Annotated Bibliography

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Ganesh, B. (2018). The ungovernability of digital hate culture. *Journal of International Affairs*, *71*(2), 30-50

   Ganesh, a researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute, studies hate speech and extremism in The United States and Europe while focusing on the relationship between technology, media, and society. Ganesh's (2018) study reveals, "Social media has played an increasingly important role in domestic and international politics." One of the main reasons social media has played an increasingly important role is that anyone can participate and express their views without experience or knowledge. "This," Ganesh points out, "has been taken to a new limit with the Internet, where anyone, anywhere, anytime, can have an opinion on anything" and that many users of social media, "are only too eager to respond to the equally deracinated opinions of other anonymous amateurs who post their views from nowhere" (p. 31). Careless posting like this on social media leads to hate speech, hate crimes, and even violent attacks, as according to Ganesh, "clever groups of these 'anonymous amateurs' have the power to spread extreme views, bigotry, and propaganda through their commentary on anything, anywhere, any time" (p. 31). This type of anonymity has created an explosion of digital hate culture, representing the sinister side of social media. In addition to the sinister motives of hate groups, the technology industries, as well as the creators of the social media platforms, have created a "digital hate culture builds on a cultivation of common sense amongst its audiences that ultimately seeks to radicalize those who listen" (Ganesh, 2018, p. 33). Moreover, it fuels the hate that spreads like wildfire through social media groups and the internet. Ultimately this type of social media usage creates a destructive culture in our society,

which "it seeks to use 'alternative media' and 'truth' to convert others to the totalizing, extreme world view that it endorses" (Ganesh, 2018, p. 36).

Ganesh (2018) points out how extreme groups use social media platforms to avoid being shut down or governed. These extreme groups or hate groups have quickly learned how to avoid being shut down by learning how to circumvent the social media platforms' rules. For example, these groups are notorious for the use of coded-language to avoid being shut down. Since the coded language is not easily recognizable by a user, "Their terms are not immediately recognizable as extreme or hateful without understanding the context, an area in which social media platforms and governments are struggling to keep up" (Ganesh, 2018, p. 39).

Many social media sites claim, "They are only offering a viewpoint that the 'politically correct' government and media are trying to silence" (Ganesh, 2018, p. 39).On the other hand, Ganesh (2018) so eloquently states:

Waiting for the law to catch up leaves social media vulnerable to being hijacked by extremists. However, there needs to be a legislative conversation based on the formal features of digital hate culture that considers the limits of free speech online and the role of bigotry, extremism, and hate in spreading extreme right wing views. Legislators need to understand that political violence is being organized through a geographically disparate swarm and that laws need to adapt to this dynamic threat. (p. 45)

(517 words)

Guan, N., Kanagasundram, S., Ann, Y., Hui, T., & Mun, T. (2016, January). Cyber bullying a

new social menace. ASEAN *Journal of Psychiatry*, *17*(1), 104-115.

This study conducted by Guan and a team of colleagues from the Department of

Psychological Medicine and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Malay defines

cyberbullying and the difference between traditional bullying and online bullying.

Although the concept of traditional bullying is the same for cyberbullying, both are meant

to cause harm or threaten a victim; the method used is where a clear difference lies. The

differences may seem subtle to an observer. However, as mentioned in the study,

"Although both cyberbullying and traditional bullying brings harm and [threats] towards

the victims, cyber bullying allows the bully to hide behind a screen and conduct the

bullying without being easily identified, which allows anonymity" (Guan, *et al.*, 2016, p.

105). That anonymity causes the perpetrator to feel even more emboldened to continue

with their bullying actions. The authors also mention two motivating factors: inter-related

anonymity and lack of social norms that are generally not followed by social media usage

on the internet. The combination of anonymity and lack of social norms shields the

perpetrator from seeing the harm they inflict upon their victims as well as avoiding the

consequences of cyberbullying.

> This distance protects them from facing the consequences of their actions;
>
> reducing self-control for potential bullies to do what they will not do in person. At
>
> the same time, the inability of cyber bullies to view the direct impact of
>
> victimization is not conducive for empathic response or remorse. (Guan, *et al.*,
>
> 2016, p. 106)

Besides, the anonymity factor, "cyber bullying also allows information to be spread rapidly and allows the perpetrator to access the bullying anywhere, anytime" (Guan, *et al.*, 2016, p. 106). There is no relief from the bullying for the victim. Once a text, comment, photograph, or video posts online, it is accessible for everyone to see and quickly passed around for all to see, which maximizes the bullying effect. Cyberbullying is so damaging because there is no escape for the victim. As noted in the study, all forms of bullying are detrimental with damaging effects on the victim. Hence, the fact that there is no escape magnifies the harm caused by cyberbullying. Also, cyberbullying has a multitude of effects on the victim say Guan *et al*. (2016):

> Cyber bullying has a few factors, which may intensify its negative impacts, including the difficulty in escaping from the bullying, the magnitude of the potential audience, the anonymity of the bully, and the ability to attack at any time and any place. (p. 107)

The study conducted by Guan *et al*. (2016) shows that the multitude of harmful effects of cyberbullying can range from depression to the most extreme case of suicide; "this is backed up by evidence that proves that cyber bullying is strongly related to suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, serious depression and stress. Cyber bullying also has harmful effects on mental health" (p. 107) Cyberbullying has also shown diminished performance at school or work.

The study highlights that anyone can become a victim of cyberbullying regardless of age or presence on social media or the internet and also provides prevention measures that can be taken to reduce the harmful effects of cyberbullying. It will be useful in

discussing both the prevalence and depth of cyberbullying as well as ways to prevent it.

(547 words)

Lewinsky, M (2015, March). *The price of shame* [Video]. TED Conferences.

https://www.ted.com/talks/monica_lewinsky_the_price_of_shame?language=en

Lewinsky, a social activist for cyberbullying, was a victim of cyberbullying even before the term cyberbullying was a trending word. As she notes in her TED talk, "I was patient zero of losing a personal reputation on a global scale almost instantaneously" (Lewinsky, 2015, 03:44). At the young age of 22, she was thrust into the spotlight of a political scandal. Her scandal was part of the digital revolution, known as cyberbullying. Throughout her Ted talk, Lewinsky (2015) explains the devastating effects cyberbullying has had on her life. In an instant, she went from a private citizen to her private life being on display for the whole world. She goes into great detail describing the horrific public shaming she felt along with the verbal assaults she endured by the public. She describes how at such an early age, because of one mistake, she lost her dignity, her reputation, and almost her life. She explains how one action, one mistake was on public display for everyone to critique and judge, "the worst version of [herself] was online for all to see" (Lewinsky, 2015, 07:41).

Moreover, the horrifying thing about cyberbullying, mistakes and humiliation are on display for all to see without ever being erased. Someone's mistake is forever accessible on the internet for all to view for eternity. No matter how much someone wants to forget about their adolescent mistakes, others can always remind them of their most humiliating experience by retrieving information posted on the internet. Lewinsky

(2015) talks about the steady barrage of negative comments she received online, leading to her emotional devastation and almost suicide. Due to cyberbullying and the invasion of private moments at a young age, it has taken years to recover from cyberbullying's devastating effects. In her Ted talk, Lewinsky (2015) cites "Childline, a UK nonprofit that's focused on helping young people on various issues, released a staggering statistic late last year: from 2012 to 2013, there was an 87 percent increase in calls and e-mails related to cyberbullying" (11:56).

Lewinsky's Ted talk will be useful to show the personal effects of cyberbullying as well as solutions and strategies she suggests to combat the ever-increasing attacks. (361 words)

Orlowski, J. (Director). (2020). *The social dilemma* [Video]. https://www.netflix.com/.

Orlowski, a Stanford graduate and the director of *The Social Dilemma* on Netflix*,* feature*s* interviews from several tech industry insiders, all of whom are former employees of Silicon Valley (Facebook, Google, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and other social media platforms). They have since left the industry "due to ethical reasons" discussed in the documentary. As the documentary points out, when the social media platforms were initially developed, no one ever imagined it would evolve into the monster it is today-- driven by industry's greed. These social media platforms make their money off the users' time engaged on social media sites. They manipulate the user by the way they design their platforms. As noted in the documentary, "Persuasive design techniques like push notifications and the endless scroll of your newsfeed have created a feedback loop that keeps us glued to our devices" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). Much like a drug user becomes

addicted to drugs, as social media users become addicted, social media becomes our drug of choice. A study noted in the documentary which looked at "a 5,000 person study found that higher social media use correlated with self-reported declines in mental and physical health and life satisfaction" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##) If social media is so harmful, why do we continue to use it? Because of the system's design, it is set up to "psychologically figure out how to manipulate you as fast as possible" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). The main objective of social media platforms is to keep the user scrolling for as long as possible "so that you are being programmed at a deeper level" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). Due to our capitalist nation's greed and culture, we tend to put profit over all else, which is precisely what the social media industry is doing. The social media platforms knowing and willingly manipulating the user for a profit. Ultimately, the users of social media are "the product being sold to advertisers for profit" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##).

Users are not only being manipulated for a profit by the tech companies who create the social media platforms, but they are also being manipulated by advertisers. We are told "Social media advertising gives anyone the opportunity to reach huge numbers of people with phenomenal ease, giving bad actors the tools to sow unrest and fuel political divisions" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). A study mentioned in the documentary notes, "64% of the people who joined extremist groups on Facebook did so because the algorithms steered them there" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). Social media platforms use various algorithms to ensure the user continues to engage on their site. Algorithms also "promote content that sparks outrage, hate, and amplifies biases within the data that we feed them" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). The documentary adds, "The number of countries with political

disinformation campaigns on social media doubled in the past two years" (Orlowski,

2020, ##:##)

As the Orlowski (2020) points out, "the social dilemma" that the former

employees of Silicon Valley face is the same "social dilemma" we as a society face. To

help combat the hate culture and biases, a former Silicon Valley employee, created the

website "Center for humane technology" (Orlowski, 2020, ##:##). It is a resource for

anyone interested in changing the social media culture. The documentary makes it clear

that "Technology's promise to keep us connected has given rise to a host of unintended

consequences that are catching up with us. If we can't address our broken information

ecosystem, we'll never be able to address the challenges that plague humanity"

(Orlowski, 2020, ##:##).

This source will be useful throughout my essay, but especially in talking about

how pervasive the pull of social media is. (606 words)

Mixon, G. (2016). Not your Father's marketplace of ideas: Hate speech and the fraudulent

marketplace of ideas created by social media. *Emory International Law Review, 34*, 399-

433.

Mixon's essay for Emory International Law Review breaks down the notion that

hate speech is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

While we as Americans have the right to freedom of speech, there are some exclusions to

the First Amendment. As noted in Mixon's (2016) essay, "Drawing on Virginia v. Black,

the court acknowledged that freedom of speech protections are not without limits and

speech can be regulated in certain instances." As stated in the essay, the United States has

seen a statistical rise in hate groups and speech, causing alarm in The United States.

In recent years, racially-motivated, hate-based crimes have been on the rise, both

in the United States and abroad. From 2000 to 2016, white supremacists were

responsible for more homicides than any domestic extremist group in the country.

From 2008 to 2016, right-wing—including white supremacist attacks and violent

events outnumbering such actions by Islamic extremists almost two-to-one.

Because of the increase of hate-based crimes and the increased use of social

media to spew hate and discord, we are forced to look at ways to curb the rising hate in

our country. One way to combat hate is to change how hate speech is perceived in the

United States of America. As mentioned in the essay, "Regulation of hate speech in both

the United States and Germany grew out of the worldwide geopolitical shift after World

War II." The United States saw the urgent need to reevaluate its laws governing freedom

of speech after World War II, concerning hate speech:

Governmental response, when regulating speech, can be formulated to address the

special and overriding interests of the speech. In Virginia v. Black, Court stated

that a prohibition on true threats 'protects individuals from the fear of violence'

and 'from the disruption that fear engenders,' in addition to protecting people

from the possibility that the threatened violence will occur.

It takes the nation's willingness and the backing of its people to reevaluate our laws

again concerning how social media is used to spread hate speech. Therefore we must

demand that our Nation's Leaders see the urgency to curb the growing trend of using

social media or the internet to spread hate. Mixon notes, "According to a study conducted

by the University of Warwick, social media is not only 'fertile soil for the spread of hateful ideas,' but it motivates real-life action." for this reason, we must demand reform of social media regulations and laws.

Although many argue that, "The internet and social media can connect and foster interactions and communications with people and points of view in previously unimaginable ways." as a society, we have a moral responsibility to our fellow human beings to stop the spread of hate through social media use and the internet. As Mixon notes, "The Internet is seemingly anonymous by default and thus has become a valuable means of communication for those of ill will." No one is immune from the ill effects of hate speech; even the President of the United States has succumbed to the use of social media to spread hate. By sharing or retweeting hateful messages, the President is contributing to the problem. (528 words)

Rosenberg, S. (2017, January 31). United we stand, divided we tweet. *UWIRE Text Gale Academic OneFile*, p. 1

Rosenberg (2017), in a newspaper article "United we stand, divided we tweet." published for *UWIRE Text Gale Academic OneFile,* one of the most extensive college news services, writes that Twitter has become one of the many places to post thoughts on sociopolitical issues only using 140 characters or less (para. 6). Because of the character limitations used on the social media platform Twitter, it makes it almost impossible for someone to have a civil conversation with a person with opposing views. These types of social media sites incite and promote hate speech by their design. As Rosenberg, notes "Due to Twitter's character limit, the concision of each tweet extracts the nuance from the

issues discussed online and thus they become diluted into oversimplified jabs that lead to a never-ending virtual pissing contest" (para. 9). This type of limited character sharing on social media closes the door to empathy and understanding. It leaves the door open to hate and misunderstanding of social and political issues. Of that, Rosenberg says, "In this age of mistrust and misinformation, Internet users have become so consumed with labeling, chastising, denouncing and shunning that many of us have lost the will to examine and discuss the complexity of important social issues in civilized settings" (para. 16). Rosenberg adds that social media sites such as Twitter, designed to share false information easily, add to people's mistrust on opposite sides of a social or political issue. The article points out that "Facebook also suffers from a similar problem, but to an even greater extent; that platform allows for users to launch into page-long rants" (para. 12). While Facebook does not have character limitations as Twitter, the problem remains the same for social media sites. The social media sites are designed and created to use algorithms to show the users like-minded information, videos, text, or context. The social media platforms sole purpose is to keep users engaged and using their social media sites.

One way to change social media sites' narrative is to engage with people with opposite views. Rosenberg (2017) simply states, "If you really want to see change and unity, start reading publications from other websites that offer alternative views. Or even better, get off the Web and start engaging in a dialogue with people who challenge and disagree with you" (para. 16). In doing so, Rosenberg adds, "That way, we might find a space actually to unite together as one nation" (para. 16). This article will help as I discuss how social media sites are manipulating users to believe in an alternative world only viewed by like-minded people like them. (433 words)

Srivastava, K., Chaudhury, S., Prakash, J., & Dhamija, S. (2019, July). Social media and mental
health challenges. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, *28*(2), 155-159.

The article, "Social media and mental health challenges," by Srivastava *et al*. all
of whom are faculty at the Dr. DY Patil Medical College Department of Psychiatry, helps
define in simple everyday terms commonly used terminology to reference online and
social media vocabulary. For instance, the article describes social media as

> Computer-driven technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and
>
> information by connecting with virtual networks and communities. By design,
>
> social media is internet based and gives users a quick electronic communication
>
> of content. Content includes personal information, documents, videos, and
>
> photographs. (Srivastava *et al*. 2019, p. 155)

In doing so, the article helps us understand the multi-facets of social media. For example,
they also define digital media as "any information that is broadcast to us through a
screen. This includes text, audio, video, and graphics that is transmitted over the Internet,
for viewing on the Internet" (Srivastava *et al*. 2019, p. 155). By understanding the
terminology, we can better understand the dangers of social media and how the growing
population uses them. Srivastava *et al*. help us understand the growing phenomenon of
social media and why so many people gravitate towards social media use. One of the
culprits of the increased use of social media is the wide use of smartphones. Smartphones
significantly increase access to the internet and social media. Based on the article, "Over
one in four people worldwide are on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and other

social networking sites (SNSs). Globally, the SNS users were estimated to be 2.95 billion in 2019." (Srivastava *et al*. 2019, p. 155).

Furthermore, Srivastava *et al*. (2019) look at the "primary motivation for using SNSs are a need to belong and a need for self-presentation...Facebook profiles help satisfy individuals' need for self-worth and appreciation" (p. 155). However, when the self-presentation is misunderstood, and the need for self-worth and appreciation is based on how many likes a person gets on their status, social media becomes a problem. That is when cyberbullying can begin, and the decline of one's self-esteem starts.

The authors also look at how different age groups, cultures, and societies use social media. For instance, they state that "greater levels of engagement with social media were observed from more individualistic cultures compared to their counterparts from collective cultures" (p. 155) The different ways societies choose to use social media impact social media's adverse effects on a person. This article will help as I discuss different social networks and how they affect people. (414 words)