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Spring 5-2016

## Media Technology: An Evolving Political Machine

Jesper Van Den Bergh

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### Recommended Citation

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Social Media: An Evolving Political Machine

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at  
Syracuse University

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May 2016

Honors Capstone Project in Public Policy

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## **Abstract**

The goal of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of social media and the role that it plays when it comes to influencing legislation. The methodology was two-fold, a historical comparison with the role of social media being compared to the roles of media/information technology in the past, and a quantitative analysis of fiscal spending and social media presence. Possible problems could include a lack of quantitative data when it comes to social media, and a failure to establish enough of a connection between social media and technologies of the past. However, through these avenues the argument was advanced that social media is not unique in the way it is utilized by political groups. Also, I discovered/discussed that social media utilization comes in two shapes: social media as the sole platform (resulting in more social/cultural influence) and social media being utilized as an arm of a more traditional power (resulting in more political change.) In conclusion, political utilization of media technology is nothing new, and social media can be extremely effective in changing certain aspects of society, depending on how it is used. Given these assumptions it is clear that social media is an evolution of media, not a revolution in media.

## **Executive Summary**

The following paper starts off with a preface explaining the influence that Ben Bagdikian, a famous media critic, had on the rest of the paper. In the preface I also discuss his three main ideas that influence the rest of the paper. His ideas are that information technology closes the “information gap” (time between when an event occurs and when the general public knows about it), that people utilize information technology to fuel their own preconceived notions of reality, and new media technology will always be co-opted by traditional political/economic powers. These points are either refuted or reinforced in each one of my chapters.

The first chapter reinforces the point about technology closing the information gap, and also tries to draw parallels between social media technology of today, and information technology of the past. Just like social media, the technologies of the printing press, telegraph, newspapers, railroad, radio, and television dramatically shrunk the information gap. What used to take months to travel from Europe to America now takes seconds. And, just like the inventors of social media platforms, media was used primarily to make money, not to fuel political revolutions. Gutenberg used the printing press to pay off debts, the papers of the mid-1800s hyper politicized events because they wanted to sell more papers, and television and radio news sensationalizes events in order to increase viewership and listeners. All of these mirror the role of social media today.

In the second chapter, I challenge Bagdikian’s point about self serving inform and give examples on the how the young social media companies are generating millions in revenue and changing the way that politicians communicate. I discuss how social media giants are, at their oldest, about 13 years old, and yet they are still generating billions of dollars in revenue. There is also mentioning of the evolution of social media, from Friendster to Facebook, and how current

forms of social media built upon the success of previous iterations. I discuss the reason for the success of social media is because people are trying to find opinions that disagree with opinions that they already have. This leads to people finding alternative sources of news and different points of view stemming from the same facts, due to it being impossible to find an objective truth of a situation, and eventually people settle into their own subjective truth. Finally, I discuss how social media has changed the way that politicians communicate with constituents, resulting in more personal interactions between voter and who they're voting for.

In the third chapter, I discuss the actual potential effect that social media has on legislation passing in Congress and talk about the effectiveness of social media when it comes to making real change in the world. Bagdikian's idea of social media being co-opted by traditional powers is also explored a little more as well. I put forward the idea that social media is utilized in two distinct yet equally effective manners. One is making social media a significant part of your movement, like Black Lives Matter. This results in more social and cultural change than actual political change. The other way involves using social media as an arm of a greater movement, like the Campaign for Modern Medicine. This can result, depending on the other parts of the movement, in political change.

In the conclusion, I try to tie together individual idea from each chapter: the goal of IT isn't political revolution, social media leads to subjective truth, and social media is flexible. I connect these ideas into my overall thesis using Bagdikian's claims.

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Abstract.....</b>  | <b>i</b>  |
| <b>Executive Summary.....</b>   | <b>ii</b> |
| <b>Preface.....</b>   | <b>v</b>  |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Chapter 1: The History of Revolution and Technology.....</b>                                     | <b>1</b>  |
| Section 1: The Revolutionary Gutenberg.....   | 1         |
| Section 2: Capitalization on the Revolutionary Technology.....                                      | 4         |
| Section 3: Telegraphs, Newspapers, Railroads.....   | 7         |
| Section 4: IT and the Muted Revolutions of 1840's.....  | 11        |
| Section 5: The Revolution of Radio and Television.....  | 14        |
| Section 6: Television, Radio, and American Political Revolutions..                                  | 17        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Chapter 2: Media Technology in the Modern Day.....</b>   | <b>20</b> |
| Section 1: The Rise of Social Media.....  | 20        |
| Section 2: Man’s Unquenchable Thirst for Knowledge.....   | 23        |
| Section 3: Social Media and its Policy Goals.....   | 28        |
| Section 4: Conclusion.....  | 34        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Chapter 3: BlackLivesMatter, the Campaign for Modern Medicine, and<br/>Realistic Change.....</b> | <b>35</b> |
| Section 1: What is social media activism?.....  | 35        |
| Section 2: Measuring the Social Media Campaigns.....  | 39        |
| Section 3: How effective is Social Media at Changing the Situation?.....                            | 43        |
| Section 4: Conclusion.....  | 47        |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Conclusion.....</b>  | <b>48</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>Works Cited.....</b>   | <b>x</b>  |

## Preface

Before getting into the main part of the paper, I need to discuss Ben Bagdikian and his book *The Information Machines; Their Impact on Men and the Media*. Bagdikian was an influential media critic before his death on March 11. He wrote many books that criticized mass media and its roles in maintaining rather than challenging the status quo. In the book I read for this project, he raised many good points about the potential future of information machines (the book was written in 1971). It read like it was written last week. The insight Mr. Bagdikian had into media and the role of machines is incredible. He raises three main points that I use as a sort of framework for analysis in the rest of the paper. The first point I address is his idea of the closing of the information gap. He defines the information gap as the time between an event occurring and the time that an average person hears about the event. Every new piece of media technology has decreased that gap, until social media made it almost instantaneous. He theorized that this decreased information gap would lead to increased pressures on leaders to make decisions instantly. It used to be that leaders would hear about events first (due to usually being located in major cities/sea ports/railway hubs). The leader would have a few days or even months to formulate a response before the average person heard it. The decreasing “knowledge gap” eliminated that advantage, forcing leaders to make quicker decisions.

The second point he talks about is people using information technology to have themselves swimming in information that confirms personal bias. His reasoning is that it is easier to twist something to agree with you than to consider that you might have the wrong idea initially. This leads to an increased in close-mindedness, as it is easier to find people who agree with you, and an increase in polarization of people. The third point that he raises that I use is that new media technology will always be co-opted by existing institutions for their own gain. He

reasons that, when a technology initially comes out, there is a “technological illiteracy” that prevails, as people have no idea how to effectively use this technology. Eventually, a few outsiders experiment with the technology and are able to utilize it to achieve new and unique ideas or movements. As those in power are faced with constant challenges from those who use the new technology, they themselves learn how to use the technology, and integrate it into the existing power structure. Thus, as “technological illiteracy” decreases, traditional powers face less and less challenge from the new technology and those who use them.

I try to reinforce and refute each of these points in my chapters, and in the conclusion I will explain how exactly I did that.



# Chapter 1

## The History of Revolution and Technology

### Section 1

#### The Revolutionary Gutenberg

Gutenberg did not intend to spark any sort of political or religious revolutions and war with his typing wine press. Like many inventors, he saw an opportunity in the tools that had been laid out for him. In fact, it is theorized that Gutenberg only created the printing press in attempt to offset his loses from a failed attempt to sell mirrors made of metal.<sup>1</sup> His revolutionary printing technology shaped the world for years to come, in ways that would have confounded the German goldsmith, who initially used his press to print thousands of pages of liturgy for the Church, and who's most famous print is a 42 lined bible. But he did start a revolution. Printed pages had been introduced to the masses. As Bagdikian claims, the knowledge gap between those in power and those below had just shrunk inconceivably smaller.<sup>2</sup> Now politicians, spiritual leaders, businessmen, authors, teachers, accountants, and hundreds of other learned and intelligent people had a method for spreading their potentially heretical ideas.

It's around 1440, Strasbourg, Holy Roman Empire, modern day France. The weather is dreary outside, as the weather often is in central and western Europe. Gutenberg has just revealed an amazing secret, a secret that he hopes will help alleviate the debts he owes for his failed, holy light capturing, metal mirror project. It's a design that he has been working on for years, as there had been early speculation that Gutenberg would use a new model of printing to settle his debts.<sup>3</sup> His method was to take existing components, such as the cork press already used for movable

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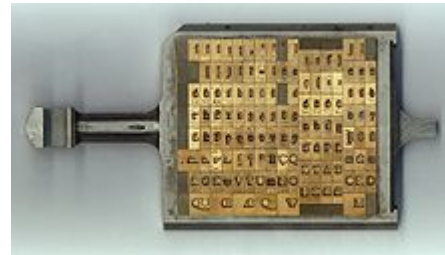
<sup>1</sup> "The Gutenberg Press." *Treasures of the McDonald Collection*. Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Bagdikian, Chapter 1

<sup>3</sup> McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Repr. ed. London: Routledge Et Kegan Paul, 1967. Print

type, and enhance them with two key inventions that he himself devised. His first and most significant addition was his invention of a matrix that allowed for the quick and precise molding of new types of blocks for uniform printing.<sup>4</sup> The matrix is the invention that most scholars and individuals would likely consider the literal printing press. A matrix mold is where the

individual letter molds are set up in to display whatever message the typesetter is attempting to set out. The design of the matrix supposedly improved both the speed and quality that block letters could be



reproduced. The second and perhaps even more important invention that Gutenberg realized was a special alloy composed of a mixture of tin, lead, and antimony.<sup>5</sup> This alloy supposedly produced high quality, durable type sets that improved the quality of the books and was much more resilient to wear and tear than any other alloy designed before. Gutenberg supplemented his inventions with the use of an oil based ink, which proved to be more durable than other inks previously tried, and he printed on both paper and vellum (a high quality parchment). The printing press itself was actually a traditional screw press, where the screws would, basically, screw the material being printed on and clamp it down on top of the molded letters and continue to press until the imprint was made. Then the material would be set out to dry.<sup>6</sup> Gutenberg would also later experiment with colored printing on some of the headers of the Gutenberg bible.

Now the question is: why is this significant? What's the point of theorizing about what Gutenberg did and did not do to advance the cause of movable type? There are two key points that I would like to emphasize from the previous paragraph. The first, and most noticeable, is

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<sup>4</sup> Meggs, Philip B. *A History of Graphic Design*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

that Gutenberg didn't really invent the printing press at all. What Gutenberg did was he enhanced and expanded upon existing methods of block printing, to allow for an almost exponential increase in productivity while at the same time expanding the number of possible works being produced. His matrix and alloy combination are what helped to propel the business of his successors Johan Fust and Peter Schoeffer to being the most prolific printing center in all of Europe. These small adjustments to an already existing formula seem to parallel the rise of social media. From Friendster, to Myspace, and eventually, to Facebook, every incantation of social media was a small build up upon the services of the past. Just as in social movements, where movement builds on the gains of the previous. The second and equally important point that can be discerned from examining the workings of the printing press and of Johannes Gutenberg is this: Gutenberg clearly did not intend to start any kind of political or religious movement. As has been noted, Gutenberg made most of the little amount of money he made off of printing liturgies at the request of local church officials, and he's most famous for printing a copy of the Bible. His machine was also still fairly complicated to use and required several skilled type-setters and print masters to run effectively. These are not the signs of someone who wants to mainstream the idea of social revolution and political upheaval. This is similar to Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook. Reading about Zuckerberg and hearing of his tactics, he is not a revolutionary. He's a businessman; a social media mogul who had an idea to help connect the people of the world, and to potentially make some money when all was said and done. However, like the German goldsmith over 500 years his senior, Mr. Zuckerberg's invention has been co-opted by political revolutionaries the world over. Gutenberg's effect was a lesson that wouldn't manifest itself in Gutenberg's life, but the political effects of his printing press would explode to the forefront less than 50 years after his death in 1468, in Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses*.

## Section 2 Capitalization on the Revolutionary Technology

Much like Johannes Gutenberg, Martin Luther never intended to start a revolution, or, in his case, a reformation. When Martin Luther hung up his *Ninety-Five Theses* on what was likely a cold October 31st, 1517, he simply was airing some of his grievances. The Wittenberg church door acted as a bulletin board for the whole town. Anyone was allowed to post there, and he was posting his handwritten note hoping to get a response from the officials inside.<sup>7</sup> But his response never came, and so Gutenberg decided to spread his writing, utilizing the local printing press to disseminate copies of his complaints. When considering the success that Luther experienced with his strategy, it is important to consider the literacy rates of early 16th century Germany. By today's standards, it was extremely low; varying from five percent in the rural areas to around 30 percent in the cities.<sup>8</sup> How then, did people even read Luther's message? Well, in truth, they didn't. They would hear it spoken to them by those who could read. Doctors, teachers, or lawyers would stand around and read copies of his work in town squares and taverns. People would gather together specifically to hear someone speak Luther's words. It is suggested that members of the audience who could write would copy what was being said in order to spread the message even more.<sup>9</sup> Supposedly the wild popularity of the work and its wide availability in vernacular languages motivated many to learn how to read.<sup>10</sup> This speaks to Bagdikian's point about how there is always a learning curve when a technology is first introduced. He theorizes that rising technological literacy is often associated with rising political movements<sup>11</sup> and that some styles

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<sup>7</sup> Waugh, Barry. "The Importance of the Printing Press for the Protestant Reformation, Part Two." *Reformation21*. Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, Inc., 1 Oct. 2013. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Bagdikian

of government lead to citizens being able to become technologically literate faster. His suggestion was that American democracy was likely to have the most adaptive citizens, but the citizens of those 16th century German principalities definitely adapted.

Literacy rates soared through Europe, starting, unsurprisingly, around 1500.<sup>12</sup> Though the actual action is different, the development of literacy 500 years ago matches the rising social media literacy that we see in today's society. The rising literacy rates, both then and now, are undeniable link with increased message promulgation. Luther continued to publish work after work, and according to some sources, from 1521 to 1545, reformist writers made up 30 percent of the 5,651 works published in the German region in that time, compared to the 15 percent made up by Catholic writers.<sup>13</sup> Of those some 1706 works, Luther himself is credited with writing about 875. Among his most significant contributions were his German New Testament in 1522, and his full translation of the bible in a dialect of German in 1534. Luther did come into some problems. He had issues with several of the print ships in Wittenberg, hiring and firing several printers and bringing in printers from other cities. His unfinished works were often stolen and brought to other cities to be finished and printed there, where Luther would have difficulty halting the forgeries. Finally, a quote sums up just how significant an impact the printing press had, not just on the Reformation but printing industry as a whole: "A man born in 1453, the year of the fall of Constantinople, could look back from his fiftieth year on a lifetime in which about eight million books had been printed, more perhaps than all the scribes of Europe had produced since Constantine founded his city in A.D. 330."

Now that we have a bit of understanding of the effect of the printing press on the Reformation, we must discuss the significance of the Reformation itself in the broader political

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<sup>12</sup>Housten, Robert. "Literacy — EGO." *EGO*. European History Online. Web. 8 Dec. 2015

<sup>13</sup> Waugh

and religious history of Europe and the world. It can be argued, reasonably in my eyes, that the *Ninety-Five Theses* is one of the most influential works of all time. In sparking the Reformation, Luther's work sparked the Thirty Year's War, Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Inquisition, the Church of England, the Puritan movement and the flight to the New World, Calvinism, Zwinglianism, and, after years of bloodshed and struggle, forced Christianity to become more accepting of its offshoots and smaller branches. Millions of people started adopting new forms of Christianity over the span of a few short years. The level of upheaval generated by the Reformation cannot be overstated. However, when thinking about this in the context of the modern day and the potential role of social media, it is important to understand that religion and politics are two completely separate beasts. Religion is, of course, a deeply personal and spiritual thing. Having someone question your faith, or attempt to convince you that you are praying to the wrong god, is an extremely intense experience for more pious members of a religion. The Reformation was so successful and so significant because it used newly developed technologies and existing issues with Papal authority. While there is a new technology today, there is no central figure in public policy that millions of people have a passionate distaste for. There are likely people who feel about as passionate, or more passionate, about their politics as their religion. Sometimes the relationship is a mesh of the two combined. And, even though some people do have extreme distaste for modern major political figures and their policies, to compare them to the levels of papal dissatisfaction in the 1500's is, in my eyes, hilariously naive. The political revolution of today would not be as passion fueled, and hopefully not as bloody, as the Reformation. Every advance in technology brings with it its own brand of revolution. Just as the printing press played a role in the successful Reformation, the rise in newspapers played a role in the decidedly less successful liberal revolutions of the 1800's.



### Section 3 Telegraphs, Newspapers, Railroads

The 1800-1860 saw a meteoric rise of the penny newspaper in America. In 1800, there were 200 newspapers in the United States. In 1860, there were 3,000.<sup>14</sup> Not only did the papers themselves increase in number, but the general circulation saw a huge boon as well. Total circulation between 1828 and 1840 more than doubled from 68 million to 148 million. Most of these newspapers followed the expansion towards the new territories in the West, away from the more developed and populated Eastern Seaboard. Many new urban cities saw the development of local newspapers in the 1830's and 1840's especially. They were specialty newspapers, targeting the rising middle class men and women, freed slaves, immigrants who were arriving in America in droves, and Native Americans. They targeted the new rising political class, as more and more Americans appeared eager to take part in their, perhaps very new, democratic freedoms. These trends were not unique. American newspapers were copying a trend that was becoming more and more common on the continent.<sup>15</sup> How did these newspapers establish themselves? What led to their popularity?

The first question can be answered a little more simply: the proliferation of information technology in the form of railroads and telegraphs. Railway technology developed in Europe at about the same clip as in America; however, the effect of these technologies can more easily be felt in the United States. As America expanded westward, railways and telegraph lines followed like a spider web, interlinking cities in the Midwest and the East. The first railway line was laid

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<sup>14</sup> "American Newspapers, 1800-1860: City Newspapers." *University Library*. University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Web. 9 Dec. 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Martin, Shannon E., and David Copeland. *The Function of Newspapers in Society: A Global Perspective*. Westport: Greenwood Group, 2003. Print.



in Massachusetts in 1826.<sup>16</sup> It was used to haul granite for the construction of the Bunker Hill Monument. In fact, most railway lines were used primarily to transport agricultural and raw resources to population and industrial centers in the East. The first passenger line was opened four years after the first use of commercial railway: 1830.<sup>17</sup> As trains became more and more interconnected, they replaced almost all other forms of transportation. Steamboats and turnpikes were replaced by railroads for two important reasons: railways were much safer, and they could be used year round. By 1850, 9,000 miles of track had been built, and by 1871, 180 million acres had been granted to railway companies through federal and state grant programs. By the 1860's up to 80 percent of farms in the Midwest were within 5 miles of a local railroad, and almost every major city had its own railway station connecting to at least a greater regional network.<sup>18</sup> The first coast to coast railway was completed in 1869. Though these trains carried primarily raw goods, foodstuffs, and persons, they also carried ideas and news. While inland cities had to wait weeks for horse and carriages to arrive, trains could get there in days. Information was being disseminated through the passengers and railway workers, and local newspapers would often crowd around train stations as trains were arriving to hear the latest news from the metropolitan East.<sup>19</sup> These railways, along with the rise of the telegraph played an undeniable role in the rise of the local paper.

In 1844, Morse sent his first telegraphic message from Washington DC to Maryland. In 1866, a telegraph line had been laid across the Atlantic Ocean, allowing instant communication

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<sup>16</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1826). "An Act to Incorporate the Granite Railway Company," Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Chap. CLXXXIII. Approved March 4, 1826.

<sup>17</sup> Dilts, James D. *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828-1853*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1993. Print.

<sup>18</sup> "American Newspapers, 1800-1860: City Newspapers."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

over thousands of miles over a hundred years before the internet.<sup>20</sup> In 1871, the Bureau of the Census reported 75 telegraph companies operating 21,147 miles of wire, with as many as ten competing companies operating in some of the largest cities in the country.<sup>21</sup> As Bagdikian claims, newspapers would often pay to have lines set up directly to their offices.<sup>22</sup> They would then pay freelancers in the major cities in the East that had telegraph connections to major cities around the world, in order to have access to major developments around the globe almost as they were happening. This helped shorten the gap between events happening and the average citizen even more. Newspapers capitalized on this increasingly shrinking gap by adopting even more politicized and polarizing attitudes in what they were printing. They adopted more and more sensationalized strategies to compete with each other for subscribers and information.

As newspapers spread they would expand coverage to local events and stories,<sup>23</sup> adopting sensationalist attitudes and styles in order to provide more content for their readers. Since penny papers were usually not supported by outside political/financial support, they relied heavily on advertisement revenue, which itself relied on circulation rates. To increase these rates, many penny papers switched their models from yearly subscriptions to selling individual papers. People needed to be sold on a paper by paper basis, rather than the quality of the newspaper corporation as a whole. The New York Sun, founded in 1833, was one of the first papers to publish local police and court reports. They would inform the public in short, one paragraph stories, about local instances of drunkenness and debauchery. The stories proved to be enormously popular. These actions were never motivated by the desire to generate political or social change. Newspaper barons, much like railroad barons, oil barons, steel barons, and other

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<sup>20</sup> "Morse Code & the Telegraph." History.com. A&E Television Networks. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> "History of the U.S. Telegraph Industry." EHnet. Economic History Services. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Bagdikian

<sup>23</sup> "American Newspapers, 1800-1860: City Newspapers."

moguls cared about one thing above almost everything else, at least when it came to their business: profits. The increasing politicization of newspapers, and their sensationalized take on local and international stories, mirrors the sensationalized nature of modern day main stream media, and even social media. The key difference is the motivators. While profits motivate media companies and they generate politicized content, politics more often than not motivates social media users and they generate ad revenue for traditional media companies, through clicks and other metric used by advertisers. The point is: politicization and polarization were merely side effects of the newspapers, never their original intentions. To understand the revolutionary effect of the penny papers, one must look back to the old world, where railroads and newspapers had proliferated years before they did in America.

#### Section 4 IT and the Muted Revolutions of 1840's

The political revolutions of 1848-1849 were located almost entirely in Northern/Western Europe and South America, though they did have an almost global impact in other places like Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and the United States. They were motivated by a variety of factors. One of the most significant of which was the desire for a more free and fair attitude towards the press.<sup>24</sup> Affecting over 50 countries in some way, shape, or form, lasting effects included the abolition of serfdom in Austria and Hungary, abolition of the absolute monarchy of Denmark, parliamentary democracy in the Netherlands, and the end of the Capetian monarchy of France. Though not as significant as the earlier chain of revolutions sparked by the French revolution at the turn of the century, these revolutions were sparked by *ad hoc* coalitions consisting of the middle class, political reformers, and local workers, the very people who were the target of the growing information technologies being permeated around the world. They were also inspired by ideas; ideas that relied on information technologies like the telegraph to spread, as Martin Luther had relied on the printing press centuries earlier.

In addition to the desire for more liberties, these revolutions were also motivated by an ideology that was just starting to take off at the time, socialism. Karl Marx, before he published his many books and other works, capitalized on the increasing availability of printing technology. Starting in 1842, writing for the radical paper *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx expressed his views on early-form socialism that was on the rise at the time. He published articles in other radical, left-wing, German newspapers and even starting his own paper, *Deutsch-Französische*

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<sup>24</sup> Evans, Robert, and Hartmut Pogge Von Strandmann, eds. *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848-1849: From Reform to Reaction*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Print.

*Jahrbücher*,<sup>25</sup> in which he wrote his article "On the Jewish Question" marking what many consider to be his embrace of communism. After the collapse of his own paper, Marx continued to write for the radical leftist paper *Vorwärts!* In his articles he refined his version of socialism. He wrote for newspapers, almost throughout his whole life. He published articles in socialist English newspapers, founded another newspaper called *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and started writing for the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1851 as a European correspondent. After publishing *The Communist Manifesto* in February of 1848, Marx supposedly used his personal wealth to directly arm Belgian revolutionaries. He fled to the new Second Republic of France and eventually to Cologne to print bills promoting the revolutions. Marx, through his ideology and actions, influenced heavily the political revolutions of the times. He, like many other radicals of the time, used the increasing popularity of the newspaper and the easy access to printing technologies to promote their radical views and to encourage as many people as possible to join the revolutions going on at the time. However, most of the revolutions failed. So, what is their significance? Are they even significant?

The political revolutions of 1848-49 may have failed to overthrow the old system entirely but they brought about one of the most significant factors that 70 years later would reshape the world in WWI: nationalism. The revolutions were heavily inspired by desires for local representation of often repressed minorities. These sentiments were often expressed in local papers specifically focused on these minority groups.<sup>26</sup> It could also reasonably be argued that nationalism still plays a key role today, in that it laid the foundation for the idea of a nation state to begin with. The revolutions of 1848-49 lit and stoked these nationalist flames, and continued

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<sup>25</sup> Nicolaevsky, Boris I., and Otto Helfen. *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*. Trans. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher. Rev. ed. London: Penguin, 1973. Print.

<sup>26</sup> "The European Revolutions of 1848." Age-of-the-sage.org. Web. 9 Nov. 2015. <[http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/1848/revolution\\_of\\_1848.html](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/1848/revolution_of_1848.html)>.

to stoke the flames of liberalism and freedom of the press that had been so intensely ignited by the French 40 years before. I believe it could be reasonably argued that the world would not exist in its modern form without the revolutions of 1848-49, and the revolutions wouldn't have existed without the proliferation of the newspaper.

What's interesting to note here is that, unlike Luther before them, those who played a role in stoking the flames of revolution, like Marx, did so for the expressed purpose of promoting the revolution itself. That is to say, they were actively using the printing technologies to promote revolution. This is the first example that Bagdikian suggests uses to suggest that technology can be actively co-opted by revolutionaries to promote and advance revolution and revolutionary thought. In this way, the revolutions were not just important in and of themselves, but also more symbolic of the transition from print being used to simply publish the news to a state where those who print or utilize media were actively trying to convince people of certain views on a large scale.

## Section 5 The Revolution of Radio and Television

The age of modern broadcasting started in December of 1921, when the Department of Commerce started issuing regulations that formally established broadcasting services.<sup>27</sup> What followed in early 1922 was what many people would consider a "broadcasting boom." A chaotic, and often disorganized, effort to scramble together organized stations, funded haphazardly by local and national groups, businesses and individuals. What resulted were 500 radio stations nation-wide by the end of the year. Stations and broadcast existed before that, and the programming was mostly focused on entertaining renditions of plays, stories, and speeches by public servants. It was theorized that radio could play a role in relaying news in September 1922, article in *Popular Radio*, entitled The Newspaper that Comes through Your Walls. In the article, the author, Homer Croy, theorized that "an audio news service, like that which had been available for over twenty-five years to subscribers to the Budapest *Telefon Hirmondó*, could now potentially be transmitted by radio broadcasting stations over much wider areas." (White, 2003). In fact, the first news broadcast is believed to have occurred two years earlier on August 31, 1920, when a Detroit radio station aired election results.<sup>28</sup> The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) began broadcasting in 1926, followed by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1927. In 1940 there were 765 radio stations in the United States, 215.6 million dollars spent on radio advertising, and 943 million dollars worth of radio equipment sold.<sup>29</sup> Together with

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<sup>27</sup> White, Thomas. "18. Broadcasting Becomes Widespread (1922-1923)." *United States Early Radio History*. 11 Mar. 2003. Web. 9 Nov. 2015. <<http://earlyradiohistory.us/sec018.html>>.

<sup>28</sup> Abell, John. "Aug. 31, 1920: News Radio Makes News." *Wired.com*. Conde Nast Digital, 31 Aug. 2010. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

<sup>29</sup> "The History of the Radio Industry in the United States to 1940." *EHnet*. Economic History Services, 26 Mar. 2008. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

television, radio dominated communication methods through the entire 20th and into the 21st century.

Before 1947, the number of television sets in the United States could be measured in the thousands.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the 20th century, 98% of American homes had at least one television and many homes contained more than one set. The first demonstration of television came on September 7th, 1927. Invented by Philo Taylor Farnsworth, the first example of a modern television broadcast was a simple line, followed by a dollar sign. In 1939, Radio Corporation America broadcasted the opening of the New York World's Fair, through its two broadcasting stations, NBC and the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). The broadcast included a speech by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, making him the first president to appear on national television. Later that year, RCA started selling television sets with 5in by 12in screens, and in November of 1939, there was the first sports broadcast: a baseball game between Columbia and Princeton. In 1941, RCA's main competitor in radio, CBS, was broadcasting two short newscasts a day to its relatively small audience in New York. Full scale commercial television broadcasting started in 1947 and by the mid-50's television was turning away from the radio formats they had been using and started embracing the "spectacular." This format embraced the visual capabilities of the television by showcasing full scale Broadway musicals and other performances, and was intended to draw attention to the network as a whole.<sup>31</sup> The 1960 coverage of the debate between Kennedy and Nixon, and the subsequent coverage of President Kennedy's assassination on November 22nd, 1963, helped to cement the significance of television as a medium for story political story telling. Before 1950, there were a total of 3.6 million television sets in the United

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<sup>30</sup> Stephens, Mitchell. "History of Television - Mitchell Stephens." *NYU.edu*. Mitchell Stephens, 2000. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Weisblat, Tinky. "The Museum of Broadcast Communications - Encyclopedia of Television - Peter Pan." *The Museum of Broadcast Communications*. Web. 9 Dec. 2015.



States.<sup>32</sup> In 1950 alone, there 6.1 million sets sold, and by 1959 the cumulative number in the United States had reached 67 million televisions sold, all makes and models. By 1978, 78% of US homes would have a color television set.

The pattern of the early technological revolutions is repeated here. The inventors and innovators of television and radio were primarily motivated by one thing: money, which makes sense. Money is quite possibly the single greatest motivator in the world. You can't invent or sustain an invention without funding. Social media companies like Facebook and Twitter had to get seed money to buy equipment and pay programmers. Radio and television networks rely heavily on revenue from advertisements, just like newspapers before them. Gutenberg relied on selling prints to pay off his debts. This does not mitigate the impact of these technologies at all. I don't believe the fact that money is required to develop new technology plays a role in the feasibility of that technology as a tool for political change. Indeed, as can be seen by the newspapers, political change and motivations actually helped to sell more copies, so newspapers seemed to actively embrace change. When it came to radio and television, they played a key role in the political developments of America from post World War I, through the Great Depression, World War II, the conflict in Vietnam, and through the present day.

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<sup>32</sup> "Facts-Stats." *Www.TVhistory.TV*. Web. 9 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.tvhistory.tv/facts-stats.htm>>.

Section 6  
Television, Radio, and American Political Revolutions

The 1920's through the 1970's were a significant period of turmoil in the United States, from the Great Depression and World War II, to the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam conflict, and associated anti-war protests.<sup>33</sup> Television and radio helped further amplify the impact of political messages by further closing the gap between events and the individual. Images and sounds could be transported from a world away and be available to the average consumer in their evening radio or television broadcast. The Red Scare and associated McCarthy purges showcased one of the first times that a government took an active stance in hampering the political effectiveness of a revolutionary technology.

McCarthyism was a dark and twisted time in American history where millions of Americans were persecuted for merely having certain political beliefs. The movement began its direct attack on the new developing technologies of television, radio, and film on July 29, 1946, when Billy Wilkerson published a trade column in his magazine *The Hollywood Reporter* "A Vote for Joe Stalin."<sup>34</sup> The article was a scathing attack on the Screen Writers Guild and other elements that Mr. Wilkerson believed served as "Red Beachhead" by which communism would infiltrate and destroy the American way of life. He branded people like Dalton Trumbo and Howard Koch, writers for the movie *Spartacus* and *Casablanca* respectively, as leftists and communist sympathizers. He destroyed their, and hundreds of other's reputations. Billy Wilkerson started what would become known as the "Hollywood Blacklist," a list of writers, actors, directors, and producers, who couldn't be involved with any Hollywood or television

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<sup>33</sup> Drucker, Peter. "The Age of Social Transformation." *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, 1 Nov. 1994. Web. 9 Dec. 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Baum, Gary, and Daniel Miller. "Blacklist: THR Addresses Role After 65 Years." *The Hollywood Reporter*. The Hollywood Reporter, 19 Nov. 2012. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

production due to their communist leanings. This period should be remembered as a serious stain on the conscious of a democratic country that prides itself on the free exchange of ideas.

McCarthyism and its effects cannot be overstated. Along with the direct impact it had on the livelihood of thousands of workers, it served to illustrate the point that Bagdikian makes about government's trying to reign in new technologies.<sup>35</sup> McCarthy, Wilkerson, and others like them sought to control the message of the new technologies, shape them so that they would not lead to criticism of the established American order. Yet, a few decades later during the heavy American involvement in the Vietnam conflict, television and radio ended up doing just that.

Before the Vietnam conflict, most reports and stories coming from war zones would come from the Department of Defense and its daily press briefings.<sup>36</sup> These reports would be reprinted in newspapers or broadcasted on the radio. The Vietnam conflict was developing along with television, and stations, wanting to attract as many viewers as possible, would send reporters and anchors into the field to get direct footage of the action. Walter Cronkite, often considered the face of early television journalism, was often seen in the field. Initial reports from the field followed the upbeat nature of DoD reports that had been broadcasted before. Footage showed Americans advancing against the communist forces of North Vietnam along all fronts. However, as the war dragged on, and more and more Americans were dying, communist advances were becoming more and more successful, and the brutal tactics used by American and communist forces were becoming more and more apparent, the mood changed. Eventually, reporters like Cronkite started voicing direct opposition to the war. These condemnations by television and radio journalists, combined with the shocking images coming from the battlefield,

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<sup>35</sup> Bagdikian

<sup>36</sup> "The Museum of Broadcast Communications - Encyclopedia of Television - Vietnam on Television." *Museum.TV*. The Museum of Broadcast Communication. Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

stimulated the counter-culture revolution of the 1960's and 1970's. This counter-culture played a role in advocating social change, and in this environment, the Civil Rights Movement capitalized on the technologies and environment as well. During the Civil Rights era, images of brutal repression tactics used by the police against civil rights demonstrators dominated nightly television broadcasts<sup>37</sup>. Martin Luther King's speeches were rebroadcasted to the millions of radios and televisions across the country. These two things combined helped bring the realities of discrimination into the individual homes of the everyday American. No longer could they suggest that there was not a systematic issue in the way that African Americans were treated by their fellow Americans and the public servants who should be serving them. The visceral images served to galvanize many previously apathetic white and African Americans. That's not to say that the movement wouldn't have eventually happened without television and radio, but its shape and possibly its success would have been incredibly different.

The "Black List" and the broadcasts from Vietnam and on the Civil Rights Movement were undeniably significant when it came to shaping the political and social culture of America during the mid 20th century. The new technologies were being utilized, as technologies had been utilized before, to generate and create desire for social change. The events themselves helped shape a modern America where we, hopefully, turn a critical eye to the desire to persecute based on beliefs, skin color, or the desire to wage war simply to contain the spread of an ideology. However, it is all too clear that these tendencies still exist today, so it could be said that these revolutions never really finished, and maybe social media and its associated movements are simply the evolution of the movements before them.

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<sup>37</sup> Frady, Marshall. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Life*. New York: Penguin Group, 2002. Print.

## Chapter Two Media Technology in the Modern Day

### Section 1 The Rise of Social Media

Facebook will be 12 years old on February 4th, 2016. 12 years ago the founders of Facebook launched their first publicly viewable website. Twitter was launched on July 15 of 2006, making it almost 10 years old. LinkedIn launched on May 5, 2003, making it the oldest of these social media networks at 12, almost 13 years old. Together, these three websites are ranked by ebizmba.com as the top three "most popular"<sup>38</sup> social media websites.<sup>39</sup> Together, they generate about 22 billion dollars in revenue,<sup>40</sup> <sup>41</sup> though LinkedIn has a negative 15 million dollar profit margin.<sup>42</sup> Twitter and Facebook became what could be considered successful companies years ago. In 2011, seven years after its launch, Facebook had a profit margin of almost three billion dollars<sup>43</sup>. Twitter, five years after its launch, had 50 million dollars in profits<sup>44</sup>. Both of these companies have seen nothing but positive growth over the past few years, and despite Facebook's IPO getting off to a less than stellar start with reports of insider trading and fraudulent financial reports, their stocks have been fairly reliable investments. LinkedIn can be considered a bit of an outlier as they are still trying to hammer out a solid revenue generating stream.<sup>45</sup> Revenue generating was also a problem with Myspace and Friendster, both of whom

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<sup>38</sup> "most popular" based on a formula used by ebizmba.com

<sup>39</sup> "Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites | February 2016." *EBiz: The Ebusiness MBA Guide*. 1 Feb. 2016. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Twitter. (2015). *Financial Statement 3rd Quarter 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/finance?q=NYSE%3ATWTR&fstype=ii&ei=qzRgU8CuL4mSqwHgRg>

<sup>41</sup> Facebook. (2015) *Financial Statement 4th Quarter 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/finance?q=NASDAQ:FB&fstype=ii&ei=rFmrVvDvFNPNuATVjZDICg>

<sup>42</sup> LinkedIn. (2015) *Financial Statement 3rd Quarter 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/finance?q=NYSE:LNKD&fstype=ii>

<sup>43</sup> "FB Annual Income Statement." *MW:MarketWatch*. Market Watch. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.

<sup>44</sup> "TWTR Annual Income Statement." *MW:MarketWatch*. Market Watch. Web. 1 Feb. 2016.

<sup>45</sup> "LinkedIn Forecasts Weak First-quarter Profit, Shares Plunge." *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 2016. Web. 6 Feb. 2016.

could be considered “first generation” social media companies, and, like many first generation products, struggled to find their niche. What we are living in right now is a fully realized, “second generation” of profitable social media, either through advertisements or selling of users data. However, it is important to remember that social media is not unique in its popularity as a media technology.

Printers during Gutenberg’s time were all highly skilled artisans. People would travel for days to visit a printer, and most were paid extremely well. As we discussed last chapter, there works were highly popular among even the illiterate. Popularity can be used to explain the explosive proliferation of newspapers during the liberal uprisings of the 1840’s. All of these niche nationalistic and ideological newspapers sprung up because there was at least somewhat of a market for them. While it’s clear that Karl Marx’s *Rheinische Zeitung* never reached Facebook levels of profitability and popularity; the newspaper was so popular that Prussian state censors shut it down after only a year and three months.<sup>46</sup> Finally, it cannot be underestimated how iconic owning a personal radio and television was when they first came out. Of course, the two world wars played a role in the increased popularity of the radio, as families would gather around the radio to hear the latest news from their soldiers across the front. The television became an almost literal symbol of the post-war economic boom that America experienced in the 50’s and 60’s, next to the personal automobile and steady source of meat. The question that comes at the end of this, and the one that I want to explore in the first section of this chapter is this: why are media technologies so popular? Bagdikian would likely theorize that it surrounds the shrinking of the information gap and the individuals thirst for knowledge that agrees with their preconceived notion. While I actively agree with the former, I would say that the later is merely

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<sup>46</sup> Mehring, Franz. *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1948. Print.

a result of the initial reason anyone first picks up any form of media: to learn more about the world around them, and to challenge pre-conceived notions thrust upon them.

Section 2  
Man's Unquenchable Thirst for Knowledge

The notion that man has a thirst for a knowledge that higher powers might ordain as risky is a concept that dates as far back as biblical times. Genesis chapters two and three describe, in my interpretation, an idyllic world. Man and woman are cared for by an unknowable, unseen force, and he himself need not struggle too greatly in his day to day life. They are then tricked into eating the apple of knowledge, which leads to an angry God banishing them from the mystical garden. There are, of course, multiple interpretations for the story and multiple symbols that are worth discussing, but in my interpretation this seems to be the biblical genesis of mankind's desire to question authority. And this happened before recorded history. It would be fairly safe to suggest that this desire to question authority has been ingrained in humanity since we first conceptualized the idea of authority. This questioning of authority could be the result of a childhood experience where we find an adult to be in the wrong. I recall how devastated I was when I first discovered that there was no giant bunny delivering me chocolate eggs every Easter. We rely on our parental authority figures to provide us with sustenance, comfort, and knowledge. Should our parental figures fail in any of these measures, we start to distrust authority, with many a kid then going off, learning something for themselves, and entering the "I know better than my parents teen phase" that I remember all too well. This is a personal theory that I have for the question as to why humankind thirsts for knowledge. Philosophers have been discussing this since Plato's *Meno*, wherein "Socrates raises the question of why knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief."<sup>47</sup> Plato responds that knowledge is tied to the concept of truth, and that knowledge is less likely to be shaken and dislodge than belief. When thinking about why

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<sup>47</sup> Pritchard, Duncan, and John Turri. "The Value of Knowledge." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford University, 2007. Web. 4 Feb. 2016.



specifically social media has become popular, it might be more interesting to explore this last concept.

"In a sense, the drowning of the individual in carefully designed self-serving information is the counterpart of the ignorance of mass audiences in times past." (Bagdikian, 2, 1971) This serves as a slight counterpoint to Plato's alleged reasoning as to why people quest for knowledge. One of the key dangers, according to Bagdikian, seems to be that people will use mass media tools to find a media that agrees with their pre-drafted narrative of the world. Plato might point to the fact that these people have knowledge. You can go onto any forum on any website and most of the time even the most asinine comments have some sort of sources or professionals to back them up. The key point that comes in Bagdikian's quote comes from the use of the word, ignorant. "Ignorant of what?" we could rightfully ask. "Ignorant of the truth, that ever important concept that knowledge is tied to" could be Bagdikian's response. But Bagdikian doesn't address his definition of the truth during his book, at least not in an immediately discernible method, and the question of "what is truth?" is a question that has been passed down from philosopher to philosopher and will continue to be passed down on and on until the end of time. I would argue that this "self-serving information" that people seem likely to drown themselves in, is merely one group's concept of the truth. To be quite honest, social media hasn't really helped solve the age old question of what is true, at least not in a singular sense.

Social media, like the religious texts printed using Gutenberg's printing method, are the nationalistic and ideological newspapers of the 1840's, thrives when it provides people with evidence that supports their purported truth. But even then, it isn't successful of convincing everyone of the same truth. That's why there exist so many different theories for common occurrences. Let's look at the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The traditionally held narrative is that it

was a surprised terror attack orchestrated by America's enemies and carried out without any prior warning to our government. This is a narrative that, more or less, has been accepted as the "main stream" interpretation of events. The narrative is supported by hundreds and thousands of documents, photos, and expert testimonies. Then there are the hundreds of conspiracy theories. Everything from the now infamous "jet fuel can't melt steel beams," the often mocked "nine eleven was an inside job," and the suspicion that there were explosions at the base of the tower, can be sourced and explained. There are hundreds of articles and expert testimony supporting these theories. Of course, there are hundreds of articles and experts disproving these "myths" and criticizing the legitimacy of the experts and articles that defend them. Whatever interpretation you believe, the fact is, almost fifteen years after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, there are still active communities discussing the truth behind the attacks. These discussions feed into my assertion for the whole paper: social media is merely an evolution of technology, not a revolution.

Just as the religious, nationalistic, and ideological books, papers, radio and TV broadcasts of the past purported their truths, and weren't able to establish a universal truth, so too does social media gain much of its popularity from allowing the individual to generate a sort of personal truth. I argue again that these are not merely self serving truths. Some of the September 11<sup>th</sup> "truthers" have easily put in over a hundred times the effort into researching the events of that day than the average individual. Or, to bring it to a more mainstream argument, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's handling, or mishandling, of the attacks on the US embassy in Benghazi has both Republicans and Democrats pouring over the same or highly similar documents and coming to completely different conclusions. Each side, again, has their own expert witnesses and sources that prove that Hillary Clinton is a traitor or did the best she could.

How does this distinguish the truth from a self-serving truth? After all, the traditional definition of self-serving would be someone who manipulates facts and figures to suit their individual needs. That is not what many of these individuals do. I say many because I am sure that there are people out there who use conspiracy theories about Benghazi or 9/11 to further their own needs.

Where conspiracy theorists and main streamers, Republicans and Democrats differ is their interpretation of the motives behind events. No reasonable individual is suggesting that Hillary Clinton herself stormed the embassy in Benghazi, or that the US military itself flew the planes into the World Trade Center. Rather, they are trying to fill in what exactly Hillary Clinton knew and when, or whether or not George W. Bush has any advance knowledge of the hijackings. These are ideas that are hard to get any solid information on, either because of national security related protections, or the fact that it's just hard to prove when someone really "knows" something. These gaps in information are what social media, and all media technology, is trying to fill. These "self-serving truths" that Bagdikian talks about are nothing but stop gaps on the road to closing the true gap between what happens and what people believe.

Finding a permanent and final solution to these stop gaps is certainly one factor in what drives the popularity of social media, but as discussed before, finding out the objective truth of a thing is literally impossible. Even with all the knowledge in the world, people would always disagree. Then what is it about these stop gap solutions that drives people to media technology? It's the idea of crowd sourcing. Humans are, by their very nature, social creatures, and to be able to discuss ideas and events with peers who share similar political, religious, ideological ideas to yours is a natural comfort for us. Along with closing the information gap between event and individual, media technology has helped close the gap more so between individuals themselves. The printing press, as suggested in the last chapter, bridged the gap between hundreds of

thousands of people who had issues with the Catholic Church. Newspapers united ideological and racial minorities across countries and provided avenues to air shared grievances. Radio and television brought the sounds and sights of other countries and lives into our homes. The internet and social media specifically, serves as a way to bring a multitude of other ideas into our very hand. No longer is source of information the printer at his printing press, or the newspaper editor, or the broadcast companies; information is truly being crowd sourced. That is what is so appealing about media technologies, it helps individuals feel a part of something, and through being a part of something, getting their own opinions and ideas out there and noticed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "The Social Side of the Internet." *Pew Research Center Internet Science Tech RSS*. Pew Research Center, 18 Jan. 2011. Web. 4 Feb. 2016. No specific citation just general idea

### Section 3 Social Media and its Policy Goals

Now that I've explained what I believe is responsible for the steady rise in popularity of social media, the next topic to discuss is what the popular goals are of social media when it comes to public policy. One important note before I start this section that there is a difference between social media's effects on policy and its effects on politics. Social is an incredibly popular tool for those who to engage in their civic duty in the digital space. Facebook and Twitter have become incredibly popular for civic engagement. A recent Pew Research survey found that approximately 39% of all American adults "have done at least one of eight civic or political activities with social media."<sup>49</sup> Now these activities can vary from encouraging others to vote to advocating for social issues in a more general sense. Voting and elections in general, are, for the purpose of this paper, to be considered part of the political process. They involve social media users encouraging others around them to engage in the electoral process and vote, exercising one of the more fundamental rights of a democracy. The effects of these might seem very tangible. Controlling for money and other traditionally important aspects of a campaign, does an increased social media presence result in an increased likelihood of victory for the target candidate? And there is data to suggest that it does. A study published in the September 12, 2012 issue of *Nature* had a selection of users who were targeted with a social media message at the top of their Facebook feed. The message urged them to vote, provided poll location and information, had a button labeled "I voted," and showed the user a collection of 6 friends who had already clicked the "I voted" button. Results suggest that, after receiving one social media message advocating voting, those surveyed were .39% more likely to actually go out and vote. Their close friends (those who were in the top 18<sup>th</sup> percentile of interaction with the user) were also .224%

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<sup>49</sup> Rainie, Lee, et al. "Social media and political engagement." *Pew Internet & American Life Project* 19 (2012).

more likely to vote.<sup>50</sup> An obvious problem with this method of measurement and interaction is that a vast majority of the civic engagement that occurs online doesn't tend to hang around at the top of your newsfeed, and instead of six friends, it's usually just the one friend posting the message. Collecting data from social media is difficult, and measuring social media's effect on the tangible of voting is made more difficult by that fact. So, what happens when we're trying to measure the effects of social media, already difficult to quantify, on the even more general area of public policy?

First we will define the scope of what exactly public policy is. Since the term itself contains the word public, naturally we must eliminate and corporate, religious, or private rules that people adhere to. While these rules may be a powerful force for many people, public policy is something that affects every single person in the country. Public policy is commonly associated with legislation, written laws or regulations, either at the local, state, or federal level. Legislation defines and shapes many of the aspects of everyday society, from medical standards to video game content, there is legislation for, or that can be applied, to almost every single activity that society engages in. This is the most substantial and powerful face of public policy. Laws, once written, must be enforced on every citizen equally. They are, normally, fairly clear in scope and what the actual rules are. Finally, laws hold the power to lay out punishments for failing to adhere to them. In addition to the laws and regulations set forth by the government, there is the much more informal public address.

Like legislation, these public addresses vary from the State of the Union down to the State of the City, and can cover any topic. There are also floor speeches in the Houses of

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<sup>50</sup> Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. "A 61-million-person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization." *Nature* 489.7415 (2012): 295-98. Web.

Congress, stump speeches on campaign trails, and the increasingly popular social media post. Public addresses differ from legislation in two key facets: first, they rarely are as specific as legislation and second, they lack actual force. Speaking to the first point, of course many politicians can and do use public addresses as a way to outline policy. Donald Trump has been the most memorable user of the PA system in this country for quite a while. Either by using campaign press releases to announce his goal of banning Muslim travel to the United States,<sup>51</sup> or a campaign speech to announce his plans to build a wall across the border with Mexico.<sup>52</sup> When pressed for specifics on either of these plans, he's famous for using phrases like: "until we figure it out" or "I'm good at building walls." These are phrases that, while catchy, don't go into the specifics that would be required to ban Muslims or build a wall with Mexico. The lack of force behind public addresses is best exemplified by the State of the Union. Every year the President of the United States addresses both Houses of Congress in a special session in which he/she outlines their legislative goals for the next year. The address is an opportunity for the President to let their idealistic side shine in attempt to sway public opinion one way or another. Again the effects are limited to public opinion, as the President still needs Congressional approval before enacting any kind of actual policy. A famous example of this would be Lincoln's address on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1862, where, it could be argued; Lincoln states that those currently held in the bonds of slavery must be freed, in order to justify the continued Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation, which was made about a month later, had the force of law in "within those rebellious states." However, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment banning slavery in the territorial United States

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<sup>51</sup> Diamond, Jeremy. "Donald Trump: Ban All Muslim Travel to U.S." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 8 Dec. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Brand, Anna. "Donald Trump: I Would Force Mexico to Build Border Wall." *Msnbc.com*. NBC News Digital, 28 June 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.

wasn't passed by Congress until over two years after this address, and wasn't added to the Constitution until almost three years later.

What is important to note is that, while public addresses don't have the force of law behind, they are fairly critical in shaping the legislation conversation. As can be seen from the Lincoln example, his speech, among a variety of other factors, truly shaped the war as a war over the institution of slavery. But what shaped Lincoln's paper? Media. As early as 1835, anti-slavery newspapers had huge print runs, printing over a million issues in the 1835 alone.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, what drives Donald Trump? Media attention. From July to Mid-October, Trump soaked up between 40 and 50 percent of total coverage of Republican presidential candidates.<sup>54</sup> Whether it's taking direction from media, among other factors, are trying to be in the media, it's clear that traditional media has played a role in the past and continues to play a huge role today when it comes to shaping the public addresses of political figures. What about social media's role in public addresses?

This section of the paper is limited in scope to the affect that social media has on public addresses. The last section of the paper will deal with what, if any affect social media campaigns have on legislation. It cannot be denied that social media has shaped the way that politicians communicate with constituents. A research paper posted on the website ResearchGate (a social media website dedicated to bringing scientists and researchers together in order to promote research) has highlighted some interesting trends when it comes to social media and the way politicians communicate.<sup>55</sup> "...the growing relevance of communication in social media implies

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<sup>53</sup> "ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES." *Nla.gov.au*. National Library of Australia. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Reuning, Kevin, and Nicholas Dietrich. "Donald Trump Has Nothing Left to Gain from Media Coverage." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 15 Jan. 2016. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Stieglitz, Stefan, and Linh Dang-Xuan. "Social Media and Political Communication - A Social Media Analytics Framework." *ResearchGate*. ReserachGate, 13 July 2012. Web. 2 Feb. 2016.



a fundamental change in traditional public communication, which has usually been exclusively initiated and managed by specific actors, e.g., politicians, companies as well as journalists” (Stieglitz, 2-3, 2012). This fundamental change is underlined in politicians’ desire to hear from constituents on political issues and shaping their communication accordingly. The author links to surveys of politicians that desire to hear from their constituents, and would appreciate being able to gauge the political landscape through social media analysis. There are also suggestions that politicians immediately engaged in social media discussions with their voters, almost as soon as social media became relevant in the modern world, specifically highlighting Obama’s use of social media in 2008. Four years after the launch of Facebook, and two years after the launch of Twitter, Obama’s presence on social media was a highlight of that political campaign cycle. Let’s split these two claims and analyze them more in depth, using the Stieglitz article as a framework.

The claim that politicians want to hear from their constituents in regards to public policy makes sense. On a fundamental level, a politician is more likely to get elected or re-elected if they make decisions that their constituents approve of. Short of going door to door and asking every constituent their opinion of a particular phrase or idea, Stieglitz makes the argument that social media is a good broad spectrum indicator of how constituents would react. Going back to an earlier section of the chapter, this constituent research through the proxy of social media feels similar to people using social media to discover the truth of an event. Much like social media users, politicians want the truth, or the answer to the question: “what do my constituents want to hear?” And, much like social media users, many politicians lack the funding or capabilities to find out, 100 percent, what people want to hear. As noted before, truth is subjective, and no one is more subjective than the voter. So not only would it be incredibly difficult to find a voter’s true

opinion on certain phrases and concepts, that opinion will likely change depending on currents or future events. So, in order to establish some sort of gauge for voter support, politicians and candidates establish social media teams that analyze and interact with voters. These teams are tasked, rewording Stieglitz here, with breaking-down social media trends and presenting them in such a way that the candidate is able to understand and digest what their constituents want to hear. In this imperfect framework, the politician is able to form conclusions about what exactly their constituents want to hear.

The second claim about the rapidity by which politicians utilized social media in campaigns is fed by the desire to know what their constituents think, but it is also fed by the lack of barriers to social media use. Stieglitz discusses how social media has become so popular in political communication because, in part, it does not cost anything to use. Unlike polling, or billboards, or phone bankers, social media acts as a free marketing tool for the politician. The argument is that, while most politicians don't have huge sums of money to spend on social media analytics, almost every campaign has some social media presence and interactions. The appeal to the constituent is that it allows them to become involved in a political discussion without ever leaving the comfort of their glowing screen. There is also, of course, the skyrocketing popularity of social media itself. No other application, other than Facebook, allows Hillary Clinton to interact with all 2.5 million followers in real time and to allow her followers to interact with her and each other. The cheapness and popularity of social media are the driving factors as to why politicians were so fast to utilize social media and why it remains so popular for them to this day.

## Section 4 Conclusion

This section has discussed the modern rise of social media, why it's popular, and how it affects politics and public addresses. It's a little less concrete than the history of social media because, like all social sciences, the metrics aren't as tangible as other sciences. There are several important conclusions that must be understood before I move into the final, more metric based chapter. Firstly, social media is incredibly popular and growing more popular every day. Not just Facebook and Twitter, there are social media websites popping up for chefs (ChefKey), scientists, and even for those who want to remain anonymous (4chan and Reddit). Secondly, social media is so popular, not because it reinforces people's personal truths, but because it allows users to come together to find their truth. It gives people a sense of confidence in that it allows people to form conclusions, not by themselves, but as a part of something bigger. Finally, social media has a dominant place in political discourse that is quite possibly only dwarfed by all forms of traditional media combined. Every politician, from the school board executive to presidential candidate spends at least some time on Twitter, either talking about the election or getting feedback from constituents on policy. Now, the question that will be answered in the final chapter: does social media actually do anything *tangible*?

## **Chapter Three** **BlackLivesMatter, the Campaign for Modern Medicine, and Realistic Change**

### Section 1 What is social media activism?

There was a draft of a thesis made available online in March of this year. The draft was written by Deen Freelon of American University and it goes in depth when it comes to physically measuring the impact of social movements. The paper, entitled *The Measure of a Movement: Quantifying Black Lives Matter's Social Media Power*, offers quantifiable measurements of tweets and hashtags used during some of the recent instances of racial violence.<sup>56</sup> The metrics seem solid, the explanations are apt, and the conclusions thought provoking. However, I feel that Mr. Freelon articulates a key, if obvious, point in his fourth paragraph: "By definition, every social movement's overarching goal is to effect some sort of social change, whether it be in individual attitudes, cultural conventions, and/or institutional policies." Social movements, indeed any political movement, are driven to the end goal of change. The exact nature of that change is always up for debate, but the fact is, people don't use #BlackLivesMatter, because they think everything going on in the world is fine and dandy.

In this final chapter, I will use some of the metric tools provided by Mr. Freelon. My goal is to try to establish some sort of correlation between the trends that he noticed and the actual trends of change when it comes to policy conversations and changes. The exact nature of the change is sometimes subtle and sometimes unexpected; see the current "reactionary" backlash against the more "progressive" BLM movement. It is never the goal of any social movement to start a counter-movement, yet that fulfills the definition of what a social movement is: a movement that shapes and changes opinions. That being the case, it is important to consider the

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<sup>56</sup> Freelon, Deen. "The Measure of a Movement: Quantifying Black Lives Matter's Social Media Power." *Upenn.edu*. University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences, Mar. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.

more intangible aspects of already extremely qualitative success rate of social movements. If 10 #BlackLivesMatter tweets results in one #AllLivesMatter tweet, is that one tweet enough to offset the other ten when it comes to the potential shift in cultural, social, and policy attitudes? Let's go back to the echo-chamber point that many people have about the internet. Say an individual stumbles upon the #BlackLivesMatter one day. They've never heard of it before, and are likely perplexed about why they haven't heard about these issues. After doing more research, they stumble upon a video of a BLM protestor storming a rally for their favorite political candidate, and they see people chanting 'all lives matter.' This instance could feed into a notion that he hasn't heard of the movement before because their concerns might not be valid. Conversely, the individual might stumble upon a video that addresses the issues of the BLM movement and addresses that, while #AllLivesMatter brings up valid points, the hashtag itself is missing the whole point of the BLM movement. The individual might then be persuaded into thinking that the movement is still valid, but, like many things, is flawed. Finally, the individual might only stumble upon pro-BLM videos and other things, thus entering the echo-chamber of those who only listen to one side of the argument.

The above case is, of course, fictionalized, but I want to use it to make a few brief points before I go into the more quantitative section of this chapter. Of the three individuals listed above, only two of them would likely be really motivated to engage politically as a result of the movement, the pro- and anti- BLM individual. Both are the result of the movement, yet the less prolific All Lives Matter has the added benefit of piggy-backing on the success of the BLM movement. As BLM becomes more popular, people can relate more to All Lives Matter just by association. All Lives Matter itself also plays on the general disposition of the public in that "The color of your skin doesn't matter." So, while BLM is more prolific, it needs to because it's trying

to change existing ideas. All Lives Matter is, in a sense, trying to preserve the prevailing attitude that race doesn't matter.

This tendency for certain social media campaigns capitalizing on prevailing trends makes sense. After all, as we've looked at through at this tool, media tools often are used to change, but also in conjunction with, prevailing societal conditions. The proliferation of newspapers in the mid 1800's coincided but also heavily influenced the rise in nationalism. The defeat of McCarthyism came from a combination of radio technology and general cooling to the idea of blacklists and communist witch hunts. The BLM movement itself does not operate in a vacuum. If it's goal is social change, it's message is fueling and being fueled by the hyper awareness of police use of force, young African American rates of imprisonment, and the continued high levels of poverty in certain communities. Politically speaking, BLM exists in a bit more isolation. The last major Civil Rights Legislation, specifically dealing with race, was introduced in 2008, *The Civil Rights Act of 2008*. Introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy, the bill was read twice and referred to committee, never to be heard from again.<sup>57</sup> BLM has a BLM Super PAC that has raised \$250 and has \$150 in cash on hand. There is some discussion as to whether they'll bring in more, but at this point, it seems that a fully utilized Super PAC will not be an arm of the BLM movement.<sup>58</sup> So, what movement is capitalizing on the political power of money? The CMM.

"The CMM, launched by Eli Lilly and Company in 2010, champions the public policies necessary to ensure individuals have access to the safe, effective, and breakthrough medicines of today and tomorrow."<sup>59</sup> This campaign description seems pretty standard. The campaign is about

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<sup>57</sup> "S.2554 - 110th Congress (2007-2008): Civil Rights Act of 2008." *Congress.gov*. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>58</sup> "Fundraising Slow for New BLM PACs." *Opensecrets RSS*. 15 Dec. 2015. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>59</sup> "The CMM." *The CMM*. Eli Lilly and Company. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

working together, making sure everyone has the access they need. These are fairly standard descriptors that respond to the mild dissatisfaction with the current medical system. A recent Gallup poll conducted in March of 2016 had 45% of those surveyed expressing very/somewhat negative view on the healthcare industry. This is the same as a poll conducted last year, but down from 55% five years ago in 2011.<sup>60</sup> Pharmaceutical companies are still ranked as some of the most unfavorable companies in America. 43% of Americans had a negative view of the pharmaceutical companies as a whole, according to a Gallup poll conducted in August of 2015. This is up from 36% in 2015, but the same result as a poll conducted in 2011. So basically, the prevailing societal conditions are that people are trending to being more satisfied with the healthcare system as a whole, and are still as distrustful of pharmaceutical companies as always. What about the political situation? Eli Lilly & Co. by itself has spent about 1.3 million so far this election cycle, and has \$707,471 cash on hand.<sup>61</sup> PhRMA, the organization of biopharmaceutical companies that works to represent their interests at the federal level, does not have a super PAC. Rather, they donate to various 501(c)(4) social welfare non-profit groups that spend that money on advertisements and campaigns. The groups total spent on influencing the 2010 midterm elections? 9.4 million dollars.<sup>62</sup> Not as much as you might think but not an insignificant amount of money. So, in terms of social change, BLM is riding the tide of increased dissatisfaction among African Americans with the current civil rights situation in America. Political change is where the CMM shines, with its deeper pockets and likely increased political capital. But this paper is about social media and its effects on politics, how much of a role did the social media campaigns themselves have on public policy?

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<sup>60</sup> "Healthcare System." *Gallup.com*. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>61</sup> "Eli Lilly & Co." *Opensecrets RSS*. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>62</sup> "Drug Lobby Gave \$9.4 Million to Nonprofits That Spent Big on 2010 Election." *Center for Public Integrity*. 27 Feb. 2012. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.





## Section 2 Measuring the Social Media Campaigns

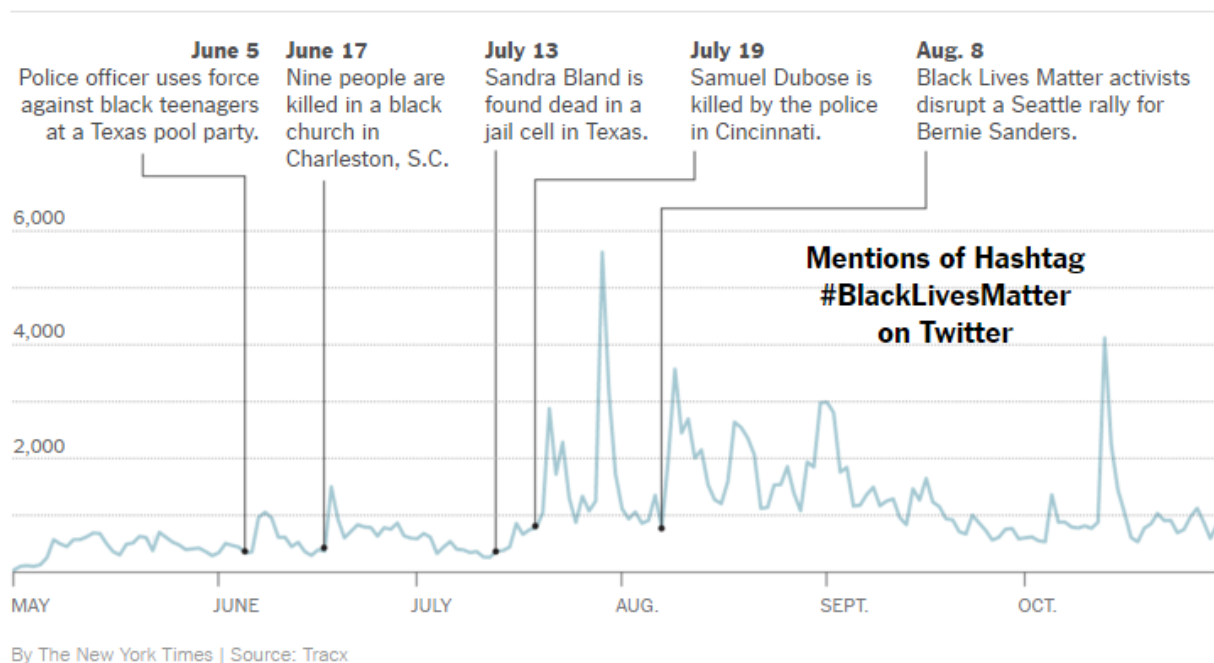
Let's go back to the Deen Freelon's paper and use some his metrics to measure the activity of the BLM campaign's presence on social media. He proposes several quantitative ways to measure the movement and provides graphs and charts illustrating his methods. One of his charts details some of the most prolific hashtags of the movement. Mr. Freelon purchased all publicly available tweets from Twitter during the year long period between June 1 2015 and May 31, 2015 that contained any of the 45 keywords related to BLM and police brutality. He ended up with 40,815,975 tweets from 4,435,217 unique users. He breaks down the tweets into the keyword and number of tweets columns, and comes up with some interesting results. The most prolific hash tag is not #blacklivesmatter, but actually #ferguson. The Ferguson hashtag has nearly five times the number of tweets versus the BLM hashtag: 21,626,901 vs. 4,312,599. The BLM hashtag isn't even in second, that spot is claimed by hashtags about Michael Brown, the black youth killed in Ferguson that sparked the riots. #michaelbrown/#mikebrown had 6,360,239 tweets. That puts the number of tweets into perspective, but what about the timing of the tweets? If a social media campaign wants to influence policy, the campaign must be active around the time that relevant legislation or executive action is being discussed.

The New York Times includes a graph of mentions of #BlackLivesMatter in its article entitled: *One Slogan, Many Methods: BLM Enters Politics*.<sup>63</sup> The graphic, seen on the next page, puts the highest spike of use at the end of July of 2015, after the end of the year that Mr. Freelon was collecting data. This period in time was the week before the House of Representatives was about to adjourn for its summer recess, and two weeks before the Senate adjourned. Attendance

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<sup>63</sup> Eligon, John. "One Slogan, Many Methods: BLM Enters Politics." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 18 Nov. 2015. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

records are almost impossible to aggregate on a macro level, but still, the week before a vacation isn't the most productive time anyone's agenda. Some of the legislation discussed on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 2015, included, ironically enough, legislation affecting pharmaceutical companies. It is also included VA legislation, educational legislation, defense legislation, and multiple other resolutions. Not one civil rights resolution. It's a weak correlation and the agenda for the House is set in advance, but, if the BLM movement wanted to influence any votes with its hashtag, it choose a bad time for that hashtag to peak.



Now let's look at the CMM. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 they posted a blog on how to translate awareness into action.<sup>64</sup> The blog includes a strategy on how to use digital media to influence policy makers. Again, it's impossible to say if this was on purpose but it was on the day that the House was discussing the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*, something that would have been known to the CMM before the 28<sup>th</sup>. Now the act itself had passed the House on the 10<sup>th</sup>, but this just serves to highlight a potential difference between the two styles of social media campaign. Not only is this

<sup>64</sup> "It's Not About Awareness, It's About Action." *The CMM*. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

potentially an example of a hyper focused digital media strategy, it is also an example of a strategy that focuses on continued pressure for support, even after the legislation has passed. The CMM likely wants to change the political atmosphere around the discussions for modernizing the US healthcare system. While the BMM has a large volume of tweets, the decentralized nature of the movement means that the tweets aren't hyper-focused and they tend to drop off by a fairly sizable chunk rather quickly. Looking back at the graph it seems that the August 1<sup>st</sup> levels are almost a tenth of the levels experienced at the end of July.

So why would the pharmaceutical companies maintain a social media campaign for multiple years? Why not blitz Congress at key times and hope to lay on such a sudden pressure that Congress must act? After all, that's often a characteristic of new social movements like the BLM movement, to have sudden and massive demonstrations. They use Facebook to create national events for certain campaigns, and then each state chapter creates their own local events. This results in the spread out and decentralized aspect of the campaign. Not only is the movement's presence split into the separate local groups that communicate amongst themselves, a lot of these people communicate primarily through social media. So, they have a lot of members, but also a lot of different voices and events. The Campaign for Modern Medicine originates from companies, which are highly centralized and structure, but also much smaller than the BLM movement. The CMM's Twitter page has sent out about 6900 tweets in the over 5 years they've been on Twitter. That's roughly 1380 tweets a year. The BLM hash tag sent out over 22 million tweets in one year. Even if each of the CMM's tweets was re-Tweeted a thousand times, which judging by the front page of their Twitter is extremely unlikely, the BLM movement, theoretically, reached 22 times the amount of people reached by the CMM in one year. We've looked a little bit at the effectiveness of the timing of each social media campaign,

and talked a little bit about social media activity could be measured. Now we can look at the political and social effectiveness of each campaign.

Section 3  
How effective is Social Media at Changing the Situation?

Social media is undoubtedly a powerful tool when it comes to organizing any political movement. However, I would say the tool itself is best used to achieve the cultural aspect of the goals of the social movement. Looking at other media networks and the general narrative over the past few years, the racial conversation dominates much more than the narrative about America's healthcare system, and way more than the conversation about pharmaceutical companies specifically. Of course, that's for a wide variety of reasons, and the BLM movement extends far beyond social media. Still, the social media presence of the BLM movement cannot be ignored. After all, the whole movement started from the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter.<sup>65</sup> 24 million tweets for a single hashtag over one year is more significant and more persistent than anything that would appear in a daily trending hashtag. While the exact metrics of what defines Twitter's "Trends" isn't a formula easily found online, from what can be observed, most of the highest trends of a day ranking in the mid-500K, but they've also gone above 1 million. Even if those metrics were per hour, it would be hard for any hashtag to maintain the popularity of #BlackLivesMatter. So the movement can be relatively popular on Twitter, but let's go back to traditional news sources.

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Trends · [Change](#)

**#Empire**

122K Tweets

**#SaveTheEarthIn4Words**

15.9K Tweets

**Curt Schilling**

35.3K Tweets

**Harriet Tubman**

516K Tweets

**Josh Norman**

76K Tweets

**#Survivor**

28.1K Tweets

**#SonomaChat**

Trending for 2 hours now

**Victoria Wood**

122K Tweets

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<sup>65</sup> Craven, Julia. "Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Reflects On The Origins Of The Movement." *Huffingtonpost.com*. The Huffington Post, 09 Sept. 2015. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

If you search “Black Lives Matter” on Google News, you’ll get approximately 1,270,000 results. If you search “Campaign for Modern Medicines” you get four. BLM dominates the discussion, but again, that’s because the movement extends beyond social media into the physical world. CMM doesn’t have enough people involved in it to go out and get the presence in the real world that BLM can. Still the BLM hashtag is probably at least mentioned in every one of those stories. Most of the stories are discussions about protests, and the amount of people protesting. The All Lives Matter movement, which is as we saw earlier a reaction to the BLM movement, has a higher favorability rate among likely U.S. voters.<sup>66</sup> 78% of likely voters believe that All Lives Matter matches their personal view point, compared to the 11% that believe BLM matches their personal view point. Just 31% of black voters and nine percent of white voters believe that BLM is the best representation of their viewpoints. The article also states that 82% of black voters think that black Americans are treated unfairly by the police, while 30% of white voters agree. Another Gallup poll showed that the percentage of non-whites who view the police as honest and ethical dropped 22 points between 2013 and 2014; to just 23%.<sup>67</sup> 60% of whites view police as honest and ethical. Well what does this all prove? It proves that BLM is shaping the narrative, albeit not with precise control. CMM hasn’t had the same cultural influence. As we saw earlier, the percentage of people who view the pharmaceutical industry in a positive light hasn’t changed much since the campaign started. Now that we’ve touched a little bit on the cultural impact of these movements, it’s important to see how effective they’ve been on the policy side of the table.

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<sup>66</sup> "Black Lives Matter Or All Lives Matter?" *Rasmussen Reports™*. Rasmussen Reports, LLC, 20 Aug. 2015. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>67</sup> Sanburn, Josh. "This Poll Shows America's Stark Racial Divide Over the Police." *Time*. Time, 18 Dec. 2014. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

The CMM was launched around the same time that the Affordable Care Act passed through Congress. In fact it was partially launched in response to the ACA, as an initiative to modernize the American health care industry during this period of significant change. However, a central piece of legislation that CMM was and is targeting is the Prescription Drug User Fee Act, or PDUFA. First enacted in 1992, PDUFA set up the new drug authorization system so that the pharmaceutical companies have to pay a fee to the FDA whenever they want the efficacy of a drug tested. This has allowed the FDA to have a revenue stream, hire more staff, and speed up the process of approving new drugs. The increased approval speed allows companies to start making a return on investment even faster, so the pharmaceutical industry is a huge proponent of these bills. The most recent version, PDUFA V passed in 2012, but was introduced in 2010. Before PDUFA V, PDUFA IV was passed in 2007, the same year Twitter launched, so this most recent PDUFA was the first where social media could be brought to bear on the voting process. And PhRMA, the pharmaceutical advocacy group, overwhelmingly supported the current iteration of PDUFA<sup>68</sup> which passed in July 2012. For the 2012 election, PhRMA spent \$421,000 on contributions to candidates, and \$18,530,000 on lobbying.<sup>69</sup> Of course, correlation does not mean causation, but the importance of money in an election year cannot be understated, so it can be assumed that the pharmaceutical companies have a seat at the table, as well they should. Looking back at the BLM side of things, it has been shown that the political war chest of the movement isn't as deep as that of the pharmaceutical industry. Civil rights legislation also doesn't come up as frequently. The last major legislation that was passed was the Voting Rights

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<sup>68</sup> "PhRMA Statement on PDUFA Reauthorization - 2010." *PhRMA*. Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America®, 12 Apr. 2010. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

<sup>69</sup> "Pharmaceutical Rsrch & Mfrs of America." *Opensecrets* RSS. The Center for Responsive Politics. Web. 17 Apr. 2016.

Act Reauthorization back in 2006. These two campaigns are successful in different ways and for different reasons.

BLM is successful because it creates/rides a recent wave of hyper awareness of police use of force. This hyper-awareness has definitely been strengthened by the proliferation of social media and the instant nature of being able to tweet or post on Facebook and having thousands of people reading it within the hour. It has used social media as many movements before BLM used the media technology of their time, as a way to change the conversation and try to influence cultural conversations. CMM is more successful in the more traditional arena of political change. Getting things done on the Hill requires multiple angles and avenues of influence, which is why there are many successful businesses and business units set up across the country to help companies navigate the complex task of getting things done in DC. Pharmaceutical companies have more experience dealing with Congress, and they have more financial resources dedicated to dealing with Congress. It's not surprise then that BLM is a household name and CMM isn't, but there has been more health care than civil rights legislation passed in recent years. That's not to say that either campaign can't be successful in the other areas.



#### Section 4 Conclusion

This section has talked about the goals of social movements, how to measure social movements and their impact (using social media as a frame), and the relative success and area of success of the two campaigns: Black Lives Matter and the Campaign for Modern Medicines. The fact that BLM is a huge hit on social media doesn't disbar it from using more traditional avenues of influence. As was suggested at the begging of this paper and what will be elaborated on in the final conclusion, is that social media is just another tool. BLM's heavy utilization of social media is one side of the coin of social influence, a side which has always been occupied by media technology. This is the side of the coin that deals with cultural change, and communicating with people. The other side of the coin is political change, and speaking to those in charge. This is the side occupied by CMM and its utilization of financial resources. Money influences politics. There have been newspaper articles, surveys, and research done that all proves that this is the case.

BLM is a massive movement. If it centralized and organized with a more financial focus in mind, it could probably amass a significant amount of money to influence politics. The CMM would have a harder time trying to take on the cultural aspect of social movements. There would need to be some sort of serious nationwide health crises that couldn't be dealt with due to some sort of inefficiency in the health care system, or pharmaceutical companies would have to spend significant sums of money on promoting the CMM. The goals of these two movements are different, but we've seen, at least a little bit, how social media is utilized by both of these campaigns as either a different kind of tool: BLM's use of social media and traditional media, or as a secondary tool for influence: CMM's use of financial resources while having a lighter social media presence. So, these two movements are different faces of the social movement.

## Conclusion

In the preceding paper, I tried to emphasize that social media is not a revolutionary technology, but rather an evolution of technology that came before it. I started with looking at historical technologies and attempted to draw parallels between historical technologies and social media. The major comparisons I wanted to emphasize were the desire for money on the part of the creators and their lack of desire to cause political upheaval. My hope is that it is clear that social media itself is not a revolution: it was built on the technologies that came before and by similar people that built those technologies. I also hoped to enforce Mr. Bagdikian's claim about the closing of the information gap. I believe that this closing of the information gap is a natural result of the technology itself, and that the act of closing this gap allows the technology to increase awareness and, in the end, cause social upheaval and revolutions.

In the second chapter, I looked at the rise of social media, the reason for its popularity, and the effects it had on speech. I discovered that, even though social media is very young, it is an incredibly lucrative industry in terms of revenue. I tried to explain its popularity and disprove Mr. Bagdikian's second point by rationalizing that people use social media to challenge traditional viewpoints and seek to find their own personal truth for the world, rather than a non-existing objective truth. I noted that social media did revolutionize how people communicated with the objective powers that be (i.e. politicians) and that politicians more often than not would use social media to find out, in a general sense, what their constituents want. This benefits them as it keeps them in office and allows their constituents to communicate with politicians.

In the third chapter, I looked at the effectiveness of social media when it comes to making changes regarding the laws. I explored metrics that are used to measure social media and its presence, and tried to correlate potential strategies with desired results. I found that there are

two different ways that social media is utilized, resulting in two different outcomes. One way is to make social media your main tool for change, as can be seen in the Black Lives Matter movements. This results in more of social/cultural change, but the disorganized nature of it leads to less political change. The second method of use is to have social media merely be an arm of influence. The Campaign for Modern Medicines uses social media in conjunction with traditional tools of influence to create a hyper focused campaign that does achieve political change. Both of these campaigns could utilize the other method, however not without significant effort or potential loss of influence.

Each of these chapters fit into the overall narrative that social media, as a technology and a tool for political change, is not a revolutionary technology but merely an evolution of traditional media technology. Mark Zuckerberg, his motivation, and his impact is no different than the impact that Gutenberg had almost 400 years ago, in that sleepy German town. So too are today's movements fundamentally no less radical in their use of technology than the revolutions of the 1840's were in their day. There has been no drastic change with the introduction of social media, just an evolution of traditional powers and traditional outliers. The world must wait a little longer for a true revolution in technology.

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