Democracy-citizens-technology:
Interstitial zones in political communication

It is rather a humongous endeavour to situate political communication at the loci of any specific discipline as politics, democracy, citizens, media systems, technologies, digital modes of production and engagement with politics, freedom of speech among others crosscut and intercut in variegated montages. The canvas of what could possibly encompass the field of political communication is filled with layers of interdisciplinary arguments. The layers are becoming thicker and this offers interesting opporunities to schoalrs to grapple with the emergent dynamics of the field. Thankfully, the shield of democracy seems to be withstanding the onslaught of virtiolic forces of the 'regimes of truth' Foucault (year). While many argue that democracy has been hacked with the flows of propaganda, fake news etc. the power to resist has not been overlooked. When 'deceiving and manipulative political communication have been essential of modern democratic politics' (Bakir et al., 2019), political communication research needs to deliver a precise understanding of the measure of communication in the application of power, holding power to account and facilitating more democratic forms of credible communication. In this context, this issue of Communication and Culture Review presents articles on political communication in the Indian context ranging from election studies to political communication and democracy.

Historically, particularly before World Wars I and II, a communication researcher would consider the following works as classical contributions, starting from Aristotle and Plato, till Marx and Engels, to the field of political communication[1]:

Aristotle's Rhetoric, a colossal influence on the progress of the rhetoric.

Gorgias, Socratic discourses inscribed by Plato, consider morality in propaganda.

The Prince, a 16th-century political exposition by Italian political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, argues that the princes can justify the use of immoral means to realize their ends.

Areopagitica, a speech of the English poet, scholar, and author John Milton to the Parlament of England, a 1644 publication, opposes licensing and censorship, defends the principle of a right to freedom of speech and expression.

John Stuart Mill's A System of Logic (1843), investigates the structure of influential argumentation.

The German Ideology, a set of manuscripts written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1846, is primarily an exposition of Marx's 'materialist conception of history.

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1.   https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/communication-political

On Liberty, a deep-thinking essay by John Stuart Mill, published in 1859, favors an ethical system of utilitarianism to society and the state, emphasizes the significance of individuality, a prerequisite to the higher pleasures, i.e., the summum bonum of utilitarianism.

What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement, a political pamphlet written by Vladimir Lenin published in 1902, represents 'a skeleton plan to be developed in greater detail' to begin a determined struggle, diffuse and ill-defined, the more capable of reasserting itself in diverse forms.

The Development of Law & Opinion in England in the 19th Century, a compilation of lectures of Albert Venn Dicey, initially delivered at Harvard Law School, helps define what it means to be a liberal.

The Mind and Society, a 1916 book by the Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto, presents the first sociological cycle theory, sprinted on the conception of an elite social class.

A generous list of this kind needs to be piled up indigenously too that would also include the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Periyar and Ambedkar, who made significant contributions to the discourse of political communication. Politics is centered on communication, especially in the middle of political domination, media, and people. Hence, political communication needs to examine the locus of interpersonal and mediated communication on the outlook, attitudes, and performances of fellow citizens, our political establishment, and all our democratic institutions, and political systems, including electoral systems, and the jurisprudence. In this edition, we have made an earnest endeavour to comprehend the socio-political sphere through the carefully chosen articles and reviews.

With this milieu in the backdrop, this edition, a combined volume of two issues of 2019, Mireille Lalancette, Vincent Raynauld, and Sofia Tourigny-Koné, present a meticulous description of ethical implications of affordance change in contemporary social media platforms, exploring the interconnections between media elites, activists, and ordinary citizens during the Quebec Maple Spring student strike in Canada. The article provides a perceptive look at the social mediascape that pays attention to the growing body of academic literature on citizen participation and protest. While Sethulakshmi, a young researcher, documents a range of notions and taxonomy concomitant to the political communication discipline, Arulselvan Senthivel, analyses the episteme of Indian election studies, by critiquing 70 years of narratives of research on Elections in India, in his article. Sunhith Ivarlu, in his article, 'semiotic analysis of political memes on Facebook pages", helps to understand the relevance of memes within a political scenario as the internet users contribute to the direct and indirect spread of different ideologies. In another article, Michel Durampart analyses the role of educational media and digital devices in the evolution of education and school in France. In his article, without idealizing the form of digital magic, he argues that the new educational media introduces new complexities, new constraints, crucial issues, and integration difficulties that must not be underestimated. Besides this, the edition also presents reviews of two topical books related to the intersections of politics, digital media, and elections, and makes this edition rich with a comprehensive spread of thought-provoking pieces.

S Arulselvan

M Shuaib Mohamed Haneef

References

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