Modern Communication Media and their Role in Reshaping The Public's Relationship with Mass Media: A Sociological Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of modern communication media in reshaping the public's relationship with mass media from a sociological perspective, in light of the profound transformations currently affecting media and communication, driven by developments in digital technology and the spread of social media platforms and networks. The study also seeks to determine how new communication media influence the formation of public opinions, perceptions, and interactions with media institutions. In addition, it highlights the sociology of audiences within the context of modern communication media use, which has generated a new journalistic form, citizen journalism, thereby transforming audience research strategies and the mechanisms through which audiences respond to communicative and media messages. Collectively, these developments have contributed to a shift from the question of what the media do to audiences to what audiences do with, and within, the media. In particular, audiences are no longer merely recipients in the communicative process; instead, they have moved from being passive consumers of messages and content to becoming producers and senders of communicative and media content through the internet and diverse digital communication platforms.

Keywords: Mass media; audiences; audience sociology; communication process; modern communication media; citizen journalism.

INTRODUCTION:

Since the emergence and development of mass media in the twentieth century, numerous theories have emerged regarding the media's role in the lives of individuals and the public. Specialists in media studies and sociology increasingly discussed the extent of the mass media's strong influence on audiences. Over time, as a result of the economic, political, social, and technological changes experienced by most societies, particularly following developments in the media that, in certain events, failed to alter public orientations, some scholars went so far as to criticise the theory of strong media effects. They came to view today's public as the actor that governs, controls, and exerts an effective influence over the media.

Notably, research and inquiry into the sociology of audiences within the context of the digital transformation of contemporary societies, which has given rise to several modern communication media, have led to a transformation in research strategies in audience studies from the study of effects to a focus on audience reception and the mechanisms of response to communicative and media messages. All of this has contributed to a shift from the question of what the media do to the public to what the public does with the media. The audience is no longer merely a receiver in the communicative process; instead, it has assumed a significant role, moving from a passive recipient of communicative and media messages and content to a producer and sender of such content within the context of digital media and communication. This transformation has given rise to a new journalistic form, namely, "citizen journalism," driven by the public's use of the internet and various interactive communication applications and media as engines of innovation. The "citizen" audience has thus come to participate in disseminating information, commenting on news, producing it, engaging with it, and exchanging it through electronic blogging across diverse modern communication media, such as social networking sites and other digital platforms, which have become strong competitors to primary global news sources from established media institutions. Therefore, the research problem of the study is articulated as follows: **How does modern communication media contribute to reshaping the relationship between the public and media institutions from a sociological perspective?**

Addressing this research problem requires the formulation of several subsidiary questions, articulated as follows:

*- What is the nature of the relationship between the public and media outlets and between the public and communication outlets?

*- What are the sociological characteristics of media and communication audiences?

*- How have media and communication institutions benefited from the use of modern communication media?

*- How do modern communication media influence the reshaping of the relationship between the public and mass media?

To answer these questions, this study addresses the following points:

1. The objectives and significance of the study are defined, and its conceptual framework is established:

This section identifies the objectives and significance of the study, outlines the methodology adopted to organise the research stages, and clarifies its key concepts.

1.1. Objectives and significance of the study and the methodology employed:

a. Objectives of the study:

This study is among the qualitative research endeavors that seek to achieve a set of aims, the most prominent of which are as follows:

- Analysing the public's use of modern communication media in the production and exchange of media and communication content.

- Examining the impact of the use of modern communication media on the formation of public opinions and perceptions.

- Assessing the extent to which the use of modern communication media affects the credibility of media institutions.

- Investigating how modern communication media contribute to reshaping the relationship between the public and mass media.

b. Significance of the study:

The world of media and communication, driven by technological development, has witnessed the emergence of digital media and communication alongside the spread of

modern communication media and their impact on audience interaction with mass media. In addition, the proliferation of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as other communication media, has enabled the public to exert control over the media and communication landscape through the emergence of citizen journalism and blogging. As a result, major global media institutions have begun to turn towards this domain in an attempt either to control it or, at the very least, to mitigate its adverse effects within what is now referred to as virtual media and communication. Consequently, media and communication institutions have come to grant audiences greater space for participation and interaction with their programmes and news bulletins by engaging with social media audiences, which have become capable of creating celebrities and bringing down certain media stars. Indeed, some presenters and programme hosts have come to be subject to the segments of the audience that follow them and, at times, are unable to deviate from the script or the core image that the audience has formed of them, for fear of losing their support.

<p style="text-align:center">C. Methodology of the study</p>

This study is classified as a qualitative study that requires a scientific methodology enabling the researcher to identify its underlying dimensions and indicators. Accordingly, the descriptive–analytical method has been employed, as it is considered the most appropriate approach for such studies that seek to trace and examine the phenomenon to achieve the desired results in light of the research problem and the questions posed.

1–2. Defining the Concepts of the Study:

Defining and delimiting concepts constitute the first step in any social research, as it determines the study's analytical perspective. The principal and fundamental concepts employed in the body of this study are outlined as follows:

1–2–1. Media and Communication:

The media refers to the means by which information is conveyed to the public to raise awareness, provide knowledge, and address life-related matters. These take several forms, including audio media that rely on hearing to convey information, such as radio; visual media that rely on sight to convey information, such as newspapers; and audiovisual media, which rely on both sight and hearing to convey information, such as television. The latter is considered the most influential and the most impactful, and it is among the most relied-upon media forms for transmitting messages to the audiences of viewers and listeners simultaneously.[1]

The media represent all governmental and private institutions that disseminate culture to the public, both at the individual and collective levels. These institutions are concerned with educational dimensions as an objective aimed at achieving the individual's adaptation to the group.[2]

1–2–2. The Audience

The audience refers to any large group, such as a nation, a city, or humankind, in which individuals are reduced to primary, essential, and shared characteristics. The study of

[1] Mayada Al-Qasim, "The Role of Mass Media in Disseminating and Promoting a Culture of Peaceful Coexistence in Societies: A Sociological-Analytical Study," in *Coexistence and Its Forms from a Humanities*

audiences, however, refers to those vast numbers of individuals who are compelled by events or structural changes to struggle for basic matters.[3]

The audience is relatively large, wide-ranging, and heterogeneous. It forms around an issue in public life, with the primary purpose of promoting an interest or opinion and achieving political change. Here, reference is given to the general public, which constitutes the enlightened segment of cinema and radio followers (and, to some extent, popular journalism) that shapes public opinion on various issues. This audience is far larger than a group or a crowd.[4]

1–2–3. Audience Sociology

Audience sociology, or the sociology of mass media, is a branch of media sociology concerned with explaining and interpreting the various phenomena associated with the authentic, final party in the communication process. It seeks to explain and interpret the mechanisms that govern the formation of media audiences, the communicative behaviour exhibited by these audiences, and their relationships with the communicator and the media message. That is, it attempts to answer the last two questions in Lasswell's communication model: To whom? And with what effect? It aims to transform the general public's impressions concerning mass media and their relationships with recipients into theoretical and empirical scientific knowledge.[5]

1–2–4. The Communication Process:

The communication process is the means by which ideas, information, and stimuli are transmitted between a sender and a receiver within social contexts concerning an issue, an abstract meaning, or a particular reality. It is also a process of participation between the sender and the receiver, not a process of transmission, since transmission ends at the source. In contrast, participation implies duality of existence, which is closer to the communication process.[6]

It is also defined as the process of exchanging facts, ideas, opinions, information, and attitudes between two or more persons, using one or more forms of expression, so that each party understands what the other means.[7]

1–2–5. Modern Communication Media:

The term media derives from the Latin medium, which means "mediation." The term refers to the link that connects two parties. The term media has been applied to mass media, including the printed press, radio, and television, as communication media that convey news and information from the sender to the recipient.[8]

New media of information and communication refer to modern means and technologies that emerged with the remarkable development of information and communication technologies, necessitating the rise of communication media such as computers, electronic

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[3] François Perroux, *The Public and the Class*, trans. Naji al-Darawsheh (Damascus: Dar al-Takwin for Authorship, Translation, and Publishing, 2012), 5.

[4] Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Theory of Mass Communication*, trans. Ayman Bajneid and Abeer Khalid (Asbar International Forum, 2010), 604.

[5] Muhammad Qayrat, "Audience Sociology (2)," *Al-Sharq*, May 31, 2014, accessed March 15, 2025, urlr.me/wuBYdx.

[6] Khadra Umar Al-Muflih, *Communication: Skills, Theories, and General Foundations* (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Hamid Library for Publishing and Distribution, 2025), 16.

[7] Ali Farjani, *Public Relations and Communication Strategies* (Amman, Jordan: Dar Amjad for Publishing and

tablets, and smartphones, which are distinct from traditional mass media such as the printed press, radio, and television.[9]

New media is also a term used to describe various forms of electronic communication enabled by advances in computer technology. In contrast to "old" media, which include newspapers, magazines, books, television, and other noninteractive media, new media consists of websites; online streaming video and audio; email; online social media platforms; online communities and forums; blogs; internet telephony; and the internet.[10]

1–2–6. Citizen Journalism:

This refers to the journalistic form whose content and substance are produced by amateur individuals or ordinary users from all parts of the world and from different levels and backgrounds. It stands in contrast to the media content produced by professional journalists working in traditional media, who sell or broadcast it as part of their work. Notably, several terms are used to refer to this new journalistic form, such as "participatory journalism," "audience media," and "alternative journalism."[11]

2. Theoretical Approaches to the Study of the Relationship between the Public and Mass Media:

Studies of media audiences and media users have been linked to the development of media effects on audiences and to how the latter engage with them. From this perspective, theoretical approaches in audience studies may be divided into two principal approaches: the first pertains to the effects model, its most important theories, and its central premise of an audience's passivity; the second relates to the reception model, its most important theories, and its central premise of the audience's active role.

2–1. The Effects Model:

The study of the relationship between the public and mass media within the effects model is based on the following question: What do mass media do to the public? Its basic premise is that the public is influenced by media content, whether through direct or moderated effects, and that the public is passive and receives without resistance. There are numerous effect theories based on this premise: that media content exerts an immediate influence on the public. Among the theories within this model are the following:

2–1–1. Magic Bullet Theory:

This theory emerged during the First World War at the hands of Harold Lasswell. It assumes that mass media and communication exert a direct and decisive influence on the recipient. After the Second World War, this theory gained renewed momentum, and enthusiasm for analysing propaganda was intense, leading to the emergence of the myth of the propaganda man and his capacity to use mass media to influence and control people's attitudes, ideas, and behaviour. This theory accords with the media's great power of influence; it is similar to firing a bullet to strike a victim.

This theory views audience members as passive in their exposure to media and engagement with content and as ready to accept ideas and meanings as soon as they encounter them. Communication messages are stimuli that move audience members who are prepared to respond. Communication sources, particularly propaganda apparatuses, did not attend to

[11] Ibrahim Baaziz, *Modern Communication Technology and Its Social and Cultural Impacts* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Hadith, 2011), 57, 60.

feedback; instead, they focused on formulating messages and broadcasting them without examining outcomes on the assumption that messages must produce an effect.[12]

2–1–2. Mass Society Theory:

This theory is often attributed to the "Frankfurt School," which holds that the public is a mass of isolated individuals who, by nature, are susceptible to manipulation and domination by the mass media. The first phase of media-audience studies reflects strong impressions of the media as powerful and persuasive forces in society. To elaborate on this issue, the role of the media as an instrument of manipulation operates ideologically to control and contain the public through the production of "standardised" products that keep the public in an obedient state, preventing any critical or political participation and rendering it incapable of generating an "authentic" meaning in the texts it consumes.[13]

2–1–3. Cultivation Theory:

The origins of this theory date back to the American scholar George Gerbner, who argued that television is a dominant force in shaping modern society. This theory emerged from his efforts with a group of researchers on the effects of television on American society. It is regarded as an application of ideas about processes of meaning-making, the construction of social realities, learning through observation, and the roles of mass media in these domains. It emphasises the capacity of mass media to shape how individuals perceive the world around them, especially among those heavily exposed to these messages. The theory links the intensity of exposure to mass media with the acquisition of meaning or learning through the symbolic images presented by these media, holding that television fosters beliefs about the nature of the social world.

According to this theory, the audience that consumes media materials, whether television or internet materials, is addressed solely in terms of exposure time, not in terms of the meanings the audience derives from this consumption. Under this theory, there appear to be no other sources of sensory perception or knowledge of social reality that contradict consumption content; instead, it assumes that televised answers dominate the audience's responses.[14]

2–2. The reception model:

Studies of audiences' reception of media messages focus on the interpretive relationship between the audience and the medium. The idea based on the audience's active role may be presented through the following principal theories:

2–2–1. Processes of the Production and Reproduction of Culture:

Here, we refer to the beginning of a new and stimulating phase in 1980 in audience research, when Hall, a pioneer in cultural studies, introduced the concepts of encoding and decoding.[15]

Through this, he explained degrees of "understanding" and "misunderstanding" during communicative exchange, which depend on degrees of symmetry and asymmetry (relations of equivalence) established between the positions of "articulations" of the

[12] Muhammad Fayyad Hasan, *Communication Theories* (Iraq: Al-Mustaqbal College, Department of Media, Second Year, 2022), 51–52.

[13] Fatimah Awan, "Understanding Audiences," chap. 3 in PhD diss. (2008), accessed March 15, 2025, http://www.artlab.org.uk/fatimah-awan-phd.htm

[14] Awan, "Understanding Audiences," 97–98.

[15] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Réseaux Reader*, no. 68, vol. 12 (1997): 27–39.

encoder/producer and the decoder/recipient. This model concludes that there are three types of audience: "dominant," "oppositional," and "negotiated". "[16]

Stuart Hall also criticises the proposition of the audience as a passive recipient. He criticises linearity but supports the new form of the process: the circuit of production–distribution/consumption–reproduction. He believes that producers initially encode information and then disseminate it to the audience and that, ultimately, the audience uses its own foundational information and knowledge to decode it. Accordingly, he argues that the audience is no longer merely a recipient; instead, in the process of encoding and decoding information, audiences have become producers and play a role in its reproduction.[17]

2–2–2. Uses and Gratifications Theory:

Katz, Dayan, and Carey focused on the audience's interpretation of the media scene, functioning as a bridge between gratification studies and cultural studies. The rationale here was to explain the selectivity of audience responses in confronting media transgressions, with the central concept being the active audience.

Thus, these researchers advanced a broader conception of how audiences engage with texts, allowing for ritual uses of communication, such as the transmission of media content from producers to audiences. Here, the shift was made from the question of what mass media do to audiences to what audiences do with mass media.[18]

2–2–3. Media dependency theory:

Dependency theory is an ecological theory because it focuses on the relationships among micro, meso-, and macrosystems and their components. Ecological theory views society as an organic structure, examining the interconnections among its parts and seeking to explain the behaviour of those parts in relation to those connections. Dependency theory seeks to understand the relationship between mass media and the public to determine why the public follows mass media and what objectives it pursues. Communication scholars believe that this theory is comprehensive, offering an integrated view of the relationship between communication media and the public while avoiding simplistic questions. One of its most important contributions is the proposition that society influences communication media. The theory reflects the prevailing scientific tendency in the social sciences to view life as a complex system of interacting elements rather than merely as separate models of causes and effects.

DeFleur's interpretation of the public's dependency on mass media constitutes a natural and distinctive domain for the influence of dependency on digital communication media, as it posits that the dependency relationship rests on two main pillars: the public's need for information and the achievement of its objectives and the conception of the media system as an information system employed to meet these needs and achieve those objectives. Digital communication is considered necessary for information systems to maintain their circulation and flow.[19]

3. The Social Characteristics of the Public and the Sociology of the Use of Modern Communication Media

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[16] Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *A History of Communication Theories*, trans. Nasr al-Din Laayadi and al-Sadiq Rabah (Beirut: Arab Organisation for Translation; Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2005), 122–123.
[17] Awan, "Understanding Audiences," 28–51.
[18] Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, "Uses and Gratifications Research," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1973–1974): 509–523.
[19] Hasan, *Communication Theories*, 151, 154.

This section first addresses the sociological characteristics of the public and then addresses the sociology of the use of modern communication media.

3–1. Sociological Characteristics of Mass Media Audiences:

The American sociological researcher Ennis devoted considerable effort in 1961 to investigating the sociological characteristics of audiences that apply to groups. Media researchers subsequently sought to apply these characteristics to mass media audiences. This American scholar identified three characteristics: social differentiation, social interaction, and normative regulatory systems. The purpose of identifying these characteristics is to reveal them and adopt them as criteria for classifying audiences to influence and persuade them, as well as to explain their communicative behaviour, by considering them as independent variables in relationships of influence. These characteristics are discussed below.

3–1–1. Social Differentiation:

This refers to social differences among individuals in terms of varying needs across different audience groups and within the same group. This difference or differentiation manifests itself in the following ways:

➢ Differences in interests and concerns: individuals do not use mass media for the same purposes or reasons.

➢ Differences in levels of perception: Sensory and cognitive perceptions depend on upbringing, education, and general culture. The degree to which media messages are perceived determines the stance the audience adopts toward them and the manner in which they are understood and interpreted.

➢ Differences in the extent of influence: individuals are not influenced by media messages in the same way or to the same degree; consequently, they do not respond in the same manner. This difference results from several factors related to the audience itself (given its heterogeneity), the media message and its construction, the social and cultural environment in which it is produced, the type of media outlet, and the general context of the reception process.

Social differentiation is not a direct result of exposure to mass media, as these differences exist among individuals and groups prior to exposure. However, the use of mass media reinforces their manifestation and facilitates their study.[20]

3–1–2. Social interaction:

Research and studies on mass media audiences have focused on the social nature of recipient audiences. Their findings have confirmed, for example, that television is often watched in family groups, whose members frequently interact with one another during programme viewing. They may discuss whether the programmes align with society's values or conflict with them, thereby fostering an interactive atmosphere. Several studies have demonstrated the validity of the proposition that mass media improve social relations while at the same time, providing individuals with greater freedom to choose emotional isolation as a means of compensation or of finding a functional alternative to what they lack in their social lives. This social interaction may be observed in four fundamental, interrelated elements, as follows:

a. The sociality of audience behaviour: The behaviour of audience members varies according to the nature of the message or the medium. For example, family members

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[20] Maryam Madawi, *Studies of Mass Media Audiences* (Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Oum El Bouaghi), accessed January 16, 2025, http://tele-ens.univ-oeb.dz/moodle/course/view.php?id=6800

watch television, which prompts them to interact with one another and provides a topic for conversation and the exchange of opinions and feelings. Viewing has become a social behaviour, much like going to the cinema.

b. Social uses: The use of mass media and mass communication is, above all, a social act. This is evident in the domestic, shared use of television, radio, and computers by family members. Studies have developed a framework that makes the social character of media use apparent, which has been termed the "patterning of social uses."

c. Social isolation: Excessive use of mass media creates social isolation, which is a manifestation of escapism and withdrawal from a pressurised reality out of fear of, or inability to confront, the social pressures imposed by that reality. This phenomenon is particularly evident among socially marginalised groups such as the ill, elderly individuals, the unemployed, the poor, and retirees, in addition to illusory virtual relationships that render the user in complete isolation from the external environment.

d. The relationship between the audience and the sender: A relationship is woven between the two parties in the communication process through the sender's attempt to reach the recipient via the message transmitted through the media outlet or when the recipient attempts to decode the sender's message. For example, via radio, listeners form an illusory intimate relationship with the program presenter and enter a state of sensory communication, believing that broadcasters are addressing them personally; indeed, many of them are friends with them on social media. This is the same relationship that viewers forge with their favourite stars. This is known as "parasocial interaction," which becomes "virtual social interaction". "[21]

3–1–3. Normative Regulatory Systems:

This concerns the audience's expectations of mass media and what they anticipate the media will provide. In general, the audience expects mass media outlets to provide education, entertainment, information, and culture in a manner that accords with the rules of refined taste. It expects that the values associated with the media content presented will be derived primarily from the judgments embedded in society's prevailing culture and affirmed by educational, familial, and religious institutions. The audience prefers to find these values within media content.

For the liberal press, obliging mass media to conform to the audience's value expectations is regarded as a form of social control over its activity, an infringement of its freedom, and an encroachment upon the principles of the "free marketplace of ideas." This has led to the adoption of consensual standards aligned with social responsibility theory, resulting in professional codes of ethics that regulate professional conduct in line with shared values.[22]

3–2. The Sociology of the Use of Modern Communication Media:

Many people, politicians, advertisers, decision-makers, managers, officials, and advocates speak of the public as although it were a single, homogeneous, and harmonious mass. In reality, however, there are different, numerous, and diverse publics. The term 'public' in media studies has undergone many historical stages, especially at junctures marked by the invention of new means of communication, most recently Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and many others. This has generated new types of publics that interact through new patterns and forms of communication.

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[21] Ali Qasaysiya, *The Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Reception Studies: A Critical-Analytical Study of Audience Research in Algeria* (PhD diss., University of Algiers, 2007), 82, 89.
[22] Madawi, *Studies of Mass Media Audiences*, accessed January 16, 2025, http://tele-ens.univ-oeb.dz/moodle/course/view.php?id=6800.

In the communication process, the public is the element that receives, interacts with, and is influenced by the message. It is the party to which the message is directed and that deciphers its codes. Understanding the public's characteristics and circumstances is important for understanding a message's meaning and its influence on that public's mentality. The success of the communication process should not be measured by what the sender provides but rather by what the receiver does behaviorally. Nor can it be assumed that the public will automatically believe and comply with the media message: it may reject it, or respond to it if it accords with its inclinations, orientations, and desires, and some segments of the public may adopt an attitude of indifference towards the message and not interact with it.[23]

Since the early 1970s, interest in seeking an alternative conception of the public has increased because the development of new information and communication technologies has made it free to choose the media it uses, and it possesses interpretive skills enabling it to interpret the texts it encounters and to produce its own meanings from them. Here, we move from the question of what the public does with mass media to how the public uses mass media or, more precisely, how the user employs new communication media.[24]

Supporters of this model usually acknowledge that the public's actions are, in some manner, determined by its social and cultural environment. In reality, the individual viewer holds the upper hand by exercising authority in the use of new communication media on the basis of participation and the production of communicative and media content. This has led researchers in this field to believe that quantitative methods are insufficient to measure this phenomenon, and they have proposed the use of qualitative methods to study it. Notably, Morley's audience ethnography (1980), previously mentioned within the reception model, is relevant here. Nevertheless, this model has been criticised for viewing the public as overly rational and overly managerial. Qualitative methods for studying this public have also often been regarded as lacking generalizability, since each person's construction of the text and its meaning is considered a unique and "unmeasurable" experience.[25]

With the development of media, audience researchers confront a moving target, as "new" media have become familiar and newer media have emerged. Television is changing, diversifying, and becoming increasingly fragmented, globalised, narrowcast, fan-based, and multichannel. The home contains multiple sets of channels that converge with other information and communication technologies, as well as with telephony, radio, computing, and even print, with the internet mediating this convergence. As a result, the activity of viewing, to which a great deal of attention has been devoted, has come to converge with reading, shopping, gaming, going to the library, writing, and so forth. It occurs at any time and in any place. This has produced a new media audience, the "user audience", which engages in all activities of listening, viewing, reading, and using new information and communication technologies. Patterns of interaction and more active, diverse media practices thus open up, including playing, browsing, searching, chatting, and downloading. Accordingly, rather than each new medium replacing what preceded it in practice, we find an accumulation of patterns from listening to reading, from viewing to listening, from

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[23] Muhammad Qayrat, "The Sociology of Mass Media Audiences," accessed February 5, 2025, https://urls.fr/CEhYIq.

[24] Fadi Hirzalla and Liesbet van Zoonen, "Media Effects: Methods of Critical Audience Studies," in *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 1–17.

[25] James G. Webster, "The Audience," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* (Spring 1998): 190–207.

browsing to viewing, and so on. We can thus speak of "users": media users and internet users.[26]

In Audiences: A sociological theory of performance and imagination, Abercrombie maintains that audience members, directly or indirectly, are also performers. This means that the roles of the content producer and content recipient are intertwined; from this perspective, almost everyone is both a producer and an audience at the same time.[27].

1. The Impact of Modern Communication Media on the Public and Mass Media:
This section addresses the impact of modern communication media on the public and then on mass media.

4–1. The Impact of Modern Communication Media on the Public:
The emergence of the web and social media has changed the way people access news and information. This has compelled media institutions to adapt to new variables and technologies in search of a new foothold in the virtual space. Moreover, the popularity of mobile devices has enabled users to enjoy media content wherever they are, which, on the one hand, has increased the popularity of social media platforms and, on the other hand, has radically transformed the media landscape and how its content is consumed.[28]

With the ongoing developments in the journalism sector driven by these modern technologies, discussion has shifted from electronic journalism managed and supervised by a team of journalists and professionals in much the same way as newspapers and traditional media institutions do to what is termed "citizen journalism," which is most often supervised and produced by citizens or ordinary users who are not professionals such as journalists in traditional media. That is, they are amateurs from all over the world, at different levels and with different backgrounds. In many instances, individuals record certain events via different technologies (a digital camera, a mobile phone, and so forth) and send them to television channels for publication, as has occurred in several regions of the world. This also includes recordings and images captured by individuals during demonstrations and protests in early 2011 across Arab countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Bahrain. This likewise occurs with specific private opposition channels that have been prevented from opening offices in some countries and whose correspondents and journalists have been constrained, making "citizen journalists" among the most effective means of obtaining information and journalistic news.

Among the repercussions and transformations resulting from this new journalistic form are the following:

a. **Role Reversal between Sender and Receiver:** This refers to the transformation affecting the two most important elements of the communication process: the sender, or what is termed the communicator, and the receiver. The public, which had been receiving media messages and content, has come to participate fundamentally and effectively in producing and disseminating them. It no longer relies solely on mass media to consume its content and messages. What distinguishes this public is that it uses mass media and is exposed to them at the same time as it contributes to their content; it also enjoys a margin of freedom far greater than that of traditional journalists.

b. **Beginning of the Decline of Gatekeeping ("the Gatekeeper"):** The widespread diffusion of modern communication means and technologies among broad segments of

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[26] Sonia Livingstone, "Media Audiences, Interpreters, and Users," in Gillespie (2015), 9–50.

[27] Nick Abercrombie, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination* (Kindle ed., 1998).

[28] Hussam al-Din Marzouqi and Awatif Manal Azayziya, "New Trends in Digital Media: Artificial Intelligence as a Driver of Media Innovation," *Raqmana: Journal of Media and Communication Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 3.

society, and their ease of use by individuals, has enabled citizens and audience members to produce media materials and content that, in many instances, competed with and rivalled the content of traditional media outlets. Numerous modern spaces and technologies have thus emerged that make it possible to publish and disseminate such content without any oversight or pressure, including interactive websites; video sites such as "YouTube"; participatory publishing such as collective electronic encyclopaedia; electronic blogs; multimedia file-publishing sites ("podcasting"); and social networking sites such as "Facebook."[29]

C. **Changing Nature of Social Relationships:** In the context of practising citizen journalism, this entails the displacement of traditional concepts concerning who consumes media content and who produces it. It has also strengthened individuals' capacity to assume new roles and enabled those who were not part of the media production process to participate through their opinions and creative expression.[30]

4–2. The Impact of Modern Communication Media on Mass Media:

In recent years, several changes and developments have occurred across multiple fields as a result of the revolution in communication and information technologies. Among the domains that have undergone substantial change and been markedly affected by this information revolution is the field of media and communication, which has experienced significant transformation across its various aspects, whether in professional practice, the approaches adopted and the modern tools employed, or the newly introduced journalistic types and forms. Electronic journalism emerged from developments in internet publishing technologies. It consists of periodicals published online, either as counterparts to the printed edition of a newspaper or magazine, containing duplicate content of the printed version, or as an electronic edition entirely independent of its printed counterpart.[31]

The media industry has long been closely linked to technological development, whether through the invention of the printing press or through radio waves and television broadcasting. At present, artificial intelligence and automation are the principal drivers of the evolution of how news and other media content are produced. Notably, the increasing use of artificial intelligence and automation in media practices and in the underlying technical infrastructure entails changes in journalistic work and challenges the roles and functions of traditional mass media.

New technologies are expected to increase the efficiency of media work by automating many routine tasks. Patterns of media content consumption also become highly measurable. In turn, digital platforms and social media sites organise and select content and feed news with the assistance of artificial intelligence-based solutions. The use of artificial intelligence affects the media sector broadly, from traditional mass media to digital platforms, including social media, and these changes extend to the media's institutional structure.[32]

On the other hand, media institutions have provided websites and applications for the public to contribute to, adopt these new journalistic patterns and coexist with them in a manner that preserves, even to a limited extent, some of the authority they have lost in

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[29] Baaziz, *Modern Communication Technology and Its Social and Cultural Impacts*, 57, 60.

[30] Baaziz, *Modern Communication Technology and Its Social and Cultural Impacts*, 183.

[31] Baaziz, *Modern Communication Technology and Its Social and Cultural Impacts*, 57.

[32] Khaled Boumkhila, "Adapting the Media Industry to Artificial Intelligence Technology in Mass Media: Potentials and the Horizon of Use," *Raqmana: Journal of Media and Communication Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 11.

favour of their active public, whose nature has shifted from passive reception to participatory engagement. We find, for example, specific radio programmes that open space for audience contributions to their content, as is the case with the Radio France Internationale (RFI), which broadcasts L'atelier des médias, a participatory programme available online, in which ordinary members of the public contribute content.[33]

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, this study reveals that modern communication media are increasingly used across all societal fields. Among the areas that have undergone substantial change and been markedly affected by this information and digital revolution is the field of media and communication, especially with the emergence of what is now termed digital media and the increased use of modern communication media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These developments have changed the nature of the relationship between the public and the mass media, as the public has begun exercising control over the media landscape through "citizen journalism." All of this has had repercussions for the sociology of mass media audiences, most notably the following:

➢ The nature of social relationships has changed as traditional concepts about who consumes media content and who produces it have been displaced. It has also strengthened the public's capacity to assume new roles and enabled those who were not part of the media production process to interact and participate through their opinions and creative expression.

➢ The roles of sender and receiver in the communication process have been exchanged. The public, which had been receiving media messages and content, has come to participate fundamentally and effectively in producing, disseminating, and exchanging them. It no longer relies solely on mass media to consume its content and messages. What distinguishes this public is that it now uses mass media and is exposed to them at the same time as it contributes to their content.

➢ Gatekeeping has declined: the use of modern communication media has made it possible to publish and disseminate communicative messages without oversight or pressure, and the public, the "citizen journalist", now possesses a margin of freedom greater than that of traditional journalists.

On the other hand, modern communication media have also had an impact on mass media, most notably the following:

➢ They assist journalists in understanding content that resonates with their audiences, providing valuable insights for media and news institutions into audience behaviour, preferences, orientations, and interests. This leads to more informed editorial decisions and improved content strategies and enables the tailoring and delivery of customised content to audiences.

➢ They have influenced mass media and the traditional model of journalism in terms of news gathering, production, and distribution through several innovative methods.

➢ Major global media institutions have begun to involve the public in the media and communication process by providing websites and applications through which audiences can contribute, thereby creating a form of interactivity in the exchange of information.

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[33] Baaziz, *Modern Communication Technology and Its Social and Cultural Impacts*, 59, 183–84.

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