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ORIGINAL

Media space and the formation of civil society: the role of information technologies

Espacio mediático y formación de la sociedad civil: el papel de las tecnologías de la información

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: the media space and information technologies are rapidly evolving, influencing the formation of civil society and democratic processes.

Objectives: this research aims to analyze modern trends in the interaction between the media space, information technologies, and civil society, focusing on the growth of civic activity and participation in social life.

Method: the study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys to assess public trust in media and qualitative analyses of digital media strategies.

Results: the findings highlight varying levels of trust among Europeans in media and technological advancements as tools for fostering a democratic society. Key digital media strategies that increase civic engagement were identified.

Conclusions: research concludes that media space and information technologies hold significant potential for strengthening civil society and supporting freedom of speech. A promising direction is the integration of critical thinking and media literacy, especially in the context of increasing geopolitical tensions. The study emphasizes the need for further innovation in mass media, developing adaptive strategies that align with the dynamics of the digital age and contribute to civil society's development.

Keywords: Media Environment; Digital Platforms; Social Media Networks; Democratic Systems; Cutting-Edge Technologies; Freedom of Expression.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el espacio mediático y las tecnologías de la información están evolucionando rápidamente, influyendo en la formación de la sociedad civil y los procesos democráticos.

Objetivos: esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar las tendencias modernas en la interacción entre el espacio mediático, las tecnologías de la información y la sociedad civil, centrándose en el crecimiento de la actividad cívica y la participación en la vida social.

Método: el estudio emplea un enfoque de métodos mixtos, combinando encuestas cuantitativas para evaluar la confianza pública en los medios y análisis cualitativos de las estrategias de los medios digitales.

Resultados: los hallazgos destacan los diferentes niveles de confianza entre los europeos en los medios y

los avances tecnológicos como herramientas para fomentar una sociedad democrática. Se identificaron las principales estrategias de los medios digitales que aumentan la participación cívica.

Conclusiones: la investigación concluye que el espacio mediático y las tecnologías de la información tienen un potencial significativo para fortalecer la sociedad civil y apoyar la libertad de expresión. Una dirección prometedora es la integración del pensamiento crítico y la alfabetización mediática, especialmente en el contexto de crecientes tensiones geopolíticas. El estudio enfatiza la necesidad de una mayor innovación en los medios masivos, desarrollando estrategias adaptativas que se alineen con la dinámica de la era digital y contribuyan al desarrollo de la sociedad civil.

Palabras clave: Entorno Mediático; Plataformas Digitales; Redes Sociales; Sistemas Democráticos; Tecnologías De Vanguardia; Libertad de Expresión.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the role of media space and information technologies in the formation of civil society confirms the significant interest of researchers in this topic. The work⁽¹⁾ examines in detail the transformation of media practices from traditional formats to the digital space, highlighting the increasing influence of social networks and digital platforms on public consciousness. Analysis⁽²⁾ focuses on the role of digital technologies in promoting civic engagement and participation in democratic processes. An article by⁽³⁾ highlights the potential of digital platforms to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility of information. The study⁽⁴⁾ outlines the intensification of geopolitical struggle and the use of media as tools of information warfare, which has a significant impact on international relations and the formation of public opinion at the global level. The study⁽⁵⁾ draws attention to innovative technologies in the media sphere, which change the ways of interaction with the audience and the formation of content. The author⁽⁶⁾ analyzes the impact of innovative marketing technologies on the development of the media space, taking into account the automation of news production and personalization of media content. An article⁽⁷⁾ explores the problem of disinformation and the challenges associated with the digital divide, pointing to the need to develop comprehensive strategies to protect democracy in the digital age. The work⁽⁸⁾ analyzes digital platforms and social networks that promote public dialogue and citizen participation in socially significant processes, increasing their potential for public activism. Research⁽⁹⁾ reveals the potential impact of information technologies on the democratization of the information space, allowing independent media to bypass traditional barriers in the dissemination of information. An important analysis⁽¹⁰⁾ focuses on the role of technology in intensifying geopolitical struggles and their use as tools to shape public opinion at the international level. The work⁽¹¹⁾ studies the implementation of automation and marketing technologies in journalism, which offers innovative approaches to the production of news content. According to⁽¹²⁾, information technologies increase the accuracy and objectivity of media production because they have a more powerful computational potential. Research⁽¹³⁾ highlights content strategies for ensuring transparency, credibility, and openness through automated verification of information authenticity. The work⁽¹⁴⁾ examines the ethical challenges associated with the collection and analysis of big data, highlighting the potential for privacy violations and the use of data to manipulate public opinion. Thus, scientists emphasize the influence of information technologies on the media space and, as a consequence, the formation of civil society. The inclusion of innovative technologies in media processes opens up opportunities for the development of democracy and presents society with new challenges related to disinformation. Further research should be aimed at developing strategies and mechanisms to help minimize the risks and maximize the positive impact of technology in supporting democratic values.

Research goals

The purpose of the study is to analyze trust in the media to determine the role of digital platforms in promoting democratic processes and civic participation. The task is to analyze modern trends in the development of digital media, the influence of social networks on public opinion, to consider the means of transformation of communication through innovative technologies. Research issues include challenges related to misinformation, the digital divide, and potential risks to privacy and freedom of speech. The practical value of the study lies in the development of recommendations for improving media literacy among the population, stimulating the development of an open and accessible media space. The results reveal the principles of civil liberties and Europeans' trust in media platforms and the importance of innovation in the information environment. The study aims to identify the balanced use of digital media to serve as a means of increasing civic awareness and engagement while minimizing risks and negative impacts on society.

METHOD

Context and Classification of the Study

This research is classified as an analytical study aimed at exploring the interaction between the media space, information technologies, and civil society. The focus is on analyzing trust in media, the role of digital platforms in democratic processes, and promoting civic participation.

Universe and Sample

The universe of the study comprises European adults who engage with digital media platforms. The sample will be selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Study Variables

The primary variables include trust in media, usage frequency of digital platforms, levels of civic participation, and perception of the impact of information technologies on democratic processes.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data will be collected using online surveys and analysis of publicly available datasets. Publicly available data will be used to supplement the survey findings, providing a broader context on media usage trends, demographic factors, and civic participation rates across different regions. This approach will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the impact of media and information technologies on civil society.

Statistical Techniques and Procedures

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, will be employed to explore relationships between the variables. Factor analysis may be used to identify underlying patterns in media trust and civic engagement.

Ethical Parameters

The study will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data will be anonymized to protect participants' privacy and used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS

In today's world, the media play a leading role in shaping public opinion, becoming a source of information and a tool of influence. The use of political technologies and information presentation strategies allows the media to form a certain point of view or even change the course of public discussions. The existing process is intensified by selective coverage of events, emotional coloring of news and emphasis on conflicts, which can increase social polarization. Scientific research in the field of mass communications and political psychology confirms that the media has a significant impact on the formation of political preferences, identity and behavior of citizens. Agenda-setting, framing, and priming are key concepts that describe the methods by which media influence what people think, how they interpret information, and what they pay attention to. The outlined strategies in the formation of public opinion are extremely important, as they reflect reality and actively participate in its construction and interpretation.

The importance of independent media and freedom of speech in today's society cannot be overstated, as they form the basis of democracy and an open society. Independent media provide the diversity of viewpoints, critical analysis and checks on power that are essential to maintaining healthy public discourse and preventing abuse. In the conditions of globalization and technological progress, the transformation of the media space through the transition to online media, which changes the traditional models of news consumption and interaction with information.⁽¹⁵⁾ The current transition opens opportunities for dissemination and access to information, which poses challenges to society related to information noise, misinformation and loss of trust in traditional media. Independent online media are becoming alternative sources of information that contribute to information transparency and public control, while challenging traditional media to raise standards of journalistic ethics and objectivity.

The formation of media culture in Europe has gone from traditional print and television platforms to mass digitization and the use of digital technologies. The existing process transformed the ways of production and consumption of media content, changed citizens' trust in the media. European countries are showing increasing attention to the problems of digital security, protection of personal data and the fight against fake news. Mass digitalization contributed to the dissemination of information, increased the challenges associated with the verification of facts and ensuring the quality of content. European institutions and organizations are actively working to create a legal framework that would regulate the digital media space, ensuring a balance between

freedom of speech and the need to protect society from harmful content.⁽¹⁶⁾ The role of education in the field of media literacy is growing, which is becoming a key element in forming a critical attitude to information and strengthening a media culture that is adapted to the challenges of the digital age. In Europe, the level of trust in the media is rapidly transforming in favor of online platforms, as shown in figure 1.

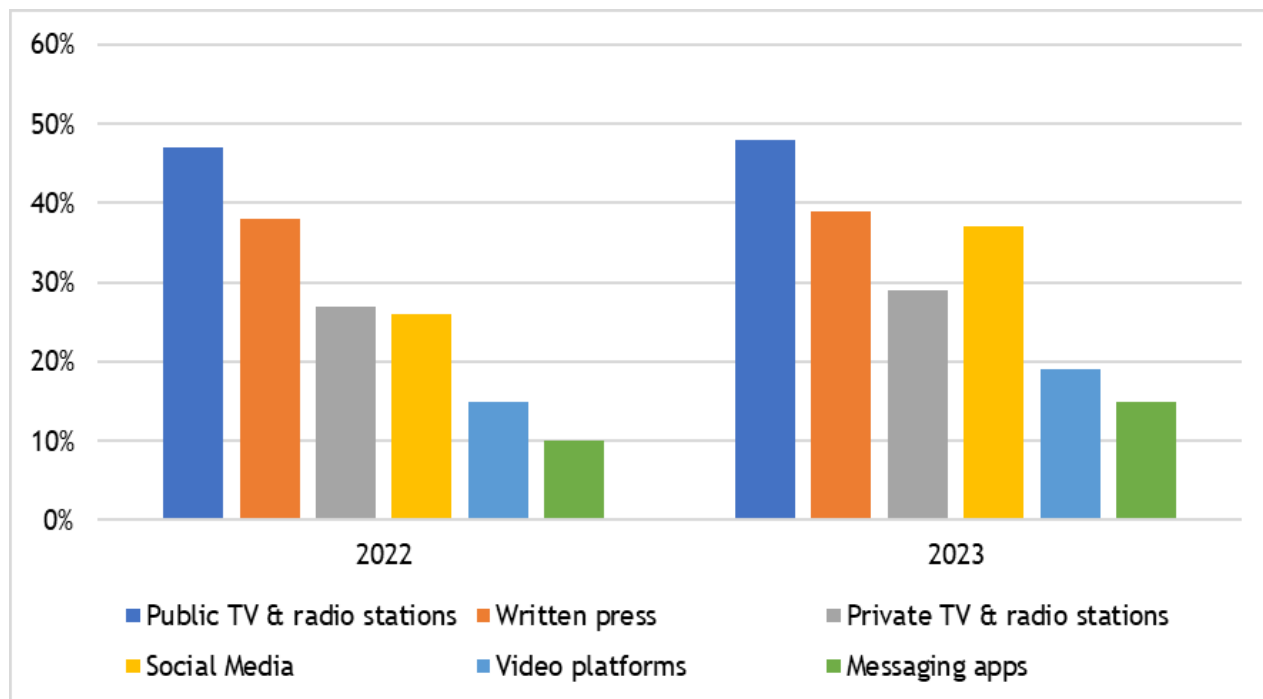


Figure 1. Most trusted media sources in Europe 2022-2023

Source: Compiled based on Eurobarometer data.⁽¹⁷⁾

With the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, the world witnessed an intensification of the media struggle for public opinion, where the information war gained particular intensity. The media space is full of propaganda aimed at forming certain rhetoric and beliefs among the population, both in Ukraine and abroad. Various media using social networks, television, radio and internet portals have been involved in creating and spreading narratives supporting a certain side of the conflict. The struggle includes a wide range of tools - from falsification of facts and distortion of information to emotionally charged appeals and manipulation of public opinion. The events in Ukraine have become a catalyst for a global debate about the role of the media in modern military conflicts, raising concerns about the impact of propaganda on international order and stability. The situation revealed the need to expand critical thinking and media literacy among the population in order to resist attempts to manipulate public consciousness.

The development of digital technologies and the Internet creates its own contribution to the formation of independent media, which become key players in the process of forming public opinion.⁽¹⁸⁾ Digital platforms, social networks, blogs, online publications, provide unique opportunities to express freedom of speech and support pluralism of ideas and opinions. Digitization of the media contributes to the expansion of the audience, increasing the level of its involvement and promoting democratic dialogue. However, such events call for new approaches to the advertising market, adapted to the changing conditions of the digital economy, where content becomes the main driver of attracting the attention of users and advertisers. The increase in ad spend across digital platforms in the media space is depicted in figure 2.

Given the challenges facing the media worldwide, there is an urgent need to improve the legal environment that regulates their activities. This concerns the fight against disinformation and the protection of copyright, ensuring freedom of speech and independence of journalism. Media regulation must find a balance between protecting society from harmful content and ensuring the openness of the information space for diverse points of view. In the conditions of globalization and technological transformation of the media space, national governments and international organizations are faced with the need to adapt existing legal frameworks to new realities. These include developing mechanisms to effectively monitor and respond to propaganda, fake news, to encourage the development of independent media through financial support and training programs. Improving the legal environment is crucial for ensuring a healthy media space, which contributes to the maintenance of democratic values and the strengthening of civil society.

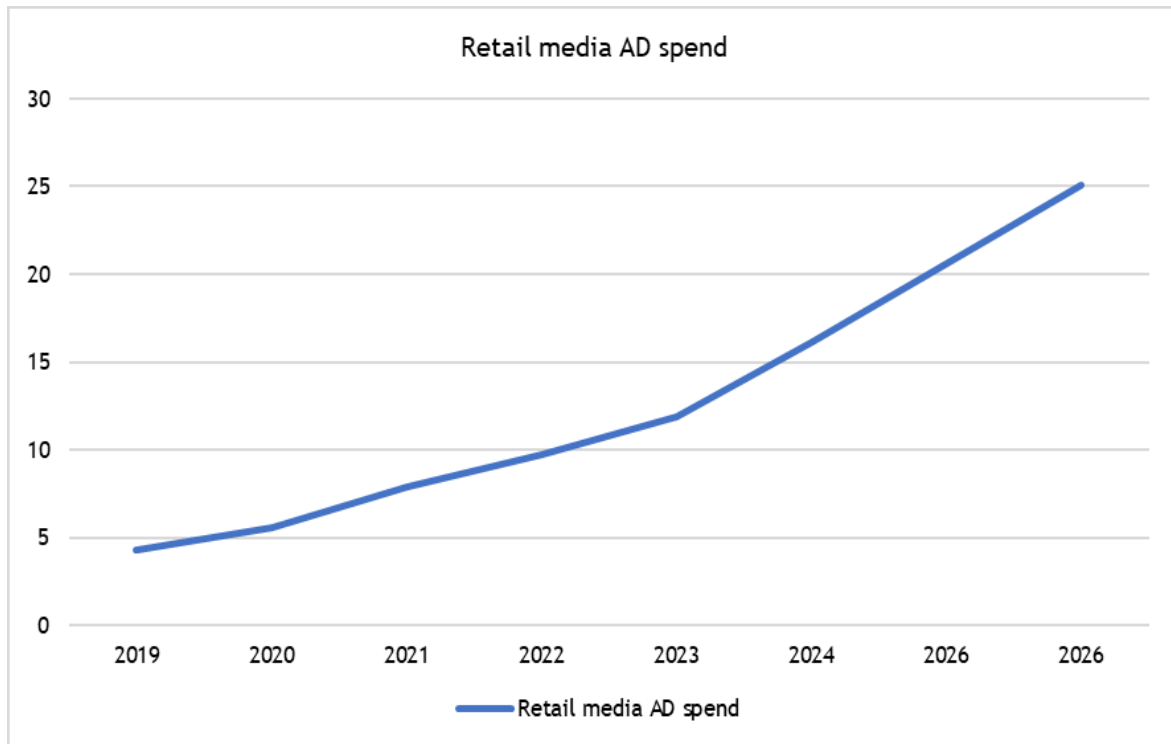


Figure 2. Digital retail media advertising spending in Europe from 2019 to 2026 (in billion euros)
 Source: Compiled based on Statista data⁽¹⁹⁾

The creation of new media initiatives in Europe and other countries of the world, aimed at improving the activities of the media space, is a response to the numerous challenges faced by modern media. The problem lies in the spread of misinformation and propaganda, a decrease in the trust of the audience and economic difficulties. The programs contribute to the restoration of trust in the media, stimulate innovation in the media industry, open new opportunities for financing quality journalism and form the basis for the sustainable development of the media space in the future. For civil society, among the most authoritative media initiatives is the activation of the states of European countries, which is disclosed in more detail in table 1.

Country	Media initiatives	Impact on civil society
Great Britain	BBC Media Action - projects to support local media to raise public awareness	Strengthening citizen participation and promoting governance transparency through citizen awareness
Germany	“Digital Pact for Schools” - investments in educational technologies	Formation of a knowledgeable young generation capable of critically evaluating information and actively participating in civil society
France	Loi sur la confiance dans l’économie numérique - regulation of online media	Ensuring the protection of the rights of information consumers and combating disinformation, which contributes to the development of critical thinking in society
Sweden	Swedish Media Council - educational programs on media literacy	Increasing the level of media literacy among the population, especially young people, for more effective participation in civil society and protection against manipulation
Poland	“Watchdog Poland” is an initiative to increase government transparency through the media	Engaging citizens in government oversight, promoting democracy and protecting human rights through access to information
Italy	“Spid” (Public Digital Identification System) - introduction of digital identifiers for access to public services	Simplifying the interaction of citizens with government institutions and strengthening digital participation in civil society

The strengthening of the role of digital technologies and the aggravation in the corporate sector are of primary importance in shaping the geopolitical struggle in the information space. Investments in digital technologies are becoming a leading source of economic growth and influence on the international arena. The development of automation and marketing technologies open opportunities for the analysis and use of

information, the creation of personalized content and targeted advertising. The corporate sector is actively using technology to strengthen its competitiveness and expand its influence, leading to increased investment in information technology and media. Commerce creates the conditions for increased geopolitical competition, where control over information and the ability to spread it quickly become a strategic resource. The growing influence of digital platforms and corporations requires governments and international organizations to develop new approaches to regulating the digital space, ensuring digital security and protecting human rights on the Internet.

The creation of a high-quality media space in the conditions of rapid development of digital technologies and information oversaturation requires attention to the technological and legal infrastructure. Training and advanced training of journalists, editors, content managers and other specialists of the media industry is a success factor in conditions of high competition and rapid changes. The training of qualified specialists who are able to work effectively in the conditions of the new media reality is the foundation for creating a responsible, independent and high-quality media space for strengthening democratic processes and protecting public interests in the modern world.

DISCUSSION

The discussion among scientists emphasizes the importance of media space and information technologies in the formation of civil society. An analysis⁽²⁰⁾ regarding the role of social networks in mobilizing civic activity confirms the results obtained, which emphasize the democratization of the information space thanks to digital technologies. According to⁽²¹⁾, the findings confirm that trust in information is increasing among online platforms, displacing traditional media. Research⁽²²⁾ characterizes the use of information technologies in geopolitical struggle, media space is a means of countering disinformation. Comparison with the analysis⁽²³⁾ about the introduction of automation in the media allows us to conclude that technology can enhance both positive and negative aspects of media influence on society. The results⁽¹⁾ reinforce the idea that innovative technologies need an ethical framework of use to counter manipulation. Unlike⁽²⁴⁾, the study highlights the multifaceted interaction between digital media and the formation of civil society, pointing out the challenges associated with the risks of misinformation. An article⁽²⁵⁾ emphasizes the importance of social media for the globalization of local markets and the growth of the potential for public activism through their influence. Based on the data⁽¹⁾, it was found that technological innovations chaotically provide changes in strategies of interaction with the audience, which requires critical thinking among users and legal regulation by state institutions. Discussions among scientists about the importance of a balance between the use of innovative technologies to support democratic processes and the need to develop mechanisms to protect society from potential risks accompany the digital era. The corresponding conclusions indicate the complex nature of the interaction between the media space, information technologies and civil society, demonstrating that the successful formation of the information space requires joint efforts from all stakeholders of the media industry.^(25,26)

CONCLUSION

Thus, the influence of the media space with information technologies on the formation of civil society is significant, since modern media are independent and provide an opportunity for freedom of speech. The development of information technologies has a significant potential to support democratic processes, helping to increase transparency, access to information and promoting public dialogue. Digital media, social networks and other online platforms provide citizens with the means to exchange ideas and express public opinion, which is critical to strengthening civil society. However, the results of the analysis also indicate that the media space is an arena for information wars, propaganda and manipulation, which requires society and state institutions to take a critical approach to the analysis and regulation of information circulation. Geopolitical challenges point to a constant renewal of approaches to the education of a responsible information consumer.

The problems related to the media space and the formation of civil society are multifaceted and require careful analysis. Digitization and wide access to information resources open unprecedented opportunities for education, self-expression and participation in public life⁽³⁷⁾. The dangers of misinformation, the digital divide, the invasion of privacy and the erosion of trust in traditional and digital media are growing. In the conditions of globalization and strengthening of international conflicts, the media space becomes a tool of geopolitical struggle, where information is used as a weapon. The modern information space requires efforts from the international community to regulate the information space, protect human rights on the Internet, and develop mechanisms to combat digital threats. It is necessary to take into account the influence of automation and algorithms on the formation of information bubbles, which can increase social polarization and complicate dialogue between different groups of society.

Based on the analysis, a number of recommendations and necessary measures aimed at improving the media space and forming civil society have been developed. First of all, it is necessary to increase the level of media literacy of the population, especially among young people, to ensure critical perception of information and understanding of media processes. It is important to stimulate the development of independent media and

support investigative journalism that promotes transparency and accountability of authorities. It is necessary to ensure the protection of personal data and privacy on the Internet by developing and implementing effective regulatory and legal acts. International cooperation in the field of regulation of digital space and combating cyber threats is expedient, which requires consolidation of efforts of various countries and international organizations. Implementation of the relevant recommendations will allow creating a safe, open and democratic media space, which will contribute to the strengthening of civil society and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

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