

THAI MILLENNIALS' ONLINE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT:
INVESTIGATING MECHANISMS BEHIND THEIR MOTIVATION



THAI MILLENNIALS' ONLINE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: INVESTIGATING
MECHANISMS BEHIND THEIR MOTIVATION

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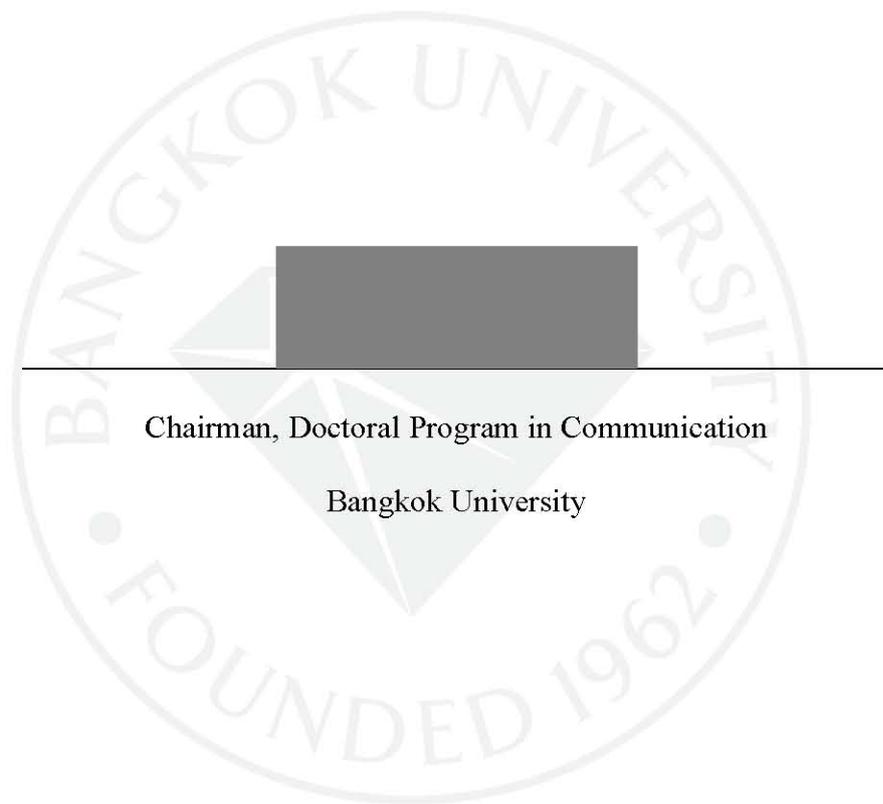
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Thai Millennials' Online Political Engagement: Investigating Mechanisms behind
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ABSTRACT

This study used the mixed-method research to examine the motivation and engagement among the Thai millennials through online political communication on Facebook of news agencies. The online survey ($n = 225$) and focus group interview ($n = 40$) samples were Thai university students and first jobbers who regularly used Facebook and subscribed to news agencies on Facebook. Applying the Selective Exposure Theory, Spiral of Silence Theory, and Uses and Gratification Theory, the study examined whether samples' selective exposure and willingness to self-censor influence their motivation for engaging with four types of political news content – 1) informational, 2) entertaining, 3) remunerative, and 4) relational content. The Multiple Regression analysis results showed that samples' willingness to self-censor and selective exposure had an association with every engagement type of online political news content. The analysis of focus groups also revealed emerging themes that informants had motivations for engaging with relational and entertaining news content. Accordingly, this research proposed the journey of online political engagement on Facebook. These results are unique within the Thai Millennials generation, for which the context of Thai culture, law, and regulation during the

period of conducting this research was further discussed. Future research should clarify the differences in motivation between generations.



Approved:

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Signature of Advisor

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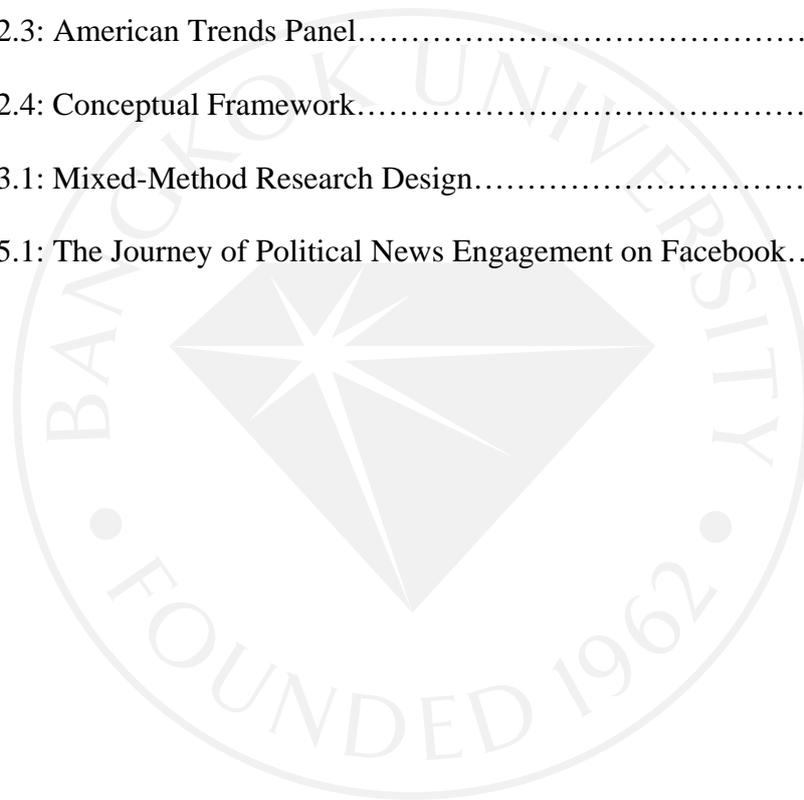
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background information for this study, including rationale and problem statement, purpose of the study, scope of the study, research questions, and significance of the study and definition of terms.

1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

New media technologies have been impactful on many paradigms in society, including political communication, where significant societal changes arise. Political communication, communication about politics and other politics-related matters, is primarily influenced by the development of technologies that allow more interactive conversation among people (Alujevic, 2012).

Traditionally, political communication was predominately top-down and one-way communication. The communications between political party representatives and citizens were interaction and mass media, such as television broadcasting, newspapers, and magazines (Kutlu, 2018). During the mid-1990s, the internet that expanded the medium of communications included emails, text messages, search engines, the blogosphere, and websites maintained by political actors and citizens (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). In recent years, social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube enabled average citizens to participate in political processes that bring political actors and citizens together to create a political dialogue and interaction that gained a personalized dimension (Kutlu, 2018).

Therefore, it is inarguably apparent that social media have revolutionized the political media landscape, as Dalhgren (2009) criticized since social media has transformed into a place where online citizens become politically active. For example, comment on political issues on various online platforms and possibly encourage more extensive changes in and out of the online political sphere. At present, people do not go out on the street protesting against each other anymore. Instead, individuals can witness "many fierce conversations and debates by youth in social networks. The discussion space has already moved from a physical area to a virtual space" (Pairepairit, 2012). People tend to talk more about politics and current issues due to access to the internet and the ability to choose "space" or "channel" they feel free to talk (Boulanger, 2013).

Social media was a cutting-edge and crucial political platform, especially for the millennials. Most Facebook users are millennials has some driving forces towards how online public spheres such as Facebook come into popularity (Pratheepwatanawong, 2012). In general, the Thais also spend more time and are more likely to express personal views on Facebook than other countries (Magpanthong, & McDaniel, 2015). Across Facebook's users in Thailand, the millennial amount to 32% of total users ("Digital 2021", 2021). Facebook has a direct and indirect influence on the way individuals interact with each other, allowing them to construct their own online identity and communicate with like-minded peers without any concerns about traditionally held social structure (Sevin, Kimball & Khalil, 2011).

In other words, the space of political discussion and participation has moved more digitally. The coming of a new platform or "channel" for political and public

conversation brings the rise of a new generation (millennial) who tends to determine the direction of contemporary communication, political communication, and society. However, the utilization of social media is challenging to isolate correspondence from association since individuals assemble in both virtual and physical space (McKuen, Wolak, Keele & Marcus, 2010).

Many critics, including Chatfield, Akbari, Mirzayi & Scholl (2012), Chou & Fu (2017), and Feezell (2016), have taken into account the motivations behind citizens' online political behavior and the effect of online over-active engagement on the real-world context. For example, in 2011, several revolutionary reforms known as the "Arab Spring" have taken place in North Africa and the Middle East. Which was explained by many critics as the 'Social Media Revolution' since the information and communication technologies in social media were a big part of the success (Safranek, 2012). The study of online political engagement has been the subject of study to many scholars ever since.

In Thailand, the development of online social media's role as a platform to discuss political issues can be seen after the PDRC (People's Democratic Reform Committee)'s anti-government street protest in 2013. People showed the power of technology that enabled them to choose an alternative set of information. The military government attempted to control traditional media, including newspapers, television, and radio, using these as a propaganda tool. The emergence of citizen journalism has been given rise to social media to shine out for individuals whose voice has long been neglected, clearly seen in mainstream media. In the 2011 general election, many political parties communicated their messages via online media, and also citizens communicated with each other about the election (Paireepairit, 2012). At that time,

the interplay between the military government and the public remained. During the military government, those who opposed the junta government or disagreed with how the NCPO of Thailand (National Council for Peace and Order) exerted its dictatorial power used social media to communicate their disagreement and protest. Later, citizens were ignited to voice their own opinions on political or social topics that consequently challenged Thailand's taboo topics and the traditionally-established power group (Paireepairit, 2012).

In 2017, the people spoke more on social media, and the message turns very creative, which provokes the military government to consider regulating this online public sphere. The social media's unreachable distance constitutes a threat to the government to the point that the Computer Crime Act has been specifically revised to facilitate the government's authoritative law enforcement on the Internet (Wongwat, 2017). The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) report on the World Press Freedom Day 2015 indicated that the government's established media control power worsened the situation and led to the weakening of citizen's political participation. ("SEAPA submission", 2015)

According to Held (2004), the younger generation rejects the traditional method of political participation. This rejection comes from the fact that traditional political participation (including town-hall meetings, political party membership, protest, and voting) required specific resources such as time, knowledge, money, and skills. In comparison, online participation is more accessible and less resource-consuming. Many scholars such as Bakker & De Vreese (2011) and Skoric, Ying & Ng (2009) argued that it must be treated differently from how political communication academically measures traditional political participation. For

example, traditional political communication measures participation through voter turnout or an increase in political party memberships, which are actions that can be quantitatively measured once every year or four years. However, in the online political participation context, action is measured in real-time.

Furthermore, the definition of participation is also changing. The way people show support or participate in expressing their opinion has become more casual (Rainie, Smith, Schloman, Brady & Verba, 2012). For example, during the rise of the Obama election campaign in 2008, many young people have shown their support by creating political memes and fan art that aims toward entertainment rather than serious political discussion, inevitably blurring the line between political participation and socialization (Rainnie, et al., 2012).

According to Vissers & Stolle (2013), online political participation on social media can be referred to as to the sharing of opinion on social/political topic, liking or joining the Facebook group, donating or raising money for a social/political purpose online, and etc., which are unique and measurable. However, for this research, the focus is on political participation on Facebook. According to Skoric, Ying & Ng (2009), political participation on Facebook can be categorized into three different actions: Like, Comment, and Share. These actions are collectively called 'Engagement,' which is the term used by the social media platform and widely used by marketing professionals and academics. The 'Like' action indicates the emotional support users have for the content, while 'Comment' can express their opinion towards the topic. The 'Share' action indicated the informational support they have for the topic, while it can also be an indicator of long-term advocacy (Skoric, et al., 2009). For this study, "political participation" is referred to as "engagement."

The Millennials are the first digitally native generation often characterized as skeptical, impatient, and blunt than their predecessors. According to Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell & Bushman (2008), cross-generational surveys have suggested that these characteristics are because they were being raised in an environment of information transparency and digital technology that offer them instant gratification. These transparencies of information and global connectivity also lead them to question conventional beliefs while also making them more open-minded and accepting of different identities and opinions (Twenge, et al., 2008). A study on millennial's behavior by NAS ("Generation Y", 2006) also found that because they are exposed to rapidly changing technology, accessible education, and supportive parenting, they are considered to be more open to changes, technologically savvy, better learners, more tolerant of diversity and efficient multitaskers comparing to other generation.

In many ways, the millennial's online political engagement reflects their characteristics and beliefs. The study by Nielsen ("Millennials on millennials", 2017) shows that millennials are more open to conflicting information that contrast their own beliefs. They also have a higher likelihood of cross-checking references to the information they found or researched. According to Bolton, et al. (2013), millennials tend not to engage in the heated exchange of opinion regarding political topics. Instead, when they are confronted online by an aggressive opponent, they have the likelihood of avoiding confrontation or dismissed the conversation. They also have more likelihood to lurk and observe political pages than actively engage in contributing their opinion because 53% of millennials are following news channels or political pages, with only 15% reported to contribute their opinion actively.

The depth of social media in online political engagement is not to be ignored. Understanding the effect of social media will help to explore the environment of the new "public sphere" and explain how the millennium expresses a political opinion and social mobilization. However, the question is why millennium tends to engage or not engage in specific issues and what the consequences are after their action. The research aims to study the motivations behind millennial's online political engagement from communication studies; therefore, the research delves deep into three following factors: Channel, Receiver, and Message.

Three theoretical frameworks were studied to explore this phenomenon's in-depth insight, including Selective Exposure Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Spiral of Silence Theory. Among the variables that influence online political support, various investigations proposed that the presentation of political data via an online platform is an essential indicator of online political cooperation (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011). However, because of the situation in the cyber world called information overload, the receivers need to be selective. They select the information they are interested in, and actively selective exposure means that users actively search online for topics that they find agreeable to their predisposition.



Figure 1.1: Relationship between media, selectivity, and political tolerance from
Online News Use and Political Tolerance

Source: McCabe, J. (2010). *Online news use and political tolerance*. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.925.972&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

The other theory to be integrated as a conceptual framework is the "Uses and Gratification Theory." Leung (2009) and Chung & Yoo (2008) suggested the need to incorporate the 'Uses and Gratification Theory' into the framework to explain the motivation behind users' political engagement on an online forum. The Uses and Gratification Theory assumes that users actively seek out the media platform (channel) to fulfill their satisfaction. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that the user is active, and their media use is very much goal-directed (Johnson & Kaye, 2010).

Also, Noelle-Neumann's (1984) Spiral of Silence theory was used by modern critics such as Donsbach, Salmo & Tsfati (2014) and Eveland, Hayes & Matthes (2013) as a foundation for explaining the social and political phenomenon, including willingness to self-censor and fear of isolation. These factors may play an important role in 'why' users do not contribute their opinion on online forums. This assumption

contradicts many critics who suggested that the fear of isolation and self-censor should not be a factor in holding back users from participating in online political commentary. "Such factors as the heterogeneity of views available on the net and the anonymity afforded by the minimal social cues involved in participation had led to high expectations of the net's democratic potential in the early years" (Witschge, 2004, p. 169). This notion perhaps calls for a re-examination of the relevancy of the spiral of silence Theory in a transformative digital society.

To study the online political communication in news agencies' Facebook page to investigate motivations and engagement among the Thai millennials. This research aims to bridges the gap by combining the selective process to exposed flavor information and the willingness to censor one's opinions according to the spiral of silence theory.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to discover motivations behind an individual's decision to engage or not engage on Facebook's news threads from the perspective of communication. The research required an understanding of individual and social gratifications that motivate an individual's online behaviors. Accordingly, the following two research objectives were followed:

1.2.1 To study the factors motivating Thai millennials to engage in news agencies 'Facebook pages.

1.2.2 To study the online political engagement of Thai millennials on news agencies 'Facebook pages.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The overarching aim of this research is to examine the individual and social motivations that cause Thai millennials with age between 18-35 years in Bangkok, Thailand. They select their media channel and enable them to decide to engage or not engage on Facebook news threads. This research will employ mixed-method approaches: an online survey and focus group. In particular, this study focuses on political communication and audiences' reactions through the news agencies' Facebook page followers, for example, Thai PBS, Thairat, and Workpoint.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background information described above, this study proposes to answer the following two research questions:

1.4.1 What factors motivate the Thai Millennials to engage in news agencies' Facebook pages?

1.4.2 How does the Thai Millennials politically engage in news agencies' Facebook pages?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The importance of this research is to look beyond the observed surfaces of the contemporary engagement throughout news agencies' Facebook pages. This research focuses on the factors affecting the audiences' motivation to engage in political commentary on news agencies' Facebook page, which explored using the qualitative method of inquiry.

Although several types of research seek to explain the motives of user engagement in online integrated forums such as Facebook news threads, they have not included both individual gratification and environmental factors in their structure of inquiry.

The significant and potential impact of this research is to broaden an understanding of contemporary online political engagement. This study also aims to expand the use of existing theories, including Selective Exposure Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, and Spiral of Silence Theory. All the key findings can provide another aspect to the study of the communication behavior of individuals in the twenty-first century.

This research broadens and provides an in-depth understanding of online political communication on news agencies' Facebook pages. It also provides a new aspect to the study of the political communication behavior of Thai millennials. Also, this research gains a new aspect to the existing political news engagement process by integrating selective exposure theory, Uses and Gratification theory, and Spiral of Silence theory.

1.6 Definition of Terms

This section provides definition of the following terms.

1.6.1 Political Engagement

This term refers to individuals' participation in the political-related actions. It can be offline and online, but this study focuses on audiences' political engagement via mass media. It involves reaction towards political media messages such as sharing political news or discussing the topics related to politics via a particular media

platform.

1.6.2 Online Political Engagement

The term refers to the act of consuming and reacting towards the political news on news agencies' Facebook, including, react, share, and comment their engagement on such political matters in a discussion section under the news posts that serve functionally as a public space where discussion is made. Respondents were asked how frequently they like, comment, and share the articles related to politics in four types of political news: informational, entertaining, remunerative, and relational content on Facebook .

1.6.3 Public Sphere

The public sphere is a virtual community space for thoughts and actions which individual initiate and engage in discussions related to social or political issues. The public sphere as defined in this study is an online political news agencies ' Facebook pages as provided or publicized by news agencies.

1.6.4 News Agencies 'Facebook Page

The news agencies 'Facebook page is social media fan page publicized by news agencies which allow online users to exchange information, express opinions, share, and react on topics in response to others. For this research, the selected news agencies 'Facebook pages are three news Facebook fan page with more than 5 million followers: 1) Thai PBS with 5 million followers, 2) Thairat TV with 5.1 million followers, and 3) Workpoint with 15 million followers.

1.6.5 The Thai Millennials

The millennials in this research refer to Thai citizens age between 18-35 years old. This includes the generation Y: the emergence of the Internet (People born

between 1981-1991) and the generation Z: digital natives (People born between 1991-2001).

1.6.6 Selective Exposure Theory

This term refers to individuals' motivation for selecting messages matching one's ideology, and satisfying with on online political news content. It was measured using the Tendency toward Congruent Selective Exposure (TECSE) Scale developed by Tsfaty (2016).

1.6.7 Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification theory in this study focuses on four types of content based on Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman (2016) suggestion:

1) informational content, 2) entertaining content, 3) remunerative content, and 4) relational content. This framework explains the difference in motivation behind an individual's political engagement on news agencies' Facebook pages by seeking out the content types that fulfill their satisfaction.

1.6.8 Spiral of Silence Theory

This study used "willingness to self-censor" to measure the concept of spiral of silence. It refers to individuals' willingness to withhold their opinion from an audience perceived to disagree with that opinion, measured using the scale developed by Hayes, Glynn, and Shanahan (2005). This framework is used to understand the way individuals inhibit engaging with online political content. For instance, it follows the majority in discussion or performs the role of observer.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature regarding the public sphere and Millennials as the Digital Native Generation. Selective Exposure Theory, Uses and Gratifications theory, and the Spiral of Silence theory were also reviewed to develop a conceptual framework for this research to understand the motivations and engagement of political communication behaviors and factors preventing political engagement among the Thai millennials through the social media platform.

2.1 Related Literature and Previous Studies

This section reviews two important constructs of this study, public sphere and the Millennials.

2.1.1 Public Sphere

2.1.1.1 Definition of Public Sphere, Informed Citizens, and the New Public

Public Sphere

The most remarkable standardizing scholar of the 'public sphere' is a German social scholar, Jürgen Habermas (conceived in 1929), whose work has roused an enduring and questionable discussion in verbal trade explore and past (Wessler & Freudthaler, 2018). The English expression of 'Public Sphere' is an interpretation of the German öffentlichkeitk. The term deciphers into two related terms: 'the General Population' or the group of speakers and audience members existing in the public sphere, and 'Availability' or the notion of being freely unmistakable and challenge to

examine people in general. The possibility of the public sphere has been applied to political as social correspondence. The timeframe conveys each an elucidating and a regularizing meaning. Regularizing hypotheses of the public sphere ordinarily indicates perfect attributes of open correspondence.

Accordingly, Warner (2002), the 'Public' must be able to self-organize, relying on the ability to address topics of their concern to the participants who share those same concerns, leading to the formation of discourse. This notion gives importance to 'Sovereign Power,' the idea that participants have agencies to produce and engage with topics without having it pre-determined by some other forces. The 'Sovereign Power' and the act of engagement gain participants' entry into this 'Public'; they can then be identified primarily through their engagement in the discourse (Warner, 2002).

This way of organization contrasted how we traditionally see the 'Public' in terms of belonging to institutions such as religion, nation, and race. The traditional form of a public organization selects its membership by criteria of geography, identity, or belief (Warner, 2002). In contrast to this notion, the modern 'Public' was organized by individuals who share the same interest, topics, or social experiences in a particular time-space. Both Warner (2002) and Asen (2000) explained the contrast between traditional civil bodies and what they see as 'Public' by stating that the former sees participants as 'Subject', while the latter see participants as 'Sovereign'. Nonetheless, both critics realize that the traditional bourgeois' public sphere played a significant role in power relations. To challenge its norms and discourse, the 'Public' therefore is 'Counter' in nature.

According to Huckfeldt & Sprague (1987), the public sphere's traditional settings are 'structurally imposed'. Setting such as neighborhood, the workplace, a church, and town hall limited the entry into the public sphere by restraining one's socioeconomic resources. These constraints influence the content being exchanged and limited the exchange of information with specific groups of people in space and time (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

The entry into the 'public sphere' must be available to all citizens within society regardless of their social, economic, and technological backgrounds (Dahlgren, 2009). It is also important to note that 'public sphere' also needs to provide a random encounter with strangers with different opinions and offer new information that might impact the individuals' informed decision (Dahlgren, 2009; Sunstein, 2017; Downey & Fenton, 2003). According to Lenhart, Horrigan & Horrigan (2003) and Rainie, et al. (2012), online platforms and communities' participants claim that their engagement on an online platform connected them to strangers and people of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. The research states that 50% of platform users say that engagement in an online community allowed them to know people they otherwise would not have met. Furthermore, 37% claim that the online community helped them connect with people of different ages, lifestyles, and political beliefs. However, to understand an individual's motives, we must look into the character of the discussion on various platforms.

According to Habermas (1991), the 'public sphere' is generally considered the social zone in which selective feelings are communicated, inconveniences of a time-respected subject are discussed, and aggregate choices are grown informatively. In this way, the public sphere is the focal field for cultural

correspondence. In huge scope social orders, broad communications, and help support verbal trade in the public sphere. The public sphere is seen as a space of public activity where a general conclusion can be framed. There is no scary power at the rear of the public sphere; however, its residents gather and join uninhibitedly to downright their assessments. The timeframe of political discussion in public is brought for open conversations on subjects associated with the country and political action. To allow conversations and the arrangement of a general supposition, an archive of state-related exercises and crime activities must be freely available.

Critics such as Feezell (2016) and Putnam (2000) argued that online settings, mainly social media are differing from traditional settings – "Where traditional set-ting are often structurally imposed, online settings are more actively constructed" (Feezell, 2016, p. 15). According to Feezel (2016), an online platform such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram offered users a level of control of their information, allowing them to build an information network by connecting with like-minded people or pages that offer preferred content (re-enforcing one belief). "By creating opportunities for information exchange, these settings can be an important platform for recruiting Political Engagement, exchanging political information, and promoting civic engagement" (Putnam, 2000, p. 120). With the ability to consume content that serves their interests, users are active of selective exposure to a certain degree. This factor also allows users of the social media platform to meet and discuss with like-minded individuals while actively construct their information network. The construction of communication structure through engagement on social media platforms shifts the paradigm of consumption and participation, shining a light on the new perspective of political communication (Putnam, 2000).

Erlis (2015) clarifies the idea of the public sphere as an idea generally concentrated on some unique teachings, such as political theories and humanism. It is fundamental for the majority rules system to have an all-around organized technique that makes the general supposition a union of personal musings showing up for the basic intrigue. The presence of the new media and the improvement in the discussion science have included enormous changes even in the applied timeframe of the public sphere and open talk. Internet-based life like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and so forth is another verbal trade territory utilized from the open components to chat with the crowds. The specialized open doors that these structures give make the social media suitable for the transmitter and the recipient of the message to talk at a more significant level (Erlis, 2015).

Informed Citizens

“Informed citizens’ are people who use social media regularly as defined by the fact that the social media is a platform that delivers the newest message faster than any other platform due to its nature as a user-ruled platform. How are they relevant to the research? The answer is that this research pertains to political discussion on social media, and social media is the platform where the political engagement happens. They engage in the political discussion for some reasons, which are what the research tries to identify. To get more about the relevancy between informed citizens and political discussion, it is required that one understands how they are important to the democracy or to define a society where freedom of expression can be found. The basic yet crucial element of a democratic society is citizens, especially well-informed ones with an ability to make rational and well-reasoned choices for themselves and society. “To be well informed means to him to arrive at

reasonably founded opinions in fields which as he knows are at least mediately of concern to him although not bearing upon his purpose at hand” (Schutz, 1946, p. 463). The informed citizens’ opinions are taken more seriously than the public opinion by normal people since the informed citizens are perceived to have a true understanding of intricate matters such as politics and economies that have direct impacts upon themselves and society as a whole. Therefore, in a democratic society, everyone is in some ways required to be a well-informed citizen who understands their role, society, and problems (both individual and social level) so that they can choose what is suitable for themselves and society. Accordingly, this is why they speak something out in a public sphere or social media.

The New ‘Public’: Critical Examination of ‘Power’

According to Asen (2000), the counter public sphere operates within the main public sphere to serve the need of persons, places or topics. With this being said, public sphere is not a new public (without preconceived norms), but rather a public that operates within the mainstream societal sphere. The counter public sphere operates on the notion that participants in certain circumstances come together to set themselves against the mainstream public and their discursive exclusions (Asen, 2000). “Neither crowd nor audience or people nor group will capture the same sense” (Warner, 2002, p. 51). The fact that participants choose to participate in the counter public sphere give them ‘sovereign power’ to resist the discourses that dominate the mainstream public. This refusal to function and operates under the power structure of mainstream public offers insight into resistant nature of counter public sphere and Foucault’s power/knowledge doctrine. “Counter public theory discloses relations of power that obliquely inform public discourse and, at the same time, reveals that

participants in the public sphere still engage in potentially emancipatory affirmative practice with the hope that power may be reconfigured” (Asen, 2000, p. 425).

According to Foucault & Gordon (1980), power is present in every interaction and participation. Therefore, it is impossible to assume that the knowledge, which is an entry point into counter public, do not contain within it an element of power.

However, Foucault (1980) further notes that power and knowledge are in separation, and that we need the power to create knowledge while knowledge in turn creates power. This notion illustrates the possibility that counter public sphere may play a role in power relation among different groups. In Foucault & Gordon (1980) view, power is not only repressive but also productive to participants. He further argued that no one in particular is producing ‘power’ but rather the impact of ‘power’ comes from the power relation among participants in certain time-space. The question of ‘Power’ remains an important topic to be discussed in relation to the notion of counter public sphere and online integrated forums. According to Foucault & Gordon (1980) and Asen (2000), the counter public sphere emerges as participants enter into the discussion with certain autonomy within a given time-space. The emerging ‘Power’ from that interaction empowers participants to further their own agenda and therefore influences others within a given time-space (as counter sphere).

2.1.1.2 Public Sphere Transition in the Digital Era

There had been a significant shift in the way people communicate, access, organize, and produce information. This tectonic shift is due to the digital revolution the world is experiencing since the birth of the World Wide Web. The functions of the internet, such as the ease of interacting, reformatting, remixing, adding on the existing texts, and so forth, promote the participatory uses of the

technologies. The internet forever changes the traditional format whereby mass audiences receive authoritative and centralized information in a one-way manner (Dahlgren, 2009). The control shift is seen by critics such as Castells (2004), Dahlgren (2009), Downey & Fenton (2003), and Dalton (2011) to have a tremendous impact on the paradigm of political communication.

Downey & Fenton (2003) suggested that the control shift also provides alternative resistance from mainstream media's radical ghetto, allowing participants to gather information beyond what the mainstream media provides. Furthermore, the internet has emerged as a powerful news-referring source, on which users rely to measure the credibility of news they received from mainstream providers (Lee & Ma, 2012). Online news content also plays an integral part in influencing civic agenda and public opinion as well as individual perceptions of social reality (Alujevic, 2012). "Recent events indicate that sharing news online and on social media has become a phenomenon of increasing social, economic, and political importance because individuals can now participate in news production and diffusion in large global virtual communities" (Lee & Ma, 2012, p.5).

Before the emergence of the network society, there were many more significant eras of social order, such as feudal society, industrial society, and post-industrial society. However, in their nature, they were limited in scope due to the physical restrictions in information distribution (Castells, 2004). These restrictions were why network society has revolutionized how to distribute information and how people interact with it and influence rapid changes that have a broader social reach. There are several distinct characteristics that part of the network society from earlier eras. These characteristics will be discussed in further detail in the following

paragraphs.

In recent years, individuals, especially millennials, have developed new ways of acquiring information, which has influenced their opinions on emerging issues surrounding their social, political, and economic environment. The internet is gaining popularity as a platform for information gathering because it allows people to contribute their opinion or share content that they have gathered within their online network (Shapiro, 1999). Beyond information gathering and news consumption, the Internet platform has become an essential part of political engagement. In 1996, the Pew Research Center surveyed the aftermath of the 1996 U.S. election found that 3% of voters said they have engaged in online debate and commentary. An additional 10% said they had observed online political debate before the Election Day (“News attracts most internet users”, 1996).

However, according to a survey by the Democracy Online Project at George Washington University in 2000, the number of eligible voters who claim they have engaged in online debate or observation before the election has gone up to 43% (Cornfield, 2000). This trend rapidly progresses as can be seen in the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project that found 66% of eligible voters in the U.S. engaged in political conversation and debate on the Internet platform and social media prior to the 2012 election (Rainie, Smith, Schloman, Brady & Verba, 2012). Furthermore, The Pew's 2012 research found that 34% of social media users have used the social media platform, including Facebook and Twitter, for political and civic activity, while 33% of those users use them to repost content related to politics, economic and social issues for other users to see (Rainie, et al., 2012). These statistics illustrate a progressive trend, which suggests that the internet has surpassed television

as the main news source for young adults and is becoming a mainstream platform for information gathering and political engagement.

The integrated online platforms allow commentary and feedback of users in real-time while viewing or reviewing the news. This function is fundamentally different from offline platforms such as television, radio, and newspapers, allowing a passive interaction between media outlets and audiences. Furthermore, this medium also allows interaction between users on the platform's thread. The co-contribution of content, information sharing, and commentary fosters an assent of the community for many users and can lead them to return to the thread or channel on a regular basis (Horrigan & Lenhart, 2003). Early research of the emerging online platform during the '90s suggested that online public platforms could shape new communities and construct individual identities. According to Horrigan & Lenhart (2003) research, 84% of Internet users have experienced engaging in an online group. The research also suggested that the majority of users claim that 'Share Interest' is a driven force of engagement in online information-sharing. This new social arrangement is coined by Horrigan & Lenhart (2003) as 'glocalization. This notion emphasized the capacity of online communities to expand users' social world beyond their geographical location connecting them with like-minded users across the globe. According to Horrigan & Lenhart (2003), the sense of community no longer binds to the geographical surrounding. However, it transcends through the 'shared interest' of people with the same concerns and beliefs across multiple societies and nations.

According to Downey & Fenton (2003), social media and online platforms play the role of counter sphere providing alternative resistance from

mainstream media's radical ghetto. The social media sites also lower traditional socio-economic barriers for entry into the 'Public' and create 'Space' for people who in normal circumstances would not be allowed to express themselves publicly because of their social status, gender, age, ethnicity, and religion. "Parallel discursive arena where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1992, p. 123 in Asen, 2000, p. 428). It is important to note that engagement with-in the contemporary mass media public sphere (television, radio, and newspaper) by citizens does not always guarantee an equal standing point, and weight of argument is often time given to the party that the media outlet chooses to represent (Downey & Fenton, 2003). This notion leads many critics to suggest that the online platform's fundamental function is to provide communicative space with equal stand-point for all of the participants (Ginsborg, 2008). This argument is supported by critics such as Greenwood, Sorenson & Warner (2016) and Downey & Fenton (2003) as a fundamental tool for political conversation between government, politicians, and citizens. "Social media such as Facebook and Twitter offer new possibilities for online political conversations between citizens and politicians" (Greenwood, et al., 2016, p. 664).

One of the early examples of online 'Globalization' is described in Horrigan & Lenhart (2003), the study of the aftermath of the 9/11 attack. The study found that 33% of American Internet users engaged in information seeking and posting on an online platform or chat rooms in the day following the attacks. Furthermore, the early postings reflected commonly outraged at the events, which bring many users together both from the local and international community. However,

the online discussion soon shifts to consolidation and further information seeking on the event's details, and many offered volunteer services to help with the relieving effort. The research also found that 79% of regular online platform users stated that they identify with at least one particular platform, which they stay in contact. Lastly, the same research also found that 49% of Internet users claim that online platforms help them connect with groups of people who share their interests and impact how they perceive certain information (Horrigan & Lenhart, 2003).

However, the technological changes alone cannot define the mechanism of social change; we must understand the social system that evolves around it (Castells, 2004). According to Castells (2004), the internet is the platform that allows the formation of specific types of social structures. He further coined the term 'Network Society,' a social structure made of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communication technologies. "At any level of the social structure, empirical research unveils the essential role of networks in organizing human activity" (Castells, 2004, p. 11).

The communication channel that allows people to consume media and communicate with each other plays a crucial role in society (Chatfield, Scholl, Akbari & Mirzayi, 2012). However, Baumgartner (2010) implicitly suggested that the channel is influenced by surrounding factors such as ever-developing technologies that keep changing the channel's mechanism and political situations that determine the degree to which individuals can consume the media or interact with what is within the channel. The background and development of Thailand's channel and political landscape were required to identify and understand how the channel affects receivers or users and vice versa.

Social media platforms such as Facebook have broken down traditional boundaries that prevent newcomers such as teenagers from engaging in discussion, making it more convenient for this group of people to voice their opinions on topics and platforms they can now select. According to The Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA)'s reported on Thailand's Electronic Thailand's Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) (2018), people of 15-24 years of age use the internet to watch television, consume news, and communicate or interact with their friends, families, and other people in online space. This shows that "Online" platforms encourage "Online" consumption and engagement for this group of people. Therefore, how they "Select" the channel and decide to engage within that channel will be investigated in this research.

Besides, the traditional broadcast media and its model of self-regulation cannot make people believe that they possess enough capacity to keep pace with the fast-growing and intricate media advance of the twentieth century (Pachaly, 2011). It is even worse learning that the Press Council of Thailand and professional media and advocacy groups cannot prove to take control of those media agencies who violate ethical media standards (Paireepairit, 2012). The Thai media often identify themselves with political parties, resulting in the gradual loss of faith among Thai news consumers. It is similar to Pratheepwatanawong (2012) claim that "media's role as a political party partisan reflects the limited extent of journalistic professionalism in Thailand as people expect professional objective media to be neutral and not take sides in politics." However, the worst case is that these media advocacy groups do nothing to protect online news media and the political expression of the people, driving the people to find their source of news online.

Social media gives a stage among organizations and users to see each other's needs. Individuals' communication is a sub-classification inside online networking (Perdue, 2010). There are numerous interpersonal interaction destinations working today with many users, for example, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and more. Instagram has a place with Facebook and works with the comparative plan of action where a dominant part of the income originates from the organizations who publicize on their foundation (Lilley, Grodzinsky & Gumbus, 2012). Moving a social media information discussion board was once observed as a vital move to safeguard and grow target advertising quantities of print paper users. The presumptions given under may moreover appropriately direct the need. As indicated by Bogart (1989), McNair (2018), Katz (1994), Thurlow & Milo (1993), moving papers online would recover youthful users, who have fallen away from the exercises of considering testing imitation data papers. Additionally, Dalglish (1992) has noticed that more youthful users have grown up with PC frameworks and computer games, making them get well with paper investigating propensities. At long last, Erlindson (1995) feels this new methodology is an exit plan to contact the more youthful crowd.

Social media news threads will be used as a study channel due to their ability to allow two-way communication. Global citizens have used social media news threads, particularly Facebook, to consume news and stories worldwide and to communicate with other people on a variety of topics that they are interested in (Mitchell, Gotteried & Matsa, 2015). It allows users to express their opinions in response to other people regarding a particular news thread. This is a two-way communication that makes this virtual space a public sphere where people can participate in any discussion they prefer (Pootrakul, 2014). Internet penetration

in Thailand is 69.5% of the population as of 2021. It should be noted that 78.7% of citizens have social media account. This statistic may suggest that there can be multiple social media account for one citizen.

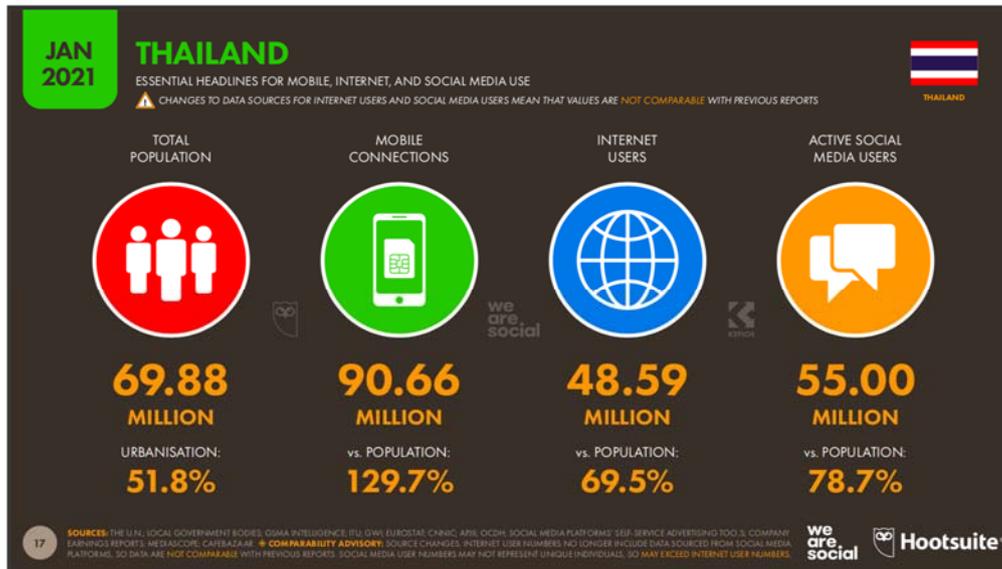


Figure 2.1: Internet Penetration in Thailand

Source: *Digital 2021: The latest insights into the state of digital.* (2021). Retrieved from <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>.

A high rate of Internet penetration in Thailand implies and a variety of existing channels show that people can now select or choose the channel they think is suitable and appropriate for their media consumption preference. Moreover, it can be seen that Facebook is the second most popular social media platform in Thailand, as it has 51 million accounts (“Digital 2021”, 2021).

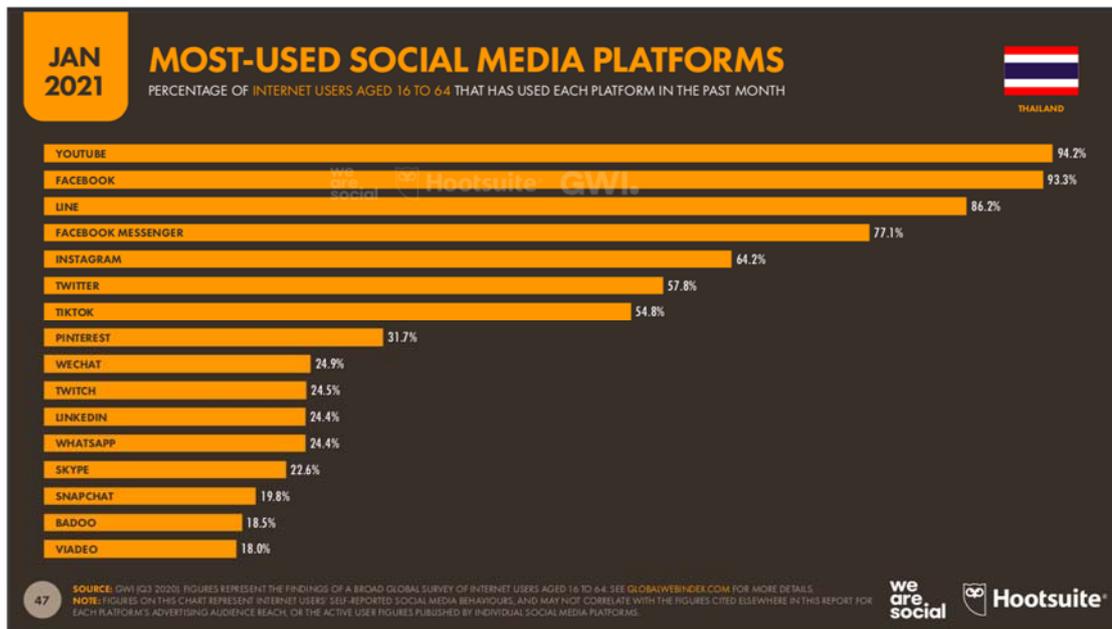


Figure 2.2: Internet Users Divided by Platforms

Source: *Digital 2021: The latest insights into the state of digital.* (2021). Retrieved from <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>.

The case is that Facebook provides its users with many categories of topics, so it is more convenient for them to select or choose topics or platforms that they prefer to receive news. Also, the exciting thing about Facebook users is that most Facebook users are millennials or, in other words, the people who were born as digital natives. This particular group of people is the ones who will have a direct impact on the media consumption of today and the future. For example, according to Madrigal (2017) article in *The Atlantic*, Facebook has had a significant impact on American democracy, and many budgets were spent on Facebook for political advertisement.

Social media was used as a channel to know what is going on about each political party. Chou & Fu (2017) research on the impact of Facebook on elections in Taiwan shows that Facebook has been an enormous player of political games in Taiwan from 2008 onwards. It suggested that a higher penetration rate of the internet led to more engagement among people, changing the political games as previously ruled only by the ruling party and giving more space for new parties that satisfied people's preferences.

2.1.1.3 Public Sphere and Political Communication

In the traditional sense, 'Space' is restricted in terms of geographical (Physical space) and the social capital needed to enter that space (Dahlgren, 2009). The traditional physical space of the public spheres such as a park, town hall, and coffee house are restricted by the sense of control in 'Time' and 'Space.' For example, in a democratic society, citizens have the right to demonstrate in a park or public space. However, they are still being constrained by time (Curfew) or even physical noises they can make. The constraint of 'space' is also valid in the town hall. One may need to have certain social-economic currency or be affiliated with a particular political party to enter.

Furthermore, the public sphere also extends to 'Media,' which provides a communicative 'Space' (Dahlgren, 2009; Dalton, 2011). As previously discussed, traditionally, the mass media such as television, radio, and newspaper should provide space for citizens to engage and voice their concerns. However, questions of ownership and agenda-setting by Media Corporation do not guarantee a free for all public spheres (Downey & Fenton, 2003).

This notion prompts Dahlgren (2009) to suggest that we may have to look beyond 'physical space' to find an alternative 'public sphere.' "The spatial element involves more than simple geography; it readily becomes a theoretic dimension in a world where space can be constituted by communication processes that may be quite indifferent to place" (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 157). Furthermore, Dahlgren (2006) argued that politics not only takes place on television in a physical sense, but it can also take place in a communicative space shaped by the media it is being communicated on.

Increasingly, the 'Space of flows' within the online network is replacing the physical organization that has previously shaped user's experiences of information seeking and political commentary. The fundamental assumption regarding 'transformation of space' is the crossing of traditional boundaries (physical) into a 'Space of flows' where anyone can voice their concern in any given 'Space' or 'Time' (Dahlgren, 2005; Dalton, 2011). This notion also impacts the boundaries of culture and norms where a more global discourse is replacing traditional dialogues of political engagement, unique to culture or languages. The shift in the communication structure also allows non-traditional stakeholders to enter into the communicative space. For example, people concerned with human rights issues in Burma do not necessarily have to be Burmese.

Furthermore, regional politics can merge into the global scene bringing about multiple discourses on the matter being discussed (Dalton, 2011). Online integrated platforms provide a public sphere that is not restricted by 'Time' and 'Space,' allowing participants to gather and exchange information freely. In many ways, this notion also shapes the sense of self and the belonging of users. By not

being restrained to a 'Physical space,' they can move freely towards issues and communities they are interested in and directly get information or share their opinions.

The structure of the internet allows for very extensive 'Inter-spatiality,' which provides the capacity to move freely between multiple communicative spaces (Dahlgren, 2009). According to Dahlgren (2009), the function of the online platform creates 'Space' for engagement without the restriction and obligation of belonging to certain social and political organizations. This notion highlights the role of an online forum as a platform for voluntary social and political mobilization. The possibility of an online forum as a counter-public sphere also changes the way we look at 'Power' in terms of formation and distribution (Dahlgren, 2005). This power shift is evident in recent years, where we have seen multiple social movements made possible by the internet. "It is not just a change in how we compute or communicate. Rather, it is a potentially radical shift in who is in control of information, experience, and resources which is bringing about a control revolution" (Shapiro, 1999, p. 40).

How users engage in an online discussion is very interesting since they will engage only with the news agencies' Facebook page. Some features such as a discussion-welcome environment are judged by how many people react or post their comments. However, some aspects serve as criteria or requirements that drive users to read, engage in, or remain opinion-less with the news agencies' Facebook page. Seeing how individuals like and share their leisure activity areas in the computerized period, Flichy (2010) indicated that the social focal point of beginners is specifically extraordinary in the subject of expression popular culture, science, and governmental issues. On account of governmental issues, this democratization of the discussion

impacts the public sphere's quintessential parameters.

Along these lines, the public sphere's online state comes up short at standing up to and talking about political difficulties in a sorted out and fundamental way. In any case, the creator concedes that the increase of online consultation is that more extensive scope of feelings can be communicated. The nature of the public sphere probably will not be influenced as long as the discussion is directed by utilizing masters of open articulation. From another viewpoint, Flichy (2010) underlines the reality that the descent of an online public sphere is trouble to the assorted variety of members adding to the discussion. However, the way that the web keeps an eye on the objective was quite sure crowds drive residents to explicitly present their particular suppositions diffusely, making the scope of political perspectives harder to recognize.

Upon the online platform, however, there seem to be rules of expression by which all citizens need to follow. A certain type of speech is considered unacceptable in Thailand. If anyone voices out that type of speech in public or on online political news, he or she might become a subject of social sanction automatically. Hate speech is taken seriously as a kind of verbal violence. Somchai Preechasilapakul, a law professor from Chiang Mai University, said that verbal violence in online media reflects political and social conflicts. Dr. Pinkaew Laungaramsri further explained that some phrases could precipitate civil unrest and conflict (Pachaly, 2011).

The hate speech topic can be clearly understood and exemplified through the binary opposition of the "Us" and "Them" mentality. To explain, antagonism recognizes opponents as enemies who should be destroyed, whether

physically or verbally. At the same time, agonism believes that those on the opposite side do have the right to express their ideas, and we should respect their freedom of speech and understand them (Arceneaux, 2012). The ideal way of expression that most people accept is that we should understand those people, and this is set as one of the rules that polite online users should follow (Garrett, Gvirsman, Johnson, Tsfati, Neo & Dal, 2014). It can be seen that messages are influenced by the channel selection and receivers that select the channel.

When they express their political comment online, the antagonistic manner of the people is the main obstacle to the compromise in a polarized society (Askew, 2010). The online political discussion needs to focus more on the common ground where they can compromise and understand each other. Many researchers, including Arceneaux, Johnson & Murphy (2012) and Garrett, et al. (2014), conducted research to look into the motivations behind the way people become antagonistic in the way they voice their opinions with and against each other use of content analysis and evidence-based coding of the message. Many findings concluded that the most influential nature of the online political discussion is the ability to understand and accept different viewpoints, encouraging people to dare speak their voices and opinions while accepting other people's different political views (Stromer-Gally, 2003). This shows that finding common ground between two different political views is the most desired and preferred rule of expression on the internet.

Dahlgren (2005) commented that online platform is becoming part of the political media landscape where users are becoming more active politically through their engagement, consumption, and reproduction of information. According to Dahlgren (2005), the online platform enables participants to vent their opinion on

topics of their concern while gaining support from like-minded people. Furthermore, the process of co-contributing information and the discourse of online platforms influences participants to form together into a public body that potentially produces dominant opinions (Chatfield, et al., 2012). The political awareness that came about from the exchange of information between individuals may also impact others who may not already have information on certain political or social issues (Gustafsson, 2012). This notion is supported by critics such as Chatfield, et al. (2012) and Gustafsson (2012), adding that the information exchange through social media platforms may increase mass awareness of issues that may not have been illustrated on mainstream media. The opinion formation brought about by the web-based social relation is unlike that of the traditional premises, whereby mass audiences are restrained by the centralized and authoritative (one-way) source. Critics such as Howard & Hussain (2011) and Gustafsson (2012) praise social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter for providing a space for the community to gather and make possible a mass gathering of like-minded individuals offline. They highlight 'Arab Spring' and 'Occupy Wall Street' as examples of how social media brings about positive social changes.

The formation of the public is a result of engagement by the subject, which shapes the discourse how it organizes and operates. "A public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself" (Warner, 2002, p. 50). Seen in this light, the sense of public is then born out of engagement by the subject in a given time-space. However, Warner (2002) points out that the kind of public that can offer strong engagement must be organized outside and not by the state or a singular mechanism that can dominate the interaction. This notion is supported by

Asen (2000), who argued that the traditional bourgeois' public sphere such as town hall meetings, political conventions, and, to a certain extent, the mainstream media are not an ideal 'Space' for public engagement.

The present-day discoveries in the field of digital activism earnestly show that, similarly as with the regularizing public sphere of the eighteenth century, the advanced age presents people with the likelihood to communicate their subjectivity, which invigorates their political commitment. Though some social scholars recognize this new upward hit of subjectivity as an obstruction to balanced intuition, concentrates on online activism show that some different characteristics of the regularizing public sphere—like the opportunity of articulation—would conceivably be stretched out by computerized correspondence innovations. Nonetheless, while portraying online arranges as a liberating open space for activists and aggressors, Bennett (1998), recommend that these participative undertakings could be extra economical and productive. In any case, this sensible supportability and effectively wish to be evaluated as per the criteria, particularly identifying with the developing connective culture, as unfriendly to the system of regular types of political activity.

As per a 2009 study by method for DigiActive, social network sites (SNS) are the most continued access to online activism, despite the way SNS has been never again made with activism in thought (Joyce, Zaeck & Brodock, 2009). Considering that evident should be found out about how the web is affecting assembly, this perhaps leads to some answers concerning the fundamental of investigating what SNS, specifically Facebook, means for social moves (Diani, 2000).

All things thought of, within the event that it is natural to click 'Join Group' or 'Sign Petition,' it deserves wondering whether or not folks of online social moves genuinely square measure centered on the explanation, or primarily jumping on the short trend. Van American state Van De Donk, Loader, Nixon & Rucht, (2004) contended that the online could supplement, not supervene upon, existing movement ways. It is the wide praised straightforwardness of online policy that researchers have suggested maybe got to undermine a development's value, growing associate, irresolute, negligible policy, or 'Slacktivism.' Further, whereas Morozov (2017) recognized that Infobahn would encourage assembly and mixture activity, which the leading-edge innovation of activists and dissenters might as fitly be in the main primarily based out of Facebook, he suggested towards the mechanical philosophical theory that sparkles over the importance of disconnected interest. The following topics will be discussed assumption theories and contemporary literature, and research on factors related to the political communication engagement on news agencies' Facebook page.

2.1.2 Millennials: The First Digital Native Generation

Generation is not defined only as people born during the same period but also the social experiences they share in common. Unlike the previous generation, where news and public relations content were broadcasted to the public, the millennials are experiencing social issues in much more fragmented ways. "Major political events were once shared national experiences. The current generation of young adults is the first to grow up in a media environment in which there are few such shared experiences" (Dahlgren, 2007. p.73). However, this does not mean that the millennial does not share the same identities and values. According to

Bennett (2004), a survey on millennials found that 61% of this demographic display a high level of generational identification.

The highly individualistic millennials displayed certain characteristics identical to the contemporary attitude towards the political system and the democratic process. They demonstrate distrust and dislike in conventional political engagement but focus and are active on certain issues relevant to their generation, such as global warming, globalization, education, and culture, associated with political consumerism rather than ideologies (Bennett, 2004). We see an emergence of personalized, less institutionally organized politics that focuses on 'Self-actualization' and 'Self-reflective' based on lifestyles and shifting social networks (Dolan, et al., 2016).

The conventional approach to citizen engagement is no longer efficient as one representation, and one solution does not fit all (Dahlgren, 2007). "When politics becomes so personal, public policies that try to embrace the millennials may fail because the government tends to deliver collective solutions, and collective solutions do not fit personalized problems" (Dahlgren, 2007, p. 61). Instead of participating in politics through traditional formats such as party rallies or public debate, the millennials base their activities on their social network of like-minded peers that share the same values and concerns (Dahlgren, 2007). They are likely to engage in activism with relevant issues to their contemporary society, which their social network group largely impacts. Furthermore, the emerging online global information economy directly impacts traditional institutions and cultures (Castells & Blackwell, 1998). Institutions such as families, voluntary organizations, political parties, and religious, which provide collective political meaning, are challenged by

self-processes of deinstitutionalization (Bennett, 1998). The traditional values are being replaced by multiple identities emerging from new social distinctions and identification such as gender, sexuality, environment concerns, race, and disability (Loader, 2007).

These issues are relevant to contemporary society and construct the issues young demographic and online users engage with. This notion highlights the fact that political engagement has increasingly evolved around issues-based activism rather than ideological affiliation. The younger generation concerns themselves with issues that affect their social surrounding rather than ideology, such as nationalism or religion. This assumption also highlights the impact of deinstitutionalized regarding user's patterns of Internet usages (Dahlgren, 2007; Loader, 2007).

Those who get most political news from social media most likely to be under 30

Among U.S. adults who say each pathway is the most common way they get political and election news, % who are ...

	Social media	News website or app	Cable TV	Local TV	Network TV	Radio	Print
Ages 18-29	48%	21%	7%	10%	5%	12%	7%
30-49	40	44	23	31	23	42	17
50-64	9	23	31	39	34	28	28
65+	3	12	39	20	38	18	47

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 29–Nov. 11, 2019.

“Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2.3: American Trends Panel

Source: Infield, T. (2020). *Americans who get news mainly on social media are less knowledgeable and less engaged and social media is now among the most common ways people-particularly young adults-get their political news.*

Retrieved from <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/trust/archive/fall-2020/americans-who-get-news-mainly-on-social-media-are-less-knowledgeable-and-less-engaged>.

Millennials and Gen Z will make up approximately 60 percent of the global citizens in 2019. This generation is unique as what they interact with the most echoes themselves, their values, and their preferences. This is made easier by the latest function of Facebook and other social media platforms that allows all these people to select what they like. They are in the sense of digital natives equipped with digital objects that offer them access to the Internet that is their “public sphere” and source of preferable information they consume and share.

According to Bennett (2004), 61% of the demographic of millennials show a very high level of generational identification, meaning that they are concerned about contemporary attitudes towards what is going on in society, including the democratic process. Such percentage still holds as in the global case from the findings from Mitchell, et al. (2015) and Thailand from the finding on media consumption from the search by Paireepairit (2012). They will participate in the discussion on Facebook news threads (the most popular Integrated Online News Site and contemporary definition of “public sphere”) mostly on issues relevant to their generation, including global warming, globalization, education, and culture, which associates with political consumerism rather than ideologies (Bennett, 2004). Thus, the millennials, who are the majority of the contemporary public sphere, will be studied and included as research participants.

The transformation and the emergence of the Internet as a counter-publica sphere were argued by Putnam (2000), as a result from a steady decline in offline civic engagement. According to Putnam (2000), this comes about due to the decline in political groups and civic organizations, which affects the general democratic process in countries with a long history of democratic tradition, such as the United States. The disaffection with political engagement has been shown in several areas, such as declining voter turnout, declining membership of parties, loss of faith in democratic institutions (Government, Constitution, and Political Parties), and in the political class in general (Ginsborg, 2008). The explanation to the decline of public engagement in the democratic process was pointed out by Schudson (1996) as a result of the constraint of information by a small number of gatekeepers (political organization, voluntary organization, political parties support organization), meaning

that citizens are not in control of the questioning or generating input regarding the political process. This decline is reflected in electoral statistics from leading western democratic nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

According to Couldry, Livingstone & Markham (2006) and Loader (2007), there is a sharp contrast between a decrease in offline political participation and an increase in online engagement among the young demographic (18-35 years old). The Public Connection Survey in the United Kingdom found that 40% of 18-35 years old read and engages with political news online at least three times per week. The survey also found that only 25% of 35 to 54 years old read news and engages in a political discussion online (Loader, 2007).

In contrast to the lack of engagement and lack of trust in a traditional mode of Political Engagement, many young people today are receiving more political information on a daily basis than their parents or other previous generation before them. Loader (2007) argued that young people today are more exposed to political information and discourse through their daily media use (emphasis on social media) and their educational upbringing. Furthermore, according to Dalton (2011), young people feel disconnected from traditional mechanisms of political socialization. They are not bored with politics but feel that the traditional mechanism engaging in political information or action does not answer their contemporary lifestyle and discourse. According to Loader (2007), the young demographic is disaffected and displaced by traditional ways political communication is being projected through mostly an offline electoral duty-bound citizenry.

“Nowhere, perhaps, is this more apparent than in the gulf that is depicted between the traditional style of political communication of elected

representatives and the newer media-oriented life experiences of many young people, characterized by sociological patterns of increasing fluidity, mobility, individualization and consumerism” (Loader, 2007, p. 10)

This brings about the argument of ‘Cultural Displacement’ regarding the decrease in offline engagement by the young demographic. This notion suggested that the decrease of the political participant is due to the shift of engagement format both culturally and technologically (Loader, 2007). The previous model and mechanism of political engagement are being replaced by modern-day online expression within the global information economy (Dalton, 2011; Loader, 2007).

Millennials, the digital natives, are experiencing social issues in substantial fragmented; they know how to utilize social media as a tool to communicate with a like-minded group and select to avoid the sphere that they do not fit in. The millennials distrust conventional media platforms and seem ignorant, not likely to share the same identity and value in general. However, when it comes to a high level of generational identification and certain relevant issues, they will actively engage and use social media movement to show their position, which can lead to offline political engagement.

2.2 Related Theories

This section reviews three related theories that were integrated into the development of this study’s conceptual framework. These theories include Selective Exposure Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, and Spiral of Silence Theory.

2.2.1 Selective Exposure Theory

2.2.1.1 Assumption of the Theory

The concept of legitimacy has always been at the center of the political communication paradigm. According to Castells (2004), the principle of legitimacy in terms of society and politics has become blurred as the plural identities enter the online sphere of constant negotiation. Furthermore, traditional concepts of states and constituencies are challenged by emerging non-traditional players on an unprecedented scale (Dalton, 2011). The fact that people are able to connect to like-minded peers without the traditional boundaries such as location or social affiliation creates a sense of diaspora, which decreases loyalty and belonging towards prior perceived authority figures (Dahlgren, 2009).

In this sense, people are less likely to trust a traditional social and political figure. “People are no longer in awe of authority, brand names, and institutions the way they used to be. Their loyalties are weaker and shift more easily” (Castells, 2004, p.11). Soysal (1998) suggested that the decline in the importance of the nation-state is in part a product of globalization. This notion highlights an increasingly popular contemporary belief that one well-being is not defined by geographical, socio-economic classes, religion, or nationality (Soysal, 1998; Held, 2004). This leads many scholars such as Castells (2004), Dalton (2011), and Dahlgren (2009) to suggest that in the contemporary network society, political and civic participation is increasingly self-interest motivated rather than as representative of group or ideology.

According to Dahlgren (2009), in terms of modern social networks beyond the primary and formative relations of family and clan, the political

engagement of users on the Internet manifests forms of communication that are relatively stable and recurring. The communication pattern of political debate on online platforms suggests that the channel also impacts the dialogue where subjective terms are being used to highlight one's opinion (Dahlgren, 2005). Dahlgren (2009) and Castells (2004) suggested that this type of engagement is still evolving in terms of codes and conventions, but engagement is generally voluntary and often serves the participants' self-interests.

In the online platform context, the accessibility to diverse content is important usability of this platform (Parmelee, Roman, Beasley & Perkins, 2017); however, user regularly not randomly expose to various information, but also selectively choose the information they find most agreed and avoid disagreed content (Johnson & Kaye, 2010). On the one hand, active-selective exposure means that users actively search online for topics that they find agreeable to their predisposition. According to several previous studies, such as Garrett, et al. (2014) and Arceneaux, et al. (2012), there are evidential correlations between user's exposure to agreeable online political content and the levels of online political engagement.

On the other hand, passive selective exposure happens when topics or channels in which users may previously engage suggested content and information that have similar points of view back to users through algorithms. Past researchers such as Gil de Zúñiga, Veenstra, Vraga & Shah (2010) pointed out that exposure to agreeable content leads to an increase in engagement by users. This finding is also factual in social media users who use social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook.

A finding by Gil de Zuniga, et al. (2010) suggested that political information seeking on Facebook leads to a high level of political engagement on the

site. They also commented that Facebook's algorithms might play a significant role in contributing to the bubble of information that kept users from experiencing alternative political contents. Therefore, the content preferences factor and the technical assistance of algorithms impacted channel and engagement among online political participants. According to Feezell (2016), exposure to some preferred, opinion-infused political information highlights more intense political engagement than one without any point of view.

2.2.1.2 Literatures related to Selective Exposure Theory

Online media allows access to various blogs, sites, and other online social media. However, this capability has been limited due to selective exposure, specifically political content, by individuals and content creators. Many pieces of research confirm that individuals are selectively exposed to online media content. As Johnson & Kaye (2010) express the confirmation that online media users who consume content by partisan sources had more tendency to seek congruence messages, and media confirmed their political belief. Additionally, Political pages often build their argument based on congruence or share the same opinion references, which most pages showed more than a dozen supported links in one content (Sunstein, 2007).

The polarizing content and the selectively expose by audiences lead to a narrowing mind and destruction of shared experiences (Sunstein, 2007). This form of passive selective exposure created a bubble of information sources that provide pleasant experiences for average users daily. "Both links and individual behavior supports the general view that many people mostly hear more and louder echoes of their voices" (Sunstein, 2007, p. 55). Extensive survey results have found that most

Americans and other developed countries (i.e., Canada, Australia, and the UK) tend to socialize, live near and work with others who share similar views on politics (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). This links geographic habitation with selective exposure giving a clue into how people select places they want to live or spend time.

The ability to construct a network of information allows individuals to actively engage with a preferred topic (that they can relate to) and bring about higher engagement with specific types of content (Bennett, 2004; Dahlgren, 2005; and Inglehart, 1997). According to past research, Dahlgren (2005) and Feezell (2016) confirm correlations between preferred channel and topic and the likelihood of political engagement. Dahlgren (2005) suggested that one of many social media functions allows individuals to advocate their own beliefs, allowing the increase of political engagement among users, especially the millennials.

“There has been a massive growth in what we call advocacy or issue politics, often in the form of ongoing campaigns. The Internet has played a strong role in facilitating the growth of informal and extra parliamentary politics.” (Dahlgren, 2005, p. 70).

Bennett (2004) survey on millennials across the globe found that 61% of this segment display a high level of generational identification (similar thought and ideas), and the issues of interest such as global warming, education, and culture are highly relevant to them. They also demonstrated high distrust in conventional political engagement and preferred to focus on issues they can relate to and by which they are directly impacted. The key motivation (relate to content topic) is less about ideological stands but rather individual interest. Inglehart (1997) and Dahlgren

(2007), suggested that contemporary political communication is largely impacted by the emerging of personalized, less institutionally organized politics that focuses on self-reflection based on lifestyle and shifting social media networks. Dahlgren (2007) also added that a social network group and pages that form an individual user's information network also play an essential role in structuring the contents they will be impacted by. However, many critics such as Dalton (2011), Castells (2004), Dahlgren (2009), and Soysal (1998) argued that selective exposure practice by contemporary political participant had created bubbles of information that kept users ignorant to other points of view that are in contrast to the preferred network. Castells (2004) added that this behavior prevents the diversity of information in the public sphere, limiting knowledge and accountability, which in the long run could underpinning the health of democratic engagement.

Selective exposure theory is relevant mainly to the user's behavior of media selection. The content and format provided in preferred media must satisfy users' pre-existing ideas to specific issues (Bimber & Davis, 2003, p. 152). The flavor media or political news providers were anchoring in top of users' minds. More than 40% of the time, they search the familiar news provider for political information (Hindman, 2009). The familiar media effect user selective exposure, but search engine-Google or Yahoo is the environment of searching political news or contents that limit the diversity by deprioritizing and excluding small and non-mainstream political news providers (Introna & Nissenbaum, 2000). The Internet environment was likely to have less diverse than the offline social environment (Brundidge & Rice, 2009), where people have more room to search for various political opinions.

Peer influences and credibility are other factors related to selective exposure. Sustain (2017) describes the linkage between credibility and selective exposure, which leads to political opinion bias. When citizens perceive information as credible only because it concurs with their values and beliefs, it could lead to more polarized and fragmented political views and less tolerance for opposing viewpoints (Sunstein, 2001, p. 30). The notion of 'Selective Exposure Theory' proves to be a phenomenon that directly impacts the democratic process as President Barack Obama expressed his concerns regarding the state of public discourse in America:

“If we choose only to expose ourselves to opinions and viewpoints that are in line with our own, studies suggest that we become more polarized, more set in our ways. That will only reinforce and even deepen the political divides in this country.” (Obama, 2016).

Hence, it is clear that exposure to media and content aligned with the individual's view occurs, which plays a crucial part in how receivers engage and take action. Westerwick & Johnson (2014) find out about distinguished a conflicting intervention sway by methods for which specific exposure impacts the internet use and political commitment. It provided proof for the connections between online data use and selectivity, just as among selectivity and political support.

The individual who finds that their preference is not fit into some channels will seek a new community that serves their ideology better. This is called ideological migration (Motyl, Iyer, Oishi, Trawalter & Nosek, 2014). It can be seen from Potrakul (2014) research on "The determinants of selective exposure that influence political tolerance among Thai university students." that selected media consumption plays a very important part as "Conservative political ideology on social

issue and degree of partisan-ship has a positive relationship to selective exposure" Pootrakul (2014). However, what can help explain more is how open people are to receive or experience information based on individual differences, skeptical mindsets, and generation.

Previous researches are considered motivating engagement reliability in attitude-challenging information of close-minded individuals. It is observed that close-minded express discomfort and anxiety when encountering oppositional opinions, which would force them to defend their beliefs (Frey, 1986; Mackuen, et al., 2010; Valentino, Banks, Hutchings & Davis, 2009). Group Polarization is intense with like-minded others (Isenberg, 1986) as information in the group conveys the group's belief and essence. The predominance of individual opinion will take over the other, taking group members' opinions to a more extreme level (Isenberg, 1986). Individuals in a group who want to be fitting into the groups' norm will turn to endorse extreme views (Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg & Turner, 1990; McGarty & Turner, 1992). Group opinions then help polarize attitudes, categorizing those who think A to Group A and B to Group B. "Some of the best and worst developments in social life are a product of group dynamics, in which members of organizations, both small and large, move one another in new directions" (Sunstein, 2007, p. 13). When coming into the scene, any new individuals will have to choose whose side they are on based on the criteria that which individual resonates with them the most. This even highlights how selective exposure becomes so strong and impactful to receivers in the online landscape.

As we mention, selective exposure significantly explains the closeness between open/ close-mindset and consuming others' opinions on the online platform;

however, this relationship showed various effects across generations. Several pieces of research witnessed the different levels of encountering toward oppositional opinion are different, such as research comparing the percent of occasionally reading both oppose and various political views in The Millennial, Generation X, and Baby Boomers. The results showed that only 18% of Millennials are likely to pay attention to political posts that supported their idea, which is lesser than Baby Boomers (31%) and Generation Xers (21%). This difference could explain by different levels of the flexibility mindset in the generation (Gottfried & Barthel, 2015). Moreover, another cross-sectional research study by statistic modeling explores the motive of exposing various political views and the intention to read the opposite view in the young generation. Results found that consuming oppositional opinion natural human tendency which young generation have the motive to consume both oppose and confirm opinions (Tsang, 2017). This phenomenon occurs if the millennials consider that opposite opinions are useful information or having low quality (Bobok, 2016). The uniqueness of the Millennial generation consuming both opposite and confirmed political views on online platforms still has room to explore in detail in future research.

Herein, researchers confirm the Millennial tendency to 'Select' what they want to consume or what satisfies individual's preference, yet lack of explanation of process and motive of behavior on the online platform, particularly Facebook engagement. Express engagement, commenting, or sharing on the political news threads were driven by the rewards they can get in return, whether individual and social gratification, entertainment, or satisfaction (Leung, 2009). In contrast, motives not only drive people to perform the engagement they wish to express but also prevent

them from voicing out their opinion due to fear of social isolation or sanction (Garrett, et al., 2014). This motive and barrier for engaging in online political news on Facebook needed to examine and illustrate the behavioral engagement's initial process.

2.2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

2.2.2.1 Assumption of the Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and its assumption are rooted in the notion that individuals use media to satisfy certain desires, whether be it social and psychological as Diddi & LaRose (2006) said that "Internet not only satisfies basic information need but also provides enjoyment through interactions with others such as discussions and gossip." With the advancement of social media, a new approach in the Uses and Gratification Theory can develop at its full capacity (Kaye & Johnson, 2004).

The development of PC interceded correspondence has restored the size of utilization and satisfaction. Indeed, utilizes and satisfactions have consistently provided a bleeding-edge hypothetical strategy in the primer scopes of each new mass interchanges medium: newspapers, radio and TV, and now the Internet. While previous researches on traditional media such as television and radio propose that the reasons behind people's consumption of media are for entertainment, researches on the 'Internet' suggest that the dominating functions of uses and gratification that pervades this new media landscape are 'information seeking and 'surveillance' (Stafford, Royne & Schkade, 2004). Many scholars, including Whiting & Williams (2013), Kaye & Johnson (2004), Chan (2014), Chung & Yoo (2008), and Harwood (1999), confirmed these findings in their researches suggesting the netizens are

increasingly using the Internet to search for information and observe other peers' online behavior, which is clearly for socialization and entertainment factors of the uses and gratification. Whiting & Williams (2013) researched. Internet users' gratification found that 40% of respondents mentioned 'information sharing' as their online news gratification. In comparison, 32% mentioned 'surveillance.' However, Chung & Yoo (2008) suggested no direct link between 'surveillance' and 'information sharing.' They further argued that 'information sharing' is closely related to 'socialization.'

Moreover, the social hierarchy on this new public sphere called the Internet may cause individuals to perform some kind of online political performance such as commenting or sharing to respond to the reaffirmation of social identities as Chan (2014) and Harwood (1999) suggested in their research. Many critics such as Lee & Ma (2012), Mauss (2002), and Chatfield, et al. (2012) described this act of status-seeking on the online platforms as a tool for individuals to establish their status and receive acknowledgment or acceptance among their peers. This further offers netizens a feeling of being important, wanted, and admired. Furthermore, the survey on the aftermath of the Iranian presidential election in 2009 by Chatfield, et al. (2012) revealed the participants felt a sense of social responsibility and belonging to their society as they participated in online discussions over political issues and conflicts. This proved that online engagement had an impact on users' social status.

Social status is particularly pertinent within the Internet utilization could reflex from social satisfaction. Social satisfaction on the Internet-based media involves real-life issues (e.g., social affect, crowds' relational, and social transactions). Krishnatray, Singh, Raghavan & Varma (2010) delineated some straight forward

Internet social capacities like visiting and connection. Presently because this new medium has emerged, "scientists have started to ponder thought on how the utilizes and delights of more seasoned media may also be like and not quite the same as these of more up to date media." The involvement of online media and the offline world had been drawing attention to the group of Uses and Gratification theorists. Hence, this theory was well to clarify the motive of consuming political content on online media.

As many factors are related to individuals' motivation towards media usage, Kippax & Murray (1980) were to classify the uses and gratification satisfaction across nations, mixed the research outcome conducted in the United States, Great Britain, Israel, and Australia. They grouped the uses and gratification into four classes: 1) preoccupation, 2) individual relationship, 3) private character, and 4) data satisfaction. In light of the past classes, Stafford, et al. (2004) argue and found only three uses and gratification: 1) content & material, 2) technique and 3) social satisfaction. However, media changes through time currently may drive researchers to pay attention to online social media (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016).

The social media's uses and gratification specifically explain and identify behavioral engagement studied by Dolan, et al. (2016). Their proposed social media uses and gratification could categorize the content into four main groups: 1) information, 2) entertainment, 3) remunerative, and 4) relational content, affecting general social engagement. The information content refers to resourceful and helpful information to users. Entertainment content refers to the extent to which content is fun and entertaining to media users (Dolan, et al., 2016). The remunerative content refers to the user's expectation to gain rewards such as personal wants, economic incentives,

or job-related benefits (Dolan, et al., 2016). Relational content refers to the desire for social benefits and social interaction (Dolan, et al., 2016).

This UGT provides a framework through which we understand individuals' usage motivations in a specific media type (e.g., Facebook or Twitter). This leaves room to explore the UGT of behavioral engagement on specific content and platforms, especially political news on Facebook. Therefore, to understand the roles of the social and psychological drive behind an individual's tendency to voice political views on Facebook online news, this research is required to employ the aforementioned theoretical frameworks.

2.2.2.2 Literatures Related to the Uses and Gratification Theory

Previous researches on the Uses and Gratification Theory, particularly in the aspect of motivational factors that play a crucial part in user's way of content and medium selection being carried out, bears some limitations since it is apparent that many pieces of research analyze each function in the uses and gratification theory separately, leading to the separated and case-by-case understanding of all the functions. Chan (2014) states that there are links between different gratification functions. Therefore, according to Chung & Yoo (2008), the integrated approach, for example, asking the question of 'why' might shed light on the undiscovered connections between gratification functions, which the researcher think can later provide an insight into a deeper understanding of individual gratification that influences online users' political engagement since the gratification characteristics exist in so many different aspects.

Nowadays, we cannot deny that the coming of social media has contributed to the transformation of passive observers to active participants through a

variety of activities, for instance, comment, like, and share content on Facebook and Twitter. Thus, the Uses and Gratification Theory is an approach to understanding why and how individuals actively seek out and use specific media to satisfy specific needs (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). The Uses and Gratification Theory was cited to understand why individuals actively find and use specific media platforms to satisfy their needs. Ko, Cho & Roberts (2005) described that individual was using media to satisfy themselves by gratifying knowledge enhancement, entertainment, and relaxation, social interaction and reward or remuneration. This view, considering the user as an active person, suggests that individuals actively search for media to fulfill one specific need (Ku, Chu & Tseng, 2013).

According to Dolan, et al. (2016), Individuals might participate in the political discussion because of many gratification attributes:

1) Individuals might want to seek friendship from those they think can get along well with them.

2) If individuals have their preferred group, they might want to gain acceptance by commenting similarly to their peers in the comment section.

3) Individuals might feel entertained if they express the opinion that attacks those who think differently in the news threads.

4) Individuals might feel educated if they follow and consume the news from the news thread. Many people who think similarly express an opinion that matches their thoughts, which confirms that they have a correct understanding of it.

All the aspects of uses and gratification were explored in the form of open questions that allow the individuals to express what they truly think gratifies them due to online political engagement. This individual level in the study of uses and

gratification fills the theoretical gap in the mixed-method approach (Dolan, et al., 2016).

2.2.3 Spiral of Silence Theory

2.2.3.1 Assumption of the Theory

The Spiral of Silence Theory originated by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the German political specialist, believes that individuals have an innate fear of isolation and willingness to self-censor. This innate drive them to always be active catching up with the majority by seeking out information, especially related to the public opinion from interpersonal discussion and the public sphere. When they feel that their opinions are considered as trivial and contrasting to the majority, they are less likely to voice out in public. In contrast, when they feel that they are part of the majority, they are more likely to express their own opinions and participate in the discussion in the public sphere.

Fear of isolation drives people to try every possible way to adjust to a certain group. Suppose they cannot find one or feel that the existing ones are impossible to join in. In that case, they are more likely to seek a new channel in the new public space where they will find the people of the same thought, which can be easily carried out in the age of space transformation and advancement of the Internet. According to Noelle-Neumann (1984), an individual tends to gain acceptance to construct or establish his or her social status by going out in the public sphere and speaking out their opinions. However, there is also a risky concern in an offline public sphere as an individual has to expect sanctions when his or her opinions are subversive or defying the group norms of opinion. This sort of feeling develops into a fear of isolation in the individuals' minds, which in most cases causes them to remain

silent and have the willingness to self-censor to avoid social isolation and sanction. According to Pootrakul (2014), high self-censorship in Thailand conforms to the Emergency Decree under the military junta government. Especially, human rights and politics are very sensitive topics for both mass media and citizens. Consequently, some choose to refrain from expressing their thoughts, some choose to be sarcastic, and some choose to soften their expression via comics and Gags.

The situation on the Internet sphere differs from the traditional offline mechanism of the spiral of silence where the participant cannot escape their social mass or select who should be included in their day-to-day interaction. This factor also lowers the social cost for online users, leading them to express their opinion freely among members of the selected group. This changes the way we perceive 'Opinion Climate' from the mass public to Rokka (2010) calls 'Little Masses' as referred to in Donsbach, Salmo & Tsifti, (2014) 's The Spiral of Silence: New Perspectives on Communication and Public Opinion. This rise of 'Neo-Tribalism' is centered in heterogeneous, fragmented public organized around affect-based collectives. These notions lead many researchers to suggest that reviving the spiral of silence theory is needed to keep up with the current new media landscape.

Thus, the Internet landscape provides individuals with the opportunity to choose their own group to join in. If they feel that they do not belong to a certain group and their opinions might bring about social punishment, they leave and find another group to adjust themselves too easily and conveniently. The emergence of the online platform gives rise to a new way to voice out in public. According to McDevitt, Kiouisis & Wahl-Jorgensen (2003), many types of social sanction and punishment rely on the physical presence of others. In a physical space, individuals'

way of communication is influenced by the social norm and formal practice associated in a physical sense: gestures, eye contact, age, and hierarchical status of conversation partners. However, all these concerns lose their influence in the Internet world, driving people to express opinions at their convenience because online platforms are perceived to be a place where individuals can freely express their opinions. The psychological mechanisms of the fear of isolation used to silence people when they feel threatened of social sanction turns to be an unwillingness to voice out their own opinion and, instead, follow the majority's direction of opinions.

Based on Noelle-Neumann (1984), society (as a whole) demands quick conformity over issues that are in the transformative stage (currently unresolved). This notion requires maintaining unification in opinions by the majority in the name of the common good. To counter the dominant public opinion may result in force isolation and sanction by the majority.

“People can be on uncomfortable or even dangerous ground when the climate of opinions runs counter to their views. When people attempt to avoid isolation, they are not responding hyper-sensitively to trivialities; these are existential issues that can involve real hazards” (Noelle-Neumann, 1984, p. 56).

Social identity is a crucial and main concern for individuals. Once the individual detects where the majority is going or what the major is saying, they will direct their opinion towards the majority's norms. This can be identified as unusual behaviors where individuals refrain from their usual ones that often appear when personal identity rules. A social identity can explain this that an individual might have motivational pressures to maintain a good state of affairs and relationships among his group. "This state can be reached by striving for membership in groups which have a

positive connotation. Due to permanent processes of group comparison, the individual can tell which groups are positive, and which are not, to maintain membership, the individual has to respect the norms that are valid in the group" (Donsbach, et al., 2014).

2.2.3.2 Literatures related to the Spiral of Silence Theory

This research contributes to the new approach in testing and interpreting the spiral of silence effect using mixed methods, including surveys and focus groups. The result of this research can shed light on old assumptions of the spiral of silence theory, such as fear of isolation and willingness to self-censor; this is to see if they are still relevant in today's new public sphere. This research also allows studying the theory in an actual public setting (where Noelle-Neumann did not have access to her study during the 70s-80s). The shift in power relation between media and users may change the way people react to 'Opinion Climate,' which is similar to Rokka (2010) as referred in Donsbach, et al. (2014) suggested, that the notion of 'Little Masses' (also known as Neo-Tribalism) plays an essential role in shifting the power relation between the participant and the public.

Unlike the offline sphere in previous studies, online users can move between different public, which lowers their fear of isolation (they can move to other public when not welcome) and decreases their likelihood of self-censorship (do not have to take consequences of isolation when voicing opinion). These factors bring to question the traditional assumptions of the spiral of silence theory. This research contributes to exploring the traditional assumption of this theory in the new media setting. The results of this study may provide a new approach in the spiral of silence research. Furthermore, this research outlined the functionality of the theory in the new

media context.

Further, apart from the fear of isolation that leads individuals to catch up with the majority, try to adjust themselves to part of the group, and seek a new channel in the new public space. The fear of rejection also plays an essential role in refining individuals from voicing their opinions in public, in contrast with the majority, to avoid conflict and disagreement. Individuals tend to lose their confidence and stay silent when they are part of minority circumstances. This willingness to self-censor can explain how individuals choose to join a group, accept or reject friends, share their opinions or repost contents, and set the privacy of each post on social media, specifically on Facebook.

Facebook's construction as a public discussion space, but limited users actively shared opinions on Facebook's sphere, especially the content related to political topics (Batorski & Grzywińska, 2018). The spiral of silence has been explained due to the private discussion in friends' online networks, namely echo chambers (Hampton, Rainie, Lu, Dwyer, Shin & Purcell, 2014). Chan (2014) research comparing the role of willingness to self-censor and fear of isolation between face-to-face and Facebook settings toward attitude supporting disagree political content found the same pattern across platforms of fear of isolation effect WSC and indirect effects on the political discussion. Moreover, Facebook usage has a direct, negative impact on willingness to deliberation in many offline settings: the home, the workplace, social gatherings with friends, and community meetings (Hampton, Shin & Lu, 2016). The roles of willingness to self-censor seem to inhibit user engagement, both offline and online context. This leaves room to explore the combination of theories to

understand individuals' motivation and process for their political engagement via Facebook.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The backgrounds in terms of 'Public Sphere 'and 'Millennials: the Digital Native, 'together with theoretical assumptions, 'Selective Exposure, 'Uses and Gratification, 'and 'Spiral of Silence, 'provide the conceptual framework for further inquiry into the psychological and social motivation of users 'engagement on integrated news agencies 'Facebook page.

The conceptual framework of this study was developed from a CMR model: Channel, Message, and Receiver. To understand the overall phenomenon, the understanding of the channel needs to be clearly defined. This framework focuses on social media news threads on Facebook. Next, the message must be scoped down to a particular issue to help fathom deep down into the core that drives people to engage, which the research defines as political communication that consists of political news as provided by news agencies 'Facebook page. The next unit is the receiver. The receiver for our political communication is clearly defined as the millennials. For a deeper level of the framework, the receivers were studied in terms of motives how the receiver gets; the analyzed 'Selective Exposure Theory 'explaining how the receiver selects their media consumption preference. Finally, the political engagement, receiver engages with the message was studied in terms of what drives them to or prevents them from engaging, which was examined through the lens of 'Uses & Gratification Theory 'and that of 'Spiral of Silence Theory '(Fear of Isolation).

Identifying the motivation to communicate about political in Thailand This research will use mixed methods to acquire insights into contemporary communication trends. Moreover, to help the lookup apprehend it more clearly and precisely, a framework is also mandatory. Below is the conceptual framework that will be used in this research.

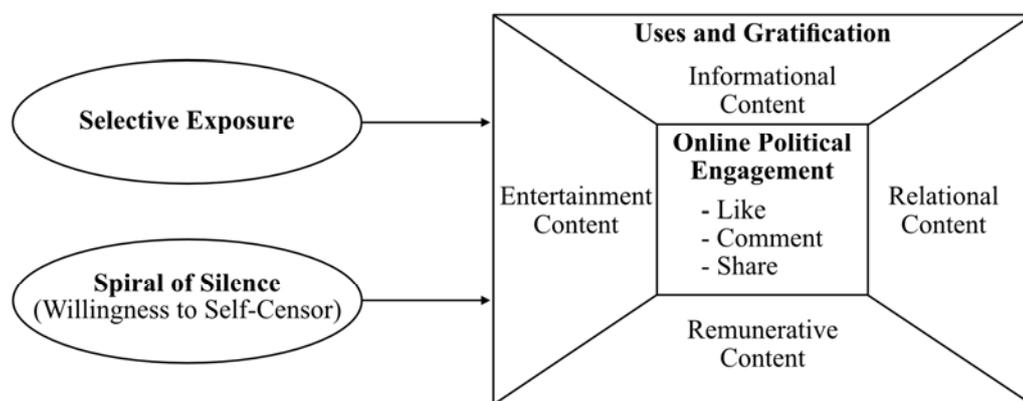


Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework was used to help the researcher understand how millennials engage with messages they prefer to receive, what factors drive them to engage, whatnot, and why. The news social media platform is defined as a public sphere or a channel in which the relationship between a message and receivers takes place and interacts with each other. The message is defined as political communication since the messages that were examined are politics-related. The receiver is Thai millennials, with potential factors of motives behind their consumption and engagement with the messages they receive. Therefore, the relationship between the message and the receiver is called 'Political Engagement'

where comments from receivers on political news presented are counted as a unit of online political engagement. The political communication for this research is defined and scoped down to consuming and interacting with the political news and other members who engage in such political news on the social media platforms.

The relationship that occurs between the political communication was explicitly studied in terms of why the receiver would like to receive the message from such news channels, why they decide to take actions in the form of comments in response to or against their opinion, and why they decide to remain silent confronted with the bigger group that thinks and says differently than themselves. To better understand the relationship and identify why the receivers engage in political news content on Facebook. By this two theories examined deeply human motivation: ‘Uses and Gratification Theory’ for understanding why and for what purpose the receivers participate in online political discussion in Facebook news threads, and ‘Spiral of Silence Theory’ for understanding why some of the receivers decide to either follow the majority in the discussion or perform the role of mere observers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation explores the millennials political news engagement and motivation on Facebook by adopting the convergent mixed method. This chapter describes the overall research methodology including research design, sampling methods and research participants, data collection procedure, measurement, and summary.

3.1 Research Design

This research uses a convergent mix-method research, combining two research methods—survey and focus group interview. According to Creswell & Clark (2011), a convergent parallel mixed method employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to enable the exploration and description of existing phenomena that extend the explanation from either qualitative or quantitative approach alone. The benefits from using this approach is that the user can get data from large samples and small samples that avoid over generalization of the interpretation of data and greater diversity of views from diversity of perspectives between different research findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

Tackling with such a sophisticated objective of research as social and psychological motivations behind online users' political engagement, this mixed method allowed the researcher to get as much useful, and related data as possible to be later formed as a set of analytical presumptions transformed into questions for in-depth interview to gain insights for this particular phenomenon. The main

characteristics of the mixed method (figure 3.1) are as follows. It begins with collection and analysis of two data types: quantitative and qualitative data, followed by the combination or juxtaposition of both sets of analyzed data to see what they share in common or stand in contrast (McDougall, Rajabifard & Williamson, 2007).



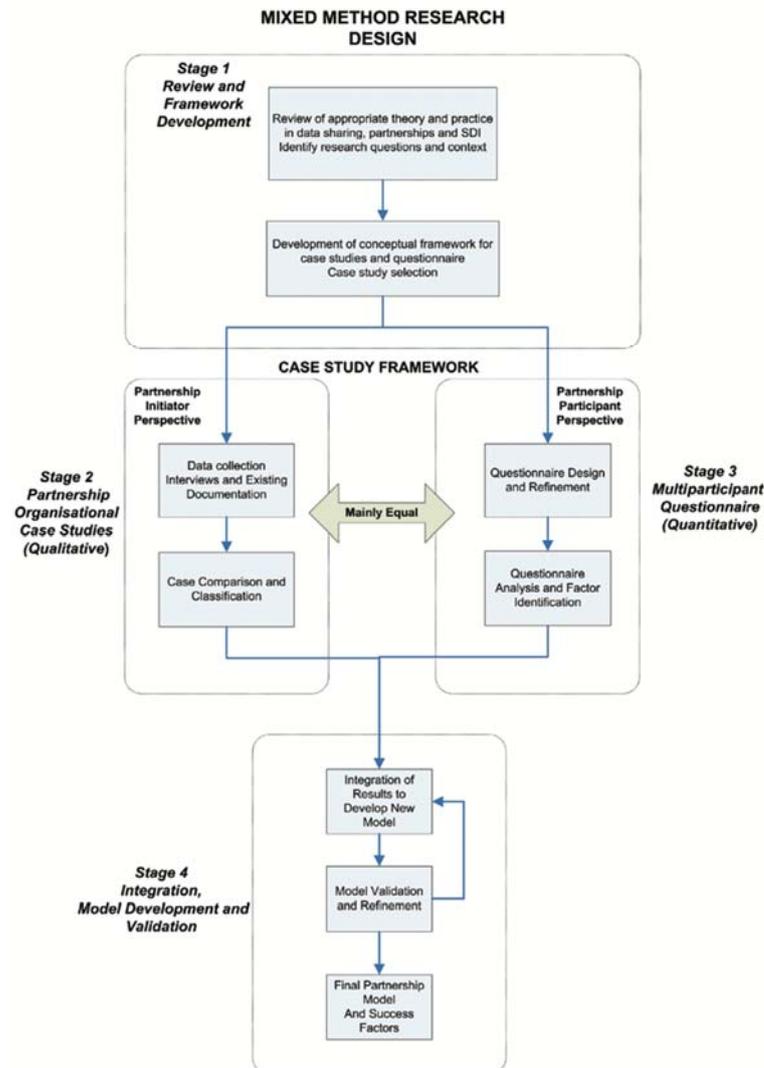


Figure 3.1: Mixed-Method Research Design

Source: McDougall, K., Rajabifard, A., & Williamson, I. P. (2007). *A mixed method approach for evaluating spatial data sharing partnerships for spatial data infrastructure development*. Redlands, CA: ESRI.

The processes may be linked at various stages in the research process and then integrated to formulate final outcomes. Priority, implementation timing, and

processes might be complex, thus the phase is needed. The phase for using this approach can be divided into two phases. The first phase is quantitative approach using an online survey while the second phase is qualitative approach using a focus group interview.

3.2 Quantitative Method: Survey

The survey research normally employed for political communication was used for examining attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors (Hoffman & Young 2013) which allow us to compare more than two variables to identify the better conclusion. This study used a cross-sectional survey to capture the motivation of behavior engagement on Facebook included Liking, Commenting, and Sharing political news. As proposed, the motivation chosen to explain engagement on Facebook is based on the concept of selective exposure, Spiral of Silence, and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

3.2.1 Sampling Method and Participants

A total of 225 millennials aged of 18-35 years living in Bangkok, Thailand participated voluntarily in this study in April 2020. The researcher selected the samples based on age and occupations, the selection was separated into two groups, university students (18-23 years) and white collar workers (23-35 years). The university student group was selected using a snowball technique and the white collar group was obtained via Facebook closed group with topics relating to education, human resources, and private organisation. They completed questionnaires via online platform including demographics information, selective exposure, willingness to self-censor, uses and gratification, and political engagement behaviors on Facebook.

3.2.2 Data Collection Procedure for Survey

Participants were requested to respond to self-administered online questionnaire. The questionnaire was publicized through Facebook pages and closed group where the target participants joined. Those eligible for the study engagement who expressed their interest would be sent a link to an online survey which they then filled out the questionnaires in their free time. It took about approximately ten minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.2.3 Measurement for Survey

The key four variables were examined by the following measurement.

3.2.3.1 Selective Exposure Theory

Selective exposure, referring to individuals' motivation selection of messages matching one's beliefs, was measured using Tendency toward Congruent Selective Exposure (TECSE) Scale developed by Tsfati (2016). The measurement contains five indicators (Appendix A) with two sub-scales: selective exposure and selective avoidance. The examples of items in the TECSE include (1) "I try to avoid exposure to media outlets expressing irritating opinions," (2) "I try to expose myself only to media outlets and news messages that are in line with my own attitudes."

Response options were coded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Reliability for these items was shown by Cronbach's alpha, 0.76. Internal consistency of the TECSE measurement on this study is 0.65 which is considered as acceptable (Van Griethuijsen, et al., 2015) and adequate (Taber & Lodge, 2016).

3.2.3.2 Willingness to Self-Censor

Willingness to self-censor, referring to individuals' willingness to withhold their opinion from an audience perceived to disagree with that opinion, was measured using the Willingness to Self-Censor (WSC) scale developed by Hayes, Hayes, Glynn & Shanahan (2005). The measurement contains eight indicators (Appendix A). The examples of items in the WSC include (1) "It is difficult for me to express my opinion if I think others won't agree with what I say," (2) "There have been many times when I have thought others around me were wrong but I didn't let them know." Response options were coded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Reliability for these items was shown by Cronbach's alpha, 0.83. Internal consistency of the WSC measurement on this study is 0.69 which is considered as acceptable (Van Griethuijsen, et al., 2015) and reasonable (Taber & Lodge, 2016).

3.2.3.3 Political news engagement behavior on Facebook

To measure 'political news engagement behavior,' respondents were asked about overall of how frequently they like, comment, and share the articles related to politics ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the times).

3.2.3.4 Uses and Gratification Theory

To measure 'Uses and Gratification,' respondents were asked about how frequently they like, comment, and share in specific types of political news: informational, entertaining, remunerative, and relational content ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the times).

3.2.4 Data Analysis for Survey

Multiple regression model was used to test the hypotheses. The independent variables for three models were the selective exposure (SE), and willingness to self-censor (WSC). The dependent variables were Like, Comment, and Share on different type of news on Facebook.

3.3 Qualitative Method: Focus Group

The qualitative method was employed in the study to gain “in-depth information and insider perspectives” (Oetzel, 2002, p. 133) in an attempt to gain more comprehensive understanding of the communication phenomenon of interest. Commonly, a focus group interview is used in businesses field for marketing purposes. It typically consists of a small number of participants from within the target market of a company, usually about six to 12. The consumers are brought together and led through discussions of important company and brand topics by a moderator.

In the context of political communication research, only a few researches about 16.7 percent from 2003 to 2015 database are qualitative research (Karpf, Kreiss, Nielsen & Powers, 2015). However, the collaboration of qualitative and quantitative result is important to obtain further theoretical understandings for the development of the field (Mokhtar, 2017). In this research, a focus group was used to understand participants' motivation under their Facebook political news engagement by adopting the concepts of Selective Exposure, Spiral of Silence, and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

3.3.1 Sampling Method and Participants

Millennial generation age of 18-35 years embrace the new media more comprehensively than the older generations and associated themselves with friends, news, and other social issues through the social media, such as Facebook, which may have advantages as well as disadvantages in terms of cognitive, emotional and social (Fietkiewicz, Lins, Baran & Stock, 2016). In this research, the focus group participants are the Thai millennial with the age of 18-35 years living in Bangkok. The purposive sampling was applied. Forty samples were selected with 20 were male and the other 20 are female.

3.3.2 Data Collection Procedure for Focus Group

The informants were divided into five groups of eight people; two university student groups (18-23 years) and three white collar worker groups (23-35 years). Each group were selected using the same criteria described in the next section.

3.3.2.1 Filtering Criterion for Focus Group

Participants who represent the millennial and interest in political news on Facebook were recruited. Several criteria were applied to ensure that the participants shared the same backgrounds or had common experiences to promote discussions within group. Therefore, the informants who were be selected for each focus groups must be the member or subscriber. The selection criteria of information are:

- 1) Age from 18-35 years old.
- 2) Have Facebook account registered in his or her real name, surname, and profile picture.
- 3) Must have more than 500 friends in connection.

4) Participants' Facebook account should follow or subscribe to more than three news agencies.

3.3.2.2 Data Collection Procedure for Focus Group

Before conducting the focus group interview, all participants were asked about age, facebook account, number of friends on Facebook, and number of subscribed news agencies through online questionnaire. Then the participants were selected according to the indicated criteria. On the date of data collection, the procedure for focus groups is as follows:

- 1) Informing consent of each samples
- 2) Inviting the samples to enter the focus group
- 3) Asking the questions about the response of political article from news agency in the aspects of cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement (Appendix A).

3.3.3 Measurement for Focus groups: Interview Questions

Questions used in focus groups were formed according to the research framework regarding response format which the participants have toward the news agencies as followed:

- 1) Cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of the participants
- 2) Types of message strategy which affect the political communication goals
- 3) Cognitive aspect focuses on the process of thought that affects how the participants selected and engaged in the political content. Emotional aspect focuses on feelings of the participants toward the news forum during the viewing of the news and also study the trustworthiness of the news agencies together with the attitudes toward the news. Behavioral aspect focuses on the participants' intention to perform any

action according to the message presented in the News Forum. This response is the result of the usage of appeals or techniques in presenting the creativity in different ways. Finally, the research focuses on the types of appeal and message strategy which affect the communication goals.

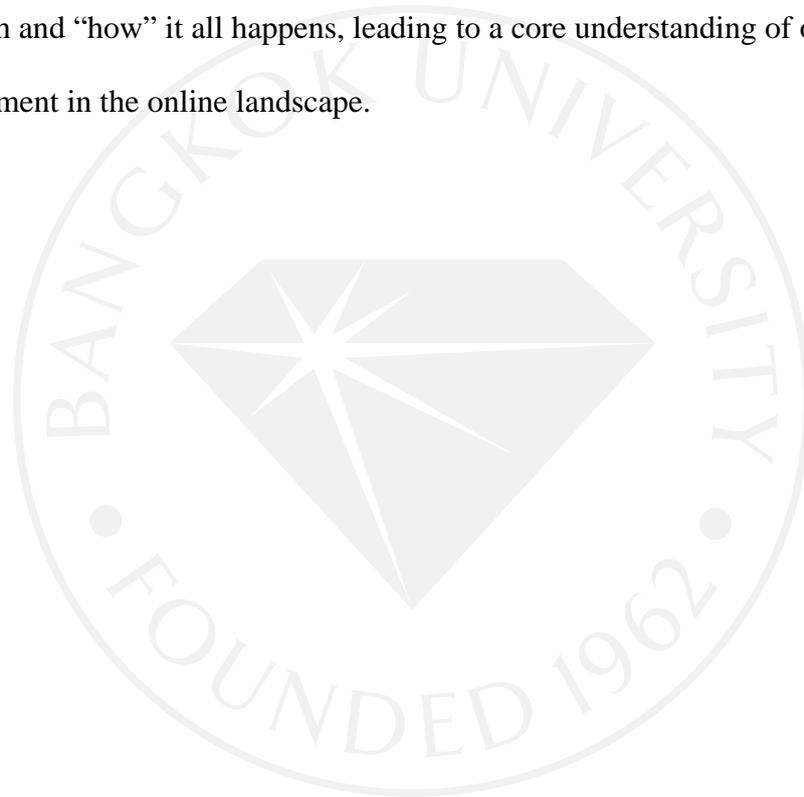
3.3.4 Data Analysis for Focus Group

As the qualitative data gained from the focus group interviews, the first step involves each focus group recording was transcribed and analyzed using the thematic analysis (Nowell, et al., 2017) to investigate behavioral motivations behind the informants' engagement in political news. To analyze the focus group transcription, this research has a peer debriefing to enhance the credibility of the research results (Barber & Walczak, 2018) by running the peer debriefing meeting frequently session with peer who had master's degree in psychology and have more than 5 years in academic research and research industries. Peer debriefing sessions were organized once a week over a month to read through the focus group transcript, group emerging themes, and review the themes together. Throughout the data analysis process, the decision and change were made on the emerging theme on engagement, behavior, motivations, then summarized the results explained in the next chapter.

3.4 Summary

Once the survey research and focus group were completed, all the data from both methods were combined and analyzed altogether in order to provide an explanation. In doing so, the researcher needs to conduct an interpretation process. The interpretation combines and juxtaposes the data of the quantitative part from the data collection with the analysis from the focus group interviews to identify

similarities and differences between these two sets of data. The researcher then compared and contrasted the information both from the survey research and focus group interviews to form a conclusion about to what extent the two factors (psychological or social) have impact on online users 'decision to make a comment or remain silent on online political news forums. The researcher can gain an insight into both "what" happens on social news forums through the data from survey research and "how" it all happens, leading to a core understanding of online political engagement in the online landscape.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This research aims to discover motivations behind an individual's decision to engage or not engage on Facebook's news threads from the communication perspective. Based on the results from both focus groups and online survey that were gathered during April and May 2020, samples' demographic characteristics and media consumption were presented. The quantitative research results were addressed first, followed by the findings from qualitative research. Finally, a summary of the key findings was given.

4.1 Findings of Quantitative Research: Online Survey

4.1.1 Samples Demographic Characteristics

The respondents completed information that evaluated five demographic characteristics, which included age, gender, education level, occupation, income. Two hundred and twenty-five individuals ranged in age from 17 to 35 years ($M = 24.06$; $SD = 3.65$) completed the demographic information. The findings for the demographic information are reported in Table 4.1 Within this study, 63.5% ($n = 143$) identified as female, and 31.5% ($n = 71$) as male. In relation to occupation, 47.5% ($n = 107$) identified as student and 52.4% ($n = 188$) as employees. About education level 77.3% ($n = 174$) were finished University degree, and about 14.2% ($n = 32$) were Undergraduate. 46.7% ($n = 105$) gain income lower than 15,000 Baht, and 28.0% ($n = 63$) gain income 15,001-30,000 Baht.

Table 4.1: Samples' Demographic Characteristics ($n = 225$)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	143	63.56
Male	71	31.56
Rather not say	11	4.89
Occupation		
Student	107	47.56
White collar	80	35.56
Government official/ State enterprise employee	14	6.22
Freelance	13	5.78
Business owner	7	3.11
Teacher	3	1.33
Intern	1	0.44

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Samples' Demographic Characteristics (n = 225)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Highest Education level		
University degree	174	77.33
Undergraduate	32	14.22
Master's degree	19	8.44
Income (Baht per month)		
Below than 15,000	105	46.67
15,001-30,000	63	28.00
30,001-45,000	33	14.67
45,001-60,000	14	6.22
60,001-75,000	7	3.11
Higher than 75,000	3	1.33

4.1.2 Samples' Media Consumption

As for the number of friends on Facebook, 34.22 percent of them have 501 to 1,000 friends on Facebook. About half of them (52.44%) have one to ten likes or subscribe news pages on Facebook, followed by 11 to 100 (31.56%). They spent more than 2 hours per day on social media, 72.89% of them is likely to be interested in politics news 18.68%, followed by life style and technology (16.06%). Majority of

them have moderate to high interest in political news. They mainly use Facebook as source of news (37.52%), followed by Twitter (29.74%), and Instagram (14.57%). In terms of politics news-reading behavior, half of the samples (53.33%) read only articles that they are interested in whereas 21.33% of them read some articles.

Table 4.2: Samples' Media Consumption ($n = 225$)

Media Consumption	Number	Percentage
Number of Friends on Facebook		
1-500	53	23.56
501-1000	77	34.22
1001-2000	56	24.89
2001-5000	39	17.33
Number of Like or Subscribe news pages on Facebook		
0	10	4.44
1-10	118	52.44
11-100	71	31.56
More than 100	23	10.22
Not sure	3	1.33

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Samples' Media Consumption (n = 225)

Media Consumption	Number	Percentage
Average amount of time spent on social media (per day)		
Less than 1 hour	1	0.44
1-2 hours	21	9.33
2-5 hours	93	41.33
5-10 hours	85	37.78
More than 10 hours	25	11.11
Types of news respondents are interested in		
Politics	164	18.68
Lifestyle and Technology	141	16.06
Education	133	15.15
Economic	121	13.78
World news	118	13.44
Entertainment	110	12.53
Art and Culture	58	6.61
Sports	29	3.30
Not specific	2	0.23

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Samples' Media Consumption (n = 225)

Media Consumption	Number	Percentage
Political news interest		
Extremely	44	19.56
Considerably	86	38.22
Moderately	73	32.44
Slightly	19	8.44
Not at all	3	1.33
Source of news		
Facebook	188	37.52
Twitter	149	29.74
Instagram	73	14.57
Website	65	12.97
Television	10	2.00
News application	2	0.40
YouTube	7	1.40
Line	5	1.00

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): Samples' Media Consumption (n = 225)

Media Consumption	Number	Percentage
Source of news (continued)		
Newspaper	1	0.20
Blockdit	1	0.20
Politics news-reading behavior		
Do not read articles at all	6	2.67
Read only articles shared by friends	32	14.22
Read only articles that they are interested in	120	53.33
Read all articles	17	7.56
Read some articles	48	21.33
Do not read articles through Facebook	2	0.89

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

In terms of selective exposure, the respondents have low level of selective exposure ($m = 2.36$, $SD = 0.95$). They also have moderate level of willingness to self-censor ($m = 2.86$, $SD = 1.03$). As for online political engagement, the respondents have low level of engagement on Facebook ($m = 2.07$, $SD = .93$). Among four types

of content based on the U&G, the respondents had low level of engagement with informational content ($m = 2.33$, $SD = 1.02$), entertaining content ($m = 2.11$, $SD = 1.01$), and relational content ($m = 2.01$, $SD = 0.96$). However, their engagement with remunerative content is very low ($m = 1.59$, $SD = 0.75$).

Table 4 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>S.D.</i>	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Selective Exposure (SE)	225	2.36	0.95	5	.65
Willingness to self-censor (WSC)	225	2.86	1.03	8	.69
Online political engagement					
General content	225	2.07	0.93	3	.77
Informational content	225	2.33	1.02	3	.73
Entertaining content	225	2.11	1.01	3	.76
Remunerative content	225	1.59	0.75	3	.75
Relational content	225	2.01	0.96	3	.78

Table 4.4: Interpretation of Mean Score

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00-1.80	Very low level
1.81-2.60	Low level
2.61-3.40	Moderate level
3.41-4.20	High level
4.21-5.00	Very high level

4.1.4 Results of Multiple Regression Analyses

Results of the Multiple Regression analyses indicated, firstly, that the residuals of test of dependent among the five outcomes in each model were significant and there is no multicollinearity among four predictors (VIF = 1.141 - 1.184, Tolerance Score = 0.845 - 0.876), supporting our need to use Multiple Regression to test both proposed research questions. The first research results of the analyses using selective exposure as the predictors with significant *beta* values for online political engagement, $\beta = 0.26$, $t(222) = 3.79$, $p < .001$; engagement with *entertaining* content, $\beta = 0.27$, $t(222) = 3.87$, $p < .001$; *relational* content, $\beta = 0.20$, $t(222) = 2.93$, $p < .01$; *remunerative* content, $\beta = 0.17$, $t(222) = 2.44$, $p < .05$; and *informational* content, $\beta = 0.16$, $t(222) = 2.29$, $p < .05$. The respondents with higher selective exposure to political news on Facebook were likely to engage with political news articles on

Facebook, and were likely to engage with all four types of content, based on the Uses & Gratifications.

Moreover, the results of the analyses using willingness to self-censor as the predictors with significant *beta* values for online political engagement, $\beta = -0.28$, $t(222) = -4.07$, $p < .001$; engagement with *informational* content, $\beta = -0.31$, $t(222) = -4.53$, $p < .001$; *relational* content, $\beta = -0.29$, $t(222) = -4.19$, $p < .001$; *remunerative* content, $\beta = -0.20$, $t(222) = -2.89$, $p < .01$; and *entertaining* content, $\beta = -0.14$, $t(222) = -2.04$, $p < .05$. Respondents who have lower willingness to self-censor regarding political news on Facebook tend to engage with political news articles on Facebook, and tend to engage with all four types of content, based on the U&G.

Table 4.5: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Predictors of Political Engagement with General Content on Facebook ($n = 225$)

Predictors	B	β	S.E.	Sig.t
SE	0.44	0.26	0.12	3.79***
WSC	-0.50	-0.28	0.12	-4.07***

Noted: $R^2 = 0.09$, $F(2,222) = 11.29$, $p < .001$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.6: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Predictors of Political

Engagement with informational content on Facebook ($n = 225$)

Predictors	B	β	S.E.	Sig.t
SE	0.29	0.16	0.13	2.29*
WSC	-0.61	-0.31	0.14	-4.53***

Noted: $R^2 = 0.09$, $F(2,222) = 10.48$, $p < .001$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.7: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Predictors of Political

Engagement with entertaining content on Facebook ($n = 225$)

Predictors	B	β	S.E.	Sig.t
SE	0.49	0.27	0.13	3.87***
WSC	-0.28	-0.14	0.14	-2.04*

Noted: $R^2 = 0.07$, $F(2,222) = 7.68$, $p < .001$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.8: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Predictors of Political

Engagement with remunerative content on Facebook ($n = 225$)

Predictors	B	β	S.E.	Sig.t
SE	0.23	0.17	0.10	2.44*
WSC	-0.29	-0.20	0.10	-2.89**

Noted: $R^2 = 0.05$, $F(2,222) = 5.26$, $p < .001$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4.9: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Predictors of Political

Engagement with relational content on Facebook (n = 225)

Predictors	B	β	S.E.	Sig.t
SE	0.35	0.20	0.12	2.93**
WSC	-0.54	-0.29	0.13	-4.19**

Noted: $R^2 = 0.08$, $F(2,222) = 9.85$, $p < .001$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As shown in Table 4.4 which reveals that 9 percent of variance of online political engagement can be explained by both selective exposure and willingness to self-censor. In similar vein, R^2 values, as shown in Table 4.5 to Table 4.9, of four different types of content vary from 0.05 to 0.09.

In summary, the Thai Millennials with higher selective exposure to political news on Facebook tend to engage with entertainment political content in ,but not engage with all four types of content. On the other hand, the Thai Millennials with lower WSC are likely to engage with information political content, and also are likely to engage with relational content and remunerative content, but not engage with entertainment content.

4.2 Findings of Qualitative Research: Focus Group

In parallel with the online survey, five focus groups were conducted to investigate deeply into Thai Millennials ' motivation behind their online political engagement. Their analysis results were presented below.

4.2.1 Informants 'Characteristics

The informants were separated into five groups by age (Table 4.10). The majority of them are adults older than 23 years old, and a higher proportion of females is higher than males.

Table 4.10: Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

Group	Age Range	Male	Female	Total
Group 1	25-30	4	4	8
Group 2	23-30	3	4	7
Group 3 (Student)	19-21	1	6	7
Group 4	23-28	5	5	10
Group 5 (Student)	21-22	4	4	8
Sub-Total		17	23	40

4.2.2 Emerging Themes from Focus Groups

In investigating the qualitative data from this focus group, each focus group recording was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (Nowell, et al., 2017) to examine behavioral motivations behind the informants 'online engagement in political news. In order to identify emerging themes, findings were sorted by three main behaviors of Facebook engagement for political news -- Like, Comment, and Share.

4.2.2.1 Like

As for the “Like” behavior, it was found that informants have a variety of motivation that resulted in the decision of pressing and not pressing “Like” for news content on Facebook, which can be organized into two emerging themes -- relational communication and consequences oriented.

Theme # 1: Communication to Form a Relationship

A communication issue is an issue in which the like-pressing group wants to communicate with the content creator or even the content receivers as well. By pressing “Like,” many people do it to “support,” which is to show encouragement to the news content creators, for instance, "I press it all, it is encouraging to the page" or "encourage him, and I agree with him.”

In similar vein, to tell the news writer that we “agree or disagree” with that news, for example, the one who is pressing “Like” will choose to press “Like” for contents they like and agree with.

“Well, I usually give thumbs up to posts that attract me only. If the posts were favorable enough, I’d automatically receive the message through skimming right away.” (Bell, informant from Group 4)

“Interesting content and analysis conducted.” (Wit, informant from Group 2)

On the other hand, to express disagreement participants choose other reactions that Facebook has, such as “Angry.”

“Most of the news I’ve shared, I pressed ‘angry’ before I even share them. I don’t feel good about them since I think it was not fair.” (Lion, informant from Group 5)

Or, if participants do not agree with the news, they will choose not to take any action.

“If I don’t agree with the posts, I won’t even bother to give them thumbs up because I do not want to give them any attention or support.” (Tiger, informant from Group 5)

Apart from communication with news writers, “Like” pressing or React also shown in comments of each news topic where “Like” or “React” on comments similar to indirect communication as if a vote to take side to attract other readers and appeal people with similar opinions of that comment followed as shown in this example.

“Talking about violence, if there are a lot of emotions shown on the post, these posts will urge me to read them. I would want to know why there is a lot of ‘Angry(s)’ or ‘Haha(s)’. I just want to know what they are laughing at.” (Jenny, informant from Group 3)

“I would press ‘Like’ for any post that sums up my feelings”, or “I usually react the other way such as giving ‘thumbs up’ to the opposite argument; that way, I feel like winning since there are more people who agree with my side.” (Mamiew, informant from Group 1)

Theme # 2: Consequence Oriented

Choosing to “Like” or “Not Like,” the reason that participants choose is to look at the results themselves. If choosing a press “Like,” what will happen? Or if they do not engage, how will it affect themselves or those around them?

“What would happen if I press ‘like’? Sometimes, there are comments that were solely made to report the situation. What would I get from giving thumbs

up? No difference, isn't it? This is why I don't usually like any post." (Milky, informant from Group 4)

In addition, some participants who have read the news content and press "Like" because they understand the consequence of their actions that will affect the content and other readers. Therefore, they have to be more considerate in showing their behavior, as indicated by one student's comment.

"If it was violent, people abroad wouldn't react at all. They won't even bother to care since it could urge people to commit these acts." or "If it comes to news, I won't be making any bookmark. I don't want my news feed to be filled with random news. If I like anything, the algorithm of Facebook would eventually find its way and suggest me with similar posts." (Nanny, informant from Group 3)

4.2.2.2 Comment

As for the "Comment" behavior, based on group interview data, three emerging themes are 1) Extended discussion under news content, 2) Entertainment while commenting, and 3) Security from threats.

Theme # 3: Extended Discussion under News Content

The need to converse via a comment in order to get more opinion from others is one reason why people choose to comment or not to comment under the news post. If the news readers think that the discussion under the news content is beneficial, they will choose to comment as comments can create new knowledge for themselves and others who read the comment.

"I do give suggestions by offering them alternatives. I just want to establish an arena of discussion; for example, I might ask them about the latest press release regarding the country lockdown. How critical should it be before we could

implement the lockdown? If we're in lockdown, there will be no such thing as this. What are the pros and cons for short-term and long-term if we do not put our country in a lockdown?" (Twitty, informant from Group 5)

Not only the extension but also a conversation to communicate the opinions to others. In the end, we will get to know other people's opinions on how they think about the issue as well, as shown by this quote.

"I was the one who started the conversation. There were more comments from a lot of people as well after I gave some reactions to their comments. I feel that this is the way we can express our views. I don't know if they actually get the message but if I see those people with similar or different perspectives, I would want to know what they are thinking." (Cody, informant from Group 5)

"Sometimes, it's something we already know commonly but posted with unfavorable notions, I would fix them. However, if it is a political post, I'm unsure if it's true or not. I'd rather not give any comment." (Kate, informant from Group 3)

Theme # 4: Entertainment

Commenting for entertainment is also one of the reasons why people choose to press "Like." Respondents believe that comment creates self-fun through sarcasm or talking about things unrelated to news content. The benefit of doing it is to make fun of yourself which can be seen from the response of one respondent using sarcasm for entertainment, stating that "If my friend shares, I'll comment to drive him crazy (laughs)." or

"I tend to troll everyone just to cause a scene. For example, I saw the updated artwork saying that the other political party was saying bullshit after the

parliament conference, I would post something like ““Woah, your updated content was released quicker than your excuses. ’Sometimes, there are even posts saying that they are giving away 2,000 Baht. I’d react by saying something like ‘Great! I would go party with my friends! ’It was fun to see a lot of people trolling them around.”

(Krit, informant from Group 4)

Theme # 5: Security from Threats

Safety is an issue that focus group participants see as it is important to decide whether to comment or not to comment on political-related news, because when commenting on political news, commenters are at risk of being harassed within their own Facebook in a way that strangers will add friends to rebuke about personal life. Which the respondents in this group have answered in the same direction, as shown in the following quotes.

“I would read the posts only. I’m afraid there will be those who are against my comments and they would add my account to violate my privacy.” (Dang, informant from Group 1)

“There are friends who rarely post comments but when he/ she make a comment, there will be people sending friend requests just to harass them.” (Bank, informant from Group 1)

“If it was Facebook, anyone could see you and I don’t want them to know me at all. They usually make nasty comments.” (Jenny, informant from Group 3)

“Well, there were some people I’ve seen who opposed the argument. When I clicked on their Facebook page, there were loads of hateful comments.” (Ballon, informant from Group 2)

Therefore, many people choose to comment between friends who share the news or talk to groups that they trust and are confident that there will be no threats. From the interview, we found that they would choose to comment with friends who shared the news only. Such as “If my friend shared, I’ll comment to drive him crazy (laughs).” or choose to comment and talk to the group with the same thought.

“I’m currently in a group in which people usually share random news and I only make a comment only on funny posts since the comments are visible only in that group.” (Ammy, informant from Group 3)

4.2.2.3 Share

From the focus group interview, analysis results showed that the sharing behavior is motivated based on three emerging themes -- 1) Sharing information, 2) Self-image and social position, and 3) Entertainment. The details of each theme are enumerated as follows.

Theme # 6: Sharing Information

One of the motivations that many participants identify is sharing. It is for sharing information with other people on Facebook to read and be informed that news.

“Occasionally. Sometimes I agree with the news and I just want to share it with the world about how unfair it is” (Lew, informant from Group 3)

Not only providing information for better understanding of the news but also providing correct information and prevent others in Facebook from believing in fake news as well, as the following quotes from the respondents who are students.

“Since my friends seem to not know anything about the current political situation, I usually share political posts to educate them. I believe they usually get to know about these situations through me. Sometimes there is also fake news circulating in the feed, therefore I would post the fact in those fake news as my response. I usually include my personal opinion towards these posts as well.” (Lion , informant from Group 5)

Aside from others will be able to get more information and learn about news, sharing can also add opinion and express position by writing a description before sharing it.

“I share them because it is my legitimate opportunity to express them in my personal space. I detest cyberbullying. They are such a coward. I don’t even want to see that side of the world. I just want to spread this accurate news only in my circle of friends and acquaintances just to let them know that these perspectives exist. Since there are also relatives on my network, I just want to take a sluggish in spreading this information so they would gradually understand my point.”

(Nemo ,informant from Group 5)

From the above data, they show that sharing is a behavior that the sharing person considers an effect of sharing on society, both close and broad society. From the above data, sharing is the spread of information to other people in close society to inform them about the news. That means, the sharer has chosen whether people in their social circle should know the story or not, as well as, becoming a person who considers a consequence from sharing must be meaningful to others in broad society too.

It was found that news prevalence is an external factor that supports sharing decisions. The sharer will choose not to share if other people have already shared it. They will choose not to share repeat news. The words of the informant stated that "It's a repetitive story of other people like other people already shared. Therefore, I don't share. I better find another fact to discuss."

In addition, the nature of Facebook sharing was seen to be shared in a narrow circle, unlike sharing on other platforms that people can reach more thoroughly, such as Twitter, so the interviewee who chose not to share on Facebook explained his behavior as shown below.

"I usually retweet them instead of sharing them on Facebook. Retweeting on Twitter could potentially create trending more than Facebook. Facebook has a particular algorithm that limits the scope of information to circulate only in our circle of friends. I think Twitter could spread the message more effectively. I like to see how the numbers are increasing in real-time. I like to see increasing numbers." (Golden, informant from Group 5)

Theme # 7: Self-Image and Social Position

Choosing to share on Facebook, the informants expressed their motivation such that they choose to share is related to the image and position they want to show what they think about politics to others because there are many types of friends on Facebook, whether it's parents, siblings, teachers or colleagues who may judge and create a negative consequence for them. Therefore, the sharer has to specially select the things to share which were heard from many informants, for example:

“The reason I share posts because not only I agree with them but I also want to share them with my friends and read them again later. Since I usually read the content before I share them, I would choose only the appropriate ones because there are also monks and teachers on Facebook.” (Lew, informant from Group 3)

“I don’t usually share things on Facebook. I would have to carefully think before I share stuff on Facebook? I have to see first if it would affect my career, social status, or my family. Facebook is comprised of many spheres. If the news source isn’t reliable, I wouldn’t share them.” (Bank, informant from Group 1)

Likewise, those who choose not to share politics news because they do not want to get troubles with people close to them. Hence, they choose not to share, for example, in a group of students that said: "On Facebook, there are both people who like and dislike me. I don’t want to cause a problem with them so I’d rather not share anything on my wall or public group." as well as the public in general.

“Those who are close to me would have known about my perspective but on Facebook, there are different circles of friends such as senior colleagues and etcetera. I don’t want to tell them how I feel but my close friends.” (Kate, informant from Group 3)

As a result of friends list on Facebook, sharers choose to compromise when expressing their position on social. In addition, the image that reflects the taste and identity, for instance, the sharer will share if the information is not a repetition of others. To be an area of building self-identity in society and the image of leadership, even the content that makes oneself look good and smart. One of the general public

interviewees explained his engagement.

“Yeah, I do share them as well but not that many. Umm...I usually care about my public image towards people on Facebook. I don't want to create a mess on my wall so I would share only posts that were already wrapped up and presented through the graphic.” (Rabbit, informant from Group 5)

Millennials are able to predict the results of their actions. This ability encourages them to share posts that are helpful for their image. They know if they share, people will read or summon friends to react to their post, causing them to consider their social aspects as well.

“Most of the posts I share? I would share only the posts that have been considerably concluded. If it was a post that calls for discussion, I would rather not share it. I don't know why would I do that? Although I just want people to only read them, sometimes I also share just to cause a scene. I would share just to provoke people and if there were already a lot of shares, I won't be sharing them on my wall.” (Gray, informant from Group 1)

Theme # 8: Entertainment

Many people choose to share specific political issues that entertain themselves. Regarding political satire or memes, the general public said that sharing political satire and jokes are not too serious and entertaining, as shown in the following quotes.

“I was doing it for fun. I was not looking for anything serious. I usually share those ironic/sarcastic posts toward political situations. It's funny enough; therefore, I just want to share them.” (First, informant from Group 2)

Other entertaining contents, such as political memes, will be shared too, as indicated by the informant below.

“I usually share political memes or video clips such as ‘Vice President fell in the Parliament ’for example, also those funny videos where the politicians are not in their best conditions. I usually share those kinds of things.” (Tan, informant from Group 4)

Choosing to share for entertainment is not only creating entertainment but also implying as a tool of their political position expression. From the statement above, lists of friends on Facebook influence the content consideration that must conform to self-image and non-violence. Sharing entertaining content is also part of creating an image through mild and funny content at the same time.

4.3 Summary of the Key Findings

This research explored the phenomena of political engagement on Facebook news contents using a mixed-method study. The results from both quantitative and qualitative parts could answer the proposed research questions. According to the first research question, “What factor motivates Thai’s Millennials to engage in news agencies ’Facebook page?” The result clarifies the motives of engagement in news agencies and contents on which qualitative study results play the bigger roles in explaining the differences between three types of political engagement on Facebook -- Like, Comment, and Share (See details in Table 4.11)

Table 4.11: Summary of Emerging Themes from Focus Groups

Engagement	Emerging Themes	Description	Related Theory
Like	Communication to form a relationship	Motive to show “supports” by “agree or disagree” toward the news content creators	Uses and Gratification Theory: Social interaction
	Consequence oriented	Motive driven by the consequence of their actions	-
Comment	Extended discussion under news content	Motive to gain new knowledge from others who discuss in the comment	Uses and Gratification Theory: Information seeking
	Entertainment	Motive to gain self-enjoyment through sarcasm or comment funny things unrelated to news content	Uses and Gratification Theory: Need for entertainment
	Security from threats	Motive to protect themselves from harassment within their own Facebook	Willingness to self-censor

(Continued)

Table 4.12 (Continued): Summary of Emerging Themes from Focus Groups

Engagement	Emerging Themes	Description	Related Theory
	Sharing information	Motive to inform latest news toward friends and others	Uses and Gratification Theory: Social interaction
Share	Self-Image and Social position	Motive to build the online social image toward friends on Facebook	Willingness to self-censor
	Entertainment	Motive to gain self-enjoyment from sharing satires and jokes	Uses and Gratification Theory: Need for entertainment

In terms of motive behind “Like” behavior on Facebook news content based on Table 4.11, results reveal that “communication to form a relationship” was a reason to drive participants to show supports or encouragement by “agree or disagree” toward the news content creators and “Consequence oriented” Moreover, the quantitative result also supports the motivation to inhibit this behavior spatially, as being called, Willingness to self-censor (WSC).

As for motive behind “Comment” on Facebook news content, it was shown that “Extended discussion under news content” was a reason to gain new knowledge from others who discuss in the comment, and “Entertainment” was a reason by gaining self-enjoyment. Participants were inhibited this behavior by Willingness to self-censor (WSC) which is supported by the theme “Security from threats” by protecting themselves from harassment within their own Facebook.

In terms of motive behind “Share” on Facebook news content, it was found that “Sharing information” is a reason for informing the latest news toward friends and others, and “Entertainment” was another reason for gaining self-enjoyment. Participants inhibited this behavior by engage in self-censor. They also shared to build the online social image toward friends on Facebook, as seen in the theme, “Self-Image and Social position.”

To answer the second research question, “How does the Thai Millennials engage in news agencies’ Facebook page?” These findings illustrate the political news engagement journey on Facebook (see Figure 5.1). Selective exposure was the first step as the Thai millennial have the ability to choose the sources or contents to expose. After they read a news they already selected, spiral of silence is another layer which filter these expressions by making a decision to inhibit themselves to engage with some content or the particular behavior in order to prevent the threat(s) they may get in the future. Lastly, to engage in term of like, comment, or share, users are making decision based on the U&G as they decide what values they will get from such engagement

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine millennial or generation Y profound motivation and process of political news engagement (Liking, Commenting, & Sharing) on Facebook social media, using the concurrent mixed-research method. The Selective Exposure (SE), Spiral of Silence (SoS), and Uses & Gratifications (U&G) theory were integrated as theoretical frameworks within the Thai Facebook context. In the past, there are limited literature on political news engagement separately or engagement as a variable. However, this research adds clarification of like, comment, and share within one data set.

The online survey research results showed the positive effect of SE and the negative effect of WSC (Spiral of Silence) on the Thai Millennials' engagement with news related to politics in general on Facebook and engagement with four types of content based on the U&G. Findings of five focus groups revealed different U&G factors on political engagement on Facebook. Results of hypothesis testing were discussed based on theories and findings of previous research, then further implications, limitations, and future research directions were provided.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This research investigated the phenomena of political engagement on Facebook news content by using a mixed-research method. The results from both qualitative and quantitative parts together could explain the proposed research questions.

For the first research question, "What factor motivates Thai's Millennials to engage in news agencies' Facebook page?" Overall, Thai Millennials primarily engaged in political news on Facebook motivated by 'Entertainment.' From the Multiple Regression analysis, the entertainment content was less affected by the willingness to self-censor than another type of content. Also, from the thematic analysis of focus groups, the informants commented on political news on Facebook and shared them due to entertaining reasons.

Additionally, willingness to self-censor (WSC) played a crucial role in regulating political news engagement. Both quantitative results revealed that WSC had a negative relationship with engaging in political news, and qualitative results showed that the participants need to decide whether to engage based on the consequence after a comment or share the content.

The quantitative result clarifies the motives of engagement in news agencies and content. The results show the positive association of Selective Exposure (SE) and negative association of Willingness to Self-Censor (WSC) towards Thai Millennials' political engagement on Facebook in every type of content based on the UGT.

Simultaneously, qualitative study results play more prominent roles in explaining the differences in political engagement (Like, Comment, and Share) based on Facebook users' motivation. Specifically, the overlap of motivation by gratification to expressing like, comments, or shares as gaining a relationship with content creators, friends, and netizens.

In terms of "Like" behavior on Facebook news content, "communication to form a relationship" and "consequence oriented" were motives that drive participants to show "supports" by "agreeing or disagreeing" toward the news content creators.

Moreover, the quantitative result also extends the motivation to inhibit this behavior spatially, by having willingness to self-censor (WSC).

As for "Comment" behavior on Facebook news content, "discussion under news content" was a reason to gain new knowledge from others who discuss in the comment, and "motivation for getting more opinion for entertainment" was a reason for gaining self-enjoyment. Participants were inhibited this behavior by having willingness to self-censor, which is consistent with the qualitative results regarding the theme, "security from threats" by protecting themselves from harassment within their own Facebook.

In terms of "Share" behavior on Facebook news content, "sharing information" was a reason by informing the latest news toward friends and others, and "entertainment" was a reason for gaining self-enjoyment. Participants inhibited this behavior by having willingness to self-censor (WSC), supported by qualitative study results in terms of "Self-Image and Social position" by building the online social image toward friends Facebook.

As for the second research question, "How does the Thai Millennials engage in news agencies' Facebook page?" This research result illustrated the political news engagement journey on Facebook (Figure 5.1). Selective exposure was the first step on which the Thai Millennials can choose the sources or contents to expose. After reading the news they already selected, individuals will filter themselves these expressions and engagement according to the possible threats they may get in the future. Lastly, making decisions to Likes, Comments, or Shares was based on the Uses and Gratification when they decide the value of political engagement they will get from engaging with such content.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Factors Motivating Thai's Millennials Engagement with Political News on Facebook

This research extends the past research findings to explain the Millennials' political news engagement on Facebook by bridging three political communication theories, included Selective Exposure Theory (SE), Willingness to Self-Censor (SoS), and Use and Gratification Theory (U&G). As the first research question aims to explore "What factor motivates Thai Millennials to engage in news agencies' Facebook page?" The effects of selective exposure and willingness to self-censor on political news engagement on Facebook were proposed with four types of content (informational, entertaining, remunerative, and relational content). Furthermore, the results confirmed the hypothesized effects of selective exposure and willingness to self-censor on Facebook users' political engagement. Our findings were discussed respectively with these three theories in the following sections.

5.2.1.1 Facebook Political News Engagement and Selective Exposure Theory

Examining the connection between the Selective Exposure Theory, tendency to favor or avoid contents depending on its consistency with their beliefs (Taber & Lodge 2006), and Facebook political news engagement. Our research results partially confirm SE theory in general, SE has shown a behavior tendency toward information consumption. This research adds SE's effect on engagement with political news on Facebook in the millennium. According to their bias (with or without awareness), they selectively and actively like, comment, and share news content. Thus, Facebook's structure may be the root and increases the chance to engage in

political news content.

Facebook is customizable social media; It enables individuals to surround themselves with information supporting their pre-existing political attitudes by themselves and/or system (Grömping, 2014). Accordingly, amplifying the possibility to actively engage, supported by latest research from Cinelli, Brugnoli, Schmidt, Zollo, Quattrociochi & Scala (2020) exploring “Like” behavior in political content showed that the number of “Like” is increased by the level of selective exposure and participants’ selective exposure level rises through time. Also, it was found that sharing political information within social media (such as Facebook) relates with SE and moderated by level of strength of party affiliation (Weeks, Lane, Kim, Lee & Kwak, 2017).

However, our results of Multiple Regression analysis showed that willingness to self-censor had higher power for explaining engagement behavior. We interpreted as a distal connection of SE and behavior engagement supported by An, Quercia & Crowcroft (2014) who gave illustration of mechanism entitled “active exposure” in which participants must first pay his/her attention, then selectively read the content, after that, they decide to act or not. Besides, data from qualitative research found that Spiral of Silence and Uses & Gratifications theory can closely explain the decision process between consuming and engaging with political news content. Participants from the focus group interview said that they all read political news/contents on Facebook either from the fact that it was a share from news pages or friends. However, whether or not they decided to engage with news is based on their motivation, type of content, perceived threats, and his/her social position and image that they want to present toward others.

The lower effect of SE may be explained by the generation studies. Previous research said the Millennial read both opposing and supporting various political views occasionally. Gottfried & Barthel (2015) showed that 18% of the Millennial users mostly or always pay attention to political posts supporting their idea, which is lesser than Baby Boomers (31%) and Generation Xers (21%). Our participants in qualitative focus groups also support this point. Participants said they read opposite comments in online political news and also react "angry" to that comment, and like to reply comments that supported his/her view. The intention to read the opposite view is a natural human tendency (Tsang, 2017) if they consider that information useful or low in quality (Bobok, 2016).

5.2.1.2 Facebook Political News Engagement and Spiral of Silence Theory

The Spiral of Silence Theory is a theory explaining individuals' tendency to self-censor their political views when they perceive a disagreeable opinion climate. Willingness to self-censor (WSC) and political climate are constructs measured as a part of the Spiral of Silence theory in this research. The result from survey has shown that WSC could predict engagement behavior (like, comment, and share).

Generally, Facebook's construction as a public political discussion space, but only a few users prefer to discuss or engage on public Facebook political pages than private network (Cowan & Baldassarri, 2018) which we could see only a limited number of users actively engage on public pages (Batorski & Grzywińska, 2018). The phenomenon might occur due to the spiral of silence, which increases echo chambers' issue in private networks of friends (Hampton, et al., 2014). Thus,

users regulate themselves to express on the online public community, especially Facebook, as the same as offline communication. Chan's (2018) research confirms that by comparing the role of WSC and fear of isolation, the same pattern regarding fear of isolation and indirect effects of WSC was found across face-to-face and Facebook settings.

For individual using Facebook, this channel is closely intertwined with offline relationships which might not completely distinguish between online and offline society (Hampton, et al., 2016). From the results, engaging in political news content representing the user's image and political attitude, individuals tended to inhibit themselves more in expressing likeness, commenting, or sharing specifically for Information political news content that could reflex political attitude. Showing the different political attitudes on Facebook can harm their privacy due to cyberbullying and getting bullied on the negative post on personal feed or harmful direct message on Facebook, as mentioned in this research focus interviews. This phenomenon occurred in another country as well; as Kwon, Moon & Stefanone (2015) mentioned, self-censorship on controversial political issues is the way to prevent a negative consequence from fear of isolation and communication.

Cultural differences across country seemingly influence the willingness to express an opinion based on a cross-country study comparing between Taiwan (collectivist culture) and USA (individualist culture). The results show differences across countries in the United States, although willingness to express opinions was not predicted by a higher level of opinion incongruence. On the other hand, if Taiwanese think that they are the minority who hold a different view from others, they tainted to keep silent (Huang, 2005). Also, the Singaporeans have the

same result regarding keeping silent effect by the future opinion congruency but not the Americans (Lee, Detenber, Willnat, Aday & Graf, 2004). So far, Thailand is a collective culture like Taiwan, Singapore, and other Asian countries, which is individuals' willing to express opinion is affected by the level of self-censorship. This phenomenon could apply to Facebook, as our research confirms.

Expanding the quantitative research results by qualitative research results, participants inhibit themselves from commenting for security from threats. The unique effect, commenting on political news on Facebook, explained by this research that they are fear of dangers and negative consequences from country context, influences Facebook users' willingness to self-censor. The Thais are influenced within this context. In Thailand, it was found that perception about security from threats, social position and image toward others (e.g., colleagues, family, and senior) is crucial for this generation to inhibit "Comment" or "Share" in Facebook news. Not only political self-censorship is the predictor of self-presentation on Facebook because Millennium generation was highly concerns about self-image and social position in their social media (Nuzulita & Subriadi, 2020).

In similar vein, they also ensure their security from Thais regulations (e.g. The Computer-related Crime Act BE 2550 (2007)). Expressing opinion against the government is a sensitive issue in Thailand. It could be a situational and environmental variable specific to Thais culture, which future research should follow the change of SoS in Thailand. Participants also inhibit themselves to share (WSC) due to self-image and social position, which is supported by the Generation Y who have typically used Facebook to build self-image and maintain good social relationship (Nuzulita, & Subriadi, 2020).

Focus on “Like” behavior in Facebook political news, only liking political news is the only form of engagement that correlates with WSC, similar to previous research shown that the majority of “Like” in political content increase the possibility for other to like due to their fear of isolation (Kushin, Yamamoto & Dalisay, 2019). Based on our focus group results, participant said that they mostly react to the posts or comments that other already responded by looking at the number of like/react as a "Vote" to identify "Which side is better?". In contrast with another engagement behavior, “comment” and “share” amount could not directly show the opinion.

5.2.1.3 Facebook Political News Engagement and Uses & Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) is usually used to understand how individuals choose media that satisfies their needs (Katz & Foulkes, 1962) and allowing one to realize gratifications of consuming social media. In the past, research distinguishes the meaning and values of engagement between Like, Comment, and Share on Facebook in the general topic. Liu, Li, Ji, North & Yang (2017) concluded that Facebook users click the "Like" as they were stimulated by five senses content. The "Comment" was stimulated by the ration (informational) content. Lastly, the "Share" using the rational or the sensory strategies was more likely to trigger people, whereas posting self-related information strategy was less likely to be shared. The fruitful result showed the difference in content integration between these three engagements in general content, yet any research explains the motivation within the political news context.

The unique engagement gratifications on Facebook were explored by the qualitative study seeking the differentiation and commodity between Like, Comment, and Share in Thai's millennium, relations and entertaining as a gratification. In this research, the millennials users had the motivation to engage in Facebook political news by Relations and Create interaction. The finding has shown the linkage between the interactive platform; The Facebook news page is an interactive public sphere that allows the user and content creator to express opinions and have interrelation with each other freely (Batorski & Grzywińska, 2018). However, the behavior under the concept of engagement had a distinct motive to perform.

"Like" behavior on political news content on Facebook was motivated by social interaction to show supports and encouragement toward the news content creators. Additionally, Interactive "Like" and other reactions (feeling love, angry, wow, or sad) could represent the emotion stimulated and trigger others to like and react to the content. However, for "Like" in general content, users' motivations are enjoyment, information seeking, social interaction, and subjective norms (Hossain, Kim, & Jahan, 2019).

Moreover, comment on political news content to create was motive by discussion creation between netizens. Similarly, sharing is gratification for others to get the same information to inform others on inner social's Facebook. The same as share business Facebook content to gratify the primary needs of diversion, information, and personal identity (Nash, 2015).

These three political news engagement behaviors have different points than general news engagement based on the U&G. Even hard news like political news

millennium still interacts with entertaining political news more efficiently than other content types. These results specifically apply to the social media platform supported by previous research results. In daily life, consuming news from social media is more about "entertainment," whereas consuming news from news media is more about "surveillance" (Michailina, Masouras & Papademetriou, 2015).

In combination with WSC and U&G theory, this generation may engage in entertaining content due to the millenniums' pop culture such that they create memes, inside jokes, and graphic images for insiders. This culture potentially performs to manage their own image and avoid the harmful threat that may occur on social media.

5.2.2 The Journey of Political News Engagement on Facebook

The second research question aims to explore "How does the Thai Millennials engage in news agencies' Facebook page?" According to the results and theories discussed above, the political news engagement journey on Facebook was summarized, and its model was proposed in Figure. 5.1. The previous research result suggests the active exposure as a process of how users show engagement to Facebook content (An, et al., 2014). The process showed the gap between SE and the action of engagement, so subjective norms (McDevitt, et al., 2003) and combination of U&G and subjective norms (Hossain, et al., 2019) could fill the gap included our outcome by the process between SoS and U&G theory.

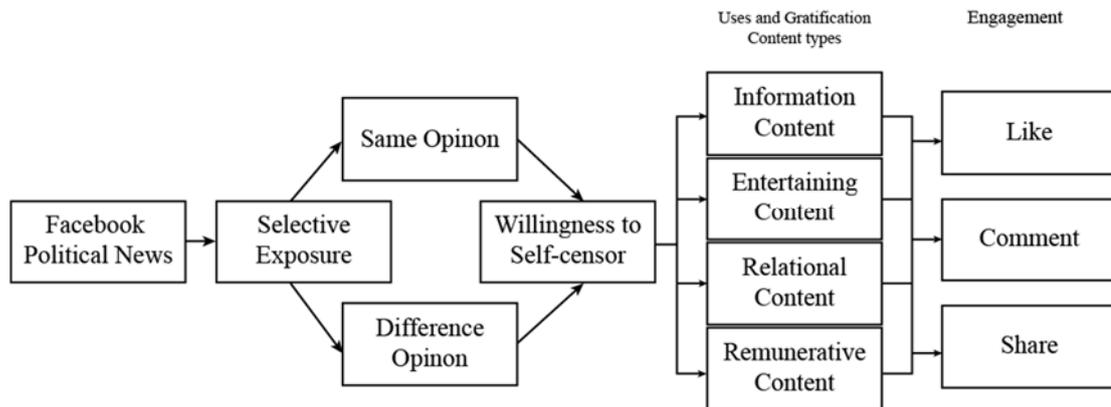


Figure 5.1: The Journey of Political News Engagement on Facebook

The model starts from “Selective Exposure” such that millennials have the ability to choose the sources or contents to expose in certain news outlet by liking the page or being friend (on Facebook) with people who have similar lifestyle and opinion – in which the millennial group selectively engage with congruency-opinion political news/pages. After millennials read a news they already selected, “Spiral of Silence” is another layer which filtering these expressions by making a decision to inhibit themselves to express some contents or behaviors in order to prevent the threat they may get in the future. Lastly, to express the “like,” “share,” or “share”, users are weighting the uses and gratification when they decide what is the value of engagement, they will get from engaging with that content -- every type of behavior has its own unique motivation and values.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This research had some limitations related to Thais' perception of "politics" as extensive as mentioned by Pootrakul (2014). Thais' political culture and the right

perception about democracy were not adopted by majority of population which lead to low level of political engagement and action. In addition, the context while conducting this research should be noted such that the online questionnaires were collected in the period of COVID-19, political mobs, and many political issues, which could intensify participants' responses or inhibit their opinion expression.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Application

The implication for the political communication practitioner is to use this research findings to design communication direction and social media content strategy. Politicians or party representative could apply this research results to set the strategy to promote political content engagement or campaign on Facebook by understanding the influential factors of younger voters. Understanding behavior insight of millennial is crucial factor to increase the quality of engagement-like, comment, and share. According to this research results, the millennials' willingness to self-censor is an important inhibition factor that reflects the trust between netizens, politicians, and government. For example, if content creator would like to increase online engagement, they should reduce the level of willingness to self-censor by building the trust, which can be done by creating a safe zone for discussion among the millennials to engage in one content.

As this research results shown that the inhibitor of online political engagement is self-censorship, the government should be aware of privacy topics that may intervene and/or decrease citizens' political engagement. This can be done by reinforcing their perception of privacy and security of expressing opinion via online or social media to increase online political engagement. For the long-term result, this

may improve the quality of political participation route offline and online

The stakeholders should consider the variety of political news content types to gain more online engagement with political news posts. For example, if the reporter describes very informative political details and uses the political meme for content coverage, this should increase “share” among readers.

For the public, this research extends the awareness of ‘echo chambre’ that most of us face in our everyday engagement with political and non-political content. The public then can understand more about what type or format of content most people engage with. This can lead them to use this knowledge to design their own political content that they can use to advocate their own agenda or political beliefs. In the long term this could lead to improving the quality of public engagement with political news.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Building on findings from previous research regarding online political engagement in relation to Uses and Gratification theory (e.g. Nash, 2015), selective exposure (e.g. Cinelli, et. al., 2020), and willingness to self-censor (e.g. Chan, 2014), this research integrated these three theories to construct the process model that illustrates a link between motivational insight and online engagement behavior among the millennials. This model could be applied for future researches across cultures, political climate, or difference generation. Building on from the UGT, this research also proposes furthering study on type of online news content (and format) and their potential impact on political engagement such as entertainment gratification and the impact of meme usages. Regarding comparative cultural studies, the proposed model

can be incorporated into Hofstede's cultural dimensions in terms of individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, and power distance to determine the impact of different culture on individuals' online political engagement motivation.

Furthermore, with this mode there is room to explore additional variables, such as political interest, offline political participation or even other media usage for political participation (twitter or Instagram) to explore the differences among the millennial generation. The researcher recommends adding political interest as part of future variable. This can further build on the proposed model using Nolan's political spectrum diagram to determine the influences of political orientation on individuals' online political engagement motivation.

The model that arises from this research can also be used to study a significance of real-time political event and the shifting behaviors of social media user's engagement. Due to the fact that during the field study of this event, there was no significant political event that was going on. If this study was conducted during important political incidents such as election or mass protest period, the model can be used for a comparative study of motivation for engagement and level of involvement.

Moreover, future research should analyze online political engagement using longitudinal study focusing on observational behaviors during the Facebook experience, or conducting experimental study in order to understand the linkage between online and offline political engagement in Thailand. Due to globalization, political news and issues appear worldwide; and may involve international politics and the relationship between Thailand and other countries.

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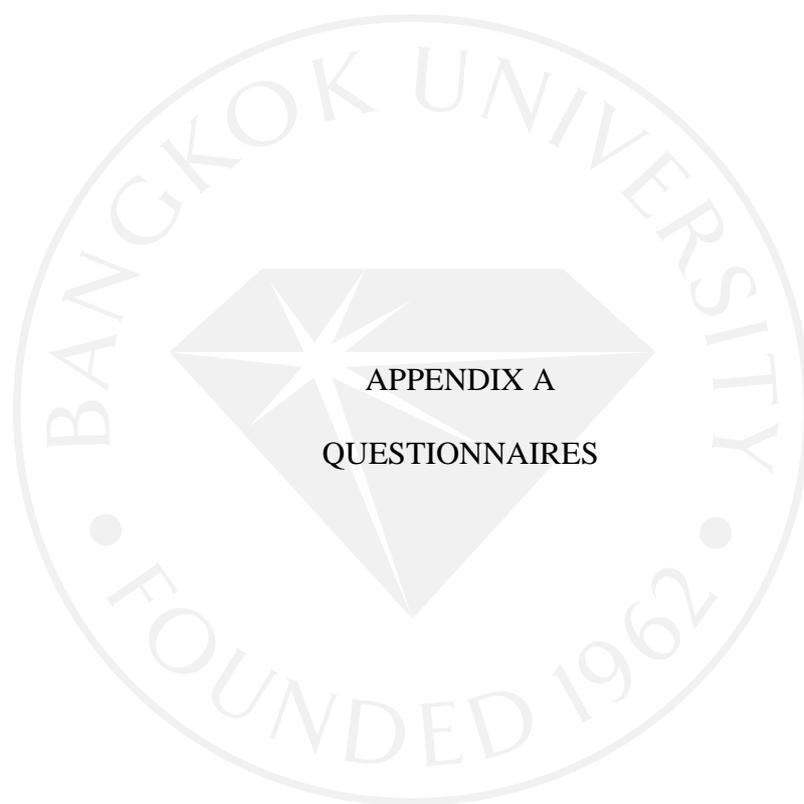
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แบบสอบถาม

ตอนที่ 1 ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล

1. เพศ	<input type="checkbox"/> ชาย <input type="checkbox"/> หญิง <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ต้องการระบุ	2. อายุปี
3. อาชีพ	<input type="checkbox"/> รับราชการ/ พนักงาน รัฐวิสาหกิจ <input type="checkbox"/> พนักงาน บ.เอกชน <input type="checkbox"/> ประกอบธุรกิจของตัวเอง/ ครอบครัว <input type="checkbox"/> อาชีพอิสระ เช่น ศิลปิน นักแสดง นักกีฬา <input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ)	<input type="checkbox"/> นิสิต/ นักศึกษา ชื่อสถาบัน คณะ ชั้นปี
4. ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุด	<input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่าปริญญาตรี <input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาตรี <input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาโท <input type="checkbox"/> ปริญญาเอก <input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ)	
5. รายได้ส่วนตัวต่อเดือน (บาท)	<input type="checkbox"/> ต่ำกว่าหรือเท่ากับ 15,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 15,001–30,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001–45,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 45,001–60,000 <input type="checkbox"/> 60,001–75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> มากกว่า 75,000	
6. ปัจจุบันนี้มีจำนวนเพื่อนใน Facebook (โดยประมาณ) คน		
7. ปัจจุบันนี้คุณกด Like หรือ Subscribe เพจข่าว (โดยประมาณ) เพจ		
8. โดยปกติคุณเล่น Social Media เฉลี่ย ชั่วโมง/ วัน		

พฤติกรรมการอ่านข่าว		
9. ประเภทของข่าวใดบ้าง ที่คุณอ่านเป็นประจำ (ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)	<input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวต่างประเทศ <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวการเมือง <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวเศรษฐกิจ <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวการศึกษาและ สาธารณสุข	<input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวบันเทิงและดารา <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวศิลปวัฒนธรรม <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวกีฬา <input type="checkbox"/> ข่าวไลฟ์สไตล์และ เทคโนโลยี
10. คุณสนใจข่าวการเมืองมากน้อยเพียงใด ไม่สนใจเลย < — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — > สนใจเป็นอย่างมาก		
11. โดยปกติแล้วคุณใช้ช่องทางในการเปิดรับข่าว (ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ)		
12. คุณมีลักษณะการเปิดรับข่าวการเมืองใน Facebook อย่างไร		
<input type="checkbox"/> อ่านทุกข่าวตลอดเวลา <input type="checkbox"/> อ่านเฉพาะข่าวที่ตนเองสนใจ <input type="checkbox"/> อ่านเฉพาะข่าวที่เพื่อนแชร์ <input type="checkbox"/> อ่านบ้างเป็นครั้งคราว <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่อ่านเลย <input type="checkbox"/> อื่น ๆ (โปรดระบุ)		

ตอนที่ 2 แบบวัดเกี่ยวกับ Selective Exposure

No.	ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง 1	ค่อนข้าง ไม่ เห็นด้วย 2	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย 3	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง 4
1	มันยากสำหรับคุณในการแสดงความคิดเห็นทางการเมือง ถ้าคุณคิดว่าคนอื่นจะไม่เห็นด้วยกับคุณ				
2	หลายครั้งที่คนรอบตัวคุณมีความเห็นทางการเมืองไม่ถูกต้อง แต่คุณก็ปล่อยให้เขาคิดแบบนั้นไป				
3	เมื่อคุณไม่เห็นด้วยกับคนอื่น คุณมักจะคล้อยตามไปกับเขาด้วยแทนที่จะบอกความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองของคุณ				
4*	มันง่ายสำหรับคุณในการแสดงความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองของคุณให้คนรอบข้างฟัง แม้ว่าเขาเหล่านั้นจะคิดไม่เหมือนคุณก็ตาม				
5*	คุณรู้สึกไม่สบายใจหากใครบางคนถามความเห็นทางการเมืองของคุณและคุณรู้ว่าผู้ถามจะไม่เห็นด้วยกับคุณ				
6	คุณมักจะพูดความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองของคุณเฉพาะกับเพื่อนหรือคนอื่น ๆ ที่คุณไว้ใจ				
7	การที่คนส่วนใหญ่ไม่แสดงความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองเนื่องจากคิดว่าปลอดภัยกว่าหากตนเองไม่พูดหรือเขียนแสดงความคิดเห็นออกมา				
8*	คุณรับได้หากคนอื่นจะรู้ว่าคุณไม่เห็นด้วยกับความเห็นทางการเมืองของเขา				

ตอนที่ 3 แบบวัดเกี่ยวกับ Willingness to Self-Censor

No.	ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง 1	ค่อนข้าง ไม่ เห็นด้วย 2	ค่อนข้าง เห็นด้วย 3	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง 4
1	คุณพยายามหลีกเลี่ยงการอ่านข่าวการเมืองหรือ คอมเมนต์ทางการเมืองที่ขัดกับความเห็นของคุณ				
2	คุณมักจะอ่านข่าวหรือคอมเมนต์ทางการเมือง ที่มีความเห็นคล้าย ๆ กับคุณ				
3	คุณไม่เห็นประโยชน์ของการอ่านข่าวการเมือง หรือคอมเมนต์ทางการเมืองที่ขัดกับความเห็น ของคุณ				
4*	คุณพยายามที่จะทำให้ตัวเองรับฟังความเห็น ทางการเมืองจากข้อมูลหลาย ๆ ด้าน				
5	หากคุณต้องเลือกอ่านข่าวการเมืองได้เพียง เรื่องเดียว คุณจะเลือกอ่านข่าวที่การเมือง มีความเห็นใกล้เคียงกับคุณ				

ตอนที่ 4 แบบวัดเกี่ยวกับ Uses and Gratification ของ Online Political Engagement

No.	ข้อความ	ไม่เคย เลย 1	ค่อนข้าง น้อย 2	พอ ประมาณ 3	ค่อนข้าง มาก 4	ตลอด เวลา 5
1	คุณกดไลค์ (Like) เนื้อหาข่าวเกี่ยวกับการเมืองในเฟซบุ๊กบ่อยแค่ไหน					
ลักษณะเนื้อหาของข่าวการเมืองในเฟซบุ๊กที่คุณกดไลค์ (Like)						
2	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการให้ข้อมูลเพื่อทำให้คุณรู้รายละเอียด					
3	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการเสียดสี ล้อเลียน meme ทางการเมือง เพื่อก่อให้เกิดความบันเทิง					
4	ข่าวการเมืองที่กระตุ้นให้ผู้ที่มียุทธศาสตร์ร่วมกันมาสนับสนุนหรือพูดคุยกัน					
5	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวข้องกับการแจกเงินหรือรางวัล เช่น แจกเงิน xxx บาท					
6	คุณแสดงความคิดเห็น (Comment) เนื้อหาข่าวเกี่ยวกับการเมืองในเฟซบุ๊กบ่อยแค่ไหน					
ลักษณะเนื้อหาของข่าวในเฟซบุ๊กที่คุณแสดงความคิดเห็น (Comment)						
7	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการให้ข้อมูลเพื่อทำให้คุณรู้รายละเอียด					

No.	ข้อความ	ไม่เคย เลย 1	ค่อนข้าง น้อย 2	พอ ประมาณ 3	ค่อนข้าง มาก 4	ตลอด เวลา 5
8	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการเสียดสี ล้อเลียน meme ทางการเมือง เพื่อก่อให้เกิดความบันเทิง					
9	ข่าวการเมืองที่กระตุ้นให้ผู้ที่มียุทธศาสตร์ร่วมกันมาสนับสนุนหรือพูดคุยกัน					
10	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวข้องกับ การแจกเงินหรือรางวัลเช่น แจกเงิน xxx บาท					
11	คุณแชร์ (Share) เนื้อหาข่าวเกี่ยวกับการเมืองในเฟซบุ๊กบ่อยแค่ไหน ลักษณะเนื้อหาของข่าวในเฟซบุ๊กที่คุณแชร์ (Share)					
12	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการให้ข้อมูล เพื่อให้คุณรู้รายละเอียด					
13	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีการเสียดสี ล้อเลียน meme ทางการเมือง เพื่อก่อให้เกิดความบันเทิง					
14	ข่าวการเมืองที่กระตุ้นให้ผู้ที่มียุทธศาสตร์ร่วมกันมาสนับสนุนหรือพูดคุยกัน					
15	ข่าวการเมืองที่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวข้องกับ การแจกเงินหรือรางวัล เช่น แจกเงิน xxx บาท					



Focus Group Questions

- 1) Which kind of content do you expose through social media?
- 2) Which social media do you use most?
- 3) What is the main reason you use social media?
- 4) How often do you use social media?
- 5) Why do you prefer Facebook to other social media platform?
- 6) Which media do you use to get the update daily news?
- 7) Which types of news are you interested?
- 8) Are you interested in political issues?
- 9) Which social platforms do you get the update political issues?
- 10) Have you ever participated in any political activities, please describe?
- 11) Why do you participate in the political activities?
- 12) Have you ever share any comments in the political news forum?
- 13) What encourage you to do that?
- 14) Do you think that the strong comments in the news forum can lead to high level of social mobilization?
- 15) If the social media you follow persuading you to join any social mobilization activity, will you join?
- 16) Do you know other members of the page? Have you done any activities with the other members? If so, which activity?
- 17) What do you think about social mobilization in Hong Kong taken place so far?
- 18) What will you do if you don't agree with the comments in the political issues presenting in the news forum? Why?

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