Globalisation and Social Media: Impacts of Facebook on the Contemporary Order

Socrates Ebo

Centre for Continuing Education, Federal University Otuoke, Nigeria

Abstract: One of the products of globalization is the invention of social media. Social media literally obliterated the barriers of space and time in human interactions and communication. Globalization made the world a global village but social media made the world a global sitting room. They changed our mode of being in the world and impacted on almost every facet of humanity's social existence. It ushered a new world order: the instantaneous order where everyone follows everyone in real time from every corner of the earth. It took away the talking points of social discourse from the government and transferred it to the marketplace of the social space were everyone is a broadcaster and everyone could read everyone. This work highlights the dynamics of globalization on social media and the far-reaching impacts they have made on world order. The research is fundamentally philosophical. The methods of the research are analytic and expository.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization simply puts means making all human interactions worldwide: worldwide integration of interactions. It is about turning everything, everywhere and every event in the world into a global affair. Man, as a social animal cannot only live in his community alone but must also interact with other human societies. Since the world is a continuous entity, only the limitations of physics and nature restrict these interactions. The advances of technology in the modern and contemporary era have rolled back these limitations significantly. The invention of wind sailed ships made it possible for the known world to expand into America. The unification of social awareness between humanity in the Americas and Europe was a great feat of globalization. But then, it was just a handful of explorers making the discoveries and making the interactions. The invention of the steam ship made possible for massive movement of people from the known world to the Americas bridging effectively humanity's gap in communication and interaction as one contiguous entity. have his society interact with other societies.

The invention of trains and the construction of massive railways across Eurasian further shortened the world and brought interactions among humanity closer [1]. That was globalization advancing a notch further. The invention of the airplane and commercial flights conquered the barrier of distance effectively. Anybody could half the world within hours. The steamship enabled increased movement of goods across the globe but the commercial flight brought about speedy movement of people around the world, a significant advance in globalization. The success of the commercial flight made the world a global city.

But the world became a global village with the rise and success of Information Communication Technology. The advancement and the maximization of internet through a myriad of apps literally obliterated the limitations of space and time. The world figuratively shrank. Travels reduced and the need for physical meetings reduced. But the invention of the social media apps blew up globalization exponentially. The social media apps brought the world to the feet of every individual. Everybody became a broadcaster. Everybody could interact with anybody no matter the location on the planet in real time. There are numerous social media applications but the focus of this research is Facebook. This application more than any other social media application in recent time impacted on the world order significantly. Both of them bear enormous social, political and economic capabilities which they unleashed in the world with highly impactful ramifications. But that is what globalization is all about: shrinking the physical barriers that keep the world apart. Of course, increasing human interactions on a global scale. The world did not get to that stage in one fell swoop. The world got there in gradated stages of globalization.

The Triumph of Man over Space and Time

In antiquity, the enormity of space and the limitations of time seemed insurmountable to humanity. But the incremental developments in technology which seems to have climaxed in the contemporary era has dusted all those seeming impossibilities of the previous eras. From the Milesian era through the Aristotelian era to the Copernican era, the impediments of space limited the inventive possibilities of the human mind of man. However, bit by bit breakthroughs in science and technology compressed space to the size of the smart phone, and time to the precision of the second. Thanks to advances in globalization, today, one could sneeze in Bangkok and it would be heard in Vancouver in an instant. Anybody can maintain a virtual presence in any part of the world in a matter of an instant.

In the Roman era, continental highways were paved for horse-powered continental travels while fleets of ships were maintained for intercontinental travels. Travelling was tedious, risky and exorbitant. Today, anybody can move from one half of the globe to the other half in a matter of hours! But are travels really always that necessary nowadays? Through the Internet, anybody can be virtually present from any corner of the globe to any corner in a matter of an instant! People from different parts of the world can hold meetings

instantaneously using suitable internet social networking applications. Facebook, Twitter and so many social media platforms literally broadcast everyone to everyone in an instant defying the limitations of space and time. They bring the world to a roundtable of one on one discussions between everyone and anyone.

II. THE INTERNET REVOLUTION

The internet literally means "internetworking". This is essentially what globalization is all about – global networking! The internet is unarguably the most impactful invention of the twentieth century. It a culmination of more than half a century of scientific hard work and steady technological advancement in computing technology. The earliest computers were bulky and difficult to move about. Sharing files between computers presented a significant challenge. The only way these computers could share files was to directly copy the files on magnetic discs and physically input them in a different computer. It was a clumsy, time wasting and highly limited way of doing computing. But necessity, it is said, is the mother of invention. Christopher Strachey, the man who would become Oxford's first professor of computation keyed into the opportunity in 1959 by filing in a patent for time-sharing in computers [2]. He could not achieve this dream. However, in the same he year passed the idea to a cerebral pioneer computer scientist, Licklider. Improving greatly on Strachey's ideas. Lick;ider proposes a sort of supercomputer centre with massive information storage capacity which would serve like a mega library for other computers that would be connected to it in a symbiotic data exchange relationship [3]. Three years later, the US government hired him to materialize this vision at Information Processing Techniques Office under the Advanced Research Project Agency. For the next two years, he would work very hard at connecting the main computers at three different centres in the US Department of Defence without success [4]. Robert Taylor, his successor would eventually make it.

On October 29, 1969 Taylor successfully linked three networks using ARPANET. That was a significant breakthrough in the history of the development of the internet. ARPANET went international in 1973, with Norway making a connection. It shot up to 213 hosts by 1981 [5]. This marked a significant leap in globalization. ARPANET became essentially, the technological cradle of what we know as the internet today. With the success of ARPANET, other networks rapidly sprang to provide intercomputer networking services. Among them were Merit Network, CYCLADES, X.25, UUCP and Usenet. There arose another problem: how could the various networks interact? How could internetworking be achieved?

The research was funded by Defence Advanced Research Project Agency. It was centred on the development of a software which could bypass the peculiar characteristics of the different networks and internetwork them. The software should be host centred rather than network centred. In other words, the research was to develop the kinds of software we call internet browsers today.

In a nutshell, several US government research projects yielded gradated dividends over the years to ultimately culminate in the internet as we know it today. It is basically a collaboration between the US academia and the Pentagon. It was heavily influenced by the challenges and frightening possibilities thrown up by the Cold War. Among them was the worry about information recovery in the then likely event of a nuclear attack on the US. This very fear yielded the development of packet data transmission system [6]. The focus of the quest for the internet was predominantly military. But it had always held great academic and commercial possibilities. It was later expanded to include academic research, and much later further expanded to accommodate commercial concerns at the end of the Cold War. It was the opening up of the internet for commercial use that gave it the explosive significance it has today.

The opening up of the internet for commercial use subjected it to many social uses including the social networking services – interactive websites which encouraged mass use of the internet. This was greatly enhanced with the expansion of internet enabled gadgets to include iPads and smart phones. The expansion of internet devices meant more internet users especially on mobile devices. It marked the shift in internet usage from government and corporations to everyday people in the streets. The internet took globalization to explosive levels. The social networking service providers would eventually turn the globe into a global sitting room.

III. SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICE

Improvements on computer technology and the commercialization of the internet meant that more people could access computers and the internet. Early computers were bulky and weighty. Steady improvements in computer designs made computers portable and affordable. The desktop gradually became a regular office and home appliance. This created the market for the popularization of the electronic mail – the e-mail. The e-mail revolutionized letter writing from a post office affair to a computer affair. The introduction of laptop computers, made e-mails even more popular. The success of the electronic mail made social networking service providers to even expand their services to go into social media. The social networking services provided platforms for people to share data: pictures, videos, documents, locations etc. They would grow in complexity and significance to be eventually be predominantly known as social media.

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The rise and success of social networking services culminated in the birthing and dominance of the social media as the most dominant feature of the internet. The social media are interactive social networks that allow for user generated content. Their development and popularity in the late 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century brought new dimensions to globalization and internet usage. There are so

many social media platforms ranging from career focused platforms, social interaction focused platforms, dating focused platforms to multipurpose platforms. The level of interactions possible among users varies from one platform to platform another. There are over a hundred widely used social media platforms. Although a lot of them predate Facebook, Facebook remains the most wildly used social media platform. Facebook has grown so rapidly to garner about 2.8 billion users, effectively dominating the social networking websites in spread and volume of users. Some of the most popular social media platforms and the volume of their users are listed below:

1. Facebook: 2.8 billion users, founded in 2004
2. YouTube: 2.3 billion users, founded in 2005
3. WhatsApp: 2 billion users, founded in 2009
4. Facebook Messenger: 1.3 billion users, founded in 2011
5. Instagram: 1.3 billion users, founded in 2010
6. WeChat: 1.2 billion users, founded in 2011
7. TikTok: 732 million users, founded in 2016
8. Douyin: 600 million users, founded in 2016
9. QQ: 595 million users, founded in 1999
10. Telegram: 550 million users, founded in 2013
11. Snapchat: 528 million users, founded in 2011
12. Weibo: 521 million users, founded in 2009.
13. Qzone: 517 million users, founded in 2005
14. Kuaishou: 481 million users, founded in 2011
15. Pinterest: 459 million users, founded in 2009
16. Reddit: 430 million users, founded in 2005
17. Twitter: 396 million users, founded in 2006
18. Skype: 300 million users, founded in 2003
19. Quora: 300 million users, founded in 2009
20. LinkedIn: 250, million users, founded in 2003 [7].

While many of the social media platforms are popular and widely used around the world, some serve mainly regional needs. Some cannot work outside their region. Truth Social for instance can only be used in the US [8]. Some dating social media platforms serve only regional purposes. While most social media platforms run on both phones and computers, some run only on mobile phones. Even among those that run on mobile phones some still are operating systems specific. Truth Social does not run on android. Nothing changed human interactions like the social media platforms. They definitely ushered in a new way of being in the world; a completely new order.

The Development of Facebook

In February 2004, a young Harvard University student, with his roommates launched an internet site they thought would help prospective students to select colleges. The site would grow rapidly beyond their expectations and metamorphose to what we know today as Facebook. It would become a social media network of global proportions, clinching almost a billion users eight years after in 2012; and by 2022, Facebook had well over two billion users. Such is the meteoric success of Facebook. The world has not been the same ever after.

Facebook connects users all over the world as long as they can access the Internet, either on their phones, iPads or computers. The network is free and thoroughly accessible. The widespread accessibility of the social media platform made a broadcaster out of everyone [9]. The Facebook revolution came with peculiar philosophical imperatives. Facebook creates the interface for real-time, real-life interactions. The virtual proximity and real-life interpersonal and interactive situations that Facebook creates have enormous and decisively impactful significance on the world's values, politics and social interactions in general [10,11]. On Facebook, one could develop real friendships with real persons across the world, decimating the limitations of space and time; crossing cultural boundaries and operating on cross cultural values. Facebook creates bonds among humanity and makes interpersonal bonding across the globe commonplace. Facebook creates the avenue for cross cultural interactions of global proportions the result is a synthesis of values on a global scale, increased bonding of humanity and synthesis of worldviews.

Facebook has features for all manner of groups – closed, secret or open groups. The implication is that dissidents and social activists are able to disseminate their values across the globe without much government control. The Arab Spring was greatly influenced by Facebook [12]. The "Occupy" protests which spread through the globe like wildfire were coordinated and popularized on Facebook []. Thanks to Facebook, a protest which began as a local event in Wall Street, became a global phenomenon. The protests would eventually spread to over a hundred American cities and over a thousand, five hundred cities, worldwide [13] That was a clear demonstration that Facebook has emerged as a peculiar socio-political force with global ramifications. Facebook has redefined the concept of social actions. It has altered the fundamental bases of international socio-political actions. Facebook is driving a shift in international politics from leader-based direction to citizens-based direction. It has knit the world into a global city where every event everywhere is subject to discussion anywhere.

In the moral arena, Facebook has made every facet of life penetrable. Anybody can talk intimately to anybody from any part of the world in total privacy on Facebook. Facebook is dominated by the youths; the result is the globalization of the values of the youths. The principles of freedom and personal liberty dominate social interactions on Facebook. These norms have been re-echoed around the world by Facebook users. Facebook seems to be turning the world into a single virtual society of common dominant values. This has significant ramifications for the traditional relativity of values was accustomed to, and the foundations of international diplomacy.

Facebook continues to evolve and reshape the human society. Today, Facebook is no longer the exclusive preserve of youths. Even seniors can be found on Facebook. Government departments maintain accounts on Facebook. Public figures maintain accounts on Facebook. Facebook has expanded to

acquire WhatsApp, an end to end encrypted messaging platform. Facebook has also bought Instagram, a social networking platform where people essentially share videos and photos. It continues to expand in size, subscription and products, the latest being Metaverse. The company later changed its name from Facebook to Meta.

The Globalization of Humanity

A by-product of the impacts of the social media, especially Facebook on globalization is the globalization of humanity or what I may call 'globetriotism'. Patriotism is increasingly giving way to globetriotism. Prior to the World War I, the cliché was 'patriotism'. Citizens defined their existence within the concept, context and confines of their nationality. The post-World War II world was one in which bloc consciousness was the bonding factor. People defined themselves in terms of the bloc their nation subscribed to. It was a case of bipolar globalization. The world was globalized along the capitalist West and the communist East. Africans and the Asians who could not measure up as well other nations that dillydallied made do with the Non-aligned Movement. It was a world of bipolar culture, bipolar politics and bipolar fears. With the fall of communism in the 1990s, the reintegration of humanity took off. The 'web' became the cliché. It was truly a web. Humanity was inexorably interwoven into an inextricable web. Incidentally, the internet is partly a creation of the Cold War. Today, to most people, national identity means not much more than the passport they carry in their wallets. Humanity has been interwoven into a single web. Thanks to the social media, especially Facebook. In today's Facebook interwoven world, whatever happens in any part of the globe inexorably has ripples in other parts of the globe.

V. GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW ORDER.

At every stage in the history and process of globalization, there has always been a corresponding world order. 1492 to 1800 was the era of nation states. In this era, globalization was championed by the nation states. Nation states entered into treaties with other nation states in the quest to build a comity of nations. That was the era of globalization that produced the Peace of Westphalia which was undoubtedly the seed of the modern-day European Union [14]. The citizenry had little or no role in the globalization of this era. Rulers and princes negotiated with leaders and princes from other nations on behalf of their subjects. That was the global order of that era. The order produced the web of alliances that eventually led to the WWI. It was equally the era of globalization that produced colonialism and imperialism. It was the era that established the English Language as a global language. It was a globalization according to the Westerner's values. The non-West was simply an object the West acted upon. In this era, the history of the world was largely a history of the West acting upon non-West. It was also the era that globalized the presence of the Western man: from Indo-China to Australia and New Zealand, from New Zealand to South Africa, South Africa to Zimbabwe, from Zimbabwe all the way to Algeria.

It was a West dominated global order. The order was neither fuelled by the internet nor Facebook but by Western superior fire power. It was the globalization of the West upon the globe.

The next phase of globalization was ushered in by the sophistication of industrial technology and the rise of multinational companies. It was a production driven globalization. To maximize profits, companies realized that they must look beyond the barriers of national boundaries. They had to access cheap labour and cheap raw materials. This era of globalization created a new world order dominated by transnational financial institutions. It was more or less capitalism without borders. It was the globalization of profit. It was predominantly a globalization defined in economic terms. The technologically driven economic globalization would ultimately usher in a new order with the commercialization of the internet.

As stated earlier on, the internet is partly a creation of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War led to the commercialization of the internet. The social media gave the internet a novel use. They started as a quest to make profit off technology. But ended up becoming the decisive instrument of globalization in the 21st century, bringing humanity together in a way never done before. The social media, especially Facebook created a new social order that is citizen-driven. In the contemporary era of globalization, the Facebook enabled individual acts directly on the global scene. The contemporary social order has no central control. Even the attempts by big-tech to direct it attracted severe backlash. The new social media enabled order has neither a unified control nor a pre-determined direction. The playing ground is cheap to the point of free; the ground itself is mostly level or can be reasonably levelled. Affordable internet continues to bond humanity together.

Facebook created a web of human interconnectedness which resulted in a global pool and mesh of billions of people, making irrelevant, the barriers of geo-politics, culture, space and time. Facebook virtually brought humanity together on the screens of the internet enabled mobile phone. Facebook bestowed enormous social powers on the individual in the contemporary world. In the present dispensation, an individual could without stress broadcast himself across the globe just on Facebook. There are almost no restrictions on whose influence he could come under, and whom he could influence. On Facebook, the individual could have group interactions with people five continents away from him and across five continents instantaneously. He could make friends across the globe, just using Facebook. He could proselytize whatever political opinion or action he chose on person to person basis across the globe on Facebook, at practically little more than zero cost.

Facebook has over a couple of billion users. That means over billions people interconnected, networking, exchanging ideas and coordinating actions without boundaries. What we have today is more or less social media civilization. On Facebook,

people rise beyond the confines of their immediate environment to interact with the entire world. Consequently, they come into immediate contact with people from other civilizations, get interconnected, evolved a broader culture characterized by liberty, egalitarianism and freedom of expression, giving the world a new order. The social networks created a global virtual society, making possible, speedy diffusion of ideas and social attitudes.

The emerging Facebook facilitated order is spreading the values upon which liberal democracy runs. People's outlooks are increasingly becoming universal. More and more people view themselves as citizens of the world. As the latest form of globalization is permeating the world, the dichotomy that characterized the Cold War order is giving way to the virtual community of humanity promoted by Facebook and other social media platforms. The clashes of civilization are ebbing way as radical Islam and totalitarian dictatorships are gradually giving way to liberal democracy. The overall effect of these developments is a tremendous increase in the power of events in a part of the world to influence events in other parts of the world.

VI. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The role of the social media, especially Facebook in the bonding of the globe is conspicuously highlighted in this work. The work analysed the role of social media in globalizing the world. Their imperatives were studied in detail as well as the socio-political order they have helped to engender. In this regard, the research was able to prove that social isolation of a people is no longer possible in the globally networked world where social interactions have broken all territorial barriers. Interactions among diverse people across the world continue to explode as the internet becomes more citizens directed. Social networking platforms fostered a new order where the entire world has been brought together almost as a single social community. Facebook has continued to mitigate the contradictions among civilizations across the globe. There is a growing sense of universal unanimity. It is not yet uhuru with the world. There is not a completely fair order yet neither is there a balanced globalization as yet. Powerful countries still take advantage of weaker nations. Disparities abound. Most times, the social values that are globalized are the values of those who control the instruments of globalization. Those who control Facebook and other social media platforms often promote their personally held values as the universal standard. Sometimes, they manipulate the enormous capacity of the social media to influence people's views and choices on political issues. Most of the nations that championed globalization did it with a view

to domination among other things. However, the processes and forces of globalization have become so dynamic that they cannot be helmed in by the monopolistic controls of any single nation.

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