The Propaganda Machine: Social Media Bias and the Future of Democracy

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Social Media Bias and the Future of Democracy

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Introduction

The narratives concerning social media, in their first phase, focused– at the beginning of the twenty-first century – on the emancipatory value of the globalized means of expression which allegedly would introduce more democracy and freedom of speech. The first optimistic impetus gave way, however, to a more cautious and critical perspective on social media: the pervasive influence achieved by Facebook, Google, etc., recalled the public opinion on the private interests of those major technology corporations affecting such a broad dimension of the public debate. Moreover, the manipulative use of social media by multiple extremist and violent organizations questioned deeply the ingenuity of the net, highlighting the threats related to the newly available forms of propaganda. The chapter will debate the classical approach to propaganda through a set of theoretical questions: how could we reconceptualize propaganda in consideration of the social media phenomenon? What are the contemporary processes of "manufacturing consent" and how are they related to the social media bias?

The Propaganda Model in the Age of Social Media

Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman outlined the propaganda model for the first time in their 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (2010). The model was conceived from the perspective of the political economy of communication to explain the behavioral and performance patterns of the US mass media in relation to news production. The original version of the model focuses on the propaganda dimension of information by

identifying five filters – ownership, advertising, information sourcing, flak and anti-communism – through which information must pass before seeing the light. The propaganda model was basically a mass media model, based on the intertwined power relations between US political and economic elites and mass media.

Despite the classic model having received several criticisms (Mullen, 2007, 2009; Pedro, 2011), it still represents a reference for the reflection on the propaganda phenomenon and it was recently revisited by Christian Fuchs in consideration of the spread of social media (2018). Fuchs discusses Chomsky and Herman's lesson trying to identify the elements of continuity and change with respect to the original model: regarding the issue of ownership and advertising, today as in the 1980s, the social media scene is characterized by an oligopoly articulated on a few technological players – Google, Facebook, Twitter and advertising has become the dominant social media business model. According to the advertising business, in fact, billions of users can enjoy free services – instant messaging, social networking, publication of personal audiovisual contents, etc. – while offering personal data and content (the same services that are accessed free of charge) that the platforms re-sell to advertisers:

> Google, Facebook and Twitter are not just sources of news and information. These websites are also among the world's largest advertising agencies. They are in the business of selling targeted ad space as a commodity and derive their revenues almost exclusively from targeted advertising.
>
> *(ibid., 75)*

Two other filters of the original model are discussed by Fuchs through a social media perspective: sourcing and flaking. In the first aspect, Fuchs insists that in spite of their greater openness and availability, social media are actually dominated by mainstream media as the main sources of information: subjects tend eventually to read on social media, the same sources of information that they use in traditional ways. The top visited social media pages turn out to polarize around the major newspapers such as *NY Times*, CNN, Fox, etc., as well as around a high number of movie stars, music performers, etc. Traditional news organizations remain powerful actors in online news dominating social media attention.

Chomsky defines flaking as a lobbying or containment activity on mainstream media:

> "Flak" refers to negative responses to a media statement or program. It may take the form of letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills before Congress, and other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action. It may be organized centrally or locally, or it may consist of the entirely independent actions of individuals.
>
> *(Chomsky & Herman, 2010, 26)*

According to Fuchs, in the digital age, lobbying for certain interests has been extended to social media and is no longer simply aimed at centralized media organizations, but now aims to directly transmit political messages to as many internet users as possible:

> The basic difference between computer networks and broadcasting is that the network is a universal machine, at once a technology of production, distribution and consumption. Combined with its global reach and significant bandwidth rates, this allows the phenomenon of user-generated content. User-generated content does however not automatically imply political plurality and diversity.
>
> *(Fuchs, 2018, 78).*

In spite of the outdated rhetoric concerning the "user-generated contents" related to the first development of the web 2.0 (O' Reilly, 2009), Fuchs highlights a central element of propaganda 2.0: that is the appearance on the social media scene of non-institutional actors who are not part of the elite talked about by Chomsky in his classic model. These new actors, thanks to social media, can express their political ideas, their opinions on climate change or on their favorite football teams. Nevertheless, both these new subjects and their counter-narratives present an ambivalent nature: on the one hand they express the possibility to be issuers of their own messages and to be precisely subjects of the mass self-communication (Castells, 2013), on the other hand those new voices can only illusively give rise to new different points of view. Fuchs emphasizes how the social mediascape is in fact dominated by an homogeneous aesthetics of entertainment inspired by a dominant neo-liberal ideology that prevents the formation of a mature and conscious public debate. This superficial and entertainment-oriented public sphere enhances in fact emotional rather than rational debate and it may even facilitate visceral forms of social communication that can also assume the drifts of extremism, hate speech, etc. As a matter of fact, Herman and Chomsky also argued in a recent interview that right-wing media, including Fox News, right-wing talk radio and blogs, form "a right-wing attack machine and echo-chamber." In the current political climate of nationalism, racism, xenophobia and elements of fascism, social media is certainly a right-wing attack machine. It must, however, also be seen that the political left is skilled at using social media, which maintains online politics as a contradictory space (Mullen, 2009).

The reading of Fuchs therefore denotes, in the transition from a propaganda mass media model to that of social media, very marginal changes that do not significantly influence the dynamics and relations of political and economic power affecting the manufacturing of consent. According to Fuchs, social media as well as the mass media are still dominated by an oligopoly of actors – only partly different from the traditional media networks of the 1980s – that

operate equally powerful and binding filters on the conditions for developing a real open public debate.

The Social Media Bias

As well as the Chomsky's inspired elements referred to in the classic propaganda model, other dimensions should be included as the proper bias of social media affecting new forms of propaganda in the twenty-first century.

As Harold Innis maintained in the 1950s, the bias of communication – the characterizing traits of a certain medium – are fundamental in marking the character of an era: its culture, its arts and above all, its power and control over knowledge (Innis, 2008).

More recently, Neil Postman (2000), referring to the tradition of the Toronto School, wrote:

> A medium is a technology within which a culture grows; it is to say, it gives form to a culture of politics, social organization, and habitual ways of thinking. Beginning with that idea, we invoked another biological metaphor, that of ecology.

In Postman's reflection, a conception of the media is developed as an "environment" within which a culture grows and influences different aspects of society: politics, social relations, the way of thinking in general. Thinking of contemporary forms of propaganda in these terms means therefore going beyond an analysis focused on the forms of economic and political relations and economic power, but considering the contemporary propaganda as the result of a media environment – that of social media – which has its own specific bias influencing public opinion, attitudes and voting behaviors.

This chapter will highlight the social media bias affecting the contemporary processes of dissemination and information sharing within the public debate, and it also aims to discuss how such biases can produce new forms of propaganda: new content that becomes more and more a characteristic manifestation of the social media debate. But before outlining those bias, a preliminary topic should be addressed:

What do we talk about when we talk about propaganda today?

What Do We Talk about When We Talk about Propaganda Today?

The concept of propaganda may appear obsolete in contemporary Western democracies where journalism practices adhere to ethical standards and rules of

conduct that guarantee in most cases transparency, reliability and confidentiality of the sources; nevertheless, the term propaganda has persistently returned in recent years as an analytical category to describe diverse social and political phenomena which seem to have one common denominator: the role of social media – e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. – as an enabling technological environment capable of significantly conditioning not only the processes of dissemination of news and information online, but also the actions of subjects influenced by propaganda. This is the case, for example, of the recent Cambridge Analytica scandal related to US presidential elections in 2016 which involved the exploitation and the deliberative manipulation of millions of social media Facebook profiles as the target of ad-hoc propaganda, or the case of systematic propaganda that several authoritarian regimes (China, Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia) implement to strengthen the consensus among their citizens, or even the increasingly decisive role that social media seem to have in the forms of socialization of extremist organizations that use networks to recruit new affiliates, to spread hate messages online, and to reinforce their echo chambers. In these phenomena that I will describe below, social media turn out to be at the center of the propaganda dynamics while the mainstream media, once at the center of debate, appear in the background in the role of authoritative counterpart with respect to the fragmented and chaotic voices arising from social media.

The Facebook Targeted Propaganda

At the beginning of 2018, the facts related to Cambridge Analytica scandal, the articulated and intertwined relations network among prominent politicians and spin-doctors – US President Donald Trump and his former communication consultant Steve Bannon – the social media giant Facebook and a group of academics from Cambridge University, highlighted the complexity of the propaganda phenomenon at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In March 2018, the testimony of Christopher Wylie – previously Cambridge Analytica head of research – along with the comments of the former Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix collected by Channel4 News, revealed that the data-mining company, harvested data of up to 87 million Facebook users thanks to a quiz application realized by a Cambridge University researcher, Aleksandr Kogan. The mentioned application – myPersonality – now banned by Facebook, collected data not only from its direct users but also from the users' network of friends exploiting the network connections structure of the social media platform. As well as exploiting personal data from users, accusations toward Cambridge Analytica stated that personal data were illegally used for actively influencing users in the 2016 US elections and in the context of the Brexit referendum with targeted contents supporting pro-Trump votes and Leave votes.[1] As a result of the scandal, Cambridge Analytica

closed its London headquarters in May 2018, also due to an investigative report which revealed the company's involvement in influencing the elections of at least eight different countries such as India, Malta, Kenya, Mexico, etc.[2] Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg had been repeatedly summoned to clarify to the US Senate, his company's regulations in the subject of protecting users privacy.[3] Very recently Facebook suspended other 400 applications on the allegation that they misused users' personal data.[4]

The Cambridge Analytica case is nowadays an ongoing trial and its consequences have still to be defined both in a legal and economic sense. Moreover, the case revealed to the outlines of a propaganda machine which radically differs from that used to in the twentieth century: cultural and socio-technical consequences of the Cambridge Analytica case will be more impactful on propaganda conceptualization rather than on its business implications.

The Authoritarian Regimes Propaganda and the Exploitation of Social Media

In 2009, 2010 and 2011, social media were hailed as new fundamental tools for different revolutionary movements that had shaken several countries in the Middle East (Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria): the so-called Arab Springs movement. In particular, the facts of Tahir Square in Egypt, or the video of the young Tunisian who burnt himself to protest against the grievance shared by a whole generation of unemployed youngsters, have recalled through a cascade of tweets, posts and YouTube videos, recalled the Western opinion to give attention to those dramatic uprisings. Even if the attention of the major Western media indeed focused in those weeks on the streets in Egypt as in Tunisia, the final outcome of the uprisings has not been – except in Tunisia where the premier Ali was forced to resign and to go into exile – revolutionary in a proper sense (Abouzeid, 2011; Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011; Khondker, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2011). In some cases, as in Iran in 2099 authoritarian regimes have exploited the attention of Western media, accusing the West of interference in their internal politics and have even solicited the population to republish on social media, counter-narratives supporting the government against the individuals supporting the protests (Morozov, 2012). In short, the disruptive use of social media in the so-called revolutionary phase has led – in Iran and in Egypt for example – to a subsequent tightening of control measures and repression by the authoritarian regimes who then became promoters of their targeted counter-propaganda. This counter-propaganda effort has also been accomplished thanks to the automated social bots: automated software able to create and to spread online propaganda contents as if they were real social media users. As Morozov claims (ibid.), these facts show that a first wave of optimism and technological utopianism linked to the democratic properties of the use of social media has given way to a more cautious consideration of

social media as tools, whose contribution to the democratic life depends on a set of contextual factors and not on the alleged "participatory" qualities of the media themselves.

What seems to be a scandal in Western democracies – that is, the manipulation of social media for political purposes – is nevertheless a widespread practice in authoritarian regimes such as China or Russia where the instrumental use of social media as a means of strengthening consensus among citizens, is a practice usually carried out by civil servants. These authoritative regimes systematically use social media to disseminate, also through the use of automated chat-bots, messages and opinions favorable to a precise political position trying to orient the opinions and attitudes of citizens in a unilateral way (Woolley & Howard, 2018).

Various authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China have adopted ambivalent policies in the social media management: on the one hand they practice a censorship aimed at the Western platforms (Google, Facebook, YouTube) but on the other hand, they are aware of the enormous potential of social media as a business opportunity and also as a monitoring tool for public opinion. They designed and implemented their own social media platforms – e.g., Vkontakte or Weibo – which resemble Facebook, Google, etc. in many senses – but are controlled and managed by the government. This allows the authoritarian states to exploit the business potentials related to the use of social media – e-commerce or simply the flywheel effect that social applications have on the purchase of smart-phones and internet traffic thus benefiting the big ICT companies – and at the same time it allows the authoritarian regimes to protect themselves from the commercial colonization of Western players such as Facebook, Google and their possible interference in their status quo.

Violent and Extremist Propaganda

Social media are described by many as enabling factors for the spreading of extremist propaganda often characterized by extreme right inspired xenophobic and racial discourses or, on the opposite side, by a violent opposition to Western imperialism, as in the recent Jihadist online phenomenon dominated by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) (Stern & Berger, 2015). Alongside the political forms of expression of discontent, new forms of extremism and radicalization emerge online assuming the form of terrorist propaganda. A typical trait of this phenomenon is the use of violence – verbal and visual – as a propaganda tool used to engage emotionally and cognitively its alleged target (Meleagrou-Hitchens & Kaderbhai, 2016, Hoskins et al., 2011, Atwan, 2015). I am referring to the recent phenomenon of ISIS propaganda and in particular to the appeal aimed mainly at young Europeans to become Foreign Fighters and to join the construction of the Islamic State in the Levant. The young propaganda targets, born and raised in Europe – as various studies have

shown – decide to adhere to such an extreme cause because they do not have a job, because they feel disappointed with expectations of personal growth and social affirmation or because, especially in the case of the second and third-generation immigrants, they feel socially and economically marginalized (Carter et al., 2014; Neumann, 2015; Roy, 2016).

Many studies analyzed the role of social media as powerful propaganda tools able to conquer the hearts and minds of such young people by offering them basically two elements: a set of radical narratives, finely elaborated and distributed online in the aesthetic canons of Western communication (Maggioni & Magri, 2015; Monaci et al., 2017); online echo-chambers within which the identities of individuals are radicalized, polarized on opinions and attitudes that do not include doubts or comparisons with different opinions, re-strengthening the bonds within the group and with the charismatic leaders.

These groups, even if virtual, offer many young people the illusory opportunity to build a new identity in the radical rejection of what they had been before: that's why many Foreign Fighters consider themselves as "born again" (Awan, 2017; Farwell, 2014; Mahood & Rane, 2017; Monaci et al., 2018). Moreover, echo chambers facilitate the emergence of de-individualized collective identities: identities which lose their biographic and personal traits and are increasingly polarized and concentrated on ideology, a shared narrative which represents the main bond and the common ground of the extremist group (Sunstein, 2018, 236–342)

To what extent are these phenomena referable to social media? What are the social media bias enabling the targeted forms of propaganda, as in the Cambridge Analytica case, or the manipulation of propaganda implemented by authoritarian regimes, or what makes social media so effective tools in spreading the violent propaganda of terrorist groups?

Social Media User Commodification

The concept refers to "audience commodification" formulated originally by Dallas Smythe's (1981) and discussed more recently by Fuchs (2012). For social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, consumption is subsumed by commodity production. That is, as the service is consumed, new commodities (user-generated data) are produced that in turn can be sold to advertisers, therefore generating a twofold commodification of the user that Fuchs labels the "digital labor prosumer commodity" (ibid.).

What bias is the phenomenon linked to?

Since their emergence at the end of the 1990s, social media and then web 2.0 has been characterized by persistence and traceability (Boyd, DM, & Ellison, NB, 2007): data left by users once "written" were no longer owned by the users but become an integral part of the platform (even if at that time there was no main platform at all and Facebook was still a promising PhD research).

What was not clear to early observers was how these data would be used, by whom – which players would have taken advantage of that huge stream of user-generated content – and especially why and under what conditions users would have continued to insert their own data in the form of comments, blogs, posts, etc. Until 2006–2007 there was not a single subject able to optimize the enormous availability of user data; in 2007 Facebook appeared online with an innovative business model: it offered to the subscribers the free opportunity to connect to other subjects (at the time only students of qualified American private universities) offering them a free entertainment information service and the opportunity to sift into other student social profiles. Based on the subscriber's data – photos, messages, personal opinions – Facebook developed an advertising business model that exploited the users' social profiles as advertising targets: Social media users became "the target" for buying advice, friends suggestions, brands offers, etc. Rapidly this model became a *de facto* standard: the commodification of social network profile data became a standard model in the functioning of the various emerging social media platforms: Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, etc. In other words, social media have become the only media in which the subjects of online messages are both issuers and content at the same time: online profiles and identities are in fact reduced to traceable, manipulable, commodified data exploited by platforms for different purposes: targeted propaganda, online marketing, social dating, etc.

Moreover, even if users registered on social networks are aware of this mechanism, they seem to accept a profitable compromise between privacy and the advantages freely made available by the social networks: the enormous expansion of the main social platforms in recent years has not stopped but has rather been re-articulated among old and new social networks (Fuchs, 2017).

The commodification of data therefore results, despite the many critical voices, in a growing trend: a constant bias in the current social media landscape.

The Cambridge Analytica phenomenon – of which the substantial results in relation to the election trend is still to be assessed – is nevertheless symptomatic of the commodity phenomenon: the exploitation of online identities translated into data has made possible the manipulative and distortive propaganda whose outcomes will have long-term consequences on the democratic political life of the United States, UK and also in the rest of the world.

Social Media Computational Data

If the subjects of social media communication can be commodified as data, can they still be referred to as an actual individual? Couldn't they be replicated and or created fictitiously? This is the case of computational propaganda BOTs, where fake profiles are invented to multiply messages to support this or that organization or to force voters to opt for a specific party.

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Computational propaganda is a term that refers to the recent phenomenon of digital misinformation and manipulation. As a communicative practice, computational propaganda describes the use of algorithms, automation and human curation to purposefully manage and distribute misleading information over social media networks (Woolley & Howard, 2016a). "As part of the process, coders and their automated software products (BOTs) will learn from and imitate legitimate social media users in order to manipulate public opinion across a diverse range of platforms and device networks" (Woolley & Howard, 2018). These bots are built to behave like real people – for example, automatically generating and responding to conversations online – and then let loose over social media sites in order to amplify or suppress particular political messages. These automated social actors can be used to bolster particular politicians and policy positions supporting them actively and enthusiastically, while simultaneously drowning out any dissenting voices (Abokhodair et al., 2015). They can be managed in conjunction with human troll armies to "manufacture consensus" or to otherwise give the illusion of general support for a (perhaps controversial) political idea or policy, with the goal of creating a bandwagon effect (Woolley & Guilbeault, 2017). This practice interests both authoritarian countries where social media platforms are a primary means of social control but it even affects the democratic life of Western countries especially during political and security crises. The consequences and the impact of the use of computational propaganda are the objects of study and analysis: Woolley and Howard (ibid.) observed that, for example, during the 2016 US presidential campaign, the computational propaganda practice had been exploited by both parties – Republican and Democratic – and that there's also little control and still approximate legislation on this aspect.

Automated Selectivity and Echo Chambers

Which social media bias facilitates the creation of online echo chambers ?

Some elements have always characterized the participation of individuals in online environments: e.g., the ease and affordability of access to online environments. Since the 1990s, in the first virtual communities and then later in blogs or in collective projects such as Wikipedia, anyone could access and contribute to a collective dialogue without any economic or cultural threshold. Another element characterizing "online participation" is anonymity: the possibility of assuming a fictitious identity or even multiple different identities based on the different types of online environments that one attends, which may be the multi-player gaming platform or the political blog or the community of interest related to their hobbies. Another element is the opportunity to reach millions of users thanks to the growing diffusion of online social platforms and the practices oriented to "prosumerism": the creative re-working of the content generated by users.

Starting from the second half of the 2000s, social media added to these prerogatives, some new and important dimensions. First of all, social media favors what anthropologists define as selective sociability, or the possibility of connecting only with selected subjects that the individual can decide whether to re-enter or exclude from his or her friends' network or followers (Miller et al., 2016). This dynamic favors the definition of relatively closed groups characterized by a certain level of homophilia: individuals who share the same tastes, opinions, lifestyle and consumption styles. Moreover, homophilia is enhanced by the logic of the "social network algorithm" that profiles our networks of friendships and systematically suggests new pages or profiles similar to ours, reinforcing the similarities instead of the differences among our social networks. Does this mean that anyone active on social media lives in an echo chamber? Not so, everyone is free, regardless of the recommendations of the platforms, to expand and diversify his own network thanks to the serendipity in following contacts and relationships very different from those that reflect their tastes or their political orientations.

However, it is evident how these characteristics might greatly help the possibility of spreading messages within selected networks homogeneous for propensities and political views, expanding these networks thanks to the social algorithm encouraging homophilia and popularity, and channeling to these networks personalized messages, visually and emotionally adapted to the type of target and subjects that are to be intercepted. Through the mechanism of selective sociability these networks can also remain relatively closed to outsiders or those who want to enter uninvited, thus reinforcing the cohesion and identification of the subjects within the group, essential to the good impact of propaganda.

Many recent studies on the phenomenon of recruitment and indoctrination of Foreign Fighters by ISIS have highlighted evidence that supports this thesis. First, the process of online radicalization is most of the time a bottom–up process: that is the young people search the web for information and news about a particular organization to get closer to this, and not vice versa (Marone, 2016; Vidino & Marone, 2017). After an initial approach the subjects can be co-opted within virtual groups (Facebook or Telegram groups) in which propaganda content may circulate: extremist magazines, ad-hoc texts of the Koran, leaders accounts. Moreover the subjects are introduced gradually inside to a closed social network – an echo chamber precisely – aimed at strengthening the individuals' ideological positions and their commitment to the cause.

Moreover, social media make available to the extremist propaganda, formats, languages and audiovisual styles widely appreciated at the emotional level: graphic memes, popular hashtags, short videos integrated by infographics. In recent years, ISIS has, for example, taken up these propaganda formats with great freedom and creative capacity, perfectly emulating the styles and aesthetics of Hollywood trailers and commercial marketing. Through the use of

Tweets on the daily life under the Caliphate, or the motivational videos in the Dabiq propaganda magazines recalling the aesthetics of highly successful video games such as Call of Duty (a particularly popular title especially in Saudi Arabia) (Maggioni & Magri, 2015), ISIS has shown to know how to exploit the most popular social media trends to achieve its own goals (Weiss & Hassan, 2016; Winkler & Pieslak, 2018).

Conclusions

The emergence of social media as a central platform in modern public life raises new questions and problems for the advancement of contemporary dem-ocracies. If, in some totalitarian states, social media are routinely used as new forms of social control, even in the most evolved democracies of the West, the social media bias may significantly produce ambiguous and pervasive forms of propaganda, often at the service of extremist, anti-democratic organizations that represent a serious threat to the public life for millions of citizens.

Recently the governments of many Western countries (Europe, US, Canada) established actions and various legislative protocols of agreement with the major online players (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) to deal with the threat of global terrorism online propaganda in which ISIS, between 2014 and 2016, proved to be one of the most active subjects. The online platforms have therefore developed various tools to contain the flow of messages of indoctrin-ation or aimed at recruiting young people in the West (Gillespie, 2018). In this case the collaboration between governments and the major private players has shown proof of effectiveness and positive cooperation.

Other cases – the most striking is Cambridge Analytica – revealed the ambiguous relations between technological players such as Facebook, a number of lobbying subjects related to the presidential campaign and mul-tiple private software companies.

Computational propaganda is now one of the most powerful tools against democracy. Social media firms may not be creating this nasty content, but they offer a safe harbor for them. Social media have the power to control what information or news people see; that gives them the responsibility for making sure this information is not harmful, harassing or false. This is espe-cially true during pivotal political events like elections, but also true in general.

Social media platforms must play a central and a new role in the mediation, moderation and also in the redesign of the bias which significantly affects the democratic debate online.

As Woolley, S. C., & Howard observed:

> they cannot rely upon tired defenses about being technology not media companies. Trending features, algorithmic curation, and personalized news feeds mean that companies do, to use their language, arbitrate

truth. Because they control information flow, they are media companies. To solve these problems, social media companies must confront their role as media platform. They must design for democracy.

(ibid., 3025 (kindle pos.)

Notes

1 For a detailed report of the scandal cf. The Cambridge Analytica Files, *The Guardian* www.theguardian.com/news/series/cambridge-analytica-files;
2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_Analytica
3 For a full transcript of Marc Zuckerberg hearing on April 11, 2018 cfr. www. washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/10/transcript-of-mark-zucker bergs-senate-hearing/?utm_term=.a49c7bb5cd7c
4 https://gizmodo.com/facebook-bans-app-that-inspired-cambridge-analytica-and-1,828,548,982

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