

**PANEL 2**  
**STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF  
FALSEHOOD AND UNREALITY**

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**New Media, Digital Diaspora and Political Activism**

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## NEW MEDIA:WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

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- Technology driven rapid changes in communication.
- More interactive,
- Offering freedom to choose, navigate from vast information sources.
- Vast and 24/7 information flow,
- New media tools : Facebook, tweeter, YouTube, Instagram...ect .

# NOTABLE FEATURE OF NEW MEDIA INCLUDES

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- Mass communication and source of Information
- Mobilization and cultural globalization,
- Contribute to collective intelligence and group thinking through virtual networks.
- Unique reality, completely different than the face-to-face reality.
- Inundated with information on issues, people and events.

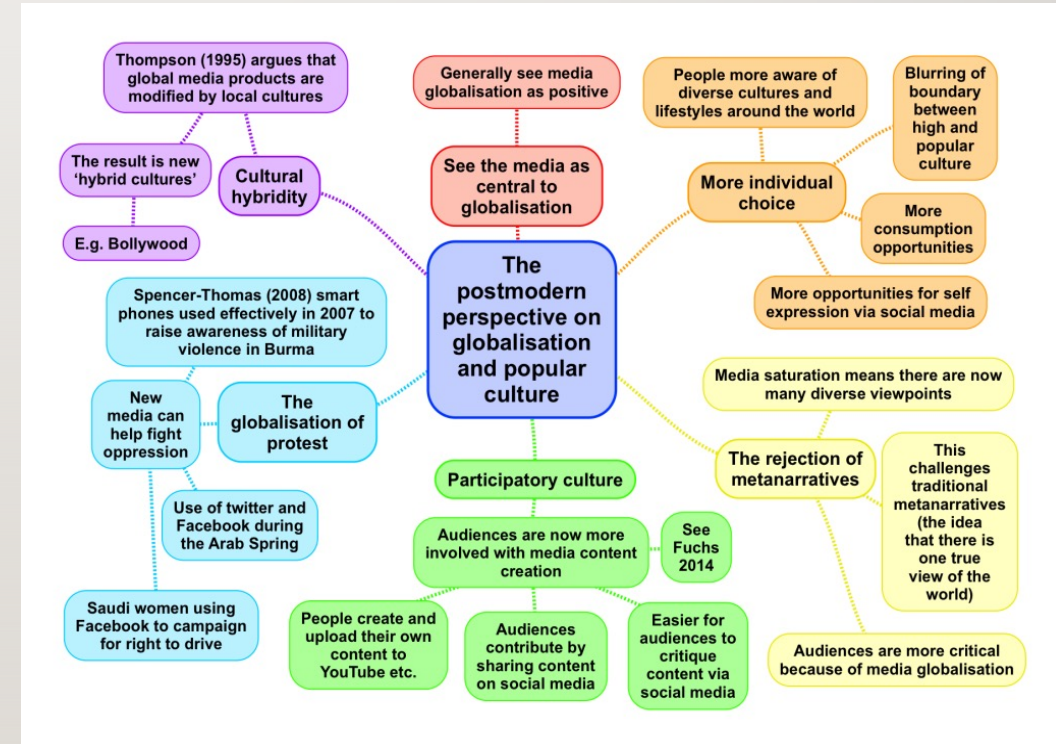


# NEW MEDIA PERSPECTIVES:

A Glimpse at 2 perspectives;

## 1. The Neophilic Perspective

- Audience more involved with media content.
- Globalization of protest.
- New ways to interact and challenging the powerful.
- Platform for and globalization of social movement and political activism.
- New hybrid culture

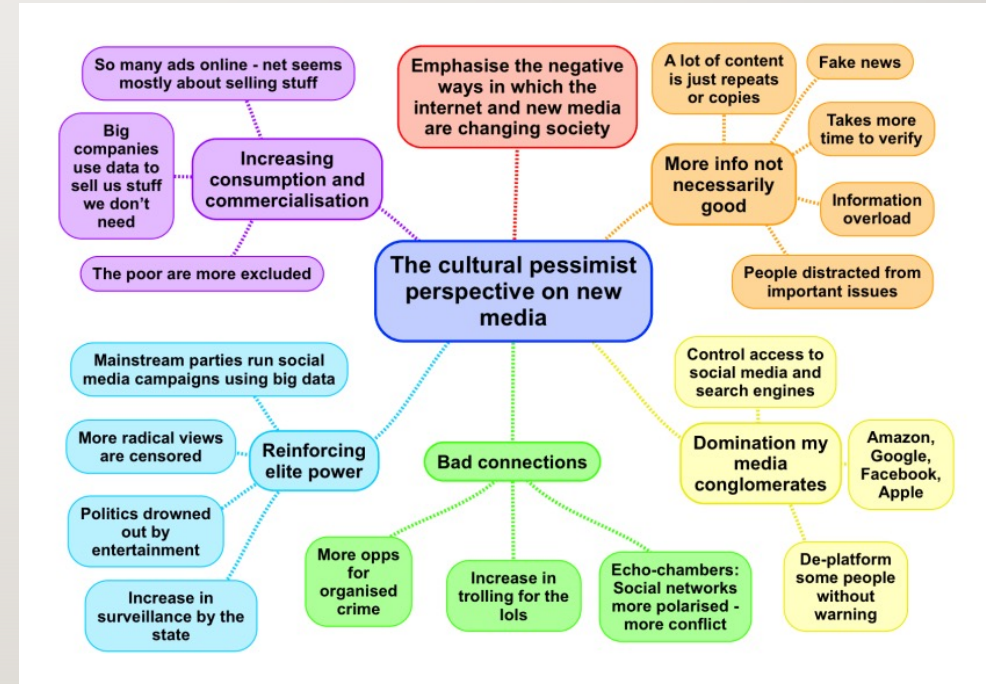


# NEW MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

## 2. Cultural Pessimists Perspective

Argue pitfalls of new media, focusing on its negative influence on society.

- rise of echo-chambers leading to polarization
- Risk of people descending into online social cliques
- overloaded information – a major challenge being verifying fact from fake news and misinformation



# ERITREAN DIGITAL DIASPORA POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA – FAILURE TO LAUNCH ?

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- Faster communication to larger audience via social media tools, Facebook, tweeter, Instagram...

## Traditional Diaspora

- Bricks and mortar activism.
- Many successful activism tasks accomplished back in the day.
- unions within the diaspora communities (Unions for workers, students, women).
- usually geared towards the quest for justice, democracy, and reform.
- Eritrea's independence in 1991 Similarly in 1998 the border war with Ethiopia



# ERITREAN DIGITAL DIASPORA POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA – FAILURE TO LAUNCH ?

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from the 90s onward, Eritrean digital diaspora

- Highly engaged in new media tools ,
- few and far in between political activism that match the outreach, mobilization, and impact of traditional Eritrean diaspora
- still trying to relive and recover the past.
- virtual reality of the homeland, Eritrea
- sense of too many but not enough.

# ERITREAN DIGITAL DIASPORA POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA – FAILURE TO LAUNCH ?

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- Isolated, marginalized and polarized
- Eritrean population faces never ending barriers and is systematically excluded from decisions and policies that affect their lives and the affairs of the nation
- Absence of free press, indefinite national service, limits on civil liberties, arrest of dissidents are the result of unaccounted, capricious regime





# CHALLENGES OF MARGINALIZED AND POLARIZED ERITREAN DIGITAL DIASPORA ACTIVISTS

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- Bubble within the bubble.
- erosion of history threat to national identity.
- Fact vs fiction.
- The people with mega microphones running the show in social media.

# CONCLUSION

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- ❑ Is it impartial to write off new media and settle for the cultural pessimist approach? or
- ❑ embrace systematic approach to move forward?

These are the stark reality, one have to face as individual activists or group activists.

On the bright side, the complex nature of new media and its challenge is also felt by political activism in in the United State,

“whereas nearly 70 percent of civil resistance campaigns succeeded during the 1990s, only 30 percent have succeeded since 2010” [Chenoweth, ForeignPolicy.com 2016].

# POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO CONSIDER

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- Team work across groups.
- design and develop an Eritrean media network.
- Use specific platform and build presence.
- Identify resources and grassroots.



THANK YOU !