework beyond the theoretical realm, I constructed an instrument to quantify the social media-state relationship and an empirical study to test the framework's assumptions. I will make sense of the thesis' overarching conclusions in this chapter.

12.1 GENERAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Three research questions have guided the thesis. The first is “what is the social media-state relationship, and how can it be characterised?” As a result of my efforts thus far, I can resolve that question. The social media-state relationship can be defined as the ongoing hegemonic competition between actors within and without states as they vie for power within a political economy based on the exchange of information, economic, and social capital. These capital forms represent currencies that are leveraged to accumulate power. Information in the form of knowledge and data is applied to socio-economic situations to elicit positive outcomes for the actor. The actor expends information capital to gain social and economic capital. Subsequently, economic capital can be understood as currency and assets within the traditional economy. By applying economic capital, an actor can gain information and social capital, transforming economic capital into power. Lastly, social capital is understood as an actor’s ability to influence social discourse and politics – an actor that garners public support can expend that support to gain power within the political economy. Broadly, these exchanges underpin the observable characteristics of the social media-state relationship.

Those characteristics are illustrated through social media’s increasing ubiquity globally. As part of this spread, the media’s historic gatekeeping role has been undermined by social media’s reliance on individual users to generate content. Subsequently, social media represent a further democratising of knowledge and discourse that threatens the continued supremacy of contemporary hegemonic actors – those behind the governments within states. The social media-state relationship is further characterised by the tensions emergent within the data economy, an industry whose spread has been catalysed by social media’s spread. Social media’s influence on the data economy illustrates information’s rise in value. Underpinning these characteristics of the social media-state relationship is the near-instantaneous spread of information globally among users, subsequently demonstrating the uniqueness of social media’s scale and speed. I can address the second and third research questions with this understanding and characterisation of the social media-state relationship in mind.

The second question guiding the thesis was, “what models might be developed to understand emergent phenomena around the social media-state relationship?”

Fundamentally, what I present throughout the thesis is a wide-reaching framework to normalise an understanding of social media-state relationships globally. As part of that framework, four models, inspired by Siebert et al.'s (1956) original four models, were developed and discussed – the Strongman, Big Brother, Free Market, and Social Consciousness models. Three of these models are observable contemporarily. The fourth, Social Consciousness, is best illustrated when considering disparate aspects of individual societies, which elicits an understanding of how a Social Consciousness state may appear. Applying the models to cases that seem to fit them provides initial insights into their effectiveness and establishes face validity; however, mere case studies are insufficient to determine the framework's overall effectiveness.

Subsequently, addressing the third research question, “how effective is the framework and its models at explaining observable phenomena around the social media-state relationship,” becomes pertinent. To answer this question, I developed a survey instrument to quantify the social media-state relationship in differing states, fictional or real. To validate this instrument, I conducted an empirical study to determine the instrument's efficacy. The results of that study provide a preliminary indication that the social media-state relationship is readily observable. Further, the survey instrument and Order Index were found to be reliable. Similarly, the research established preliminary construct validity for the Order Index scale. Thus, the tool I developed effectively quantifies the social media-state relationship and provides further evidence for the relationship's existence beyond the theoretical realm.

To extend the validity point further, the research was limited to establishing discriminant validity; convergent validity could not be established. However, supporting the hypothesis aligns the model's results with other indices like those employed by Freedom House. On that point, recalling Giannone's (2014) Neo-Gramscian critique of Freedom House's approach is pertinent. I have adopted a Neo-Gramscian perspective to develop models, tested them empirically, and reached a conclusion that aligns with other frameworks. Thus, the thesis minimises Giannone's criticism of Freedom House's approach through reaches a similar conclusion within the Neo-Gramscian perspective. So, in this thesis, I conclude that the social media-state relationship can be observed and quantified, and a unified understanding can be achieved by applying the framework I present. I expand my reasoning for this conclusion in the next section.

12.2 CONSIDERING THE CHAPTERS

Throughout the thesis, I constructed a foundation spanning the history of communications technologies, media-state scholarship, contemporary social media scholarship and the perspectives afforded through IR theories. In accomplishing this, I have demonstrated that social media is unique from previous communications technologies and supported how the social media-state relationship can be characterised.

In chapter two, I illustrated that there had been some form of media-state relationship throughout civilised society's history, even if how a state is defined historically differs from today. Further, chapter two demonstrated that a political economy of power has underpinned how actors have engaged in hegemonic competition throughout history. As a result of social media's advent, the power political economy, in scale and speed, has been fundamentally altered by the erosion of media as gatekeepers and fragmented journalism, the globalisation of information flows, and states' varying responses to social media's emergence.

Chapter three continues to illustrate social media's differences from previous communications technologies. The chapter also highlights how recent efforts to model social media's impacts, while exceptionally useful, are limited in their ability to unify scholarship. Siebert et al.'s (1956) *Four Theories*' utility is discussed as a framework I can build upon for the thesis. However, the discussion demonstrates a need for a framework to facilitate research efforts regarding the social media-state relationship. Chapter three further indicates that previous research has established social media's societal impacts and its globalising nature in disparate cases, thus, illustrating that a framework to facilitate discourse across society would benefit research endeavours.

Further, highlighting social media's transnational influences illustrates a need to widen my framework's perspective if it is to account for influences on social media and states effectively. Subsequently, chapter four discusses paradigmatic approaches to international relations. A robust discussion of Realism, Liberalism and other Critical theories' merits concluded that the Neo-Gramscian approach enables an effective discourse on the power political economy within states and abroad.

Thus, in chapters two, three and four, I construct the foundation upon which the social media-state framework I propose is built. From there, chapters five through nine establish the framework I propose. Chapter five contains a general overview of the framework to synthesise the cross-discipline and cross-paradigm approaches I employ. Chapter six is where I establish the Strongman model and apply it to Russia.

Conversely, chapter seven discusses the Big Brother model and its applicability to China. Chapter eight presents and applies the Free Market model to the United States. Lastly, chapter nine constructs and applies the Social Consciousness model to the United Kingdom. Applying the respective model to each case throughout these chapters indicates they fit the proposed model. Further, my efforts in chapters five through nine resulted in a blended framework that bridges the Communication and International Relations disciplines and Empiricist and Critical scholarly paradigms and is distilled into a form that facilitates generating hypotheses.

In chapter ten, I generate hypotheses to validate my framework. This chapter provides the research design and rationale for the study that preliminarily validated the framework I propose. Chapter eleven discusses the study's results. Between these two chapters, the conclusion is that the framework is observed as expected. There is a caveat made for the Social Consciousness model as that one is expected to not exist in the world yet. Thus, the study's results support the overall framework I have presented throughout the thesis.

12.3 OVERARCHING IMPLICATIONS

The thesis provides a framework for understanding the emergent social media-state relationship. I have provided preliminary support for the assumptions underpinning the framework's theoretical perspective. Subsequently, the framework I propose is an extension of previous media-state relations scholarship into a distinct niche within the literature. I have demonstrated through this thesis a way to bridge disciplines and paradigms to find a way forward in normalising social media scholarship across states. Subsequently, the primary beneficiaries of this research are other scholars who can utilise the framework I have constructed to expand our collective understanding of the social media-state relationship in its forms worldwide.

Further, a potential result of this effort is an efficient language system to describe social media-state relationships in states concisely. If this framework's models were applied generally, then a means to quickly explain the social media-state relationship in states to non-academic stakeholders becomes a meaningful result of the thesis. By asserting a normative framework, an understanding of social media's societal impact can be quickly imparted to others.

Beyond the theoretical realm, the methodology I have chosen to conduct the empirical aspects of my research is replicable. Thus, the preliminary approach I propose can be easily expanded. Some may assert a bias in the framework, given that it is derived from a Western-cultural perspective; however, future research can alleviate this. Similarly, the other methodological limitation – recruiting casual observers instead of experts – can be alleviated with further research. The current approach generates insights into how non-experts interpret the social media-state relationship, which can facilitate translating research outcomes from academia to businesses, governments, and the public. Thus, the thesis has potential ramifications for several stakeholders in society. Immediately, the research contributions highlight the academic benefits of my current efforts.

12.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

Briefly, the primary research contribution is establishing the social media-state relationship conceptually through a blended framework to understand and characterise the relationship across states. The conceptual framework is unique in that it bridges the Communications and International Relations disciplines. In turn, it highlights the merits of interdisciplinary approaches to global issues. Further, this framework bridges theoretical paradigms in that it is conceptualised within the critical perspective and validated from the empirical perspective. Thus, this thesis's primary contribution is a blended conceptual framework of the social media-state relationship.

The second principal research contribution is the creation and preliminary validation of an instrument and statistical index to observe and quantify the social media-state relationship. Through establishing the instrument and Order Index, this thesis provides a means of objectively observing the social media-state relationships worldwide, model those relationships, and understand the deeper nature of them. Subsequently, through establishing the social media-state relationship conceptual framework, new research avenues are established, which I will discuss in the next section. Lastly, through utilising the VSA as part of this research, the thesis provides additional support for Bizumic and Duckitt's (2018) VSA scale.

12.5 FUTURE RESEARCH POTENTIAL

From the thesis, there are several potential areas for future research. Immediately, there is replicating the study conducted as part of the thesis to gain further validation for the instrument I developed. Assuming the instrument is revalidated, there is a wide scope of potential research.

Firstly, alleviating concerns around cultural bias becomes relevant – so repeating the data collection in non-Western nations becomes a meaningful area of future research. Subsequently, recruiting participants in China and Russia may yield interesting insights into other perspectives on the social media-state relationship. Secondly, constructing a Delphi-type approach to quantifying the social media-state relationship may yield insights that differ from utilising casual observers. Thirdly, incorporating other indices into the research would enable establishing the Order Index's construct validity further – thus, this is a potential area for future research. These research areas provide avenues for new knowledge contributions whilst alleviating the thesis's limitations.

Given that the framework is intended to apply to states other than the four I engaged with as part of the thesis, future research may attempt to quantify the social media-state relationship in other countries. Immediately, Australia is a ready example, given that the thesis was undertaken at an Australian university. Beyond that case, quantifying the social media-state relationship in developing states worldwide may elicit insights into how emerging data economies and social media-state relationships are being impacted by globalised information systems. So, states in Asia and Africa and other Small Island Developing States may elicit meaningful insights.

The spectrum-based nature of the instrument I have developed allows for ranking states similar to the work of Freedom House and other institutions. So, immediately, quantifying the social media-state relationship and determining its nature in other states is a future avenue. Since my analysis halted at the start of April 2022, there have been several events globally – new EU regulations for social media, Elon Musk's continued pursuit of Twitter, and the continued social media blackout around Russia's invasion of Ukraine ([English, 2022](#); [Jones, 2022](#); [Satariano, 2022](#)). These examples illustrate the perpetual research potential the thesis provides – the social media-state relationship is constantly evolving and would need routine re-evaluation in states. So, future research could

generate an updated understanding of the social media-state relationship once a state's initial relationship has been modelled. Ultimately, the framework I have presented in this thesis enables these research futures.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, J. (2013). Introduction: Assessing the social and political impact of the internet and new social media in Asia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 43(4), 579-590.
- Abdi, H., & Williams, L. J. (2010). Principal component analysis. *Wiley interdisciplinary reviews: computational statistics*, 2(4), 433-459.
- Abdullakkutty, K. (2018). Internationalizing Social Media: The Case of 'Twiplomacy' in India and Russia. *IUP Journal of International Relations*, 12(1), 7-23.
- Abu-El-Rub, N., & Mueen, A. (2019). Botcamp: Bot-driven interactions in social campaigns. The World Wide Web Conference,
- Adams, S. (2017). *Un-title II-ed: What reclassification means*. Center for Democracy & Technology. Retrieved 23 Mar from <https://cdt.org/insights/un-title-ii-ed-what-reclassification-means/>
- Agichtein, E., Castillo, C., Donato, D., Gionis, A., & Mishne, G. (2008). Finding high-quality content in social media. Proceedings of the 2008 international conference on web search and data mining,
- Aguilera, M., Morer, I., Barandiaran, X., & Bedia, M. (2013). Quantifying political self-organization in social media. Fractal patterns in the Spanish 15M movement on Twitter. *Artificial Life Conference Proceedings* 13,
- Ahluwalia, P., & Miller, T. (2014). The prosumer. *Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 20(4-5), 259-261.
- Akoglu, H. (2018). User's guide to correlation coefficients. *Turkish journal of emergency medicine*, 18(3), 91-93.
- Alaimo, C. (2021). From people to objects: The digital transformation of fields. *Organization Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01708406211030654>
- Alaimo, C., Kallinikos, J., & Valderrama, E. (2020). Platforms as service ecosystems: Lessons from social media. *Journal of Information Technology*, 35(1), 25-48.
- Alessi, E. J., & Martin, J. I. (2010). Conducting an Internet-based survey: Benefits, pitfalls, and lessons learned. *Social Work Research*, 34(2), 122-128.
- Alizada, N., Cole, R., Gastaldi, L., Grahn, S., Hellmeier, S., Kolvani, P., Lachapelle, J., Lührmann, A., Maerz, S. F., Pillai, S., & Lindberg, S. I. (2021). *Autocratization turns viral: Democracy report 2021*.

- Alkharusi, H. (2012). Categorical variables in regression analysis: A comparison of dummy and effect coding. *International Journal of Education*, 4(2), 202.
- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.
- Allison, A. L. (2020). Requirements for obtaining spectrum and of orbital approvals for small satellite constellations. In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of small satellites: Technology, design, manufacture, applications, economics and regulation* (pp. 1263-1285). Springer International Publishing.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_71
- Amorim, G., Costa Lima, R., & Sampaio, B. (2018). Broadband internet and protests: Evidence from the Occupy movement. *Available at SSRN*.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=2764162>
- Analytica, O. (2021). US companies in China face more challenges. *Emerald Expert Briefings*.
- Ananyev, M., Xefteris, D., Zudenkova, G., & Petrova, M. (2019). Information and communication technologies, protests, and censorship. *Protests, and Censorship*
https://wp.nyu.edu/lseyu2019/wp-content/uploads/sites/14210/2019/04/Zudenkova_Petrova.pdf
- Andi, S. (2021). How and why do consumers access news on social media? In *2021 Digital news report*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021/how-and-why-do-consumers-access-news-social-media>
- Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2014). Mobilization through online social networks: The political protest of the indignados in Spain. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(6), 750-764.
- Ansolabehere, S., & Schaffner, B. F. (2014). Does survey mode still matter? Findings from a 2010 multi-mode comparison. *Political Analysis*, 22(3), 285-303.
- Archetti, C. (2010). Media impact on diplomatic practice: An evolutionary model of change.
- Arnaudo, D. (2017). Computational propaganda in Brazil: Social bots during elections.
- Arnold, A. (2018). *Do we really need to start regulating social media?* Forbes.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/07/30/do-we-really-need-to-start-regulating-social-media/#3c7c7688193d>

- Arora, P. (2019). General data protection regulation—a global standard? Privacy futures, digital activism, and surveillance cultures in the global south *Surveillance & Society*, 17(5), 717-725.
- Atkinson, M. J., Sinha, A., Hass, S. L., Colman, S. S., Kumar, R. N., Brod, M., & Rowland, C. R. (2004). Validation of a general measure of treatment satisfaction, the Treatment Satisfaction Questionnaire for Medication (TSQM), using a national panel study of chronic disease. *Health and quality of life outcomes*, 2(1), 1-13.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2001, 22/02/2001). *Australian standard classification of education*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 9/12 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/02D465407348EBEA CA256AAF001FCA57?opendocument>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2014, 11/03/2014). *Age standard*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 9/12 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/age-standard/2014-version-17>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016, 2/02/2016). *Standard for sex and gender variables*. Australian Bureau of Statistics Retrieved 9/12 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/2016>
- Aylmer, G. E. (1980). The meaning and definition of " property" in seventeenth-century England. *Past & Present*(86), 87-97.
- Azzarelli, T. (2020). Obtaining landing licenses and permission to operate LEO constellations on a global basis. In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of small satellites: Technology, design, manufacture, applications, economics and regulation* (pp. 1287-1313). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_72
- Badawy, A., Ferrara, E., & Lerman, K. (2018). Analyzing the digital traces of political manipulation: The 2016 Russian interference Twitter campaign. 2018 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM),
- Badawy, A., Lerman, K., & Ferrara, E. (2019). Who falls for online political manipulation? Companion Proceedings of The 2019 World Wide Web Conference,

- Baker, C. E. (1989). *Human liberty and freedom of speech*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Baker, P., & McEnery, T. (2015). Who benefits when discourse gets democratised? Analysing a Twitter corpus around the British Benefits Street debate. In *Corpora and Discourse Studies* (pp. 244-265). Springer.
- Bakir, V., & McStay, A. (2018). Fake news and the economy of emotions: Problems, causes, solutions. *Digital journalism*, 6(2), 154-175.
- Bambauer, D. E. (2013). Privacy versus security. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 103, 667.
- Bao, H. (2019). 'Rice Bunnies'—# MeToo in China: A hashtag movement and women's empowerment through social media. Proceedings of EVA London 2019,
- Baptista, E. (2021). *Communist Party is not China's only political party – there are eight others*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved 30 September from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3136835/communist-party-not-chinas-only-political-party-there-are-eight>
- Baran, K. S., & Stock, W. (2015). Acceptance and quality perceptions of social network services in cultural context: Vkontakte as a case study. Proceedings of the 9th International Multi-Conference on Society, Cybernetics and Informatics (IMSCI 2015), 12.-15. July 2015, Orlando, Florida, USA,
- Barclay, C. (2017). Commercial speech in a social space. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social Media and the Law*. Routledge.
- Barendt, E. (2005). *Freedom of speech*. OUP Oxford.
- Barnes, R., & Barrett, J. (2016). *Law of the Sea-UNCLOS as a Living Treaty*. BIICL.
- Barnett, G. A., Xu, W. W., Chu, J., Jiang, K., Huh, C., Park, J. Y., & Park, H. W. (2017). Measuring international relations in social media conversations. *Government Information Quarterly*, 34(1), 37-44.
- Bartlett, K. G. (1947). Social impact of the radio. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 250(1), 89-97.
- Baum, M. A., & Potter, P. B. (2019). Media, public opinion, and foreign policy in the age of social media. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2), 747-756.
- BBC News. (2016). *Linkedin blocked by Russian authorities*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-38014501>

- BBC News. (2018). *China's Xi allowed to remain 'president for life' as term limits removed*. BBC News. Retrieved 30 September from
- Beauchamp, T. L. (2000). *An enquiry concerning human understanding: A critical edition*.
- Becker, S. L. (1984). Marxist approaches to media studies: The British experience. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 1(1), 66-80.
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, W. L. (1990). Toward a theory of press-state relations in the United States. *Journal of communication*, 40(2), 103-127.
- Bennett, W. L. (2012). The personalization of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 644(1), 20-39.
- Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (2018). The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions. *European journal of communication*, 33(2), 122-139.
- Bennett, W. L., Segerberg, A., & Walker, S. (2014). Organization in the crowd: Peer production in large-scale networked protests. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(2), 232-260.
- Bennetts, M. (2019). *Facebook and Twitter could be blocked in Russia in data storage row*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/17/facebook-and-twitter-face-russian-sanctions-in-data-storage-row>
- Bessi, A., & Ferrara, E. (2016). Social bots distort the 2016 US Presidential election online discussion. *First Monday*, 21(11-7).
- Bizumic, B., & Duckitt, J. (2018). Investigating right wing authoritarianism with a very short authoritarianism scale. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*.
- Bjola, C. (2016). Getting digital diplomacy right: What quantum theory can teach us about measuring impact. *Global Affairs*, 2(3), 345-353.
- Block, D. (2004). Globalization, transnational communication and the Internet. *International journal on multicultural societies*, 6(1), 13-28.
- Bobbio, N. (1996). *Left and right: The significance of a political distinction*. University of Chicago Press.

- Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D. I., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295-298.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/nature11421>
- Bond, S. E. (2011). Criers, Impresarios, and Sextons: Disreputable Occupations in the Roman World. In U. o. Iowa (Ed.): Iowa Research Online.
- Boone, H. N., & Boone, D. A. (2012). Analyzing likert data. *Journal of extension*, 50(2), 1-5.
- Boulianne, S. (2015). Social media use and participation: A meta-analysis of current research. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(5), 524-538.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). The forms of capital. In *The sociology of economic life* (pp. 78-92). Routledge.
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x>
- Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2018). *Challenging truth and trust: A global inventory of organized social media manipulation* (The Computational Propaganda Project, Issue).
- Brand, J. E., & Pearson, M. (2001). The newsroom versus the lounge room: Journalists' and audiences' views on news. *Humanities & Social Sciences papers*.
- Breed, W. (1955). Newspaper 'opinion leaders' and processes of standardization. *Journalism Quarterly*, 32(3), 277-328.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905503200302>
- Brewer, A., & Marx, K. (1984). *A guide to Marx's 'Capital'*. CUP Archive.
- Broderick, R. (2022). *How Facebook twisted Canada's trucker convoy into an international movement*. Vox Media. Retrieved March 10 from
<https://www.theverge.com/2022/2/19/22941291/facebook-canada-trucker-convoy-gofundme-groups-viral-sharing>
- Brommesson, D., & Ekengren, A.-M. (2020). EU foreign and security policy in a mediatized age. In *The European Union in a changing world order* (pp. 193-215). Springer.
- Bruner, R. (2021). *'We're at its mercy.'* Small businesses that rely on Facebook and Instagram question their loyalty after global outage. Time USA. Retrieved

March 10 from <https://time.com/6105022/instagram-outage-small-business-impact/>

- Bucher, T. (2012). Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook. *New media & society*, 14(7), 1164-1180.
- Buckley, P. J., Clegg, J., & Tan, H. (2010). Cultural awareness in knowledge transfer to China—The role of guanxi and mianzi. In *Foreign direct investment, China and the world economy* (pp. 165-191). Springer.
- Buhmann, A., Paßmann, J., & Fieseler, C. (2020). Managing algorithmic accountability: Balancing reputational concerns, engagement strategies, and the potential of rational discourse. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 163(2), 265-280.
- Burnham, P. (1991). Neo-Gramscian hegemony and the international order. *Capital & Class*, 15(3), 73-92.
- Burns, A., & Eltham, B. (2009, 19-20 November 2009). *Twitter free Iran: An evaluation of Twitter's role in public diplomacy and information operations in Iran's 2009 election crisis* Communication Policy and Research Forum, Sydney, Australia.
- Cai, Z., Huang, Q., Liu, H., & Wang, X. (2018). Improving the agility of employees through enterprise social media: The mediating role of psychological conditions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 38(1), 52-63.
- Cameron, M. P., Barrett, P., & Stewardson, B. (2016). Can social media predict election results? Evidence from New Zealand. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 15(4), 416-432.
- Carey, J. W. (1983). Technology and ideology: The case of the telegraph. *Prospects*, 8, 303-325.
- Carlisle, J. E., & Patton, R. C. (2013). Is social media changing how we understand political engagement? An analysis of Facebook and the 2008 presidential election. *Political research quarterly*, 66(4), 883-895.
- Carmine, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1979). *Reliability and validity assessment*. Sage publications.
- Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46-65.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282>

- Carr, E. H., & Cox, M. (1946). *The twenty years' crisis, 1919-1939: An introduction to the study of international relations*. Macmillan London.
- Carriere-Swallow, M. Y., & Haksar, M. V. (2019). *The economics and implications of data: an integrated perspective*. International Monetary Fund.
- Carrière-Swallow, Y., & Haksar, V. (2019). *The economics and implications of data*. I. M. Fund.
- Castells, M. (2007). Communication, power and counter-power in the network society. *International journal of communication*, 1(1), 29.
- Castells, M. (2011a). Network theory: A network theory of power. *International journal of communication*, 5, 15.
- Castells, M. (2011b). *The rise of the network society* (Vol. 12). John Wiley & Sons.
- Castells, M. (2014). The impact of the Internet on society: A global perspective. *Change*, 19, 127-148.
- Cattaneo, M. D., Jansson, M., & Newey, W. K. (2018). Inference in linear regression models with many covariates and heteroscedasticity. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 113(523), 1350-1361.
- Ceccanese, A. (2022). *How social media regulation could affect the press*. Committee to Project Journalists. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://cpj.org/2022/01/social-media-regulation-affect-press/>
- Chan, A. (2020). *K-Pop fans and TikTok users claim they derailed Trump rally attendance*. Billboard. Retrieved March 10 from <https://www.billboard.com/music/music-news/k-pop-fans-tiktok-users-trump-rally-attendance-9406305/>
- Chang, K. c. (2011). A path to understanding guanxi in China's transitional economy: Variations on network behavior. *Sociological Theory*, 29(4), 315-339.
- Chauhan, P. S., & Kshetri, N. (2021). 2021 state of the practice in data privacy and security. *Computer Society*, 54(08), 125-132.
- Chayko, M. (2020). Superconnectedness. In *Superconnected: The internet, digital media, & techno-social life*. SAGE Publications, Inc. .
- Chen, Y., & Yang, D. Y. (2018). The impact of media censorship: Evidence from a field experiment in China. *Stanford Graduate School of Business*, 4, 302.
- Chen, Y., & Yang, D. Y. (2019). The impact of media censorship: 1984 or brave new world? *American Economic Review*, 109(6), 2294-2332.

- Chen, Z., & Chan, M. (2017). Motivations for social media use and impact on political participation in China: A cognitive and communication mediation approach. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 20(2), 83-90.
- Cheng, H. W. J. (2020). *Economic properties of data and the monopolistic tendencies of data economy: Policies to limit an Orwellian possibility [working paper]*. New York: United Nations Dept of Economic and Social Affairs Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3621692
- Chin, S. J. (2018). Institutional origins of the media censorship in China: The making of the socialist media censorship system in 1950s Shanghai. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 27(114), 956-972.
- China, C.-E. C. o. (2017). *Annual Report*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office Retrieved from <https://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/2017%20Annual%20Report.pdf>
- Choi, J., Lee, J. K., & Metzgar, E. T. (2017). Investigating effects of social media news sharing on the relationship between network heterogeneity and political participation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 25-31.
- Chow, D. C. (2015). How China's crackdown on corruption has led to less transparency in the enforcement of China's anti-bribery laws. *UCDL Rev.*, 49, 685.
- Chow, D. C. (2017). China's anti-corruption crackdown and the foreign corrupt practices act. *Tex. A&M L. Rev.*, 5, 323.
- Christensen, M. B. (2018). *The ethics of social media policy: National principles of justice, security, privacy and freedom governing online social platforms in Russia, China and the United States*. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Clegg, C. S. (2001). *Press Censorship in Jacobean England*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cliteur, P. B. (2000). Spontaneous order, natural law, and legal positivism in the work of FA Hayek. In *Hayek revisited* (pp. 14-32). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Cohen, B. J. (2017). *International political economy*. Routledge.
- Cohen, N. S. (2008). The valorization of surveillance: Towards a political economy of Facebook. *Democratic Communiqué*, 22(1), 5-5.

- Colgan, J. D., & Keohane, R. O. (2017). *The liberal order is rigged: Fix it now or watch it wither*. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-04-17/liberal-order-rigged>
- Collier, M. (2003). *Italian unification, 1820-71*. Heinemann.
- Collins, N., & Bekenova, K. (2019). Digital diplomacy: Success at your fingertips. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Collins, Q. (2020). *In search of hidden dragons: An exploration into western business challenges in China* University of Texas]. Austin, Texas.
- Collins, S. D., DeWitt, J. R., & LeFebvre, R. K. (2019). Hashtag diplomacy: Twitter as a tool for engaging in public diplomacy and promoting US foreign policy. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 15(2), 78-96.
- Committee to Protect Journalists. (2019). *165 journalists imprisoned in China*. [https://cpj.org/data/reports.php?status=Imprisoned&localOrForeign%5B%5D=L
ocal&localOrForeign%5B%5D=Foreign&cc_fips%5B%5D=CH&start_year=20
00&end_year=2018&group_by=location](https://cpj.org/data/reports.php?status=Imprisoned&localOrForeign%5B%5D=Local&localOrForeign%5B%5D=Foreign&cc_fips%5B%5D=CH&start_year=2000&end_year=2018&group_by=location)
- Comrey, A., & Lee, H. (1992). Interpretation and application of factor analytic results. In *A first course in factor analysis* (Vol. 2, pp. 1992). Psychology Press.
- Conference of American States. (1934). *Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States*.
- Conger, K. (2019). Facebook and Twitter say China is spreading disinformation in Hong Kong. *The New York Times*. [https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/19/technology/hong-kong-protests-china-
disinformation-facebook-twitter.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/19/technology/hong-kong-protests-china-disinformation-facebook-twitter.html)
- Digital Millennium Copyright Act, 112 304 (1998). <https://www.congress.gov/105/plaws/publ304/PLAW-105publ304.pdf>
- Constantiou, I. D., & Kallinikos, J. (2015). New games, new rules: Big data and the changing context of strategy. *Journal of Information Technology*, 30(1), 44-57.
- Cook, S. (2019). The implications for democracy of China's globalizing media influence. In F. House (Ed.), *Freedom and the Media 2019*. Freedom House.
- Coopman, T. M. (2011). Networks of dissent: Emergent forms in media based collective action. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 28(2), 153-172.

- Cox, R. W. (1981). Social forces, states and world orders: Beyond international relations theory. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 10(2), 126-155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298810100020501>
- Cox, R. W. (1983). Gramsci, hegemony and international relations: An essay in method. *Millennium*, 12(2), 162-175.
- Cox, R. W. (1987). *Production, power, and world order: Social forces in the making of history*. Columbia University Press.
- Cox, R. W. (2019). *Social forces, states, and world orders: Beyond international relations theory*. Routledge.
- Cox, R. W., & Sinclair, T. J. (1996). Beyond international relations theory: Robert W. Cox and approaches to world order. In R. W. Cox (Ed.), *Approaches to World Order* (pp. 3-18). Cambridge University Press. [https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511607905.002](https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511607905.002)
- Cox, R. W. S., Timothy J. (1996). Beyond international relations theory: Robert W. Cox and approaches to world order. In R. W. Cox (Ed.), *Approaches to World Order* (pp. 3-18). Cambridge University Press. [https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511607905.002](https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511607905.002)
- Crane, G. (1998). *Thucydides and the ancient simplicity: The limits of political realism*. Univ of California Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design : Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Fifth edition.. ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cridland, C. (2008). *The history of the Internet: The interwoven domain of enabling technologies and cultural interaction* (Vol. 34).
- Czitrom, D. J. (1982). *Media and the American mind: from Morse to McLuhan*. Univ of North Carolina Press.
- D'heer, E. (2016). *Social media logic meets political communication: how social media are changing the dynamics among politics, the media and the public* Ghent University].
- Dale, H. C. (2009). *Public Diplomacy 2.0: Where the US Government Meets" New Media"*. Heritage Foundation Washington, DC.
- Darmody, A., & Zwick, D. (2020). Manipulate to empower: Hyper-relevance and the contradictions of marketing in the age of surveillance capitalism. *Big Data & Society*, 7(1), 2053951720904112.

- Das, A. (2018). Chilling social media: warrantless Border searches of social media accounts infringe upon the freedom of association and the freedom to be anonymous under the first amendment. *Brooklyn Law Review*, 84, 1287.
- David, M. (2015). New social media: Modernisation and democratisation in Russia. *European Politics and Society*, 16(1), 95-110.
- De Tocqueville, A. (2003). *Democracy in America* (Vol. 10). Regnery Publishing.
- De Vivo, F. (2005). Paolo Sarpi and the uses of information in seventeenth-century Venice. *Media History*, 11(1-2), 37-51.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1368880052000342406>
- Dejevsky, M. (1989). Glasnost and the Soviet press. In *Culture and the Media in the USSR Today* (pp. 26-42). Springer.
- Delacre, M., Leys, C., Mora, Y. L., & Lakens, D. (2019). Taking parametric assumptions seriously: Arguments for the use of Welch's F-test instead of the classical F-test in one-way ANOVA. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 32(1).
- DeLisle, J., Goldstein, A., & Yang, G. (2016a). *The Internet, social media, and a changing China*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- DeLisle, J., Goldstein, A., & Yang, G. (2016b). Introduction. The Internet, social media, and a changing China. In *The Internet, social media, and a changing China* (pp. 1-27). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Dell'Anno, R., Rayna, T., & Solomon, O. H. (2016). Impact of social media on economic growth—evidence from social media. *Applied Economics Letters*, 23(9), 633-636.
- Diebold, F. X. (2012). On the origin(s) and development of the term 'big data' [working paper]. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PIER, Uni. of Pennsylvania.
- DiMaggio, A. R. (2015). *Selling war, selling hope: Presidential rhetoric, the news media, and US foreign policy since 9/11*. State University of New York Press.
- Direnga, J., Timmermann, D., Lund, J., & Kautz, C. (2016). Design and application of self-generated identification codes (SGICs) for matching longitudinal data. Proceedings of the 44th SEFI Annual Conference. , Tampere, Finland.
- Dixon, P. (2000). Britain's 'Vietnam syndrome'? Public opinion and British military intervention from Palestine to Yugoslavia. *Review of International Studies*, 26(1), 99-121.

- Dodd, M. D., & Collins, S. J. (2017). Public relations message strategies and public diplomacy 2.0: An empirical analysis using Central-Eastern European and Western embassy Twitter accounts. *Public relations review*, 43(2), 417-425.
- Donnelly, J. (2000). *Realism and international relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dorussen, H., Gartzke, E. A., & Westerwinter, O. (2016). Networked international politics: Complex interdependence and the diffusion of conflict and peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 53(3), 283-291.
- Douglass, R. (2020). Hobbes and political realism. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 19(2), 250-269.
- Downing, J., & Ahmed, W. (2019). #MacronLeaks as a “warning shot” for European democracies: Challenges to election blackouts presented by social media and election meddling during the 2017 French presidential election. *French Politics*, 17(3), 257-278.
- Drew, K. F. (2004). *Magna carta*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Du Plessis, C. (2017). The role of content marketing in social media content communities. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 19(1), 1-7.
- Dubbelink, S. I., Herrando, C., & Constantinides, E. (2021). Social media marketing as a branding strategy in extraordinary times: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Sustainability*, 13(18), 10310.
- Dumčiuvienė, A. (2016). Twiplomacy: The meaning of social media to public diplomacy and foreign policy of Lithuania. *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 35(1), 92-118.
- Duncombe, C. (2017). Twitter and transformative diplomacy: Social media and Iran–US relations. *International Affairs*, 93(3), 545-562.
- Duncombe, C. E. (2017, 30 March). How Twitter is transforming diplomacy: Iranian tweets and the P5+1 nuclear negotiations. *International Affairs Blog*.
<https://medium.com/international-affairs-blog/how-twitter-is-transforming-diplomacy-iranian-tweets-and-the-p5-1-nuclear-negotiations-cc56bdcaf6>
- Eastman, L. E. (2019). China’s democratic parties and the temptations of political power, 1946-1947. In *Roads not taken* (pp. 189-199). Routledge.
- Eferin, Y., Hohlov, Y., & Rossotto, C. (2019). Digital platforms in Russia: Competition between national and foreign multi-sided platforms stimulates growth and innovation. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*.

- Effing, R., Van Hillegersberg, J., & Huibers, T. (2011). *Social media and political participation: Are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube democratizing our political systems?* International Conference on Electronic Participation, https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-23333-3_3
- Eichenauer, E. *Creating realities: A comparative analysis of Malaysian mass media* [Humboldt University of Berlin]. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Eva-Eichenauer/publication/306506211_Creating_Realities_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Malaysian_Mass_Media/links/57bebcae08aed246b0f75c0d/Creating-Realities-A-Comparative-Analysis-of-Malaysian-Mass-Media.pdf
- Eisenstein, E. L. (1980). *The printing press as an agent of change* (Vol. 1). Cambridge University Press.
- Englehardt, S., Reisman, D., Eubank, C., Zimmerman, P., Mayer, J., Narayanan, A., & Felten, E. W. (2015). Cookies that give you away: The surveillance implications of web tracking. Proceedings of the 24th International Conference on World Wide Web,
- English, A. J. (2022). *Russia blocks access to Facebook amid war with Ukraine*. Al Jazeera English. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/4/russia-blocks-facebook-ukraine-war>
- Enli, G. (2017). Twitter as arena for the authentic outsider: exploring the social media campaigns of Trump and Clinton in the 2016 US presidential election. *European journal of communication*, 32(1), 50-61.
- Entman, R. M. (2003). Cascading activation: contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication*, 20(4), 415-432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244176>
- European Parliament. (2016). *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)* European Union. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679>
- Farrell, H., & Newman, A. L. (2019). Weaponized interdependence: How global economic networks shape state coercion. *International Security*, 44(1), 42-79.

- Federal Register. (2021). *Copyright alternative in small-claims enforcement (“CASE”) act regulations: Expedited registration and FOIA*. United States National Archives. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/08/18/2021-17696/copyright-alternative-in-small-claims-enforcement-case-act-regulations-expedited-registration-and>
- Fedor, J., & Fredheim, R. (2017). “We need more clips about Putin, and lots of them:” Russia's state-commissioned online visual culture. *Nationalities Papers*, 45(2), 161-181.
- Ferrara, E. (2017). Disinformation and social bot operations in the run up to the 2017 French presidential election. *arXiv Preprint*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1707.00086>>
- Flake, J. K., & Fried, E. I. (2020). Measurement schmeasurement: Questionable measurement practices and how to avoid them. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 3(4), 456-465.
- Fletcher, R., Newman, N., & Schulz, A. (2020). *A mile wide, an inch deep: Online news and media use in the 2019 UK general election*. R. I. f. t. S. o. Journalism. [https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-02/Fletcher News Use During the Election FINAL.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-02/Fletcher%20News%20Use%20During%20the%20Election%20FINAL.pdf)
- Flew, T. (2014). *New media: An introduction* (4th edition. ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Flyverbom, M., & Madsen, A. K. (2019). Telegraph. In *The Oxford handbook of media, technology, and organization studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Foundation, E. F. (N.D.). *CDA 230: The Most Important Law Protecting Internet Speech*. Electronic Frontier Foundation. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://www EFF.org/issues/cda230>
- Frakt, A. B., & Bagley, N. (2015). Protection or harm? Suppressing substance-use data. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372(20), 1879-1881. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp1501362>
- Franch, F. (2013). (Wisdom of the Crowds)2: 2010 UK election prediction with social media. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 10(1), 57-71.

- Freedom House. (2022a). *Freedom on the net 2021*. Freedom House. Retrieved 29 Mar from https://freedomhouse.org/country/united-states/freedom-net/2021#footnote3_r3r1myd
- Freedom House. (2022b). *Freedom on the net 2021: Australia*. Freedom House. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/australia/freedom-net/2021>
- Freedom House. (2022c). *Freedom on the net 2021: Estonia*. Freedom House. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/estonia/freedom-net/2021>
- Freeland, S. (2020). Legal issues related to the future advent of small satellite constellations. In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of small satellites: Technology, design, manufacture, applications, economics and regulation* (pp. 1315-1336). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_73
- Freudenstein, R. (2020). Why the Chinese Communist Party doesn't like Winnie the Pooh. *European View*, 19(2), 245-246.
- Friedman, M. (2010). *Milton Friedman on economics: Selected papers*. University of Chicago Press.
- Fuchs, C. (2009a). A contribution to theoretical foundations of critical media and communication studies. *Javnost-The Public*, 16(2), 5-24.
- Fuchs, C. (2009b). Information and communication technologies and society: A contribution to the critique of the political economy of the Internet. *European journal of communication*, 24(1), 69-87.
- Fuchs, C. (2009c). Some theoretical foundations of critical media studies: Reflections on Karl Marx and the media. *International journal of communication*, 3, 34.
- Fuchs, C. (2011a). New media, web 2.0 and surveillance. *Sociology compass*, 5(2), 134-147.
- Fuchs, C. (2011b). Web 2.0, prosumption, and surveillance. *Surveillance & Society*, 8(3), 288-309.
- Fuchs, C. (2012). Social media, riots, and revolutions. *Capital & Class*, 36(3), 383-391.
- Fuchs, C. (2013). Critique of the political economy of informational capitalism and social media. In *Critique, social media and the information society* (pp. 63-77). Routledge.

- Fuchs, C. (2014). Theorising and analysing digital labour: From global value chains to modes of production. *The Political Economy of Communication*, 1(2).
- Fuchs, C. (2015). Dallas Smythe today—The audience commodity, the digital labour debate, Marxist political economy and critical theory. Prolegomena to a digital labour theory of value. In *Marx and the Political Economy of the Media* (pp. 522-599). Brill.
- Fuchs, C. (2016a). Baidu, Weibo and Renren: The global political economy of social media in China. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 26(1), 14-41.
- Fuchs, C. (2016b). Power in the age of social media. *Heathwood Journal of Critical Theory*, 1(1).
- Fuchs, C. (2017). From digital positivism and administrative big data analytics towards critical digital and social media research! *European journal of communication*, 32(1), 37-49.
- Fuchs, C. (2018a). Authoritarian capitalism, authoritarian movements and authoritarian communication. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(5), 779-791.
- Fuchs, C. (2018b). Social media, big data, and critical marketing. In *The Routledge companion to critical marketing* (pp. 467-481). Routledge.
- Fuchs, C. (2019a). Karl Marx in the age of big data capitalism. In D. Chandler & C. Fuchs (Eds.), *Digital objects, digital subjects: Interdisciplinary perspectives on capitalism, labour and politics in the age of big data* (pp. 53-71). Uni. of Westminster Press.
- Fuchs, C. (2019b). *Nationalism on the Internet: Critical theory and ideology in the age of social media and fake news*. Routledge.
- Fuchs, C. (2021). *Social media: A critical introduction*. Sage.
- Fuchs, C., Boersma, K., Albrechtslund, A., & Sandoval, M. (2013). *Internet and surveillance: The challenges of Web 2.0 and social media* (Vol. 16). Routledge.
- Fuchs, C., & Mosco, V. (2015a). *Marx and the political economy of the media*. Brill.
- Fuchs, C., & Mosco, V. (2015b). *Marx in the age of digital capitalism*. Brill.
- Fuchs, C., & Mosco, V. (2016). Introduction: Marx is back—the importance of Marxist theory and research for critical communication studies today. In *Marx in the age of digital capitalism* (pp. 1-21). Brill.
- Fuchs, C., & Sandoval, M. (2013). *Critique, social media and the information society*. Routledge.

- Fuchs, C., & Sandoval, M. (2015). The political economy of capitalist and alternative social media. In *The Routledge companion to alternative and community media* (pp. 183-194). Routledge.
- Fuchs, C., & Trottier, D. (2015). Towards a theoretical model of social media surveillance in contemporary society. *Communications: European Journal of Communication, 40*(1), 113-135.
- Gallacher, J. D., Barash, V., Howard, P. N., & Kelly, J. (2018). Junk news on military affairs and national security: Social media disinformation campaigns against us military personnel and veterans. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1802.03572*.
- Gambaro, M. (2018). Big data competition and market power. *Market and Competition Law Review, 2*(2), 99-122.
- Ganong, L. H., & Coleman, M. (2006). Multiple segment factorial vignette designs. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68*(2), 455-468.
- Gel'man, V. (2015). *Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing post-soviet regime changes*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Ghaffary, S. (2022). *Russia continues its online censorship spree by blocking Instagram*. Vox Media. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://www.vox.com/recode/22962274/russia-block-instagram-facebook-restrict-twitter-putin-censorship-ukraine>
- Ghonim, W. (2012). *Revolution 2.0: The power of the people is greater than the people in power: A memoir*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Giannone, D. (2014). The political and ideological dimension of the measurement of freedom of information. Assessing the interplay between neoliberalism and the freedom of the press index. *International Communication Gazette, 76*(6), 505-527.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 17*(3), 319-336.
- Gilmore, E. (2012). Democratisation and new media. *Irish Studies in International Affairs, 5*-12.
- Giuliari, G., Klenze, T., Legner, M., Basin, D., Perrig, A., & Singla, A. (2020). Internet backbones in space. *ACM SIGCOMM Computer Communication Review, 50*(1), 25-37.

- Glasius, M. (2018). What authoritarianism is... and is not: A practice perspective. *International Affairs*, 94(3), 515-533.
- Gleason, G. (2010). Natural gas and authoritarianism in Turkmenistan. In *Caspian energy politics* (pp. 94-106). Routledge.
- Gleicher, N. (2019). Removing coordinated inauthentic behavior from China. *Facebook Newsroom*. <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2019/08/removing-cib-china/>
- Golding, P. (1997). The classic debate on media regulation. *The Media in Question: Popular Cultures and Public Interests*, 7.
- Goldring, D., & Azab, C. (2020). New rules of social media shopping: Personality differences of US Gen Z versus Gen X market mavens. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*.
- Gómez, A. D. (2014). The key elements of viral advertising. From motivation to emotion in the most shared videos. *Comunicar. Media Education Research Journal*, 22(2).
- Gomez, J. (2014). Social media impact on Malaysia's 13th general election. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 24(1), 95-105.
- Goodwin, E. H. (1965). *The new Cambridge modern history: Volume 8, The American and French revolutions, 1763-93* (Vol. 8). Cambridge University Press.
- Gorwa, R., & Guilbeault, D. (2018). Unpacking the social media bot: A typology to guide research and policy. *Policy & Internet*.
- Goundar, S., Chandra, B., Bhardwaj, A., & Saber, F. (2020). Digital transformation of diplomacy: The way forward for small island states. In *Impact of digital transformation on security policies and standards* (pp. 33-46). IGI Global.
- Grab, A. (2003). *Napoleon and the transformation of Europe*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Gramsci, A. (2007). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. Duke University Press.
- Gramsci, A., Hoare, Q., & Nowell-Smith, G. (1971). *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*.
- Gray, J. (2013). *Hayek on liberty*. Routledge.
- Gray, J., & Potter, P. B. (2019). Diplomacy and the settlement of international trade disputes. *Available at SSRN*.
- Grazier, W. A. (2013). *The social dynamics of witchcraft in the late middle ages*

- Greaves, P. L. (1974). *Mises made easier. A glossary for Ludwig von Mises' Human action*. New York: Dobbs Ferry.
- Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2016). Social media update 2016. *Pew Research Center*, 11(2), 1-18.
- Gregory, B. (2011). American public diplomacy: Enduring characteristics, elusive transformation. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 6(3-4), 351-372.
- Groshek, J., & Koc-Michalska, K. (2017). Helping populism win? Social media use, filter bubbles, and support for populist presidential candidates in the 2016 US election campaign. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(9), 1389-1407.
- Gu, M. (2020). Marx and Engels' peace thought and its contemporary value. *Scientific and Social Research*, 2(3).
- Guilbeault, D. (2016). Automation, algorithms, and politics| Growing bot security: An ecological view of bot agency. *International journal of communication*, 10, 19.
- Gunitsky, S. (2015). Corrupting the cyber-commons: Social media as a tool of autocratic stability. *Perspectives on Politics*, 13(1), 42-54.
- Guo, L. (2019). Media agenda diversity and intermedia agenda setting in a controlled media environment: A computational analysis of china's online news. *Journalism Studies*, 20(16), 2460-2477.
- Guzzini, S., & Leander, A. (2005). *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics*. Routledge.
- Haakonssen, K. (1989). *The science of a legislator: The natural jurisprudence of David Hume and Adam Smith*. Cambridge University Press.
- Haffemayer, S. (1997). Les gazettes de l'Ancien Régime. Approche quantitative pour l'analyse d'un «espace de l'information». *Histoire & Mesure*, 69-91.
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=PTRIBAAAQBAJ>
- Halpern, D., Valenzuela, S., & Katz, J. E. (2017). We face, I tweet: How different social media influence political participation through collective and internal efficacy. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(6), 320-336.
- Hannan, J. (2018). Trolling ourselves to death? Social media and post-truth politics. *European journal of communication*, 33(2), 214-226.

- Hänska, M., & Bauchowitz, S. (2019). Can social media facilitate a European public sphere? Transnational communication and the Europeanization of Twitter during the Eurozone crisis. *Social Media + Society*, 5(3), 2056305119854686.
- Harder, R. A., Sevenans, J., & Van Aelst, P. (2017). Intermedia agenda setting in the social media age: How traditional players dominate the news agenda in election times. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(3), 275-293.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161217704969>
- Harris, B. (2013). Diplomacy 2.0: The future of social media in nation branding. *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy*, 4(1), 3.
- Hartzog, W. (2017). Privacy and terms of use. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social media and the law*. Routledge.
- Hayden, C. (2012). Social media at state: Power, practice, and conceptual limits for US public diplomacy. *Global Media Journal*, 11(21).
- Hayek, F. A. (1996). *Studies in philosophy, politics and economics*.
- Hayes, A. F., & Coutts, J. J. (2020). Use omega rather than Cronbach's alpha for estimating reliability. But.... *Communication Methods and Measures*, 14(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2020.1718629>
- Hayes, D., & Guardino, M. (2011). The influence of foreign voices on U.S. public opinion. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), 831-851.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00523.x>
- Head, D. (2017). *Encyclopedia of the Atlantic world, 1400–1900: Europe, Africa, and the Americas in an age of exploration, trade, and empires*. ABC-CLIO.
- Heller, N. (2017). *Estonia, the digital republic*. The New Yorker. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/18/estonia-the-digital-republic>
- Henderson, J. J. (2017). New boundaries of free speech in social media. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social media and the law: A guidebook for communication students and professionals* (2nd ed., pp. 1-29). Routledge.
- Henry, O. (2012). *"Twitter diplomacy": Engagement through social media in 21st century statecraft* [Oberlin College].
- Henten, A., & Tadayoni, R. (2008). The impact of the Internet on media technology, platforms and innovation. *The Internet and the mass media*, 45-64.

- Heyer, P. (2003). America under attack I: a reassessment of Orson Welles' 1938 war of the worlds broadcast. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 28(2), 149-166.
- Hilton, A., & Armstrong, R. A. (2006). Statnote 6: Post-hoc ANOVA tests. *Microbiologist*, 2006, 34-36.
- Himmelboim, I., & Golan, G. J. (2019). A social networks approach to viral advertising: The role of primary, contextual, and low influencers. *Social Media + Society*, 5(3), 2056305119847516.
- Hinderman, B. (2015). *Building responsive data visualization for the web*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hinds, S. (2019). *The European Union approach to disinformation and misinformation: The case of the 2019 European Parliament elections* [Uni. of Strasbourg]. Strasbourg, France.
- Hinton, S., & Hjorth, L. (2019). Understanding social media. *Understanding Social Media*, 1-232.
- Hintz, A. (2015). Social media censorship, privatized regulation and new restrictions to protest and dissent. In *Critical perspectives on social media and protest: Between control and emancipation* (pp. 109-126). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Ho, C.-W., & Wang, Y.-B. (2020). Does social media marketing and brand community play the role in building a sustainable digital business strategy? *Sustainability*, 12(16), 6417.
- Hobbes, T. (1973). *Leviathan*. Dent.
- Hobbs, W. R., & Roberts, M. E. (2018). How sudden censorship can increase access to information. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 621-636.
- Hochfelder, D. (2012). *The telegraph in America, 1832–1920*. JHU Press.
- Hollingsworth, J. (2020). *K-pop fans are being credited with helping disrupt Trump's rally. Here's why that shouldn't be a surprise*. CNN. Retrieved March 10 from
- Holt, K., Shehata, A., Strömbäck, J., & Ljungberg, E. (2013). Age and the effects of news media attention and social media use on political interest and participation: Do social media function as leveller? *European journal of communication*, 28(1), 19-34.
- Hong, S., & Nadler, D. (2012). Which candidates do the public discuss online in an election campaign?: The use of social media by 2012 presidential candidates and

- its impact on candidate salience. *Government Information Quarterly*, 29(4), 455-461.
- Hossain, M. D. (2015). Manufacturing consent: Framing the liberation war of Bangladesh in the US and UK media. *Journalism*, 16(4), 521-535.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914524516>
- House, F. (2018). *China*. Freedom House. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/china>
- House, F. (2021a). *China: Freedom in the World 2021*. Freedom House. Retrieved September 29 from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-world/2021#PR>
- House, F. (2021b). *China: Freedom on the Net 2021*. Freedom House. Retrieved September 29 from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/china/freedom-net/2021#A>
- House of Commons Digital, C., Media and Sport Committee,. (2018). *Disinformation and 'fake news': Final report*. London, UK: House of Commons
- Howard, P. N., & Parks, M. R. (2012). Social Media and Political Change: Capacity, Constraint, and Consequence. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 359-362.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01626.x>
- Howard, P. N., Woolley, S., & Calo, R. (2018). Algorithms, bots, and political communication in the US 2016 election: The challenge of automated political communication for election law and administration. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 15(2), 81-93.
- Hsu, T. (2021). *Facebook's outage frustrates advertisers heading into the holiday season*. New York Times. Retrieved March 10 from
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/business/media/facebook-outage-advertisers.html>
- Huang, H., Wang, F., & Shao, L. (2018). How propaganda moderates the influence of opinion leaders on social media in China. *International journal of communication*, 12, 23.
- Huang, Z. A., & Wang, R. (2018, Sept 2018). Panda seems like a new “cat”: China’s digital panda public diplomacy on Twitter: Affective sign, image promotion, and the permanent Chinese diplomat. EUPRERA

- 2018 Congress: Big ideas! - challenging public relations research and practice - Social media, Aarhus, Denmark.
- Hulcoop, A., Scott-Railton, J., Tanchak, P., Brooks, M., & Deibert, R. (2017). *Tainted leaks: Disinformation and phishing with a Russian nexus*. C. Lab.
<https://citizenlab.ca/2017/05/tainted-leaks-disinformation-phish/>
- Hume, D. (1830). *The history of England, from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the revolution in 1688* (Vol. 2). Jones.
- Hume, D. (1907). *Essays moral, political, and literary* (Vol. 1). Longmans, Green, and Company.
- Hume, D. (2003). *A treatise of human nature*. Courier Corporation.
- Hume, D. (2011). *The letters of David Hume: 1766-1776* (Vol. 2). Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hyun, K. D., & Kim, J. (2015). Differential and interactive influences on political participation by different types of news activities and political conversation through social media. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 328-334.
- Iakhnis, E., & Badawy, A. (2019). Networks of Power: Analyzing World Leaders Interactions on Social Media. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1907.11283*.
- Innovation, C. f. D. E. a. (2019). *Independent Report: Snapshot Paper - Deepfakes and Audiovisual Disinformation*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cdei-publishes-its-first-series-of-three-snapshot-papers-ethical-issues-in-ai/snapshot-paper-deepfakes-and-audiovisual-disinformation>
- International Telecommunication Union. (2021). *Measuring digital development: Facts and figures 2021*. ITUPublications. <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/FactsFigures2021.pdf>
- Internet World Stats. (2022). *Internet usage statistics: The Internet big picture*. Miniwatts Marketing Group. Retrieved 30 May from <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>
- Ivanova, P. (2021). *Gazprom takes majority stake in Russia's biggest social media site*. Financial Times. Retrieved 14 December from <https://www.ft.com/content/08e76970-fb82-42f9-87d3-d317189ce5b9>
- Jakhu, R. S., Pelton, J. N., & Mishra, N. (2020). "Rules of the Road" for Launch and Operation of Small Satellites and Related Issues. In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of Small Satellites: Technology, Design, Manufacture*,

- Applications, Economics and Regulation* (pp. 1417-1445). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_77
- Jarrar, Y., & Awobamise, A. O. (2021). From mainstream to live-stream: Understanding the embracing of citizen journalism by youths in the Middle East. In M. A. M. Gansinger & A. Kole (Eds.), *International Aspects of Phenomena in Media and Culture*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Jervis, R. (1978). Cooperation under the security dilemma. *World Politics*, 30(2), 167-214.
- Ji, H., & Knight, K. (2018). Creative language encoding under censorship. Proceedings of the First Workshop on Natural Language Processing for Internet Freedom,
- Jiang, J., & Vetter, M. A. (2020). The good, the bot, and the ugly: problematic information and critical media literacy in the postdigital era. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(1), 78-94.
- Jiang, M. (2016). The coevolution of the Internet,(un) civil society, and authoritarianism in China. In *The Internet, social media, and a changing China* (pp. 28-48). University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Jones, B. T., & Mattiacci, E. (2019). A manifesto, in 140 characters or fewer: Social media as a tool of rebel diplomacy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 739-761.
- Jones, J. h. (2022). *Elon Musk sets his sights on Twitter with massive stock buy*. MSNBC. Retrieved 9 Apr from <https://www.msnbc.com/the-reidout/reidout-blog/elon-musk-twitter-rcna22926>
- Jones, N., Borgman, R., & Ulusoy, E. (2015). Impact of social media on small businesses. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*.
- Jönsson, C., & Hall, M. (2005). *Essence of diplomacy*. Springer.
- Joseph, B., & Nerone, J. (2013). The historical roots of the normative model of journalism. *Journalism*, 14(4), 446-458.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464177>
- Jung, E., & Kim, E. (2006). *More Democracy or More Restriction: Global Internet Information Flows and Censorship in the Public Sphere on Cyberspace in China* Cultural Space and Public Sphere in Asia, Seoul, South Korea.

- Juris, J. S. (2005). The new digital media and activist networking within anti–corporate globalization movements. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597(1), 189-208.
- Kahar, R., Yamimi, F., Bunari, G., & Habil, H. (2012). Trusting the social media in small business. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 564-570.
- Kaiser, H. F. (1958). The varimax criterion for analytic rotation in factor analysis. *Psychometrika*, 23(3), 187-200.
- Kampf, R., Manor, I., & Segev, E. (2015). Digital diplomacy 2.0? A cross-national comparison of public engagement in Facebook and Twitter. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 10(4), 331-362.
- Kant, I. (1970). *Perpetual peace: A philosophical sketch* (Vol. 1991). Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- Kaur, P., Dhir, A., Rajala, R., & Dwivedi, Y. (2018). Why people use online social media brand communities: A consumption value theory perspective. *Online Information Review*.
- Kay, S., Mulcahy, R., & Parkinson, J. (2020). When less is more: The impact of macro and micro social media influencers' disclosure. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(3-4), 248-278.
- Kayali, L. (2019). Inside Facebook's fight against European regulation. *Politico*.
<https://www.politico.eu/article/inside-story-facebook-fight-against-european-regulation/>
- Keller, F. B., Schoch, D., Stier, S., & Yang, J. (2020). Political astroturfing on Twitter: How to coordinate a disinformation campaign. *Political Communication*, 37(2), 256-280.
- Kemp, K. (2020). Concealed data practices and competition law: Why privacy matters. *European Competition Journal*, 16(2-3), 628-672.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17441056.2020.1839228>
- Kemp, S. (2022). *Digital 2022: Global overview report*. Datareportal. Retrieved 30 May from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>

- Kenez, P. (2016). *A history of the Soviet Union from the beginning to its legacy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kenna, M. (2011). *Social media: following EU public diplomacy and friending MENA*.
- Kent, M. L. (2010a). Directions in social media for professionals and scholars. In C. Skinner, L. von Essen, G. M. Mersham, & S. Motau (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations*. Oxford University Press.
- Kent, M. L. (2010b). Directions in social media for professionals and scholars.
- Keohane, R. O. (2005). *After hegemony*. Princeton university press.
- Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (1973). Power and interdependence. *Survival*, 15(4), 158-165.
- Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (1987). Power and interdependence revisited. *International organization*, 41(4), 725-753.
- Ketchell, M. (2022). *Publishers take on Facebook and Google for failing to pay up under the News Media Bargaining Code*. The Conversation. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://theconversation.com/publishers-take-on-facebook-and-google-for-failing-to-pay-up-under-the-news-media-bargaining-code-179838>
- Khrennikov, I. K., Stepan. (2019). Putin wants his own Internet. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-05/vladimir-putin-wants-his-own-internet>
- King, G., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2013). How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055413000014>
- Kleven, T. (2004). On the freedom to associate or not to associate with others. *Tennessee Journal of Law & Policy*, 1, 69.
- Klinger, U. (2013). Mastering the art of social media: Swiss parties, the 2011 national election and digital challenges. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(5), 717-736.
- Klonick, K. (2020). The Facebook Oversight Board: Creating an independent institution to adjudicate online free expression. *Yale Law Journal*, 129(2418).
- Kragh, M., & Åsberg, S. (2017). Russia's strategy for influence through public diplomacy and active measures: The Swedish case. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 40(6), 773-816.
- Kramer, H., & Sprenger, J. (2007). *The Malleus Maleficarum*. Cosimo, Inc.

- Krämer, J., Schnurr, D., & Wohlfarth, M. (2019). Winners, losers, and facebook: The role of social logins in the online advertising ecosystem. *Management Science*, 65(4), 1678-1699.
- Kratochwil, F. (2006). Wendt's 'social theory of international politics' and the constructivist challenge. In S. Guzzini & A. Leander (Eds.), *Constructivism and international relations: Alexander Wendt and his critics*. Routledge.
- Kuang, X. (2018). Central state vs. local levels of government: Understanding news media censorship in China. *Chinese Political Science Review*, 3(2), 154-171.
- Kubin, E., & von Sikorski, C. (2021). The role of (social) media in political polarization: A systematic review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 45(3), 188-206.
- Kurtis, L., Hennessy-Fiske, M., & Garrison, J. (2022). *After shocking Canada, are 'freedom convoys' in the U.S. next?* Los Angeles Times. Retrieved March 10 from <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-02-10/la-na-trucker-convoys-canada-united-states>
- Kyere, I., & Kankam, P. K. (2021). Information dissemination during pandemics: A review on the Spanish Influenza and Covid-19. *Record and Library Journal*, 7(2), 254-264.
- Kyriakopoulou, K. (2011). Authoritarian states and Internet social media: Instruments of democratisation or instruments of control? *Human Affairs*, 21(1), 18-26.
- Lahiri, I. (2014). *Unlikely bedfellows? The media and government relations in West Bengal (1977-2011)* University of Stirling]. https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/20410/1/Unlikely%20Bedfellows_28.05.2014.pdf
- Lai, B., & Slater, D. (2006). Institutions of the offensive: Domestic sources of dispute initiation in authoritarian regimes, 1950–1992. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 113-126.
- Laursen, B., & Valentini, C. (2015). Mediatization and government communication. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 20(1), 26-44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161214556513>
- Lazarus, J. V., Ratzan, S., Palayew, A., Billari, F. C., Binagwaho, A., Kimball, S., Larson, H. J., Melegaro, A., Rabin, K., & White, T. M. (2020). COVID-

- SCORE: A global survey to assess public perceptions of government responses to COVID-19 (COVID-SCORE-10). *PloS one*, 15(10), e0240011.
- Le, M. (2018). *Social entrepreneurs: 5 consumer brands that started on social*. Meltwater. Retrieved November 26 from <https://www.meltwater.com/en/blog/launching-consumer-brands-in-the-age-of-social-media>
- Leamer, E. E. (2007). A flat world, a level playing field, a small world after all, or none of the above? A review of Thomas L Friedman's the world is flat. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 45(1), 83-126.
- Lee, F. L. (2015). Social movement as civic education: Communication activities and understanding of civil disobedience in the Umbrella Movement. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 8(4), 393-411.
- Lee, F. L., & Chan, J. M. (2015). Digital media use and participation leadership in social protests: The case of Tiananmen commemoration in Hong Kong. *Telematics and Informatics*, 32(4), 879-889.
- Lee, F. L., & Chan, J. M. (2016). Digital media activities and mode of participation in a protest campaign: A study of the Umbrella Movement. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(1), 4-22.
- Lee, P. S. N., So, C. Y. K., & Leung, L. (2015). Social media and Umbrella Movement: Insurgent public sphere in formation. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 8(4), 356-375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2015.1088874>
- Leetaru, K. (2018a). *We really are just data for sale in Facebook's eyes*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2018/12/05/we-really-are-just-data-for-sale-in-facebooks-eyes/#501e0ed85659>
- Leetaru, K. (2018b). *What does it mean for social media platforms to "sell" our data*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2018/12/15/what-does-it-mean-for-social-media-platforms-to-sell-our-data/#6bde6e812d6c>
- Leidner, D. E., Gonzalez, E., & Koch, H. (2018). An affordance perspective of enterprise social media and organizational socialization. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 27(2), 117-138.
- Leiner, D. J. (2019). Too fast, too straight, too weird: Non-reactive indicators for meaningless data in internet surveys. *Survey Research Methods*,

- Leonardi, P. M., Huysman, M., & Steinfield, C. (2013). Enterprise social media: Definition, history, and prospects for the study of social technologies in organizations. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12029>
- Leung, J. (2015). Xi's corruption crackdown. *Foreign Affairs*, 94, 32.
- Levy, J. S., & Thompson, W. R. (2011). *Causes of war*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Li, H. (2020). Towards an emic understanding of mianzi giving in the Chinese context. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 16(2), 281-303.
- Li, X., Lee, F. L., & Li, Y. (2016). The dual impact of social media under networked authoritarianism: Social media use, civic attitudes, and system support in China. *International journal of communication*, 10, 21.
- Lichtenstein, J. (2010). Digital diplomacy. *New York Times Magazine*, 16(1), 26-29.
- Lilleker, D. G., & Koc-Michalska, K. (2017). What drives political participation? Motivations and mobilization in a digital age. *Political Communication*, 34(1), 21-43.
- Lim, S. (2021). *Majority of Australians will check out a business online before engaging with them*. The Drum. Retrieved November 26 from <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2021/10/29/majority-australians-will-check-out-business-online-engaging-with-them>
- Lim, X. J., Radzol, A., Cheah, J., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2), 19-36.
- Lin, N. (2001). Guanxi: A conceptual analysis. *Contributions in Sociology*, 133, 153-166.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. Macmillan.
- Lipschultz, J. H. (2017a). Big data and privacy. In *Social media communication: Concepts, practices, data, law and ethics*. Routledge.
- Lipschultz, J. H. (2017b). Law and regulation. In *Social media communication: Concepts, practices, data, law and ethics*. Routledge.
- Lipschultz, J. H. (2017c). *Social media communication: Concepts, practices, data, law and ethics*. Taylor & Francis.

- Liu, Y., & Bakici, T. (2019). Enterprise social media usage: The motives and the moderating role of public social media experience. *Computers in Human Behavior, 101*, 163-172.
- Livingston, S. (1997). *Clarifying the CNN effect: An examination of media effects according to type of military intervention*.
- Ljubownikow, S., & Crotty, J. (2016). Nonprofit influence on public policy: Exploring nonprofit advocacy in Russia. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 45*(2), 314-332.
- Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., & Xenos, M. A. (2014). The networked young citizen: Social media, political participation and civic engagement. *Information, Communication & Society, 17*(2), 143-150.
- Lou, C. (2021). Social media influencers and followers: Theorization of a trans-parasocial relation and explication of its implications for influencer advertising. *Journal of Advertising, 1-18*.
- Loubere, P. A. (2021). *A history of communication technology*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Luceri, L., Deb, A., Badawy, A., & Ferrara, E. (2019). Red bots do it better: Comparative analysis of social bot partisan behavior. Companion Proceedings of The 2019 World Wide Web Conference,
- Lukito, J. (2020). Coordinating a multi-platform disinformation campaign: Internet Research Agency Activity on three US social media platforms, 2015 to 2017. *Political Communication, 37*(2), 238-255.
- Luther, M. (2011). Ninety-five theses.
- Lynham, S. A. (2002). The general method of theory-building research in applied disciplines. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 4*(3), 221-241.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422302043002>
- Lyon, D. (2019). Surveillance capitalism, surveillance culture and data politics. In *Data politics* (pp. 64-77). Routledge.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2011). Construct measurement and validation procedures in MIS and behavioral research: Integrating new and existing techniques. *MIS quarterly, 293-334*.

- Madigan, K. (2021). *Protecting lawful streaming act signed into law: What you need to know*. Copyright Alliance. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://copyrightalliance.org/protecting-lawful-streaming-act-signed/>
- Maffettone, S. (2021). *Marx in the 21st century: A critical introduction*. Taylor & Francis.
- Malasenkova, A. A., & Lavrov, I. R. (2019). Twitter diplomacy as a tool for promoting foreign policy: UK–Iran case study. *Journal of Governance and Politics*, 2(1-1).
- Marshall, P. (2017). *1517: Martin Luther and the invention of the Reformation*. Oxford University Press.
- Martin, C., Jagla, L., & Firestone, C. M. (2013). *Integrating diplomacy and social media*. T. A. Institute.
- Marx, K. (2019). *Capital: volume I*. Courier Dover Publications.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970a). Idealism and materialism. In *The German ideology* (Vol. 1). International Publishers Co.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1970b). The illusion of the epoch. In *The German ideology* (Vol. 1). International Publishers Co.
- Mascaro, C., Agosto, D., & Goggins, S. P. (2016). One-sided conversations: The 2012 presidential election on Twitter. Proceedings of the 17th International Digital Government Research Conference on Digital Government Research,
- McKay, S., & Tenove, C. (2021). Disinformation as a threat to deliberative democracy. *Political research quarterly*, 74(3), 703-717.
- McLuhan, M. (1994). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. MIT press.
- McLuhan, M. (2013a). Radio: The tribal drum. In *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Gingko Press.
- McLuhan, M. (2013b). Television: The timid giant. In *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. Gingko Press.
- McMillan, A. S. (2020). *Harnessing the power of social media to drive an e-commerce business* [Arizona State University].
- McNamee, R. (2020). *Zucked: Waking up to the Facebook catastrophe*. Penguin Books.
- McNealy, J. (2017). Account ownership and control. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social media and the law*. Routledge.
- McQuail, D. (1983). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. Sage. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=SgliAAAAMAAJ>

- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. WW Norton & Company.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). Bound to fail: The rise and fall of the liberal international order. *International Security*, 43(4), 7-50.
- Meikle, G., & Young, S. (2017). *Media convergence: Networked digital media in everyday life*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Meirelles, H., Albuquerque, R., Borgatti, L., Souza, L., Meister, N., & Lima, F. (2003). Performance of broilers fed with different levels of methionine hydroxy analogue and DL-methionine. *Brazilian Journal of Poultry Science*, 5(1), 69-74.
- Merrill, J. C. (1990). *The imperative of freedom: A philosophy of journalistic autonomy*. Freedom House. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=fZtNPgAACAAJ>
- Merrill, J. C. (2002). The four theories of the press four and a half decades later: A retrospective. *Journalism Studies*, 3(1), 133-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616700120107374>
- Messick, S. (1990). Validity of test interpretation and use.
- Mickiewicz, E. P. (1999). *Changing channels: Television and the struggle for power in Russia*. Duke University Press.
- Mikhail, B., & Aleksei, M. (2016). Use of social media and blogs by Federal Authorities in Russia: Regulation and policy. Proceedings of the 17th International Digital Government Research Conference on Digital Government Research,
- Milkman, R. (2013). Back to the future? US labour in the new gilded age. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 51(4), 645-665.
- Miller, C. (2021). *Can Congress mandate meaningful transparency for tech platforms?* Brookings Institution. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/can-congress-mandate-meaningful-transparency-for-tech-platforms/>
- Miranda, L. (2021). *After massive outage, small-business owners lament — and reconsider — dependence on Facebook*. NBC News. Retrieved March 10 from <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/after-hours-long-outage-small-business-owners-lament-reconsider-dependence-n1280838>
- Mises, V., & Ludwig. (2005). *Theory and history: An interpretation of social and economic evolution*. Yale University Press.

- Misra, S. (2019). New media & social networks: A contemporary public sphere for social change. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 9(6), 324-334.
- Montalbano, G. (2021). Gramsci in Amsterdam: a critique and re-appraisal of the Neo-Gramscian transnationalism. *Globalizations*, 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1889770>
- Moqbel, M., & Nah, F. F.-H. (2017). Enterprise social media use and impact on performance: The role of workplace integration and positive emotions. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, 9(4), 261-280.
- Morgenthau, H. J., & Thompson, K. W. (1985). *Politics among nations : the struggle for power and peace* (6th ed.. ed.). Knopf.
- Moroz, O. (2020). ‘We Will Not Forget, We Will Not Forgive!’: Alexei Navalny, Youth Protest and the Art of Curating Digital Activism and Memory in Russia. *Social Movements, Cultural Memory and Digital Media*, 249-274.
- Morrison, S. (2021). *Why Facebook banned (and then unbanned) news in Australia*. Vox Media. Retrieved 30 Mar from
<https://www.vox.com/recode/22287971/australia-facebook-news-ban-google-money>
- Moskovskaya, A., & Soboleva, I. (2016). Social entrepreneurship in the system of social policy: International experience and prospects of Russia. *Studies on Russian Economic Development*, 27(6), 683-688.
- Mossner, E. C., & Ross, I. S. (1977). *The correspondence of Adam Smith*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mueller III, R. S. (2019). *Report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election*. U. S. D. o. Justice.
<https://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2019/images/04/18/mueller-report-searchable.pdf>
- Mullen, A., & Klaehn, J. (2010). The Herman-Chomsky propaganda model: A critical approach to analysing mass media behaviour. *Sociology compass*, 4(4), 215-229.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2010.00275.x>
- Muller, D. (2021). Theories of the press. In *Journalism and the future of democracy* (pp. 149-163). Springer.

- Murphy, J. E. (1978). Press responsibility and new journalism. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 3(2), 27-36.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/019685997800300203>
- Musto, M. (2020). *The Marx revival: Key concepts and new critical interpretations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Naidoo, R., & Potgieter, L. M. (2017). Factors explaining user loyalty in a social media-based brand community. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 19(1), 1-9.
- Nakara, W. A., Benmoussa, F.-Z., & Jaouen, A. (2012). Entrepreneurship and social media marketing: Evidence from French small business. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 16(4), 386-405.
- Narveson, J. (1995). The case for free market environmentalism. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 8(2), 145-156.
- Nazaretyan, A. (2017). The role of Bolshevik Revolution in Russian and world history. *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost*(4), 114-129.
- Nerone, J. C., & Berry, W. E. (1995). *Last rights: Revisiting four theories of the press*. University of Illinois Press.
<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=Vtcl0oATFawC>
- Nicholls, R. (2020). *In a world first, Australia plans to force Facebook and Google to pay for news (but ABC and SBS miss out)*. The Conversation. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://theconversation.com/in-a-world-first-australia-plans-to-force-facebook-and-google-to-pay-for-news-but-abc-and-sbs-miss-out-143740>
- Nick, S. (2001). Use of language in diplomacy. In J. Kurbalija & H. Slavik (Eds.), *Language and Diplomacy*. DiploProjects.
- Niebuhr, R. (1986). *The essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected essays and addresses*. Yale University Press.
- Nisbet, E. C., & Kamenchuk, O. (2019). The Psychology of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns and implications for public diplomacy. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14(1-2), 65-82.
- Nordenstreng, K. (1974). *Informational Mass Communication: A Collection of Essays*. Tammi. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=dSIIAQAAIAAJ>

- Nordenstreng, K. (1997). Beyond the four theories of the press. In J. L. Koivisto, Epp (Ed.), *Journalism at the Crossroads: Perspectives on Research* (pp. 47-64). Tartu University Press.
- Noriega, A. C. (2016). The Putin system: Russian authoritarianism today. *Revista Mexicana de Análisis Político y Administración Pública*, 5(1), 75-92.
- Nunn, N. (2014). Historical development. In P. Aghion & S. Durlauf (Eds.), *Handbook of economic growth* (Vol. 2, pp. 347-402). Elsevier.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Nusrat, A., He, Y., Luqman, A., Waheed, A., & Dhir, A. (2021). Enterprise social media and cyber-slacking: A Kahn's model perspective. *Information & Management*, 58(1), 103405.
- O'Hara, K., & Hall, W. (2021). *Four internets: Data, geopolitics, and the governance of cyberspace*. Oxford University Press.
- O'Hara, P. A. (1999). *Encyclopedia of Political Economy* (Vol. 2). Psychology Press.
- O'laughlin, B. (1975). Marxist approaches in anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 4(1), 341-370.
- O'Neil, M., & Frayssé, O. (2016). *Digital labour and prosumer capitalism: The US matrix*. Springer.
- O'Reilly, T. (2009). *What is web 2.0*. O'Reilly Media, Inc.
- O'Boyle, J. (2019). Twitter diplomacy between India and the United States: Agenda-building analysis of tweets during presidential state visits. *Global Media and Communication*, 15(1), 121-134.
- Oatley, T. (2018). International political economy. In *International political economy: International student edition* (6th ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351034661>
- Oatley, T. (2019). Toward a political economy of complex interdependence. *European Journal of International Relations*, 25(4), 957-978.
- Ognyanova, K. (2018). In *Putin's Russia, information has you: Media control and Internet censorship in the Russian Federation* (Vol. 4). IGI Global.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-7113-1.ch088>
- Oguadinma, E. (2017). *Developing E-commerce Practices for Paradise Boutiques*. Lagos.

- Olson, K. (2017). Intellectual property. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social media and the Law*. Routledge.
- Orwell, G., & Fromm, E. (1961). *1984*. New American Library.
- Osborne, J. W. (2015). What is rotating in exploratory factor analysis? *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 20(1), 2.
- Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1), 59-68.
- Packer, C. (2017). Social media use in courtrooms. In D. R. Stewart (Ed.), *Social media and the law*. Routledge.
- Paine, T. (2003). *Common sense and other writings*. Modern library.
- Papineau, D. (1994). The virtues of randomization. *The British journal for the philosophy of science*, 45(2), 437-450.
- Park, H.-W. (1999). *The press, the state and hegemony: A theoretical exploration* University of Minnesota]. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/304522127?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Park, S. J., & Lim, Y. S. (2014). Information networks and social media use in public diplomacy: A comparative analysis of South Korea and Japan. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 24(1), 79-98.
- Pavliček, A. (2013). Social media—the good, the bad, the ugly. IDIMT-2013, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Pelton, J. N. (2020). US government and NASA documents related to orbital space debris mitigation. In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of small satellites: Technology, design, manufacture, applications, economics and regulation* (pp. 1645-1653). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_108
- Penney, J., & Dadas, C. (2014). (Re)Tweeting in the service of protest: Digital composition and circulation in the Occupy Wall Street movement. *New media & society*, 16(1), 74-90.
- Persily, N. (2017). The 2016 US election: Can democracy survive the Internet? *Journal of democracy*, 28(2), 63-76.
- Pittman, M., Oeldorf-Hirsch, A., & Brannan, A. (2021). Green advertising on social media: Brand authenticity mediates the effect of different appeals on purchase

- intent and digital engagement. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 1-16.
- Pitts, F. H. (2017). *Critiquing capitalism today: New ways to read Marx*. Springer.
- Pohan, S., Pohan, H., & Savitri, I. N. (2016). Digital diplomacy-Maximizing social media in Indonesia's economic and cultural diplomacy. 1st International Conference on Social and Political Development (ICOSOP 2016), Medan, Indonesia.
- Polyakova, A. (2020). The Kremlin's plot against democracy: How Russia updated Its 2016 playbook for 2020. *Foreign Affairs*, 99, 140.
- Potter, E. (2018). The evolving complementarity of nation-branding and public diplomacy: Projecting the Canada brand through "Weibo diplomacy" in China. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 24(2), 223-237.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2018.1469523>
- Pratama, P. G., & Rakhmawati, N. A. (2019). Social bot detection on 2019 Indonesia president candidate's supporter's tweets. *Procedia Computer Science*, 161, 813-820.
- Prier, J. (2017). Commanding the trend: Social media as information warfare. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 11(4), 50-85.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon and schuster.
- Qin, B., Strömberg, D., & Wu, Y. (2016). *The political economy of social media in China [working paper]* NBER Conference, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Qin, B., Strömberg, D., & Wu, Y. (2019). Social media, information networks, and protests in China [working paper]. In. Stockholm, Sweden: Stockholm University.
- Raaflaub, K. A. (2008). *War and peace in the ancient world*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Regan, P. M. (2020). Three arenas of congressional oversight of online platforms: Competition, privacy, and content. *Wayne L. Rev.*, 66, 193.
- Repucci, S., & Slipowitz, A. (2021). *Freedom in the world 2021: Democracy under siege*.
- Reuter, O. J., & Szakonyi, D. (2015). Online social media and political awareness in authoritarian regimes. *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(01), 29-51.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123413000203>

- Reyfman, I. (2016). *How Russia learned to write: Literature and the imperial table of ranks*. University of Wisconsin Pres.
- Reynolds, P. D. (2015). *Primer in theory construction: An a&b classics edition*. Routledge.
- Riigi Teataja. (2004). *Electronic communication act*. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/521082017008/consolide>
- Riigi Teataja. (2019). *Personal data protection act*. Riigi Teataja. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/104012019011>
- Roberts, J. A. (2011). Cyberethics: Morality and law in cyberspace. *Journal of Business Ethics Education*, 8(1), 431-434.
- Robinson, P. (2001). Theorizing the influence of media on world politics: Models of media influence on foreign policy. *European journal of communication*, 16(4), 523-544.
- Robinson, P. (2005). *The CNN effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention*. Routledge.
- Robinson, P. (2011). The CNN effect reconsidered: Mapping a research agenda for the future. *Media, War & Conflict*, 4(1), 3-11.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635210397434>
- Robinson, P., & Taylor, P. M. (2010). *Pockets of resistance: British news media, war and theory in the 2003 invasion of Iraq*. Manchester University Press.
- Rodríguez, J. J. F., & Lemus, J. A. (2019). Digital media and the challenges for fundamental rights. In *A complex systems perspective of communication from cells to societies*. IntechOpen.
- Roeder, P. G. (2012). *Where nation-states come from*. Princeton University Press.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400842964>
- Roemer, J. E. (2013). *A general theory of exploitation and class*. Harvard University Press.
- Rohde, M., Aal, K., Misaki, K., Randall, D., Weibert, A., & Wulf, V. (2016). Out of Syria: Mobile media in use at the time of civil war. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 32(7), 515-531.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2016.1177300>
- Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), 144-172.

- Rosen, J. (2012). The people formerly known as the audience. In M. Mandiberg (Ed.), *The social media reader* (pp. 13-16). NYU Press.
- Ross, A. S., & Rivers, D. J. (2017). Digital cultures of political participation: Internet memes and the discursive delegitimization of the 2016 US presidential candidates. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *16*, 1-11.
- Rothschild, M. (2013). Corporate cyber-censorship: The problems with freedom of expression online. *Canadian Journal of Law and Technology*, *11*(1).
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1984). *A discourse on inequality*. Penguin.
- Rowen, H. H. (1961). "L'Etat c'est a moi": Louis XIV and the state. *French Historical Studies*, *2*(1), 83-98.
- Rowland, R. C. (2019). The populist and nationalist roots of Trump's rhetoric. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, *22*(3), 343-388.
- Russell Neuman, W., Guggenheim, L., Mo Jang, S., & Bae, S. Y. (2014). The dynamics of public attention: Agenda-setting theory meets big data. *Journal of communication*, *64*(2), 193-214.
- Russo, A., Watkins, J., Kelly, L., & Chan, S. (2008). Participatory communication with social media. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, *51*(1), 21-31.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2008.tb00292.x>
- Ruxton, G. D., & Beauchamp, G. (2008). Time for some a priori thinking about post hoc testing. *Behavioral ecology*, *19*(3), 690-693.
- Salem, S. (2014). Creating spaces for dissent: The role of social media in the 2011 Egyptian revolution. In *Social media, politics and the state* (pp. 183-200). Routledge.
- Salge, C. A. D. L., & Karahanna, E. (2018). Protesting corruption on Twitter: Is it a bot or is it a person? *Academy of Management Discoveries*, *4*(1), 32-49.
- Sani, M. A. M., & Zengeni, K. T. (2010). Democratisation in Malaysia: The impact of social media in the 2008 general election. 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Adelaide, Australia.
- Sanovich, S. (2017). *Computational propaganda in Russia: The origins of digital misinformation [working paper]*.
- Satariano, A. (2022). *E.U. takes aim at social media's harms with landmark new law*. New York Times. Retrieved 11 May from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/22/technology/european-union-social-media-law.html>

- Savin, N., & Solovyeva, O. (2020). Social media and Russian society. In K. Tstsura & D. Kruckeberg (Eds.), *Strategic communications in Russia* (pp. 167-176). Routledge.
- Scammell, M. (1996). Television and contemporary history. In B. Brivati, J. Buxton, & A. Seldon (Eds.), *The Contemporary History Handbook* (pp. 408-422).
- Schein, A. I., & Bauer, G. R. (2019). The Intersectional Discrimination Index: Development and validation of measures of self-reported enacted and anticipated discrimination for intercategory analysis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 226, 225-235.
- Schermer, B. W. (2011). The limits of privacy in automated profiling and data mining. *Computer Law & Security Review*, 27(1), 45-52.
- Schlitzer, A. (2018). *The spread of top misinformation articles on Twitter in 2017: Social bot influence and misinformation trends* University of Arizona].
- Schmarzo, B. (2013). *Big data: Understanding how data powers big business*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Schmit, C., Kelly, K., & Bernstein, J. (2019). Cross sector data sharing: Necessity, challenge, and hope. *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 47(S2), 83-86.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1073110519857325>
- Schmit, C., Larson, B. N., & Kum, H.-C. (2021). *Data privacy laws in the US protect profit but prevent sharing data for public good – people want the opposite*. The Conversation. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://theconversation.com/data-privacy-laws-in-the-us-protect-profit-but-prevent-sharing-data-for-public-good-people-want-the-opposite-166320>
- Schramm, W. (1964). *Mass media and national development: The role of information in the developing countries* (Vol. 25).
- Schwarzenberger, G. (1951). Power politics: An introduction to the study of international relations and post-war planning. In. New York: Praeger.
- Schwarzmantel, J. (2014). *The Routledge guidebook to Gramsci's prison notebooks*. Routledge.

- Sclofsky, S., & Funk, K. (2018). The specter that haunts political science: The neglect and misreading of Marx in international relations and comparative politics. *International Studies Perspectives*, 19(1), 83-101.
- Segado-Boj, F., & Díaz-Campo, J. (2020). Social media and its intersections with free speech, freedom of information and privacy. An analysis. *Revista ICONO14. Revista científica de Comunicación y Tecnologías emergentes*, 18(1), 231-255.
- Segesten, A. D., & Bossetta, M. (2017). A typology of political participation online: How citizens used Twitter to mobilize during the 2015 British general elections. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(11), 1625-1643.
- Shahbaz, A., Funk, A., Slipowitz, A., Vesteinsson, K., Baker, G., Grothe, C., Vepa, M., & Weal, T. (2021). *Freedom on the net 2021*.
- Shahin, S., & Huang, Q. E. (2019). Friend, ally, or rival? Twitter diplomacy as “technosocial” performance of national identity. *International journal of communication*, 13, 19.
- Shao, C., Ciampaglia, G. L., Varol, O., Yang, K.-C., Flammini, A., & Menczer, F. (2018). The spread of low-credibility content by social bots. *Nature communications*, 9(1), 1-9.
- Sharoni, S. (2012). E-citizenship: Trust in government, political efficacy, and political participation in the Internet era. *Electronic Media & Politics*, 1(8), 119-135.
- Shea, C. S., & Lee, F. L. (2022). Public diplomacy via Twitter: Opportunities and tensions. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 1-14.
- Sheehan, H. (2007). Marxism and science studies: A sweep through the decades. *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 21(2), 197-210.
- Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media: Technology, the public sphere, and political change. *Foreign Affairs*, 28-41.
- Siebert, F., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press: Authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. University of Illinois Press.
- Siisainen, M. (2003). Two concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam. *International journal of contemporary sociology*, 40(2), 183-204.
- Simons, G. (1997). *The Vietnam syndrome: Impact on US foreign policy*. Springer.
- Simons, G. (2015). Taking the new public diplomacy online: Russia and China. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 11(2), 111-124.

- Šimunjak, M., & Caliandro, A. (2019). Twiplomacy in the age of Donald Trump: Is the diplomatic code changing? *The Information Society*, 35(1), 13-25.
- Skinner, A. S. (1993). David Hume: Principles of political economy. In D. F. Norton (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (pp. 222-254). Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, M. A. (2020). Small satellites and their challenges to space situational awareness (SSA) and space traffic management (STM). In J. N. Pelton & S. Madry (Eds.), *Handbook of small satellites: Technology, design, manufacture, applications, economics and regulation* (pp. 1373-1386). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36308-6_75
- Skjerdal, T. S. (2010). *Responsible watchdogs? Debating the role of the press in post-apartheid South Africa*. VDM Verlag Dr. Miller.
- Skoric, M. M., & Poor, N. (2013). Youth engagement in Singapore: The interplay of social and traditional media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 57(2), 187-204.
- Skoric, M. M., & Zhu, Q. (2016). Social media and offline political participation: Uncovering the paths from digital to physical. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 28(3), 415-427.
- Skoric, M. M., Zhu, Q., & Pang, N. (2016). Social media, political expression, and participation in Confucian Asia. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 9(4), 331-347.
- Skovsgaard, M., & Van Dalen, A. (2013). Dodging the gatekeepers? Social media in the campaign mix during the 2011 Danish elections. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(5), 737-756.
- Slater, P. (2020). *Origin and significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist perspective*. Routledge.
- Slavtcheva-Petkova, V. (2017). Fighting Putin and the Kremlin's grip in neo-authoritarian Russia: The experience of liberal journalists. *Journalism*, 0(0), 1464884917708061. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917708061>
- Smith, A. (1863). *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations with a life of the author, an introductory discourse, notes, and supplemental dissertations*.
- Smith, A. (2010). *The theory of moral sentiments*. Penguin.

- Smith, D. (2012). *Guanxi, mianzi, and business: The impact of culture on corporate governance in China*.
- Smith, J., & Noble, H. (2014). Bias in research. *Evidence-based nursing*, 17(4), 100-101.
- Smith, K. (2016). *Tigers, flies, and longines: The Chinese corruption crackdown and its effect on conspicuous consumption* [University of Mississippi].
- Smith, M., Szongott, C., Henne, B., & Von Voigt, G. (2012). Big data privacy issues in public social media. 2012 6th IEEE international conference on digital ecosystems and technologies (DEST),
- Smith, R. M. (2003). *From blackjacks to briefcases: A history of commercialized strikebreaking and unionbusting in the United States*. Ohio University Press.
- Spencer, S., Harding, J., & Sheahan, J. (2014). *Social ecommerce: Increasing sales and extending brand reach*. O'Reilly Media, Inc.
- Spierings, N., & Jacobs, K. (2014). Getting personal? The impact of social media on preferential voting. *Political Behavior*, 36(1), 215-234.
- Squarespace Communications. (2021). *Squarespace survey reveals Gen Z find digital life more important and memorable than in-person life*. Squarespace. Retrieved November 26 from <https://newsroom.squarespace.com/blog/squarespace-survey-reveals-genz>
- Srivastava, M. (2013). Social media and its use by the government. *Journal of public administration and governance*, 3(2), 161-172.
- Stadnik, I. (2021). Russia: An independent and sovereign Internet? In B. Haggart, N. Tusikov, & J. A. Scholte (Eds.), *Power and authority in Internet governance: Return of the state?* (pp. 147-167). Routledge.
- Staff, R. (2014). *Russia's VKontakte CEO says he was fired, flees Russia*. Reuters. Retrieved 14 December from <https://www.reuters.com/article/russia-vkontakte-ceo-idUSL6N0NE1HS20140422>
- Starbird, K., Arif, A., & Wilson, T. (2019). Disinformation as collaborative work: Surfacing the participatory nature of strategic information operations. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 3(CSCW), 1-26.
- Stegemann, P. (2016). War in the digital sphere: The operation protective edge on Twitter. *IReflect*, 3(1), 53-76.

- Stieglitz, S., Brachten, F., Ross, B., & Jung, A.-K. (2017). Do social bots dream of electric sheep? A categorisation of social media bot accounts. *arXiv Preprint*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1710.04044>
- Stier, S., Bleier, A., Lietz, H., & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Election campaigning on social media: Politicians, audiences, and the mediation of political communication on Facebook and Twitter. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 50-74.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). Information and the change in the paradigm in economics. *American Economic Review*, 92(3), 460-501.
- Stockdale, R., Ahmed, A., & Scheepers, H. (2012). Identifying business value from the use of social media: An sme perspective. PACIS 2012,
- Stockmann, D., Luo, T., & Shen, M. (2020). Designing authoritarian deliberation: How social media platforms influence political talk in China. *Democratization*, 27(2), 243-264.
- Strauß, N., Kruikemeier, S., van der Meulen, H., & van Noort, G. (2015). Digital diplomacy in gcc countries: Strategic communication of Western embassies on Twitter. *Government Information Quarterly*, 32(4), 369-379.
- Stucke, M. E. (2017). Should we be concerned about data-opolies? *Geo. L. Tech. Rev.*, 2, 275.
- Sturrock, J. (2008). *Structuralism*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Su, S., & Xu, M. (2015). Twitplomacy: Social media as a new platform for development of public diplomacy. *International Journal of E-Politics*, 6(1), 16-29.
- Sue, V. M., & Ritter, L. A. (2007). Conducting online surveys. In. SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983754>
- Sullivan, G. M., & Artino Jr, A. R. (2013). Analyzing and interpreting data from Likert-type scales. *Journal of graduate medical education*, 5(4), 541-542.
- Sweezy, P. (1942). *The theory of capitalist development; Principles of Marxian political economy*. Monthly Review Press.
- Sy, E., Burkert, C., Federrath, H., & Fischer, M. (2018). Tracking users across the web via tls session resumption. Proceedings of the 34th Annual Computer Security Applications Conference,
- Tan, L., Ponnam, S., Gillham, P., Edwards, B., & Johnson, E. (2013). Analyzing the impact of social media on social movements: A computational study on Twitter

- and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining,
- Taneja, S., & Toombs, L. (2014). Putting a face on small businesses: Visibility, viability, and sustainability the impact of social media on small business marketing. *Academy of marketing studies journal*, 18(1), 249.
- Tang, G., & Lee, F. L. (2013). Facebook use and political participation: The impact of exposure to shared political information, connections with public political actors, and network structural heterogeneity. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31(6), 763-773.
- Tannenbaum, E. (2021). *Every social media platform Donald Trump is banned from using (so far)*. Conde Nast. Retrieved 29 Mar from <https://www.glamour.com/story/donald-trump-social-media-bans-twitter-facebook>
- Tapsell, R. (2021). Disinformation and cultural practice in Southeast Asia. In *Disinformation and fake news* (pp. 91-101). Springer.
- Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International journal of medical education*, 2, 53.
- Terry, M. (2009). Twittering healthcare: Social media and medicine. *Telemedicine and e-Health*, 15(6), 507-510. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2009.9955>
- Thomas, D. (1969). *A long time burning: The history of literary censorship in England*. Praeger.
- Thompson, W. (1997). *The left in history: Revolution and reform in twentieth-century politics*. Pluto Press.
- Thucydides, & Crawley, R. (2012). *History of the Peloponnesian war*. Dover Publications.
- Timberg, C., Romm, T., & Dwoskin, E. (2018). *Lawmakers agree social media needs regulation, but say prompt federal action is unlikely*. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/lawmakers-agree-social-media-needs-regulation-but-say-prompt-federal-action-is-unlikely/2018/04/11/d3ce71b0-3daf-11e8-8d53-eba0ed2371cc_story.html?noredirect=on

- Toner, M. E., & Trainer, K. E. (2021). The fourteen-billion-dollar election. In L. J. Sabato, K. Kondik, & J. M. Coleman (Eds.), *A return to normalcy? The 2020 election that (almost) broke America*. Rowan & Littlefield.
- Torrealba, A. A. (2015). Twiplomacy: Impact of Twitter social network on diplomacy. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 15(3), 152-166.
- Towner, T. L. (2013). All political participation is socially networked? New media and the 2012 election. *Social Science Computer Review*, 31(5), 527-541.
- Towner, T. L., & Muñoz, C. L. (2018). Baby boom or bust? The new media effect on political participation. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 17(1), 32-61.
- Transparency International. (2021). *Corruption perceptions index 2020*.
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020>
- Treble-Greening, J. (2019). Raising the stakes: Creating an international sanction to generate corporate compliance with data privacy laws. *Colum. Bus. L. Rev.*, 763.
- Treisman, D. (2018). *The new autocracy: Information, politics, and policy in Putin's Russia*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Trithara, D. (2020). Securitizing disinformation: The case of Westminster's digital, culture, media and sport committee. *Democracy and Security*, 1-28.
- Trottier, D., & Fuchs, C. (2014a). *Social media, politics and the state: Protests, revolutions, riots, crime and policing in the age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube*. Routledge.
- Trottier, D., & Fuchs, C. (2014b). Theorising social media, politics and the state: An introduction. In *Social media, politics and the state* (pp. 15-50). Routledge.
- Tsokhas, K. (1980). The political economy of Cuban dependence on the Soviet Union. *Theory and Society*, 9(2), 319-362.
- Tsvetkova, N. (2020). Russian digital diplomacy: A rising cyber soft power? In A. A. Velikaya & G. Simons (Eds.), *Russia's public diplomacy: Evolution and practice* (pp. 103-117). Springer.
- Tudoroiu, T. (2014). Social media and revolutionary waves: The case of the Arab Spring. *New Political Science*, 36(3), 346-365.
- Tufekci, Z. (2014). The year we get creeped out by the algorithms. Retrieved July, 5, 2019.

- Tufekci, Z., & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of communication*, 62(2), 363-379.
- University of Sussex. (2005). *Table of critical values for the F distribution (for use with ANOVA)*. University of Sussex. Retrieved March 7 from <https://users.sussex.ac.uk/~grahamh/RM1web/F-ratio%20table%202005.pdf>
- Uren, T., Thomas, E., & Wallis, J. (2019). *Tweeting through the Great Firewall*. <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/tweeting-through-great-firewall>
- Uyheng, J., & Carley, K. M. (2019). Characterizing bot networks on Twitter: An empirical analysis of contentious issues in the Asia-Pacific. International Conference on Social Computing, Behavioral-Cultural Modeling and Prediction and Behavior Representation in Modeling and Simulation,
- Vaca-Baquerio, M. T. (2018). *Four theories of the press: 60 years and counting*. Routledge.
- Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2020). Deepfakes and disinformation: Exploring the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty, and trust in news. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1), 2056305120903408.
- Vaccari, C., Valeriani, A., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Jost, J. T., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2013). Social media and political communication. A survey of Twitter users during the 2013 Italian general election. *Rivista italiana di scienza politica*, 43(3), 381-410.
- Valenzuela, S. (2013). Unpacking the use of social media for protest behavior: The roles of information, opinion expression, and activism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7), 920-942.
- Valenzuela, S., Arriagada, A., & Scherman, A. (2012). The social media basis of youth protest behavior: The case of Chile. *Journal of communication*, 62(2), 299-314.
- Van der Wurff, R. (2008). The impact of the Internet on media content. *The Internet and the mass media*, 65-85.
- Van Gessel, H. (1970). Acta Urbis—Ancient Rome's Local Paper. *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)*, 16(2), 88-104.
- Varol, O., Ferrara, E., Davis, C. A., Menczer, F., & Flammini, A. (2017). Online human-bot interactions: Detection, estimation, and characterization. Eleventh International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media,

- Vásquez, I., & McMahon, F. (2020). *The human freedom index 2020*. Fraser Institute.
- Verhulst, S., & Young, A. (2017). *The potential of social media — intelligence to improve people's lives: Social media data for good* (The GovLab Report, Issue.
- Voigt, P., & Von dem Bussche, A. (2017). *The EU general data protection regulation (gdpr): A practical guide, 1st ed.* (Vol. 10). Springer International Publishing.
- Von Mises, L. (1972). *The anti-capitalistic mentality*. Ludwig von Mises Institute.
- Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151.
- Walker, J. (1950). The censorship of the press during the reign of Charles II. *History*, 35(125), 219-238.
- Walker, M., & Matsa, K. E. (2021). *News consumption across social media in 2021*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved 20 Nov from <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2021/09/20/news-consumption-across-social-media-in-2021/>
- Walsh, D. (2020). *In Egypt, images From American protests evoke a lost revolution*. New York Times. Retrieved 11 June from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/world/middleeast/protests-egypt-floyd-arab-spring.html>
- Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
- Wang, J. (2020). *Regulation of digital media platforms: The case of China*.
- Wang, P., Angarita, R., & Renna, I. (2018). Is this the era of misinformation yet: Combining social bots and fake news to deceive the masses. Companion Proceedings of the The Web Conference 2018,
- Wang, X. (2016). *Social media in industrial China*. UCL Press.
- Wang, Y., & Mark, G. (2016). News trustworthiness and verification in China: The tension of dual media channels. *First Monday*, 21(1). <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/6147/5195>
- Wasim, A. (2016, 30 Mar). Amplified messages: How hashtag activism and Twitter diplomacy converged at #thisisacoup – and won. *Impact of Social Sciences Blog*. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65280/1/Ahmed%20Amplified%20messages%20How%20Ohashtag%20activism%20and%20Twitter%20diplomacy%20converged%20at%20%23ThisIsACoup.pdf>

- Weber, J. (2006). Strassburg, 1605: The origins of the newspaper in Europe. *German history*, 24(3), 387-412.
- Wells, H. G. (2003). *The war of the worlds*. Broadview Press.
- Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of international politics* (Vol. 67). Cambridge University Press.
- White, C. L., & Boatwright, B. (2020). Social media ethics in the data economy: Issues of social responsibility for using Facebook for public relations. *Public relations review*, 46(5), 101980.
- Wilke, J. (2015). Media control in the twentieth century. In P. Meusburger, D. Gregory, & L. Suarsana (Eds.), *Geographies of knowledge and power* (pp. 277-293). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9960-7_14
- Wilkie, S. (2021). *The news media bargaining code could backfire if small media outlets aren't protected: An economist explains*. The Conversation. Retrieved 30 Mar from <https://theconversation.com/the-news-media-bargaining-code-could-backfire-if-small-media-outlets-arent-protected-an-economist-explains-155745>
- Williams, B. A., & Delli Carpini, M. X. (2004). Monica and Bill all the time and everywhere: The collapse of gatekeeping and agenda setting in the new media environment. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(9), 1208-1230.
- Williams, B. D., Valero, J. N., & Kim, K. (2018). Social media, trust, and disaster: Does trust in public and nonprofit organizations explain social media use during a disaster? *Quality & Quantity*, 52(2), 537-550.
- Wolfsfeld, G., & Sheafer, T. (2006). Competing actors and the construction of political news: The contest over waves in Israel. *Political Communication*, 23(3), 333-354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600808927>
- Wooditch, A., Johnson, N. J., Solymosi, R., Medina Ariza, J., & Langton, S. (2021). Bivariate correlation. In *A beginner's guide to statistics for criminology and criminal justice using r* (pp. 227-244). Springer.
- Woolley, S. C. (2016). Automating power: Social bot interference in global politics. *First Monday*, 21(4).
- Wren, M. C., & Stults, T. (2009). *The course of Russian history*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

- Wu, S. (2016). *Uncovering conceptions of “journalism crisis” in Singapore and Hong Kong: When state influences interact with western liberal ideals in a globalizing media landscape* [Simon Fraser University].
- Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 179-188.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.016>
- Xiguang, L., & Jing, W. (2010). Web-based public diplomacy: The role of social media in the Iranian and Xinjiang riots. *Journal of International Communication*, 16(1), 7-22.
- Yamamoto, M., Kushin, M. J., & Dalisay, F. (2015). Social media and mobiles as political mobilization forces for young adults: Examining the moderating role of online political expression in political participation. *New media & society*, 17(6), 880-898.
- Yang, K.-C., Hui, P.-M., & Menczer, F. (2019). Bot electioneering volume: Visualizing social bot activity during elections. Companion Proceedings of The 2019 World Wide Web Conference,
- Yang, Q. (2021). *Partisanship, friendship, and censorship in online social networks* [Massachusetts Institute of Technology].
- Yee, R. W., Miquel-Romero, M.-J., & Cruz-Ros, S. (2021). Why and how to use enterprise social media platforms: The employee’s perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 137, 517-526.
- Yin, J. (2008). Beyond the four theories of the press: A new model for the Asian & the world press. *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, 10(1), 3-62.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/220782191?accountid=26503>
- Zaharna, R. S., & Uysal, N. (2016). Going for the jugular in public diplomacy: How adversarial publics using social media are challenging state legitimacy. *Public relations review*, 42(1), 109-119.
- Zeljko, D., Jakovic, B., & Strugar, I. (2018). New methods Of online advertising: Social media influencers. *Annals of DAAAM & Proceedings*, 29.
- Zeng, K., & Li, X. (2019). Geopolitics, nationalism, and foreign direct investment: Perceptions of the China threat and American public attitudes toward Chinese FDI. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 12(4), 495-518.

- Zhang, A. (2012). An examination of the effects of corruption on financial market volatility. *Journal of Emerging Market Finance*, 11(3), 301-322.
- Zhang, J. (2013). A strategic issue management (SIM) approach to social media use in public diplomacy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(9), 1312-1331.
- Zherebtsov, M., & Goussev, S. (2017). Kremlin tweets: The politics of social media and the quest for legitimacy in Putin's Russia. 113th American Political Science Association Conference,
- Zhong, X., & Lu, J. (2013). Public diplomacy meets social media: A study of the US Embassy's blogs and micro-blogs. *Public relations review*, 39(5), 542-548.
- Zhou, L., & Zhang, S. (2018). Mianzi/lian. In Ö. Jan-Ola & V. Jer (Eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics: 21st Annual Installment* (Vol. 21, pp. 141). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Zuboff, S. (2015). Big other: Surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization. *Journal of Information Technology*, 30(1), 75-89.
- Zuboff, S. (2019a). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. Profile books.
- Zuboff, S. (2019b). Surveillance capitalism. *Esprit*, 5, 63-77.
- Zuckerman, E. (2008). The cute cat theory of digital activism. E-Tech Conference, San Diego, CA, USA.

APPENDIX A: MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

Below is a bulleted list for each of the models of the order represented within a society. These are derived from the chapter that corresponds with the model (e.g., Strongman, Chapter 6), as well as the literature review throughout chapters two, three, and four. They reflect a synthesis and distillation of the concepts that underpin the models and were utilised to draft the vignettes for the research. Further, the characteristics reflect differing degrees of the four dimensions comprising the Order Index: Personal Freedom, Corporate Freedom, State Control, Societal Statism.

Strongman

- The presence of a high degree of authoritarian governance.
- A high degree of state power vested in the head of state.
- The power of state used for hegemonic self-preservation rather than public interest.
- A high degree of censorship enforced by the use of state power.
- A high degree of yes-man-ship among social media companies in the form of acquiescence to the demands of the state government.
- A high degree of self-censorship among social media companies regarding the moderation of their social media platform's content.
- A high frequency of state social media engagement in official and unofficial accounts.
- A high degree of state social media engagement based upon the creation of social media content using propaganda, public relations techniques, misinformation, disinformation, bots, or some combination therein.
- A high degree of social media platform-based surveillance by the state or required of social media companies by the state
- A high degree of social media user data used for surveillance purposes
- A high degree of truth distortion.
- The presence of a closed system.
- A low degree of or non-existent external (foreign government or enterprise) engagement with social media platforms.
- A high degree of regulation on the existence of social media companies and platforms, e.g., state approval or licensing required.
- Social media related industries, such as digital advertising or user data, regulated to work in favour of the government, a high degree of fascist tendencies in government.

- The presence of state capitalism practices within social media-related industries.
- A moderately low degree of freedom.
- A moderately low degree of protected rights.

Social Consciousness

- The presence of a robust democratic tradition.
- A high degree of freedom.
- A high degree of protected rights.
- The robust presence of state regulation.
- A high degree of private enterprise.
- A relatively high degree of public enterprise.
- A highly open system.
- A high degree of privacy rights for individuals regarding data.
- A robust user data industry.
- A highly regulated user data industry.
- A high degree of practices in the vein of surveillance capitalism.
- A moderate presence of sousveillance as a practice within society.
- Little to no distortion of the truth.
- A high degree of social responsibility.
- State power wielded in favour of public interest, not private interest or hegemonic self-preservation.
- A high degree of official state engagement with social media.
- Little unofficial engagement with social media by the state.
- A moderately high degree of state surveillance of social media content.
- The presence of state requirements for social media content moderation.
- Social media companies engaged in a great deal of content moderation on their platforms.

Free Market

- The presence of a robust democratic tradition.
- A high degree of freedom.
- A high degree of protected rights.
- A lack of state regulation.
- A high degree of private enterprise.
- A low degree of public enterprise.
- A relatively open system.
- A low degree of privacy rights for individuals regarding data.
- A robust user data industry.
- A high degree of practices in the vein of surveillance capitalism.
- Some distortion of the truth.
- A high degree of libertarianism.
- State power wielded in favour of private interest, not public interest.
- A moderate degree of state engagement with social media.
- Some state surveillance of social media content.
- Moderation responsibilities mainly left to social media companies.
- Little moderation of social media content, generally speaking.

Big Brother

- The presence of a high degree of totalitarian governance.
- A high degree of state power vested in the head of state.
- The presence of a group that monitors and governs along with the head of state.
- Power of state used for group hegemonic self-preservation rather than public interest.
- A high degree of censorship enforced by the use of state power.
- A high degree of state control over individuals' private lives.
- A high degree of state control over individuals' public lives.
- The presence of a high degree of authoritarian governance.
- A high degree of state power vested in the head of state.
- A low degree of or near-non-existent levels of freedom.
- A low degree of or near-non-existent levels of rights.
- The power of state used for hegemonic self-preservation rather than public interest.
- A high degree of censorship enforced by the use of state power.
- A high degree of yes-man-ship among social media companies in the form of acquiescence to the demands of the state government.
- A high degree of self-censorship among social media companies regarding the moderation of their social media platform's content.
- A high frequency of state social media engagement in official and unofficial accounts.
- A high degree of state social media engagement based upon the creation of social media content using propaganda, public relations techniques, misinformation, disinformation, bots, or some combination therein.
- A high degree of social media platform-based surveillance by the state or required of social media companies by the state.
- A high degree of social media user data used for surveillance purposes.
- A high degree of truth distortion.
- The presence of a closed system.
- A low degree of or non-existent external (foreign government or enterprise) engagement with social media platforms.
- A high degree of regulation on the existence of social media companies and platforms, e.g., state approval or licensing required.
- Social media related industries, such as digital advertising or user data, regulated to work in favour of the government, a high degree of fascist tendencies in government.
- A moderate degree of private enterprise.
- A high degree of state enterprise.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET, SURVEY INSTRUMENT & CODING SCHEME

Participant Information Sheet:

Explanatory Statement

TW00137

Assessing Social Media Constructs Accuracy Through Survey Instrument

My name is Tyler Wilson, and I am currently undertaking a Doctorate of Philosophy at Bond University under Dr Jeffrey Brand and Dr Jonathan Ping's supervision.

The research that I am asking you to participate in focuses on how theoretical models can explain the relationship between social media and nations. In addition, I am interested in how well these theoretical models can be translated to the real world.

To participate in this research, you will need to navigate to the online survey within the Qualtrics survey platform. First, you will be asked to answer some demographic questions, like your age and gender. Then, you will be asked to read a hypothetical case inspired by a real nation and evaluate it using the survey's criteria. During the survey, you will be presented with a few short statements and asked how much you agree with them. The research should take around 20 minutes to complete.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time without consequences until the data has been readied for analysis. If you withdraw, your data will be removed from the dataset for analysis. All the data collected in this research will be treated with confidentiality. No one outside of the research team will have access to it. The data will be stored according to Bond University policies on data management and storage.

We expect that the data from this research will help make the theoretical models more accurate, which will improve our understanding of social media systems globally.

Should you have any concerns with how this research is being conducted, please contact:

Bond University Human Research Ethics Committee, Bond University Office of Research Services. Bond University, Gold Coast, 4229, Australia Tel: +61 7 5595 4194 Fax: +61 7 5595 1120 email: ethics@bond.edu.au

If you experience distress from participation in this research, please contact Lifeline by phone at 13 11 14 or by text at 0477 13 11 14.

Completing the survey implies your consent to participate and the data collected to be used in this study.

Survey Instrument:

Demo 1: What is your age?

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

Demo 2: What is your sex?

Male

Female

Another term (please specify)

Prefer not to say

Demo 3: What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Pre-primary education

Primary education

Secondary education

Certificate level

Advanced diploma and diploma level

Bachelor Degree level

Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate level

Postgraduate Degree

VSA 1: It's great that many young people today are prepared to defy authority.

(REVERSE CODED)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

VSA 2: There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse. **(REVERSE**

CODED)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

VSA 3: Our society does NOT need tougher government and stricter laws. **(REVERSE**

CODED)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

Foil 1: Generally speaking, the available COVID-19 vaccines are safe for use.

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

Q1: Regarding social media platforms in *Country X*, to what degree...

Q1_1: Are users able to share their political ideas or opinions? **(REVERSE CODED)**

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q1_2: Are users able to protest or criticise the government? **(REVERSE CODED)**

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q1_3: Can users expect to control their content? **(REVERSE CODED)**

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q1_4: Can users expect privacy on the platform? **(REVERSE CODED)**

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q1_5: Are users able to interact with foreign individuals, companies, or governments? **(REVERSE CODED)**

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q2: Regarding social media companies in *Country X*, to what degree...

Q2_1: Are companies free to control their platforms? (**REVERSE CODED**)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q2_2: Are companies required to share user data with the government?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q2_3: Are companies privately owned? (**REVERSE CODED**)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q2_4: Do companies trade or sell user data? (**REVERSE CODED**)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q2_5: Do companies do business with foreign individuals, companies, or governments? (**REVERSE CODED**)

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q3: Regarding the government in *Country X*, to what degree...

Q3_1: do they regulate the trade of user data?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q3_3: do they participate in social media?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q3_3: do they monitor social media activity?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q3_4: do they control privacy rights for social media users?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q3_5: do they censor social media activity?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q4: Regarding obligations to the government in *Country X*, how much...

Q4_1: do companies monitor content for the government?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q4_2: do companies censor political content?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q4_3: do companies follow social media laws?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q4_4: do users rely on government officials for information on social media?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Q4_5: do users support the government on social media?

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (High)

Foil 2: Generally speaking, humans are not responsible for climate change.

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

VSA 4: What our country needs most is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity.

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

VSA 5: God's laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late.

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

VSA 6: The facts on crime and recent public disorders show we have to crack down harder on troublemakers, if we are going to preserve law and order.

(Low)1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 (High)

APPENDIX C: VIGNETTE DECKS

This appendix contains the vignette decks presented to participants in the research. They are presented in the following order: Strongman, Social Consciousness, Free Market, and Big Brother. Each deck contains a fictional vignette using the nation “Ustia” and a real-world mirror. The vignettes are included in the format that participants received them.

You live in Oswal, a neighbour of Ustia. You are trying to learn more about Ustia, especially how social media works there. You find the following report online. Please read the report, then answer the survey questions that follow it to help you evaluate Ustia.

Ustian Social Media Platforms Boom, Creating an Account Carries Some Risks



Social media platforms are growing within Ustia despite the government's restrictions on political speech. Platforms are privately owned but are often monitored by the Ustian government. So, while it is possible to join Ustian social media as an Oswalan, there is a high risk the Ustian government will be watching.



Ustian social media companies appear to operate free of the state. However, sources report Ustagram, the leading social media platform in Ustia, follows the rules on what content to allow on its platform. For example, Ustagram restricts all posts critical of government policies or officials. One source also informed us that the government quickly and quietly removed smaller start-ups seeking free political speech online. As a result, these efforts have reduced political speech on platforms. So, only the platforms that comply with government requests are left in Ustia. As well, only the government's political speech is allowed on social media in Ustia. So, Ustians have become reliant on the government for political news from beyond the borders. This policy has resulted in many Ustians either promoting government views or staying silent about their beliefs online out of fear of the government.

The Ustian government is known to request data collected from users by Ustian social media companies. Usually, the government targets users who are friendly to foreign nations or people. This makes it hard for people outside of Ustia looking to connect with friends there. Also, it may result in our Ustian friends getting an unfriendly visit from the government.

There are no laws on trading user data acquired by companies, most likely since the companies provide data access to the government. There are not any privacy rights laws for individuals on social media either. As a result, social media companies profit greatly through selling user data to advertisers and other business interests in Ustia. So, there is a high risk of user data being collected and traded to private and government entities. Ultimately, while it is possible to join Ustian social media as an Oswalan, it is not advised if it can be avoided.

You have recently become interested in social media around the world. Read the following report below on Russia. Then, answer the survey questions to help you evaluate Russia's social media landscape.

Russian Social Media has Grown in Recent Years, Kremlin Expands Authority Over Social Media Platforms in Response



Russian social media companies have experienced rapid growth in recent history, much like the rest of the world. The Russian government under Vladimir Putin has worked to capitalise on social media's potential benefits for Putin's regime.

Officially, social media companies within Russia like VKontakte (VK) and Odnoklassniki (OK) are privately-owned. However, there is a considerable deal of influence from the government on how they operate. As a result, censorship of content that is critical of the government has developed. This was not always the case, with VK being used to organise anti-government movements in the past. Nowadays, the founder of VK has been forced out of the company. Instead, investors who have close ties to Putin have taken control of the company – leading people to worry about the future of what free political speech exists on the platform.

Government policies have had an impact on the use of Twitter or Facebook in Russia as well. Facebook and Twitter have been required to bring the servers they use to Russia so that the government can monitor the content that the companies collect. Twitter and Facebook have resisted this demand, reducing the use of their platforms in Russia. As a result, the government has tried to fine them for ignoring the government's demands. Further, while the government has fined foreign social media, it has not hesitated to pressure domestic social media similarly.

Social media in Russia finds itself governed under the Information Security Doctrine and the Sovereign Internet legislation. These two policies have led to greater information collection and monitoring powers for the government as part of a broader vision to have a Russian intranet removed from the influence of the global Internet. Interestingly, the policies have ensured that the final say ultimately lands on Putin's desk. So, this has led to more pressure on social media companies to self-censor and restrict content that the government deems illegal, usually critical or inconvenient for the regime.

So, Russia has become a harsher place for those trying to garner a social media following, especially if it deals with politics or is critical of Putin's regime.

You live in Oswal, a neighbour of Ustia. You are trying to learn more about Ustia, especially how social media works there. You find the following report online. Please read the report, then answer the survey questions that follow it to help you evaluate Ustia.

Ustia Sees Growth in Social Media Platforms and New Legislation, Users Now Enjoy Great Control Over Their Accounts



Social media platforms are growing within Ustia. As a result, there are concerns over privacy rights and user controls for social media accounts. The Ustian government has adopted new laws designed to protect users' data and privacy rights. So, if ever there was a time to join an Ustian social media platform, it is now.



Ustian social media companies have enjoyed great freedom over the past few years. However, that time appears to have passed as the Ustian government has enacted tough laws around users' accounts and user data. One new law focuses on giving users the right to control what data is collected on them. This law also created a right to be forgotten across Internet services as well as social media platforms.

The Ustian government has started to treat the user data industry like any other industry in the country. Privately-owned social media companies have not had any regulations on their data collection efforts or how they go about selling that data. However, the user privacy rights law takes steps to limit the collection efforts. Another new law restricts how social media companies sell user data and to whom they sell it. The nature of the data sold to advertising partners is strictly monitored. Users are now entitled to know what data is collected from them and who is buying it.

These new laws benefit the Ustian government as well. The government has started using social media to inform Ustians of important political, economic, and emergency updates in a way that has yet to be matched elsewhere in the world. So, any Oswalan in Ustia is just a swipe away from having any vital news delivered to them.

A final reform for social media is connected to the larger social media push from the government. The reform has sought to limit the spread of fake news, hate speech, and dangerous beliefs. This reform has raised some concern from free speech advocates but is widely praised. The government has claimed that the law will not impact anyone's right to share their opinions online – political or otherwise.

Ultimately, the new laws have been met with some criticism from business leaders and the owners of the social media platforms. However, all the platforms appear to be following the new laws. Overall, the laws have led to users praising the government for the steps they have taken to protect individual rights on social media.

You have recently become interested in social media around the world. First, please read the following report below on the United Kingdom. Then, answer the survey questions to help you evaluate the United Kingdom's social media landscape.

The United Kingdom Social Media Use has Grown in Recent Years; Government Adopts New Regulations for Platforms in Response



The use of social media within the United Kingdom is still growing. However, revelations over the past few years have led to increased calls for reform and oversight of social media within the country. The UK's government has taken steps to bring those regulations about. With the increased desire for user protection, the timing is getting better to join platforms within the UK.

UK social media companies have operated freely of the state in the past. However, local news has reported that the UK government is considering new legislation for stronger restrictions on misleading information and fake content being posted. Further, the proposed laws would fine those companies that fail to curb misinformation, stamp out hate speech and other forms of online abuse. Senior staff in the companies may be looking at criminal charges for failing to comply with the law.

The government in the United Kingdom passed a law like Europe's GDPR, guarantee protections for user data collected from social media users and those online generally. This step helped rein in the rampant trading of user data and has alleviated some concerns in the wake of BREXIT. Under the 2018 Data Protection Act, citizens of the UK gained several rights beyond the basic protections of the GDPR around how their data is used and when it is processed.

The new laws benefit the government as well. They gain more oversight powers over big tech companies, especially those like Facebook. Further, there are provisions within the data laws they have adopted to allow for greater access and processing of user data as it matters for national security. The government's efforts to rein in big tech have often led to clashes with those companies.

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority has been seeking to force Facebook to sell Giphy out of concern about market competition. As a result, Facebook has been pointedly protesting the government's efforts. This case highlights that individual users are not the only ones who benefit. Smaller tech companies that are at a competitive disadvantage against giants like Facebook and Twitter also benefit greatly.

Overall, the United Kingdom's efforts to create laws and provide oversight for social media have proven to be beneficial. More could be done but joining social media in the UK certainly comes with a lot more rights than other parts of the world.

You live in Oswal, a neighbour of Ustia. You are trying to learn more about Ustia, especially how social media works there. You find the following report online. Please read the report, then answer the survey questions that follow it to help you evaluate Ustia.

Ustia Sees Growth in Social Media Platforms, Government Promotes Social Media Economic Opportunities



Social media platforms are growing in Ustia because the government has been promoting the development of the technology. As a result, social media companies have emerged as leaders in the big data industry within the nation. This industry focuses on collecting a great deal of information from social media users and the monetisation of that data. So, Oswalans beware when hopping on an Ustian social media platform – selling data is the new business, and business is booming.

Ustian social media companies are free from any laws restricting how they can collect user data. So, Ustian social media users assume that the company will sell what they share on the platform. Some Ustians have protested for greater privacy rights. However, the lobbying from the data industry has proven more effective. Ustian social media companies' freedom has resulted in businesses from all over the world advertising on these platforms and trying to gain traction in Ustian markets. Unfortunately, a side effect is the spread of lots of misinformation.

The Ustian government has taken to platforms to try and combat the spread of fake news by promoting the government's view political issues. However, most people do not listen to the government on social media. Instead, they follow individual politicians and other news sources.

Rumours in Ustia say that the platforms have struck a secret deal with the government. They provide access to anyone of interest to the government in exchange for not being regulated. This is unverified but might explain why the government does not seem overly interested in enacting laws.

So, as an Owalan interested in using Ustian social media, be careful. The government may be monitoring whatever is being shared. However, the companies behind the platforms will certainly be collecting everything they can and selling it to a third party.

You have recently become interested in social media around the world. Read the following report below on the United States. Then, answer the survey questions to help you evaluate the US's social media landscape.

The United States Sees Growth in Social Media Platforms; Government Takes Tax Approach to Regulation



Social media platforms have enjoyed unchecked growth within the United States over the past decade. As a result, social media companies have emerged as leaders in the big data industry within the nation. This industry focuses on collecting a great deal of information from social media users and monetising that data. So, anyone on social media in the US should be mindful of how they engage with the platform. The data that generates – selling data is the new business, and business is booming.

US social media companies are virtually free from any laws restricting how they can collect user data. Further, they are essentially free from any regulation restricting how they monitor what is shared on their platforms, whether fake information or hate speech. Instead, social media companies have developed means of self-regulating. Efforts to create federal regulations around content have been met with opposition due to the immense freedoms guaranteed to businesses and individuals in the United States under its constitution.

So, US social media users can safely assume that so long as they stay within the community standards, they can post whatever they want online with little risk. The other assumption users can safely make is that whatever they post online will be monetised somehow. There are growing calls from users for greater data protection, like those in Europe, but the government has been slow to act. The US government's slowness to act is potentially attributable to the massive lobbying efforts by social media companies, with Facebook in particular spending nearly 20 million US dollars in 2020.

Social media companies in the US have developed algorithms for data collection and advertising designed to maximise engagement, in turn maximising their potential profits. Since there are few restrictions on US social media companies, there has been much partnering with businesses, political leaders, and governments within the US and abroad. As a result, there has been a rapid spread of misinformation and fake content, with algorithms pushing the content to get more reactions from users.

The US government has taken to platforms to try and combat the spread of fake news by promoting the government's view on political issues and directing users to credible sources. However, most people do not listen to the government on social media within the US. Instead, they follow individual politicians and other news sources that tend to align with their views.

So, anyone interested in joining a social media platform within the US should be wary. There are multiple ways data is collected from users and sold to a variety of third parties. Further, there is a great risk that the content shown to you might be fake and made to mislead you. However, you do get the benefits of staying connected with all your friends.

You live in Oswal, a neighbour of Ustia. You are trying to learn more about Ustia, especially how social media works there. You find the following report online. Please read the report, then answer the survey questions that follow it to help you evaluate Ustia.

Ustia Sees Growth in Social Media Platforms Prompting New Government Management Regime



Social media platforms have been growing in Ustia, dismaying the government. As a result, the government has taken steps to limit what platforms are available and enact laws on how those platforms can be operated and who owns them. Oswalans are encouraged to think twice before joining an Ustian platform with the new management regime in place.

The new laws have dictated what could be share online by social media users. Chiefly, the government is interested in limiting the spread of political opinions that oppose the government to stomp out dissent. Social media companies in Ustia must comply with this law if they wish to remain privately owned. The government has taken over the companies that refused to comply with the law. Further, the government has banned any foreign person or company from creating a platform or joining an existing one unless they relocate to Ustia.

As part of the censorship program, the government has employed Ustians to promote messages from the government on their social media accounts. On top of this, the government requires that individuals report any content that slips by the censors. This has created hundreds of new jobs, so many Ustians have hopped on board with the program. This program works with broader official messaging on social media from the government. So, Ustian social media is interested in two things – promoting and protecting the government’s image.

The other side of the new laws handles what user data is collected. Any privately-owned social media platform must hand over all user data they have to the government to help Ustian police catch dissenters. The policy has hurt the user data industry in Ustia. However, so long as companies comply with this mandate, they can sell the data to other businesses. Due to this, there is a highly regulated market for user data.

The restrictions on Ustian social media space matches historic policies of limiting media access to individuals. So, Ustians are more reliant on official accounts for news on Ustian social media.

Ultimately, due to the relocation law, it is advised that any Oswalan steer clear of Ustian social media. However, if using the platforms is tempting, be mindful of what is shared online, and the data collected by the companies and the government.

You have recently become interested in social media around the world. First, please read the following report below on China. Then, answer the survey questions to help you evaluate China's social media landscape.

Chinese Social Media has Grown in Recent Years; Government Adopts New Regulations for Platforms in Response



China has experienced the rapid growth of social media platforms in recent history, much like the rest of the world. The Chinese government under Xi Jinping has worked to capitalise on social media's potential benefits for the Communist Party of China's (CCP) regime.

Officially, social media companies within China like WeChat, QQ, and Weibo are privately-owned companies. However, there is a significant degree of government oversight and regulation on the content posted on the platforms. Further, the government encourages companies to comply with a list of terms that it deems worth censoring, therefore restricting users' ability to discuss controversial, political topics. Interestingly, the CCP is happy to allow discussions on corrupt officials at the local level of government. So, it appears that only national-level politics are exempt from significant criticism. As a result, the government can use content from social media to investigate corruption claims and remove those officials – allowing for the reconsolidation of local power within the CCP. So, this also makes the CCP look tough on corruption – allowing them to score points with the public, a win-win for them.

On top of the censorship, the CCP's regime actively uses social media platforms to promote the Party agenda through official accounts and influencers. Though, the influencers are met with a degree of scepticism usually. So, this creates an environment ripe with the narrative the CCP is trying to build online and very little in the way of oppositional voices.

Beyond monitoring content on social media platforms, the government requires access to the user data collected by the social media companies. Further, to slow big tech's rise in China, the CCP has passed anti-monopoly laws to reduce large social media companies' power in the tech sector.

Beyond the domestic sphere, the CCP has strict regulations on foreign companies operating within China, banning platforms like Facebook and Twitter altogether. So, this works to limit users' choices to only those platforms that the government has oversight.

So, China's social media landscape has been altered by new laws from the government. As a result, individual users have less freedom, and companies face more regulations than before.

APPENDIX D: PILOT STUDY SURVEY LOGIC

This appendix contains the survey used in the pilot as well as the survey flow logic from the Qualtrics platform. The flow demonstrates the mechanisms for the randomisation within the survey. For clarity's sake, the vignette locations are denoted, see [Appendix C](#) for the full vignettes.

Block: Explanatory Statement (1 Question)
Standard: Demographics (3 Questions)
Block: VSA and FOIL 1 Rev Code (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette and Responses 1 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 2 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 2 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)

Block: VSA and FOIL 2 (5 Questions)
Block: Thank you (1 Question)

EndSurvey:



APPENDIX E: FULL STUDY SURVEY LOGIC

Contained in this appendix is the Qualtrics printout of the survey flow logic and the survey itself as participants would receive. There is a slight difference in display as the formatting changes between MS Word and Qualtrics' web or mobile platform. Lastly, I have substituted the vignettes for their name and reference (e.g., Strongman Vignette, Real-World) for clarity's sake, to read the full vignettes, refer to [Appendix C](#).

EmbeddedData

opp = QUAL73522469_030221_Digital_Media_PHDresearch

ridValue will be set from Panel or URL.

RISNValue will be set from Panel or URL.

LSValue will be set from Panel or URL.

V = H

gcValue will be set from Panel or URL.

termValue will be set from Panel or URL.

ResponseIDValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_TotalDurationValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Country = AU

EmbeddedData

Q_RecaptchaScoreValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_RelevantIDFraudScoreValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_BallotBoxStuffingValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_RelevantIDDuplicateValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_RelevantIDDuplicateScoreValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Q_CHLValue will be set from Panel or URL.

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Overall 240n Has Been Met

EmbeddedData

gc = 3

term = OQ

EndSurvey: Advanced

Block: Explanatory Statement (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Q_RecaptchaScore Is Less Than 0.5

Or Q_RelevantIDFraudScore Is Greater Than 30

AndIf

If Q_CHL Is Not Equal to preview

EmbeddedData

gc = 4

term = flag1

EndSurvey: Advanced

Branch: New Branch

If

If Q_BallotBoxStuffing Is Equal to true

Or Q_RelevantIDDuplicate Is Equal to true

Or Q_RelevantIDDuplicateScore Is Greater Than or Equal to 75

AndIf

If Q_CHL Is Not Equal to preview

EmbeddedData
gc = 4
term = flag2

EndSurvey: Advanced

Standard: Demographics (3 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If
If What is your age? Under 18 Is Selected

EmbeddedData
gc = 2
term = under18

EndSurvey: Advanced

Branch: New Branch

If
If What is the highest level of education you have attained? Pre-primary Education Is Selected
Or What is the highest level of education you have attained? Primary Education Is Selected

EmbeddedData
gc = 2
term = education

EndSurvey: Advanced

Block: VSA and FOIL 1 Rev Code (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If
If Quota Vignette 1 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette and Responses 1 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 2 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 5 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

**If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Not Been Met**

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 2 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 5 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

**If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Not Been Met**

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 3 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 5 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

**If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Not Been Met**

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 4 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 5 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

**If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 5 Has Not Been Met**

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 5 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 5 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 6 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 6 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 5 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 6 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 7 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 7 (5 Questions)
Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Vignette 1 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 2 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 3 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 4 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 5 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 6 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 7 Has Been Met
And Quota Vignette 8 Has Not Been Met

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Block: Vignette 8 (5 Questions)

Block: VSA and FOIL 2 (5 Questions)

Branch: New Branch

If

If Quota Overall 240n Has Been Met

EmbeddedData

gc = 3

term = OQ

EndSurvey: Advanced

Branch: New Branch

If

If Q_TotalDuration Is Less Than 120

EmbeddedData

gc = 4

term = speeder

EndSurvey: Advanced

EmbeddedData

gc = 1

LS = \${e}{{e://Field/RISN}%3402}*3}

EndSurvey: Advanced

Page Break
