Information Warfare and Digitalization of Politics in a Globalized World

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Abstract

Online media of digital methodology has transformed human behaviors from sociocultural and political backing, interest, and participation to sharing supposition or resistance and has transfigured the approach of interaction and thinking—a serious issue for digital anthropology that centeres on internet-related changes of social marvels, a configuration of chaotic pluralism. With the prime argument that digital social media platforms implant feebleness, insecurity, and instability into social and political life, this paper investigates the risks that online media impose on democracy. Based on auxiliary secondary data, the methodology incorporates qualitative verifiable, and analytical methods. The paper's findings contend that the politico-techno-driven political economy of digital innovation has chopped social and democratic institutions and has destabilized worldwide social relations and politics, democracy has been fumed, stormed, and hacked. Social media has created a modern world order of amazing befuddling filter bubble impact where cyber-violence is misogynistic--social media is just like a redirection of Chinese whispers. Subsequently, with, private on-screen characters, governments' data dispersal, and so-called security and safeguarding of citizens' democratic rights, allegorically, George Orwell's nightmare of 'Animal Farm' unfurling. In a bourgeois populist science of the 'digital panopticon' of technological colonialism, state surveillance, and bourgeois information, humankind is

becoming more divided and unsecured and in the future citizens' will be deprived of numerous sociopolitical rights. Future people may fade under the pressure of high-tech colonialism which concurs with the normalization approach that 'offline field' powerful people are powerful 'online' too. Upcoming democracy is probable to be a discreetly 'high-hat' elitist endeavor. Current endeavors and legislations are romanticized as a glass half empty with very few tools to control cyberspace. It is pivotal to invigorate and fortify citizens' digital agency and self-determination in society, politics, well-being, and economy, otherwise, societies/countries are probable to be more totalitarian.

Keywords: Digital anthropology, panopticon, digital nuclear bomb, metaverse, oligopoly

Introduction

Though underway since the late nineties, the digital methodology of online media became popular in the twenty-first century. This digital methodology or digital methods of online social media of online devices, tools, and websites is enabling mutual interaction by empowering users to share facts, opinions, and interests. Users can share content, individual information, contemplations, perspectives, feelings, and discernment styles and can use apparatuses for interaction and chat, hence, revolutionizing human propensities of sharing, perusing, and investigating news, content, and information. This change has transformed and reshaped all human behaviors from sociocultural, political backing, and partaking to sharing a supposition, opposition, or opinion globally and has transformed the conventional approach of interaction and thinking. Sociopolitical behaviors and activities have become increasingly shared online--offering varied ways of inquiring queries besides creating new data. The communications transformation and breakdown of conventional news media and the upsurge of high-tech platforms e.g. Google, Facebook, and Twitter have started buffeting decisions and capsizing routine contenders. Now, no political party, candidate, or citizen is in the field, but online. Christodoulou and Iordanou (2021) contend that digital media, by using Artificial Intelligence (AI), have manifold impacts on individuals and democratic social order. As a discipline studying internet-related transformation, digital anthropology covers an entire range of modern social manifestations, phenomena, political opportunities, structural violence, injustice/disparities, the refashioning of how people access, understand, behave, create, and spread a message, conceivable outcomes, and the threats emerging from digital engagements and the association among technology and culture, online cultural settings that can't be inferred from physical-world sociality and consequential rationales and logics of selfhood and culture. De Lauri and Kristin (2021) contend that its role is crucial in studying the magnitudes and implications of digital transformation, and power dynamics e.g. how digital changes, as processes of social change, bring new prospects and challenges committing to holistic ethnography in terms of wide sociopolitical relations, practices, and what it implies to be human, misplaced, and lost humankind to smartphones. Allied with political anthropology, digital anthropology facilitates the formation of bigger regulative moral contentions and arguments rather than only observation/explanation of the implications of digital change.

Information Warfare and Digitalization of Politics in a Globalized World

Moore (2018) contends that digital media is rebuilding and restructuring our politics, undermining existing institutions and altering the citizens' role. It is making openings and opportunities for individuals who previously had nothing. Social media podiums are now employed as a device--enticing, and frequently employed to alter or impact suppositions, opinions, political views, etc. for facilitating the course of political socialization. It is also revolutionizing the course of politics leading to digital openness in the state institution's functioning pattern and the quality of public service delivery mechanisms. Dahlgren (2006) argues that the simulated virtual spaces created through internet technologies have steered the development of a new digital space. Online social media has sustained and extended the opportunities for political talk and mobilization inside the digital open domain (Loader and Mercea, 2011). This expanded usage of social media correlates with increments in political involvement and partaking (Boulianne, 2015; Kahne & Boyler, 2018). Bollier (2008) has pointed to the potentiality of the digital public sphere to enliven democratic and enhance citizens' capacity to challenge the political and economic power of governments and corporations via online dissents and protests, movements, and active campaigns. Nakamura (2008) upholds that *Avatars* along with digital online profiles depict individuals' offline identity that can lead to online prejudice and inequalities. Yet, increasingly, historically disadvantaged and marginalized people use the internet to create their online spaces like "*networkedcounterpublics*" by using global hashtags trend as *#enoughisenough, #blacklivesmatter, #wakeupamerica, #guncontrol #opportunity, #wethepeople, #equity #georgefloyd, #vote, #covid, #nojusticenopeacem, #wewillnotcomply*. In 2022, the *#prayforukraine* hashtag on Instagram and Twitter assisted Ukraine in gathering worldwide sympathy against the Russian invasion. Twitter and Instagram triggered the *Hijab* (headscarf) protest of Iranian women in 2022, grouped protesting citizens, and propelled political unrest in Iran. The hashtag #MeToo detonated, removed scores of men from their high-power positions, and sparked a worldwide discussion about workplace sexual harassment.

In Nepal, Twitter hashtag trends 'our government failed to be accountable' is effective among youths e.g. #Enoughisenough#, *#NoNotAgain*##saveiih#savenepal #downincompetence#, etc. In 2022, hashtag #balensaha became a popular trending post that influenced the local election in Kathmandu and the cities of Nepal. Globally, this pulsating online power is in practice to fight social injustices, segregation, discrimination, oppression, corruption, police brutality, and infringement of basic human rights. But, there are negative ambiances too. With military clashes, wars, and civil wars, cyber-attacks start spilling into digital media, and adversary sides lock in data warfare or deface opponents' websites through localized cyber-attacks. Hence, the focus of opinions and discernment styles towards internet platforms took distinctive shapes. This communication media started facing challenges and was considered from positive and negative perspectives. During the 2022 elections in Nepal, the online Page and Group 'No not again' was asked by the Election Commission to remove the page/group or face legal action, though, the Supreme Court gave interim order not to take action against this page/group. This signifies that digital media platforms can be distorted for different purposes including politics since many online

technologies became politicized, used by civilians and politicians for election campaigning, enlisted, and conscripted as a device of protest and war; hence, are, perpetually more monitored and manipulated. Moore (2018) says that politics itself has gone digital and hacked. Globally, policymakers make discourses about whether we should give up privacy in the name of cyber terrorism and counter-terrorism. These measures are defended and justified.

The digital cyber revolution caused distinctive thoughts regarding the internet effect in politics and the functioning of the regulatory political mechanism, and policy implementation permeating almost the entire context of public administration and governance. Analysts started investigating how digital innovations impact political communication and cooperation, particularly in the open circle. Shaun-Cohen and Lev-On (2020) confirm portable gadgets like mobile devices are vital for the upsurge of interest in politics, and participation as voting agents in backward nations (Aker et.al., 2017). Expanded accessibility of portable mobile phones, and consequent entry into the open public sphere, have upgraded individuals' and groups' capacity to fetch attention to and join the specialized issues (Creeber, 2009). Consequently, digital politics became an innovative approach for presenting and discoursing the issues related to politics that transformed the track of conventional political practice. Twitter, Facebook, and Google have modified civic engagement, basically seizing vote based system or simply hijacking democracy, by influencing citizens' way of thinking. Currently, political movements and campaigns are implausible and unimaginable without digital media apparatuses. Since the Arab Spring uprising in the early 2010s, it is meaningless to assume politicking and united accomplishment without online communication, digital media sorting out and unifying, hashtags, and viral campaigns. Moore (2018) affirms that the worldwide political disturbances of 2011 were the primary legitimate sign of the scale of disturbance and disruption, though democratic governments delineated the erroneous implications from them. Across North Africa and the Middle East, citizens used digital tools to hatch and incubate protests and coordinate a united campaign against authoritarian absolutist governments. These revolutions were perceived positively by democratic governments and digital platforms. They botched in expecting that digital platforms were intrinsically democratizing and empowering better approaches to pursuing political ends. Contrary, many other stakeholders were using these digital apparatuses to pursue their vested political interests. It did not matter if these aims were equitable, democratic, despotic, revolutionary, or anarchistic.

Schradie (2015) affirms that as citizenship and united deeds nowadays are digitally organized (online and offline), electoral campaigns are influenced by broad digital media usage, and with electronic voting, journalism, news scope, coverage, and dissemination face changes inside the generation. Conventionally what was the sole government undertaking, like strategy, standard- norm-and policy-making, is essentially changing with demands for new popular government, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness. Then again, presently who might proclaim that digital technologies' design and uses are unbiased and neutral? In the

age of artificial intelligence, algorithmic learning, and predictive decision-making, governments as well as progressively private on-screen characters are forcing standards and criteria besides imposing control--through surveillance, censorship, and unpretentious or else fewer unobtrusive political affecting and handling - over citizens, organizations and institutions, including governments. All these led to the commencement of a new 'digital culture' governing the digital in a period of online platforms with political, legal, financial, societal, and ethical confrontations of these changes. Christodoulou and Iordanou (2021) contend that digital media's strength and support to enhance law-based democracy has as of late come under strong scrutiny. Amidst rising populism, radicalism, digital surveillance, and data manipulation, a shift has occurred towards critical approaches to digital world media, its consumers, and producers. This drift, allied with calls for a pathway to digital well-being, permits closer scrutiny related to moral issues emerging from simulated intelligence which are regularly contrasting and incongruent with the basic democratic standards. Moore (2018) argues that the overwhelming pattern is concealed abuse, disintegration and corrosion and attrition of discrete individual agency and liberty, and absence of transparency, responsibility, accountability, and, the presence of totalitarian subtleties in place of digital well-being with the equal and dynamic interest of informed citizens—in blatant words *democracy chopped or hacked*.

Regardless of the accomplishment of digital forums in supporting or (harassing?) emancipatory movements and the issues of human rights as well as democratic ethics, the online digital platform stood effective in deciphering political parties, political institutions, and communities uproar and turbulences that pretences a critical danger to security and confidentiality. Government officials are challenged in nearly the entire range of internet governance issues; however, the issues of cyber security vary. As digital platforms are employed to start or bolster popular movements and dissents in society, occasionally, the materials gathered from online media are distorted and misused by totalitarian establishments to screen, surveil and repress. The online platform's use has led to escalations in political divergence and ideological radicalism. Donald Trump's broad use of, and the *war* on Twitter, underlines the centrality and swiftly changing terrain of online digital media politics. Digital media platforms have a consistently rising impact on the people as well as the sociopolitical life of politicians.

With new elections showing populist and a new digital social media shift, new and emerging political parties are swiftly budding in the Nepali digital horizon. Online platforms are providing openness and access to campaigning procedures and conceivable results besides empowering proactive outside communications with potential voters, supporters, and individuals of distinctive political parties and independent candidates. Globally, with online forums, politics has ended up ever more fast-moving, leading to electoral stuns as well as regime changes. But there's not much orderly evidence that cutting-edge politics is becoming more unstable. Hence, this paper endeavors to address this crevice by examining the digital use drifts in Nepal as well as other countries experiencing considerable electoral change and expansive variances in support across parties. It endeavors to answer whether

expanded instability and volatility can be elucidated and justified by greater online digital platforms usage. The argument is that online social platforms infuse flimsiness, instability, and volatility into sociopolitical life. They exert a sociopolitical impact on users creating feedback influences that crafts volatility into sociocultural as well as political domains and wave a projected hysterical muddle. The key concern is to address differing ethical distresses and the antagonization and challenges confronted when endeavors are made to lessen the bad insinuations, multifaceted dilemmas, pressures, tensions, and deterrents that collaborators confront while dealing with digital media. Identifying, examining, and explicating these challenges will be an essential stride in analysis to overwhelm them.

Further, despite the important role of digital platforms in enlarging the circle of citizens' participation in active politics, there is a substantial dispute regarding what precisely this role is, and, whether is the internet really and ultimately useful for democracy. Kahne and Bowyer (2018) contend that as sociopolitical issues take on an expansive presence online, the prevailing structures of established control and power, are increasingly mediated, solidified, negotiated, and challenged to an incredible degree by digital online platforms. Through the horizons of democracy, how can these advancements be perceived? The fundamental concern is to assess answers to that question, hence, the subsequent questions represent subjects of attention in the current study e.g. intensifying dependency on digital media and the prospects for political life and the consequent impacts on sociopolitical and economic sectors and the magnitude and how online digital platforms influence political commitments and citizens' behavior. Is digital online a gateway to political activism/radicalism and prolonged politicking or a substitute for it, inciting for promoting political or socioeconomic causes and movements full of hobbyism but with very minimal commitments and efforts? In what way and at what time do digital politics fortify, supplement, degenerate, balance or swarm out more conventional forms of political partaking, and in what way are digital platforms employed, abused, and exploited by states, individuals, and regimes? And to what extent do these platforms affect political activism and support sociopolitical turbulence, instability, campaigning, legislation, and legal and executive rule? Amidst widespread collection and harvesting of information from online platforms, a few other concerns are political impacts of and reactions to the increasing economic as well as the political power of digital platforms e.g. Twitter, Facebook, and Google consumers and how digital platforms control and misuse the behavior of their consumers, and the risk to personal agency and growing addiction and the planned compulsion to digital media that may constitute a major risk to democracy in future. Given these, the key objective of this paper is to examine whether democracy is induced, stormed, and hacked by the digitalization of politics and in what ways are digital social media endorsing a new world order? The key endeavor is to enhance the academic discourse while too giving valuable insights to policymakers and organizations engaging in the pursuit of accountable improvement that secures the well-being of digital consumers, online media, and democracy itself.

Materials and Methods

This secondary desk research incorporates the existing data obtained from an assortment of secondary sources. The paper material includes logical secondary monographs, articles, internet resources, outlines, and reports. The methodology of the study incorporates qualitative verifiable and analytical methods: the verifiable method to track democratic governance and digital governance is contingent on the authentic analytical secondary scaffold. The analytical method sorts it conceivable to ascertain key components of digital government prototypes, taking into account the innovative digital features as well as the fundamental drifts in the advancement of governance in an online digital world.

Digital Politics: Conjecturing Theoretical Outlooks

Instead of looking into observational discoveries and empirical findings, this paper appraises and compares competing theoretical perspectives and displays their contentions forward. Dahlgren (2015) converses on the role played by the internet in modifying an existing field of civic spaces accessible to citizens to discourse as well as engage with politics. His overarching finding proves that the internet's relationship to politics is entrenched in 'civic cultures' that help disaggregate the diverse levels of internet impacts on politics. Couldry (2015) centers on the digital media response to social establishments, political engagement as well as a political action that alter political opportunities. He stresses the implication of specific questions concerning what way online digital media may change who can participate in politics, what they can do, and why. Dutton and Dubois (2015) generated the concept of the *Fifth Estate* which alludes to internet usage to grasp powerful organizations and people publicly accountable. With a challenging departure, Schradie (2015) contends that amidst structural disparities, online politics, like offline politics, are overwhelmed and dominated through powerful voices and priorities.

Among the scholars, there are discussions on the usage of digital media and the opportunities the internet could bring in the political field. Firstly, with doubtful approaches, afterward the optimistic positive perspective that the internet has become a part and parcel of human life. Strandberg (2006) affirms that two essential approaches have risen for political communiqué. The first approach is based on 'citizen fact' and the other one is the appraisal dealing in terms of a 'political actor'. The approach pedestalled on citizen fact is assessed and classified in the outline of binary distinctive theories---*reinforcement* and *mobilization*. Norris (2001) affirms that reinforcement and mobilization are related to theories on interest and citizens' participation in political exercises by utilizing digital opportunities and their online interest in the internet inside the frame of dual but contrasting views. Of these two views, the first one is cynical, pessimistic, and skeptical and another one is optimistic.

The reinforcement approach evaluates the internet as staid and doubtful and that will not alter the existing order and structure of social imbalance and disparity, political cooperation as well as participation, rather it will strengthen the existing unequal and deleterious

situation. The internet as a communication device will expand the size of the crevice between people possessing it and those who don't have it, so, it'll serve to reinforce the existing imbalance circumstance. The doubtful and pessimist reinforcement approach explains that the influx of the internet permits further prospects for socially and politically powerful elites. The lower class will be deprived of its accession. The mobilization approach claims that as a new form of democracy of the old Greek period called direct democracy, citizens can make direct and primary processing real through blogs and forums, and politics takes shape with direct participation (Rheingold, 2000). Contrary to pessimism, the mobilization approach incorporates a positive perspective that the internet empowers and enables democratic opinions to come into existence.

Norris (2001) uncovers the internet's prospects, the starring role it can perform in politics, and its use as a communication apparatus for distinctive social layers. Concurring with the mobilization approach, as a modern communication device, the internet generates overwhelming impacts in politics. Internet usage provides prospects to narrow down the fissure among the folks who govern and the people who are governed, it reinforces and strengthens democracy, too. Harmonizing to these theoreticians, cyberspace embodies the different practices of partaking and becomes distinctive from conventional participation e.g. working for political organizations, organizing social movements, taking curiosity in campaigns, and lobbying for political candidates.

The perspective based on the political approach discourses under twofold headings: the normalization approach and the equalization approach. These two views have two inverse concepts, positive and negative, precisely similar to the citizen aspect. The normalization approach is an appraisal of the reinforcement approach based on political actors. Existing imbalances and disparities grounded in political actors regarding traditional media are transferred to the internet in a similar mode. So, offline inequalities never become different when they go online (Strandberg, 2006). Powerful and known political actors having control in offline fields win from the beginning. As a redenominated way of reinforcement with the political actor fact, the normalization approach is presently the universal condition. Particularly power dynamics like money-related power, divided supporters, the supremacy of effortlessly being in conventional media along with guidance command, the new political actor will run in circles owing to the organization of power starting with exceptionally big problems in the online arena. Having command and power in the political field is stiffer than influencing other sectors. Hence, the approach of normalization is dominantly seen. Particularly, those influential offline are powerful online too.

The equalization approach incorporates a fundamental romantic thought similar to the mobilization approach. Equalization affirms the internet will make the power balance go to new and less powerful and feeble political actors' favor with its opportunities than ruling out disparities regarding the political actors. Yilmaz (2008) contends that the internet's opportunities can debar disparities regarding political actors. In areas with internet access, this digital platform brings more voice and visibility to small parties compared to traditional media. Conventional political parties abide by the trace of traditional communication when

small parties use newfangled digital platforms e.g. Facebook. The internet's modern features bolster the equalization approach. This is since political actors' most imperative problem at inception is making people listen to them. With the internet, it is not essential to invest an expansive sum of cash in making people listen. The novel form of conventional media implanted in the modern digital presents itself as an integrated media. The low cost of internet sites is notable and encouraging for small political movements. Concomitantly, it can reach larger masses of people. Looked at from this side, the digital can open an entryway regarding budgetary costs which sustains the equalization approach.

Berg et.al (2022) argue that the Political Theory of Digital Constellation discourses the circumstances and potentials of political theory's commitment and engagement with the expansion of digital. This motivation is because of the rising significance of the query of political theory rising from digital transformation, but equally that politics also shapes digitalization. They point to the trio drawbacks of previous engagements, namely the narrowing of the theme of digitalization to the topic of the internet and, thus, to the facet of communication, the contempt of the technicality of the digital, as well as the inadequate recognition that the digital innovation is political. To evade these pitfalls, the exploratory standpoint of the digital constellation is discussed in such a way that the digital constellation serves as an epistemological monitor to assist the structure of the theoretical reflection regarding the affinity between digitalization and political questions.

Edward and Chomsky's (2002) 'The Propaganda Model' contends that the mass communication media are viable and capable ideological bodies that execute a system-supportive publicity propaganda function, by relying on advertising system and powers, internalized presumptions, and self-censorship, and without direct or overt restraint and coercion via the purposeful publicity i.e. propaganda model of communication. This model depicts how the mass media consolidate backing for specific interfaces and benefits that direct state and private activities and puts that the information presented in the standard normal mass media is flawed and questionable to its ability. On the macro level, this model strongly depicts the situation of modern capitalist society controlled by a tiny group of state elites and commercial enterprises. By way of the model of political economy standpoint, the propaganda model profoundly criticized the way the mainstream mass media became an instrument or amplifier for the propaganda of those parties in power. The calculations of possession and media business are regarded as a determinant figure in politics and the economy as a premise deciding politics and politics regarded as an economic superstructure. Moore's (2018) 'model of digital hackers contends the role of digital hackers in politics who effectively misshape and distort elections and the nations.

Observatory Surveillance and Bourgeois Knowledge: Humankind Unified or Divided?

Advanced digital changes influence the mode of interaction, knowledge generation, and dispersal, hence extending the capacity of digital anthropology regarding plausible consequences and jeopardies (Scheper-Hughes, 1995). Beyond the challenges displayed by the digital twist, the crucial apprehension related to the political economy of technological

determinism may be that a pretentious, trivializing, or utopist nature, the emergence of societal discontent, technological giants' practices, and the increasing feudalism of data administration. Big data, biometric observation, and observatory surveillance, as well as artificial intelligence influencing worldwide structures, need to be examined for power and hegemonic representation amidst the starring role of digital technology instigating political change, movements, and protests. Such events offer strong sites for ethnographic examination as they produce new connections, discourses, and types of information. In such anthropological ethnographic inquiry, the high-tech revolution is investigated for the social and political impacts it produces and different representations.

While not marking down the momentous influence the content generated by digital innovations imparts on sociocultural life, digital anthropology turns its consideration to the digital: its materiality, that's, the objects via which digital innovation is constituted—the frame specialized, technical, and infrastructural components of *digitality*-- from source code to hardware, and web network conventions and protocols to software. De Lauri and Kristin (2021) argue that by examining the methods, procedures, and practices through which innovative digital knowhow secures meaning, digital anthropology draws consideration to how culture is made concerning—and through the production of—the digital frame illustrating that technology is not only a vehicle for discourse but that ethical and political regimes are implanted inside the fabric stuff of technology since it is being produced, delivered, adjusted, disseminated and traded in sociotechnical worlds. The digital methods are wide-ranging geographic and social-cultural territory, from weird, geek, and hackers' subcultures to protests and public unrests and other activities such as production, generation, and interchange of code and other conventional performances that shape economic and political prospects in the face of hegemonic impacts. The imperative questions that outline anthropological discussion on digital methods are how the digital technology's fabric components (e.g., equipment/hardware, software, source code, binary code, network conventions/protocols) and properties e.g., variability, interactivity, erasability shape the forms of ethics, politics, and sociality nowadays? Vital queries are competing epistemologies, belief systems, ideologies that uphold and reinforce digital technology's creation, and the way the subjectivities are made and revamped in connection to them.

Counteracting digital technology's transmutation of the global political scenario and fabrication, democratic states have begun to estimate and measure the magnitude of political disturbance caused by digital media, attempting to ascertain manners to respond. The genuine question is, where will democracies go next? Moore (2018) contends that it looks like they will chip and splinter in directions towards platform democracy; surveillance democracy; and a re-formed – 'rehacked'-digital democracy. Digital forums will be further effective than they are now and become gateways not only to commercial administrations and services, but to open services like social welfare like healthcare, education, and transport. Hence, in the future, digital platforms might have a new prominent upshot on citizens' lives than changing their elected government. In a surveillance democracy, the government will attribute far more jurisdiction, authority, and power to itself with much

more noteworthy facility and capacity to observe, push and coordinate its citizens. Fundamentally, in this classic pattern, those flexibilities and freedoms that citizens currently enjoy, are to be much more constrained. Altogether the directions will be towards an etiolated régime or an over-powerful state--long been perceived as intrinsic frailties of egalitarian democratic government. Is a government, of need solid instead of the freedoms of citizens' freedom, or moreover frail and feeble to preserve its existence? The digital communications transformation, along with the technological titans' upsurge, makes this question urgent once more. Another direction is towards a rehacked democracy of the digital age-- perhaps the foremost wanton word. Having figured this out, it becomes necessary to change or reform the existing political charter and structures and redistribute regulation and authority in a manner that numerous politicians and leaders will dislike. The state of affairs is alarming, states and people are by the side of a perilous moment, and the majority of citizens believe and recognize that the existing political structures are not functioning in the manner they should be.

A few years back there was a popular belief that digital podiums were supporting and improving democratic frameworks but speaking honestly, digital platforms are undermining and reshaping them. Law-based democratic governments and policymakers have arrived belated to this realization, provoked by mounting evidence of political abuse and mistreatment of the digital podia. By the time they learn around about this manhandling and misuse of online digital platforms, despite their constrained understanding, they surge collectively to retort and respond. Some snuffle and disdain the fears of digital disruption and shift quickly on the way in the wrong direction. The digital platforms also have their responsibility to settle political issues in the digital circle in an ethical way. Going in either of these directions will hurry the collapse of magnanimous popular government and democracies and initiate a fresh political era: a period marked by more proficient and helpful, but not easy-going, less pardoning, and less free. There is another distinctive way, where majority rule democracy is permitted to evolve in a way it benefits from digital media but is not directed by it, and wherein we reestablish and renew people's confidence and trust in the viability of democratic political frameworks, but only when we act presently.

It is indispensable to end this pot-pourri of counter-cultural disorder coupled by way of a sprint of consumerism and technological utopianism. All information must be free from counterculture to a cyber-culture, unlike the enchanted vitality that is assumed to circulate via the communes of the *back-to-the-land* movement, binding the members to one another so that to circulate transparently along the hackers' community, likewise, liberating them to act as citizens and binding them in a community of like minds. Digital social media should facilitate building democracy, basic human rights, justice, democratic rule, and constitutional supremacy along with a free, competent, reasonable, mindful, and responsible society and politics. But, entrenched in an advanced digital *panopticon* engrained in a perilous bourgeois populist science of the digital world, organizations, corporations, and governments are continually observing us. This surveillance prototype of democracy (or despotism?) may be connected with 'Animal Farm and Countering Terrorism' with mass

surveillance allegorically symbolizing George Orwell's (1945) parody novel 'Animal Farm' which gives a viewpoint about the actuality of mass surveillance termed as 'protection'. Representing the Russian Revolution of 1917, after the tsarist absolutism was overthrown and the Bolsheviks came into control, and then the revolution's disloyalty, betrayal of supporters under despot Stalin, and then Stalinist repressive era, the novel tells the account of a group of farm animals who revolted against their human rancher, trusting to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. Most characters are each deceiving big politicians though the species represent different tropes of the Soviet Union. The key subject is the power-mongering or craving for power and degenerated corrupt politics that begins with the thought of the transformation, but inevitably leads the pigs to want even more power and less equality---a mockery of a downtrodden society's visionless move towards absolutism.

Though surveillance innovations make us know much improved and better, we are in peril of letting the algorithms gaslight (manipulate psychologically) us. Will technology spare or save humans, or will it annihilate humans? In the future, amidst digital bourgeois knowledge, individuals will likely vanish under the pressure of technological colonization, in addition, the planet earth may be colonized and populated by exceptionally diverse creatures like cyborgs yet it is troublesome to foresee what sort of enthusiastic, emotional or psychological life such entities will have. Present human is relinquishing and sacrificing emotionalism for digital online media. How can we get ready and prepare for our future? Right now, it is troublesome to anticipate what sort of emotional or psychological life the human race will have in the future. Humankind is getting to be further representative and democratic or despotic, unified or divided by technology. Times are threatening, and commoners are seeking replies to factual and literal queries about the consumption of the online digital world. Will people survive the impending waves of advanced change? Do our qualities contain the strategic key to understanding everything around us? Will innovation i.e. technology spare us, or devastate us?

Technology Destabilizing Global Politics: Democracy Stormed and Hacked

Globally, online digital power is used to fight against state bad service delivery and bad governance, discrimination, social injustice, corruption, oppression, police and army brutality, violence, government incredibility, gender, civil rights-related violations, policies adjustment and drive for continuous improvement, as well as in strengthening egalitarian democracy by engaging stakeholders through informed decisions. Globally different protests and political and social activities and movements have been launched and fought online e.g. in Iran, Arabian Peninsula and Africa, Brazil, Hong Kong, Turkey, USA, Nepal, etc. The hashtag campaigns e.g. Twitter hashtags are digitally fought movements and protests can be inferred as 'digital battles'. However, the emerging anti-democratic strengths in the countries through the misuse of digital media are debilitating different states and undermining their democratic standing in the world. Perverted and fraudulent political figures who empower those assaults send a flag that causes individuals to address, 'are the nations still valuing what they converse about?' Even the tower and spine of global democracy, Britain, the US,

and France, are threatened as a result of strengths abusing digital instruments. Among the countries of the developed Global North, online technology has worked in worsening offline pressure and tension thus resulting in numerous defies concerning democracy such as in the Brexit debacle, the US presidential election of 2016, and assault and hatred against immigrants. The activities such as the operation of digital media to expand observatory surveillance powers, such as in Russia, China, and even in democratic Britain (with its expansive presence of CCTV cameras), is a matter of the misuse of digital power. The countries of the Global South are too involved in observatory surveillance games against the institutions and those individuals who are supporting and fighting for basic civil rights. Countries like Russian Federation and China are developing the capability of technological reconnaissance and misinformation whereas the US and several police divisions worldwide are depending on companies to extend their surveillance on citizens. All these have led to disastrous consequences for democracy. This politico-techno-driven political economy of digital technology has created concerns about exactly how these activities influence egalitarianism, democracy, and democratic institutions. No doubt, this new technology can indeed be used to enhance democracy, democratic institutions as well as procedures, however, it is very difficult with numerous complications to overwhelm. The hi-tech digital revolution has assisted democracies along with reinforcing non-democracies to encourage censorship and observatory surveillance of citizens. Despite the availabilities of technologies to neutralize and counteract these propensities, the balance inclines to tip intensely in favor of the other side. Further, there's a worldwide 'battle of life', 'survival of the fittest 'rat race' to the bottom regarding the collection of personal information, having the potentiality to empower the annihilation and suppression of numerous other rights.

Though digital media can reinforce egalitarianism and democratic civil rights by bringing additional access to exact information, unfortunately, the darker side of the digital medium is that several nations are meddling in elections. State-sponsored and private online hackers use digital high-techs to facilitate their activities, in what way to capture and hijack social media agenda, to throng established politicians, to assault mainstream media, to synchronize online social networking raids, as well as to sustain and nurture the malicious normalization of derisive, hateful and biased verbal language and images in political debates. Turkey, China, Russia (e.g. in Russian warfare in Ukraine), Egypt as well as many other countries are limiting access to the truth. Democracies like Britain, France, United States, are confronted by forces misusing digital technologies. The knowledge disparity between data-poor countries and data-rich countries is deepening and ultimately power and money will influence decisions made by democratic bodies. With growing distress, citizens can employ digital online social media to make themselves listen. Eventually, this will be pushed back once more by existing power holders and nothing may eventually change. Existing power holders will keep on applying their influence, and the citizens will be left to continue to voice their opinions by yelling in the cyberverse.

The shocking political event in the United States seeded the arrangement of a further critical approach to advanced digital media, one that arguably come to a crest with the 2021 Capitol

riots. The world, conceivably for the first time, saw big technology companies such as Facebook and Twitter being allied to positions of authority (Roose, 2021) associated with that global power; over the news when referring to users' accounts, especially of Trump when his Twitter account was suspended after the Capitol riot. Trump was blamed for misusing Twitter for misleading, agitating, and instigating his followers to storm and occupy Capitol Hill. This incident is allied to power and control where digital media platforms were the decision makers, whereas the global domain held up to see how they would react following. These occasions were noteworthy since hence far, discussions of worldwide governance in the political talk were overwhelmingly related to intergovernmental associations just as the United Nations, World Bank, International Criminal Court, etc., organizations that had legitimate structures with member states and equitable democratic processes. Roose (2021) contends that Trump's brief and permanent banishment from different social media clearly outline that, in the present digital society, power stays not just within the point of reference of the legal system or the checks and balance of government, but within the capacity to rebuff the access to platforms that shape our open public discourse.

The digital media discourse about post-Capitol riots comes to a crest, raising concerns about inexplicable and unrestrained supremacy and power that are essential to popular democracies (Jangid et al. 2021). After these incidents, consequently, technological companies were depicted as corporate autocracies disguised and cloaked as mini-democracies (Roose, 2021). The Capitol riots spread-out apprehensions all around the world. There were worries about the business model of online platforms and its effect not only on free, reasonable, and fair competition but too on our democracies (Amaro, 2021). These occasions and their commitments to a move towards a more critical approach on digital platforms made it imperative not to lose sight of the broader setting and long-standing dangers and threats to popular democratic government.

Both far-right and fanatic radicalism has displayed that it is exceptionally simple for violent words to become violent activities, debilitating not only internal security as well as steadiness inside national borders but moreover having worldwide consequences, given that unlike the factual world the online digital domain has exceptionally few borders. There are various illustrations in Nepal and universally when before elections politicians, different political parties along with their supporters were contriving and conspiring online to raise support for them, their parties, groups, and lobbies and to stifle votes for its mainstream adversaries. Deception as well as false (fake) news, the upsurge of online radicalization into Islamic and right-wing radicalism; the echo chambers (beliefs reinforced by communication plus reprise inside a close system insulated from reply and counterclaim) and political polarization; criticisms regarding the need of educated assent, independence, autonomy and confidentiality and heated wrangles on 'free will' of discourse were all blistering long before Donald Trump's defeat and it is against this wider scenario that a crucial reconsidering of the standards and ethics of simulated artificial intelligence is direly needed. Polarizing tussles took place in the setting of democratic flexibilities and liberty being curtailed as a

reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020. Expanded digital demands during the pandemic added weight to the critical approaches toward digital media. The common is that the democratic institutions designed to bargain and handle dissent are not working in the present digital age; that the implies and the way of negotiating disagreement are neither fruitful nor helpful and this adds further criticalness. Disregarding people or endeavors to repress them are marks of dictatorial governments that don't permit ambiguity, plurality, and resilience and are more likely to make sure additional damage than good in the long run, including irritated users turning to more niche radical platforms. This is figurative not only of the unchecked powers of a small group of unelected business magnates but of the perilous populist power conferred upon politicians through digital devices, the authority to impact the 'hearts, minds and behavior' of the people. Its victory as an instrument for providing a voice is an outline of the deficiencies of the often far-off, bureaucratic, and organized communication of representative democracy.

The advantageous bond that populist pioneers often as possible have with digital media (Postill, 2018; Schroeder, 2018), with both of them flourishing (as one forty the popularity/profitability of the other), raises questions concerning the compatibility of ethical and healthy democracies with the venture models of digital media companies. It is fundamental to watch out not to rehash the botches that led to digital media being used to harm democratic standards, mishandle civil rights, spread freeze and panic, misinformation, deception, and fake news as well as radical deliberate publicity. Concurring to Burr and Floridi (2020), digital well-being can be characterized as the venture of reviewing the influence that online digital innovations, e.g. social media, smartphones, and simulated artificial intelligence, etc. have on human security, comfort and self-knowledge, self-identity, and selfhood. Müller (2020) argues that it is necessary to maintain a strategic distance from handling moral and ethical issues of online social media as though they are static: at present, there is no idea precisely about the future of this technology and its future ramifications. Further, no one knows exactly what are the most suitable ethical practices of online media to attain. Procedures and techniques created in marketing and promoting advertisement, employed by sellers, including misuse and exploitation of behavioral predispositions and biases, duplicity, deception, and addiction generation to maximize profit (Costa and Halpern, 2019), are presently employed in politics to manipulate the public opinion and maximize votes (Woolley and Howard, 2016). By using the data from users' profiles showing their past online interactions, one can give the kind of input that is more likely to influence a specific individual influence (Müller, 2020). During elections, those who control digital media have the power to nudge or influence undecided voters and win decisions, leading to a modern form of dictatorship (Helbing et al., 2019; Roose, 2021) and traumatizing democracy.

Besides the orchestrating endeavors of 'nudging' (Helbing et al., 2019), online digital media creates a robust platform for the propagation of deception and propaganda via the reflective absenteeism of any kind of gatekeeping. Deception and misinformation, hate speech, and treachery or conspiracy theories have penetrated citizens through digital media, particularly

social media, undermining political and social strength (Frank, 2021). Notwithstanding the trepidations regarding thoughtful dissemination of information conducive to influencing public discernment were apparent before (Bauer and Gregory, 2007), those issues have been intensified by the use of artificial intelligence. There prevails the risk of dusting misinformation by varied actors, including politicians, news media, and ordinary citizens (Hameleers et al., 2020), as well as machines such as the propaganda bots that infiltrate Twitter/Facebook (Scheufele and Krause, 2019).

Other than using deliberate processes e.g. changing evidence and deliberately fueling fake news, the digital media, employ other mechanisms which do not contribute to the protection of basic human rights--an indispensable component of a democratic society. Algorithmic filtering, which alludes to prioritizing the selection, sequence, and visibility of posts (Bucher, 2012), and is implanted in digital online platforms, reinforces individuals' pre-existing convictions and worldviews (Loader et al., 2016; Gillespie, 2018; Talmud and Mesch, 2020), increasing biases and sociopolitical polarization (Helbing et al., 2019). Given the biases in favor of one's position and the limited critical assessment of evidence reported when individuals are perusing new data (Iordanou et al., 2020; Iordanou et al., 2019), hampering one's input of information to only that which is in alliance with one's beliefs, obstructs self-reflection (Iordanou and Kuhn, 2020) and contributes to polarization and radicalism. These altercations ascertain how social media calculations supplement political divergences and polarization. This concurs with findings that show that interaction with people who share distinctive views from one's own is crucial for the development of critical thinking (Iordanou and Kuhn, 2020). Digital social media platforms began and ensure to run as business models, aiming to generate revenue by coordinating advertisements to clients pedestalled on their digital profile. In the name of the so-called contribution to individuals' need to get informed and socialize, digital platforms have misused the vulnerabilities of the human mind by making it inclined and obsessive. Cave (2019); Cacciatore et al. (2018) contend that digital media has not been initially designed to inform or teach, contrary there is an absence of a regulatory system controlling the role of digital media as information providers or urging them to be responsible for their actions. Further, there is a link between the application of social media and a lower level of political participation which is not surprising. Rather news access from social media is related to uncivil discourses and unfriending, which is shutting down opposing ideas and views and contributes to polarization (Goyanes et al. 2021).

Another concerning issue is the workout by digital platforms of power structures and inclinations and biases in society (Diakopoulos, 2015). Digital media typify and encapsulate the worldviews and biases of their creators (Broussard, 2018; Noble, 2018) or the data they depend on (Cave, 2019). This effect can be particularly hindering for youths, for which digital cyberspace is an indispensable part of their social life, and who are in a critical juncture of socialization (Talmud and Mesch, 2020). The result of algorithmic inclination or predisposition in big data is the replication of biases, discriminatory choices, and undemocratic situations (Pols and Spahn, 2015). Cave (2019) argues that the pace of digital

technology is contrasted with the slow pace of policy formulation and implementation, the technology advances, and only then do policies on online digital platforms start to follow.

Another challenge is concurring on what constitutes an ethical system in the first place, given the diverse and clashing viewpoints and presumptions on this point. Another variable is allied to territorial, social-cultural, and country contrasts e.g. ethical and principled in one culture may not be fundamentally moral in another culture. Regional and country differences are moreover imperative. There's a distinction between industrialized and diffident backward societies. Eventually, the truth that everyone's definition of what is moral or where to draw the line will vary complicated an already multifaceted issue, added further tensions and implied that paving a common way forward became nearly unmanageable. Further, the upsurge of nationalism and populism has weakened and led to the failure of democratic institutions not only in the democratically weak country Nepal but globally, including the popular and established western democracies. The fundamental issue at stake is how can one indeed start tackling ethical issues when the very foundation upon which democracy is built is being undermined. The debilitating and weakening of democratic institutions due to the global upsurge of populist politicians, an increment in nationalism, governments' undemocratic practices and unregulated false newscasts, and abhorrence or hatred discourse and speech are the key challenges that prevent endeavors to address moral issues and human rights infringement. State-sponsored surveillance and monitoring, information collection without knowledgeable and satisfactory consent, data mismanagement, or either financial or political gain, are specifically connected to human rights infringement. Consequently, politics itself have gone digital, *stormed,* and *hacked*.

At present there are deteriorating and disintegrating world where many vital organizations such as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), World Health Organization (WHO), and the European Union (EU) are being challenged. In this dangerous setting of political crumbling and polarization, politicians are regularly turning to blame games instead of addressing human issues and ensuring human rights. The United Nations is feeble, and charities are in collapse. Modi's *Hindutva* game has threatened the secular fabric of the Indian constitution. Therefore, this is a critical time to retain a few similarities of direction, regulation, and human rights on a worldwide scale owing to the escalation of nationalism, scapegoating and blame diversions, tricky games, and all sociopolitical trickeries that are underway if not, democracy will be chopped and hacked more.

Before and immediately after the Nepal general election in 2022, online bigotry, racism, sexism in systems, fake news, schism, polarization as well as hate speeches prepared a prolific ground for populist leaders to develop their effect and influence on digital platform users. Currently, it is not probable to anticipate support for ethical behavior by state leaders who flourished and depended on the propagation of such elements in society, as well as sometimes effectively working towards creating them. Lack of accountability and no sufficient penalty for bad actors in dealing the ethical issues has accelerated the problem. Young Nepalese consumers from the new generation are, okay with the trade between privacy and personalization but for the older generation, the trust issue is major. Hence, the

progress in addressing moral issues and ensuring and protecting democracy in Nepal and other countries is based on an exhaustive understanding of what is upright and what is preventing progress in practice. Kalampalikis et al. (2013) argue that the present need is to converse on the emerging interdisciplinary investigative research field of public understanding of technology so that to give insights to policymakers for making emerging technologies, especially digital media more ethical and democratic. For defending the foundations of democracy in a better way, there should be a good balance between direct and indirect democracy (representative) democracy, especially in countries that tend to function through the latter. The guideline and principle of indirect democracy and elected representatives rest on the often outdated presumption that those elected are more learned to sort out preferences and decisions for the sake of and on behalf of the public. However, there's no convincing evidence in Nepal to show that politicians are more educated about the risk of digital media than the common public. Hence, alternative bodies could be made e.g. ethical bodies and councils with committed specialists from investigative research and industry, local assemblies, and citizen science initiatives and referenda (for instance as part of *e-democracy*) so that to spur and motivate the public to educate themselves on the one hand, and to make good use of their existing skills and expertise on the other. For making a strong and advanced democracy, it is necessary to go beyond just regulatory normative calls for making the right decisions and create secure and safe spaces to accommodate and negotiate dissent and differing opinions. Concurring to Christodoulou and Iordanou (2021) eventually, when endeavoring to reach a compromise between ethics, digital well-being, and democracy, the focus should not be on whether the deceptive unethical practices are a result of malicious or benevolent behavior but good intentions do not reduce the harm caused.

Social Media and Emerging New World Order

Like political machinery, digital populists are more a source of deception and misinformation presenting overdramatic stories about real or false information in persuasive powerful language. They promote erroneous traumas and crises whereas bestowing themselves as possessing the responses. They easily comprehend the temptation, lure, and psychological manipulation of a description or story well expressed and communicated persistently looking to extend viewers---not even aware that the basic science of online digital media is distorted and warped in the interest and pursuit of popularity and influence. It is the right to subject populist seers to genuine and serious scrutiny in a new dimension of recreated or simulated illusionary reality made conceivable by the acquisition of a typical framework fabricated by digital media platforms which are challenging the future of humankind itself. As untrue projections have real consequences, human emotions and expressions are also subjective and varied to express reactions. There are diverse cultural and individual differences in the way in which humans interpret their sensations. Human feelings, thus, can't be deduced from physiological measures stripped uncovered of relevant contextual information which concurs with Hall's (1973) 'Active Audience Theory' which contends that media audiences don't get data passively but are keenly involved, often unknowingly, in making sense of the message inside their individual and social setting such

as family background, convictions, beliefs, values, culture, interests, education, and experiences.

The differentiation of assessments made in the citizen aspect comes into presence in the political actor perspective; the ones who acknowledge the normalization approach question to equalization, and the ones who acknowledge the equalization question to the normalization approach. It looks as if it is mandatory to choose only one of them. But, it has been seen that digital platforms have empowered users to become interactive, as well as enabled them to select content effectively, check it, share it, and like it. As the citizen chain goes to the bottom, they can express from every viewpoint, can rule out cynicism, and can effectively take an interest to participate in politics. The situation is similar in the context of political actors. In political parties, the powerful and deep-rooted politician can broadcast their highlights and features effectively, and broadly. However, the citizens who never thought that they could be political actors, who express themselves without obstructions through the use of the digital platform, have come to the positions to change the country's politics. Concisely, at the point where the internet has come and brought the world to, the reinforcement-mobilization and normalization-equalization approaches are all genuine in terms of citizens and political on-screen actors since these online actualities reflect the offline world in the online platform without inconsistencies, contradictions, and limits.

Digital platforms provide trust to change conventional political talk, however, at numerous levels, it just imitates and replicates, hence, becoming an unconventional instrument that marks the hostile symptoms of the modern era. Digital platforms which were at first thought of as a way to connect individuals globally became news-sharing platforms, which to an expansive degree are being created by people themselves. This moreover makes different narratives making their role beautiful in the stream of information which subsequently, empowers diverse social actors to influence and construct conclusions on important issues. This dispersal of information on an expansive scale becomes a problem if it is fake or doctored. With secrecy and anonymity, easy access, and no watchdogs, this information can be less secure and problematic and can be one-sided.

Presently, the online digital space has become an alternative to the overwhelming political discourse where mishandling and disinformation are becoming an imperative culture of mediatized politics. It has provided a new space for open talk and political battles e.g. worldwide *Occupy Movement* in 2011 that expressed resistance to social and economic imbalance, inequality, and the lack of genuine democracy around the world. In this movement, the activists used online platforms to raise resistance against their government, hence, circumventing a new political space through online platforms. The online feminist activism that looked to register their protest through online platforms bringing into light the ordinary battles of women, is yet another example, though women who express their views and dissents on social media are subject to abuse. Nevertheless, for the marginalized segments of society, digital platforms are becoming an important device to register contradiction, remonstration, defy and most imperatively raise their voice and speak for themselves and to be heard. There are also examples of complete blackouts to curve the

spread of social media information. Masih (2019) notify that the Indian government imposed a complete internet blackout in Kashmir on August 2019 to avoid the dissemination of information and stifle the disagreeing voices, which was draconian and worse than collective punishment in a *dying democracy*. There are also reports of digital scandals such as political counseling firms which employ fake measures to extricate individual information from Facebook. In the United States, the information, which was extricated without the consent of the people, was used to mold the Presidential campaign for Donald Trump. This shows how digital platforms are being employed as a device to structure the public discourse in a way that favors those who are in power. The government's online army plays a vital role in controlling the descriptions of digital power.

Digital social media, which was anticipated to revive the public circle to create a modern civic culture, has permitted the selective return of *fascist belief* ideology. Hence, the vital query is what role digital social media has come to play in the democratic processes? Has this led to the further ideologies-based polarization of the world and the emergence of new world order? The issue or problem (?) of the use vs. misuse of digital space is complex since, on one side, the internet is regarded as a space for the free expression of views that are abused hence requiring regulation; on the flip side, the internet has become an equalizing space and hence any kind of censorship that curtails this fundamental freedom would be risky. It will be necessary to look for a middle path and draw a line between the use and misuse of digital space, and whom to give the power to decide this—to the digital consumers, digital conglomerates, or the government?

Globally, including in Nepal, online digital has augmented cybercrimes and felonies such as sexual abuse, exploitation, fraud, swindling, evil behavior, etc. In the dearth of strict cyber laws in Nepal, 3,906 cases of cybercrime were registered in the fiscal year 2020/21 (The Annapurna Express, 2022). Of them, 2,003 women and 1431 men became the victims of cybercrime. Many children under the age of 18 also became victims of cybercrime. Facebook, Imo, YouTube, Viber, Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok are used in Nepal to commit crimes. Likewise, people are superfluously bullied on their political inclination, gender, ethnic/caste, religious identity, etc. Women's distress is increasing whose photos are transmogrified for sexual abuse without their consent. Frequent questions have been raised about *Hindutva masculinity* on social media in India creating a culture of ferocity against women and Muslims. Subramanian (2010) raises the question of the *Hindutva masculinity* of social media. In Nepal, macho *patriarchy* presented on digital platforms has created chaos on multiple occasions. Sexualized and gendered practices of violence towards women are resulting in their closure of social media accounts or absconding from cyberspace participation. The cyber-violence is highly misogynistic without indemnification of cyber safety. Abhorring speech, polarization, and cyber harassment are frequent in online media. Further, it has the power of transference of deception and misinformation from the *virtual* to the real world and, hence, can make a space for those *subaltern* voices that are stifled. It can moreover provide the control of secrecy and anonymity which can be a boon as well as a revile and curse. Amidst all concerns over digital platforms misuse, fake news,

and fabricated information, social media trade globally should be understood in connection to longer cultures of political exchange and structures of privilege that characterize who gets to spread false information or manhandle individual users, and with what consequences. Far from rejecting rough exchanges on digital platforms as political mud-slinging common to the fissured democratic scenario, it would serve well to approach mishandling and disinformation as a critical culture of mediatized politics in the digital age, which not only reflects political differences but essentially shapes what it implies to participate in open public life for a net-nourished generation.

In the 2022 general elections in Nepal, underneath digital media created order, the digital space became an arbitrator just like a diversion of the *Chinese whispers* game in which message is disfigured by being passed around in whispers, where one message gets interpreted into a diverse one, with the increase in exchange. The other side to the viciousness and violence on Nepalese social media occurred when certain groups of digital consumers consumed the digital space to polarize issues and abuse the social media for publicity in a way that marginalized certain groups of people in the same way as it does in the real world such as the circulation of online noxious recordings and videos reflecting the online political of communal hatred. The digital platforms penetrating the lives of citizens accidentally bring with them the history of structures of benefit and privilege that characterize who treats who, and who should be obligated and liable for certain actions against the rest. The emergence of the global digital culture of *othering* which is developing through focusing and targeting and trolling certain groups of people on online platforms is a serious concern. The level of exertion, ability, and assets that would have gone into the crafting of this mortification is not only intended to have a chilling impact but implied to terrorize. These issues raise the questions of where we draw the line between the *real* and *virtual*, and how social media gives us trust to change conventional political talk, and however at numerous levels just replicates it. This virtual metaverse signifies a hypothetical recurrence of the internet as a solo, worldwide immersive virtual world encouraged via the usage of *Virtual Reality* (VR) which makes us reflect on bridging the extremes between the free rein of digital social media and observation. The issue surfaces when the bellicose encounter gets polarized and the already marginalized *other* gets further ambushed. Hence, it's imperative to pick on the indications and symptoms of this digital era and reflect on the control and power of social media and how cleverly certain stakeholders of digital media are misusing and taking advantage of public sentiments in the digital era.

In this emerging digital media-created new world order, there's no reason to accept that technological innovation can strengthen democracy where digital media is diminishing the governed. The digitally networked surveillance capitalism has created an undemocratic class system setting as rivals the controllers against the controlled. Technological advancements show up way better suited for extending government control versus improving the capacity of people to evade surveillance. Over the whole range of political belief systems, governments can legitimize increased budgets for ever-more-sophisticated surveillance innovations based on noble-sounding bases, such as national security. Having made a

perfect *panopticon* that maps each endpoint and each gadget on the digital network, and with the rise of middle-box collectors that use gigantic computing control and power to connect and correlate identifiers, the final result will incline toward command and control. The surveillance capitalism and the oligarchs, aided by foreign interests will continue to control and manipulate public opinion for their broader interest and the economic difference will continue to rise, as will resentment, misdirected towards minorities, immigrants, and the elites even as claimed by Moore (2018).

In the new world order, it is possible to reach voters in a focused way and convey information from remoteness instead of cultivating neighborhood community talk and support. The lack of privacy in web service platforms, in conjunction with artificial insights and information, presently makes it possible for candidates to distinguish, identify and influence voters in ways that might not have been envisioned a few years back. Without remedial activity such as modern election rules constraining the use of citizens' private information, these modern capabilities could lead to increased political instability and conceivably the breakdown of whole democratic frameworks. Egalitarian governance and democratic regimes might end up less democratic due to the abuse of observatory surveillance systems in the name of the so-called legitimization of national security. Democracy may be more of an elitist behavior in the future than it is presently. The political, as well as social life of the common working class, is likely to be at its worst. The voice of *subaltern* groups will be suppressed more and more and those possessing cash, political power as well as digital supremacy will be the dominant power. Digital technology will amass people's expression and remove individual voices but the democratic institutions will not be positively impacted, rather digital technology will continue to create disfranchised and disempowered citizens. The trend of exploiting digital literacy will be rampant. Exploiting and extractive digital illiteracy, citizens' lack of digital articulacy and their apathy will produce ill-informed and/or dispassionate citizens, henceforth, waning democracy and the basic sociocultural rubric of the society.

The grand *confusing filter bubble* impact has created a situation in which internet users experience only information and opinions that acclimates to and fortify their own beliefs that personalize individual's online experience, subsequently, there are fewer potentials for the users to discover novel information. Individuals will not seek out, examine or take time to understand positions they do not understand or don't concur with. Presently, a major bulk of the Nepalese population lives with a lean assemblage of realities, mutilated information, and an insufficient cognitive base to create a rational choice. Real information is failing to drive out false ideas, purposeful propaganda publicity, allusion, or misdirection. Technology without civics is capitalism with crystallized rationale and unbounded scope. Social cohesion requires levels of understanding of aware and caring citizens to respect 'others' feelings rather than seeing them as mere digital consumers and occasional partisan voters. The situation will be alike to waging info-war where digital technology can be made into weapons by anyone, anywhere, anytime to target defenseless populations and digital technicians' elections.

Information Warfare and Digitalization of Politics in a Globalized World

In the lack of proper direction and regulations, future elections will be controlled by those parties who can optimize social media most successfully. Presently, different parties use fear, prejudice, and xenophobia to influence elections. Unlike armed rebellion, the little number of digital employees capable to influence thousands and millions will be decisive to improve the power of politicians to control people and manipulate democracy for their advantage. Digital systems will be an effectual indentured servant active to assist and educate people who are against the interests of the elite class. Further, digital intelligence will replace human labor and cut down many people's jobs, and make them unemployed consequently leading to a decrease in the quality of life and sowing the seeds of further confusion in sociopolitical life.

Now, it is visible that, tech-borne reality twisting is smashing the already brittle public trust in democratic institutions. With the increase in hate speech, polarization, distortion, and lack of well-considered thought, a direct positive and negative bond between social media, mental health, technology use/offers, human behavior, activities, and social relationships can be traced. Online viral misinformation will pose a risk to democratic institutions and the integrity of elections and will deteriorate the capacity to agree; by supporting smaller communities and fringe ideas, it'll make a compromise and finding a modus vivendi much more difficult. In the future, no mass armies will be required to wage wars as new digital technologies will be actively used for an online digitally viral war that will enable centralized control to a point never imagined before. Consequently, democracy is and will be filled with more viral fake news and absurd bloviating *boastful discourse*, crusade, or digitally ferocious campaign and behavior. The fading independent journalism, research, and critical skills resulting from too much reliance on the internet make people vulnerable to manipulation, rhetoric, and prejudices. The upsurge of media-triggered radicalism, jingoism, tribalism, and distrust will weaken democracy. Few related patterns can be inferred. First, the decentralization of the new era, second, the need for easy-to-use, citizen-facing components, and mechanisms for deciding the legitimacy of digital platforms along with their objects. Third, a personalization environment leads to an increase in the propensity toward confirmation inclination/bias and intellectual constriction. All three patterns diminish the number of educated and well-informed voters and lead to the increase of sociopolitical division. The use of more time in online media and less time for family, friends, community/personal interaction, and learning critical social skills of respect and compassion, will finally lead to intellectual narrowing and sociocultural fragmentation, and less trust in offline information. With all these changes in human behavior, we cannot hold a part of the trust for future democracy.

The central ideology of democracy i.e. representation, elections, government fixed tenure, etc. will to a great extent undermined by digital intelligence that will manipulate popular opinion which in turn will contradict citizens' right to express their choice for distress and fear, going against the crowd. Hence, it is visible, the foundation of a new era where online digital media is chopping down democracy and social relations vital for a democratic society. *Digital consumers* will have no good way of knowing what is true and what is false,

what is the opinion and what is the fact. Globally, most individuals don't yet know how digital innovations particularly combined with a need for security and privacy, permit them to be manipulated. The terrifying question is not what will change, but what must change. Without changes in democratic institutions, the enduring future of democracy itself is in question. Further, there is a developed vs. underdeveloped, urban vs. rural binary at work with a serious disparity in wealth dispersion, with wars, fear-mongering, and civil turmoil dominating it all. Digital innovation will have a hand in giving as well as hindering solutions. Unless there's straightforwardness and transparency, online digital technology will be the *new digital nuclear bomb* that has moved quicker than individuals or the law's understanding of its unintended results and evil uses.

Conclusion

In this new digital era, there are clear indications of prejudice, manipulation, election rigging, digital panopticism surveillance, and totalitarian control over social systems, the internet, and its digital platforms by private and state actors. Digital technology has mainly empowered the elites but the governance and government itineraries usually did not facilitate and assist democratic objectives or accomplish self-governing democratic products and results. All these are activities to diminish the helplessness of critical frameworks and infrastructures that has genuine democratic implications. Contrary they assist the powerful and power holders—hence, clear indications of the allegoric unfurling of George Orwell's nightmare of 'Animal Farm' as private actors and governments in the name of information dissemination and protection of citizens' democratic rights, using online gadgets for surveillance and increasingly redefining actualities and history capable of outlining, refining and forming public opinion. This wanton use of digital technology has weakened the basic components of democratic norms and tangible democratic representation. The matured democracies may not be worried about this, but less developed societies and immature democracies such as Nepal, who are less worried to protect liberty or easily led to relinquishing it may face serious consequences in the future. Amidst confusing politico-social circumstances, it seems appropriate to act with doubt about the internet's transformative potential towards democratic cooperation which is protected by those who acknowledge the optimistic mobilization approach (internet as a new prototype of democracy of the old Greek direct democracy) in a circumstance where it is conceivable to recognize rich-poor, and developed-undeveloped dichotomies. Consequently, only an unfathomable and subverting destabilizing crisis is growing out of the upsurge of absolutism, and racial, ethnic, and cultural nationalism. The institutions basic to the peaceful orderly improvement of societies are crumbling and failing to stop attacks on minority pressure groups. In the future, one-sided technocratic groupthink will probably proceed in its stride toward dictatorship. Charismatic leadership will prosper in liberal systems. Dictatorship will take root. Online inclination and preference overviews and surveys may be developed to direct numerous choices facing the government.

A universally sanctioned set of regulations to control digital multinationals is improbable right now since dominant states see technology as a way to overwhelm their citizens with

their plans and influence the democratic perspectives of what they consider to be unfriendly. Consequently, liberal democracy is being *digitally weaponized*. When excessive power is concentrated in the hands of a few, the outcomes are not in favor of the numerous, not good for democracy. If the concerned stakeholders do not act to abridge digital platforms' power, in the future, the common citizen will not have much role in who wins elections, who loose, and the overall democratic functions of the state. Further, it will be very difficult to break the oligopoly of state-supported big tech companies. Hence, the future democracy will be democracy in name only. The degeneration of governments into imposter phony shoppers and profound fakes will disorder the distinction between actualities and misrepresentations that concurs with the normalization approach (as an essential assessment of reinforcement approach based on political actors), that one having power capable to be powerful in the offline field is powerful within the online field, too. This social media proclaimed new world order and its 'internet capitalism' will serve only a few, and democracy will debilitate and weaken as a result compatible with the prime argument of this study that social media platforms infuse flimsiness, instability, and volatility into social and political life that concurs to 'digital anthropology's internet-related chaotic pluralistic transformations of sociopolitical phenomena. But, it is not the technology that will cause the changes. Digital technology can move forward or weaken democracy depending on how it is used and who controls it and the systems and structures that create different technologies. Presently, it is controlled by only a few elites, consequently, their loudest voices have been heard more. In the future, though the media may change, the elite class will still run everything. Democracy will be attacked, chopped, and hacked more in a new social order ruled by digital tycoon-funded elite politicians. Hence, the present need of the time is to reinforce citizens' digital agency and enforce a resilient universal regulation to regulate the digital world.

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