Creating Space in the Fifth Estate

Creating Space in the Fifth Estate

Edited by

Janet Fulton and Phillip McIntyre

Creating Space in the Fifth Estate

Edited by Janet Fulton and Phillip McIntyre

This book first published 2017

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2017 by Janet Fulton, Phillip McIntyre and contributors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The chapters in this book are a collection from the 2016 conference of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA). The Association provides an inclusive and collegial environment for communication scholars to share their research and the chapters here represent the rich and diverse research that ANZCA encourages.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

JANET FULTON AND PHILLIP MCINTYRE

The human cargo carried on this small blue planet we know as the Earth is currently experiencing a global change that is as radical in its implications as the industrial revolution once was. While we humans may not be able to see clearly, as yet, what these sweeping changes mean for us in the long term, we can still ask important questions about what is going on right now. One amongst many that have bubbled to the surface is the question of whether the intellectual frames that were used to understand what happened at the end of the nineteenth century are still useful as we hurtle headlong through the ever-changing twenty-first century. One of those intellectual frames which is being continually reassessed and reappraised is the notion of power: what is it? how does it work? who has it? where is it located?

Power used to be conceived largely as a property of hierarchies. This conception held that power operates in a top-down linear fashion and this thinking gave rise to concerns about who is in control, what do they own to implement that control and what forces were at play to countervail those structures and practices often thought to be predominantly oppressive. Frankfurt School theorists, for example, "argued that the media were controlled by groups who employed them to further their own interests and power" (Holt and Perren 2009, 95). Now it is common to speak of systems, fields and networks of power. This latter conception of power and the way it is thought to operate recognizes it as less linear, not as hierarchical and, as a consequence, sees it as far more diffuse, malleable and fluid. As Michel Foucault remarked:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs

to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault 1980, 119)

Power can also be seen, at one and the same time, as both negative and positive, both constraining and enabling. It hinders some things while at the same time it helps other things happen. The space it occupies, who has it and how it works has been of concern to intellectuals, and of course those who use it for their own ends, for some time.

At the time preceding the French Revolution, the loci of power of the Ancien Regime was thought to be centered on three important but not entirely equal estates. These consisted of the clergy, the nobility and the common people. These categories are not surprising given the enormous wealth and property of the Catholic Church in Europe at the time, the lands that were controlled by the aristocracy and the power this gave them under a monarchical system. Each had to maintain a delicate balance with the commoners, as both the nobility and the clergy needed the people's ability to produce things in order to maintain their hierarchical power. Edmund Burke had written on the repercussions of the French Revolution as the radical changes it signaled were being debated and considered all over Europe. Burke was an Irish Enlightenment thinker who sat in the Houses of Parliament in London as a member of the Whig party and he had noticed that a shift in power was again taking place. As Thomas Carlyle reported, in 1787 Burke supposedly observed that "there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth more important far than they all" (in Dutton 2009, 1). What was to become known as "the press" had begun to demonstrate its members' political power.

The term "press" was, of course, premised on the invention of Johannes Gutenberg's printing apparatus and its accompanying movable type. As Terry Flew indicates, tools such as this enabled their users to transform and enable social interaction, indicating the technology's social and cultural dimensions (2005, 26). The tools humans used, such as the printing press, were bound to the systems of knowledge and social meanings that accompanied their development and use. In short there was, and still is, an "interaction between physical objects, contexts of use, and systems of knowledge" (ibid). What was important about the development of the printing press as a technology was the spread of literacy this technology afforded. It was literacy that formed the bedrock of the new power Burke had identified. As things progressed, the development of the newspaper, the first significant medium of mass communication, was made possible because it also occurred in a particular social setting:

As a technical device, it was consistent with, and perhaps even required by, other cultural institutions of the day. The relevant institutional structure of the society in terms of economic, political, and educational processes, as well as demographic and ecological patterns, provided a setting within which the particular combination of elements represented by the penny press could emerge and flourish. (De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989, 24)

Since that time, as William Dutton explains, "radio, television and other mass media have been enfolded with the press into the fourth estate, which has become an important independent democratic institution" (2009, 1). For liberal democratic societies, the press, now often conflated with the idea of "the media"—even though the media consist of far more than the generation of journalism—performed an oversight function at times exposing corruption, abuses, hypocrisy and illegalities in the corners of power the general populace could not easily access. As a result of this function, the fourth estate, along with the "legislative, executive and judicial branches of government" (Dutton 2009, 2), became increasingly powerful. In their book *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*, Holt and Perren assert:

Media culture helps shape both an individual's and a society's view of the world, defining good or evil, their positive ideals and sense of who they are, as well as who and what are seen as threats and enemies, creating, in some cases, sharp divisions between 'us' and 'them'. Media stories provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which individuals constitute a common culture and through their appropriation become part of the culture and society. Media spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence, and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the powers that be and show the powerless that they must stay in their places or be oppressed. (2009, 95)

These media industries have consequently been "powerful forces in contemporary societies" (ibid). They produce not only news but also entertainment, information, music, films, dramas, actualities and persuasions in the form of advertising. Public relations machines feed on them to the extent that Jürgen Habermas, who developed an idealized version of what he called "the public sphere", felt that it was threatened by:

the growing power of information management and manipulation through public relations and lobbying firms [who] contributed to making contemporary debate a 'faked version' of a genuine public sphere. Instead of democratic participation Habermas argued that public affairs have

become occasions for 'displays' of power in the style of medieval courts rather than a space for debate on socio-economic issues. (Thussu 2000, 71)

But it is not just the news that was susceptible to manipulation. What makes all of the products of media powerful, from songs through to ads to clips of films on YouTube, is that they "provide materials out of which individuals in contemporary media and consumer societies forge their very identities, including sense of self, notion of what it means to be male or female, and conception of class, ethnicity and race, nationality, and sexuality" (Holt and Perren 2009, 95). They are at the same time an "essential economic force, helping manage and promote consumer demand, constructing needs and fantasies through advertising and entertainment" (ibid). As such they are "key instruments of political power, constituting a terrain upon which political battles are fought and providing instruments for political manipulation and domination" (ibid). Despite the wide sweeping power of all of these media products, it is the press, as Dutton argues, "that remains identified as a Fourth Estate in many liberal democratic societies" (2009, 2).

In the spirit of what Stephen Hill calls alignment, where "the technology-society relationship is interactive, and at the same time enframing of possibilities" (1988, 33-34), there have been further interactive developments that suggest the rise of a related but qualitatively different locus of power. As Dutton writes:

> In the twenty-first century, a new institution is emerging with some characteristics similar to the Fourth Estate, but with sufficiently distinctive and important features to warrant its recognition as a new Fifth Estate. This is being built on the growing use of the Internet and related information and communication technologies (ICTs) in ways that are enabling 'networked individuals' to reconfigure access to alternative sources of information, people and other resources. Such 'networks of networks' enable the networked individuals to move across, undermine and go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions, thereby opening new ways of increasing the accountability of politicians, press, experts and other loci of power and influence. These are neither personal nor institutional networks, but networked individuals. This reflects many attributes of Manuel Castells' conception of a 'network society' and which are similar to what have been called 'Internet-enabled networks'. (Dutton 2009, 2)

Castells, according to Flew, argued that "the network increasingly shapes the logic of social interaction across diverse spheres of social interaction" (2005, 16). If the network is populated with a wide variety of "practices of consumption and cultures of use" (Cunningham and Turner

2006, 259) then the notion of the fifth estate not only poses challenges for how we understand the changes that are being wrought but also necessitates a change in the way the loci of power are conceived. This idea would move the conception of the power of the fifth estate beyond a simple extension of the powers of the press.

While the notion of the fifth estate, as Chika Anyanwu indicates in this edition, appears to have been in use as a term since the 1920s, and referred earlier to radio (Waller 1945) and latterly to bloggers (Cooper 2006, Jericho 2012) as well as journalists and other non-mainstream media outlets, it may be that the place of entertainment is just as critical to power relations in the fifth estate as the press was thought to be for the fourth estate. In this case, as well as considering the power of journalism in all its traditional and radically new forms, we want to include in this concept not only all the online networks that create and share information, constitute new communities, and aid in organizing social movements that take the place of those that existed in an industrialized world, as well as the traditional forms that are still finding their niche in the new world, but also all the forms, symbols, myths, spectacles, memes and resources that are constituting a fractured yet common global culture. In doing this, we want to remind ourselves there are spaces in this new locus of power for communicators of all stripes.

With all of that in mind, this book has gathered together ideas from journalism, blogging, social media, other online sites, literature and music that try to make sense of what is happening around us to find an intellectual space that helps us usefully understand these shifts. In Chapter 2, for example, Chika Anyanwu provides a detailed look at common understandings of the fourth and fifth estates and contends that our understanding of these estates is based on a narrow conception of the fourth estate as an institution and the fifth estate as merely a technology and thus, seemingly, not seen as legitimate. However, these distinctions and questions about the perceived supremacy of the fourth estate over the fifth estate (and Anyanwu uses social media as an example of the fifth estate) are less important than other questions that should be asked: what are the fundamental roles of both estates; how do they perform those roles; and what are the conditions in which they operate.

Anyanwu suggests that both estates are useful for citizen participation and employs Habermas's (1989) notion of the public sphere to argue that both estates are founded on the same ideologies of watchdog and accountability and that technology merely affects how those functions are carried out. Anyanwu also draws on Castells' (2009) theory of identity and power to claim that there is now such a distrust in mainstream media,

primarily owned by media conglomerates, that the public has looked to other sources for independent news; one of those sources is social media, what has been called the fifth estate by some (Dutton 2009; Jericho 2013). Social media, contends Anyanwu, has an edge over older media platforms because it is premised on the notion of participatory information such as information exchange and collective intelligence rather than the hierarchical and conglomerate structure of traditional media ownership.

However, Anyanwu also notes that it is a Utopian dream to expect social media to be an independent media in the way Habermas envisaged the public sphere, particularly in the light of the advent of a neoliberal economy. Social networking sites, as an example of the fifth estate, appear to be following the ownership and control path of traditional media. He argues that the acquisition of social networking sites by established media and other social media companies means it is more difficult to expect an independent media, one that provides citizens with an open space to debate the issues of the day.

Emmett Stinson, in Chapter 3, takes the reader through the little-researched area of the literary journal and how this particular cultural form has adapted to and become part of the fifth estate. Using a modified Bourdieusian framework, Stinson investigates how the "little magazine", another name for the literary journal format, has adapted to and operated in the "digital literary sphere" (Murray 2015, 313). He does this by analyzing four born-digital Australian literary journals: *Jacket*, *Cordite*, *The Mascara Literary Review,* and *The Review of Australian Fiction*. Using these online journals as examples, Stinson demonstrates the effect that digital technology has on the flow of symbolic and social capital, including not only such areas as book-talk and distribution, but also the effect on producer-consumer networks, national literary discourse and the hierarchies in this particular area of cultural production.

Furthermore, contrary to other print-based forms, Stinson contends that born-digital literary magazines support the offline industry rather than disrupt it and he uses the four digital journals to demonstrate this contention. For Stinson, digital literary journals are not only built on existing networks but also extend them. He notes that the print/digital divide inherent in other cultural forms is not as evident in the literary journal industry and, in fact, the boundary between digital and print journals in this format is porous. He also makes the bold claim that the successful tactics that literary journals have employed in adapting to digital media can also assist other print cultures as they move into the space of the fifth estate.

Janet Fulton also writes about an online media form in Chapter 4. She examines the importance of social networking sites to new media entrepreneurs and how they work and survive in the online space of the fifth estate. Based on ethnographic methods, including in-depth interviews with thirty bloggers, online magazine producers, web publishers and broadcasters, Fulton analyses the respondents' social media use and its value and asks how crucial this use is in building and maintaining an audience.

Fulton's chapter draws on data from a broader research project that is examining the key skills, business models, success and type of technologies (including social networking sites) of these online media producers. Using qualitative interview data, Fulton's chapter focuses on which social network sites are employed, which ones are successful, which ones are appropriate for these new media entrepreneurs, and why these social networks work for these respondents. While Fulton's research has found that there is a broad range of social network sites that are employed to engage the audience (platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest are noted), the interaction provided by these sites is crucial in how these participants connect with their audience. Deep analysis of the data has shown that each participant has carefully chosen the form/s of social media and digital dissemination that their audience would find appropriate, but the majority have also experimented, with differing levels of success, with a broad range of digital communication forms to ascertain which strategy works best. These participants use social media to engage with their different audiences in different ways, to keep in contact with others in their industry, and to promote their sites/work. Social media is a crucial tool for online media producers working in the fifth estate.

In Chapter 5, Jessamy Gleeson suggests that social media is also a crucial tool for activism, particularly for voices not often heard, women in this instance, in traditional forms of media such as talkback radio. Gleeson has employed a case study methodology to analyze the Australian feminist social media movement Destroy the Joint to demonstrate the power of the fifth estate in giving a voice to women. Using Australian talkback radio shock jock Alan Jones and his infamous comment in 2012 that "Women are destroying the joint", Gleeson explores how feminist groups and campaigns in Australia aim to disrupt and challenge more traditional bases of power through social media.

Over several months, Jones had disparaged then Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Australia's first female Prime Minister, by calling her "brain dead", "a lying cow" and "off her tree". But in this particular instance,

Jones's comment sparked an enormous backlash with thousands of tweets, using the hashtag #destroythejoint, and the development of a Destroy the Joint Facebook page, which eventually led to an advertiser boycott that cost the radio station's owners millions of dollars and to a broader social movement that addressed national and international issues affecting women.

Gleeson has analyzed data from a group of Destroy the Joint participants and explores their perception of power and how they seized a form of power to challenge the societal discourses around how women are reported in mainstream media. She grounds the chapter in the broader context of how women are perceived in the political sphere and how they are portrayed in traditional media forms. The online campaign Destroy the Joint, with its powerful collective voices, challenged these discourses and identified the fifth estate as a valuable platform enabling the marginalized and disparaged to control and direct their own message.

In Chapter 6, Marjorie Kibby discusses a phenomenological study that employed a survey and an online discussion forum to examine how young Australian adults between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four (millennial generation) experience location-based apps and services. According to statistics (Statista 2016), Apple and Google currently have more than a million applications that can be used on a smart phone with many of these apps requiring a location to work effectively: weather, maps, closest bank/restaurant/hotel, etc. Using the *spatial self* (Schwartz and Halegoua 2014) as a theoretical concept, where the "self" is constructed and presented around geographic locations or physical places, Kibby explores the concept of the self through millennials' use of location-based smartphone applications. Study respondents discussed location-based apps including *Nearby Friends*, *Find My Friends*, *Life 360*, *Map My Fitness/Walk/Run, Strava, Shazam, Crunchyroll, Timehop* and *Spotify*. Analysis of entries into the forum set up by Kibby showed that while these apps are used for utilitarian purposes, they also have a performative function. Kibby discovered that millennials are aware that to effectively represent themselves on social media, despite some concerns about privacy, sharing a location is a necessary part of engaging and participating in the online environment. Kibby states that while people have always included the physical places in which they live and play to construct their identity, the technologies of the fifth estate, including networks and mobile phones, mean the performative function of social media is now amplified. As Kibby notes in her chapter: "Being constantly able to not only identify the space around them but also to transmit that information to others and in return see the space occupied by those in their

network has intensified the relationship between them and their physical environment." Furthermore, the social norms around this performative function are still developing as the space of the fifth estate develops.

Social media and identity construction in the fifth estate is also examined by Yini Wang and Mark Balnaves. Employing a phenomenological framework, and ethnographic methods such as interviews and online observation of social media sites such as WeChat, in Chapter 7 they examine the online practices of Chinese youth. Some claim that Chinese youth identity is changing to become more "elastic" (Wang, 2013) because of online interaction with strangers and this has led to the development of what are called preferred selves (ibid.). However, Wang and Balnaves argue against Wang's idea of the elastic self. After conducting a major ethnographic project with students in Changsa, a city in the middle south of China, the authors demonstrate that although Chinese youth identity may seem to be "elastic", in this particular study traditional social norms are still shaping youth online communities. Confucianism is still central to the construction of identity be it off or online. For example, traditional expectations of reciprocity shape online communities in China as does the core Confucian value of intersubjective benevolence, or love for others.

Wang and Balnaves state that social media in China provides a platform for reciprocity that has specific Chinese characteristics including *zi-hei* (self-mockery or self-deprecation) and *zheng-neng-liang* (positive energy). In fact, they claim that this reciprocity is intensified in the online interactions of the study's cohort but it is also implicit in how these young people present themselves online rather than overt, in a similar way to offline social interactions: traditional Chinese values are still an intimate part of how youth interact in modern communicative spaces such as social media, a bastion of the fifth estate.

Music, though, is a cultural form where online activity may continue to disrupt social behaviors. Online music streaming on sites such as Spotify and Pandora is providing a new space for listeners to connect with music producers through aggregated streaming services. The act of receiving music on demand, rather than the traditional ways music has been received, and the new tools and technologies used to do this, are also disrupting the processes of recording music offline. In Chapter 8, Robert Taylor looks at the diffusion of innovation that is occurring in both the offline and online musical space. In this chapter, he presents his research on the relatively new technologies of hyper-compression and loudness normalization in music production and discusses how music streaming online may make tools used offline, such as hyper-compression, redundant. In simple terms, hyper-compression has been used for many

years by audio practitioners as a tool to adjust the dynamic range of sound recordings which enables music to be played at a perceived loud level; as Taylor notes, it "has become a structural determinant within music production practices." However, this situation often meant music from different eras sounded comparatively softer and the "louder" recordings that used hyper-compression (from later eras) were considered more attractive by listeners. Louder it seems was better. So much so, that it now has developed an embedded esthetic appeal within certain genres of music. However, while the technology of loudness normalization was developed for television and radio broadcasting so content such as advertisements (typically using hyper-compression) would have the same level of loudness as the rest of the broadcast, Taylor states that other media platforms such as music streaming sites have found the loudness normalization technology to be useful and have adapted the tool for their own purpose. As Taylor concludes, if these newer forms of online music delivery continue, the use of hyper-compression may become redundant, demonstrating the interactive nature of technological and social interaction and the affordances they provide in the fifth estate.

Dean Brady and Michael Meany take the most radical step in their examination of what can be afforded by the technologies that underpin the fifth estate. They ask in Chapter 9 whether search engines such as Google can be opinion leaders in the fifth estate in a similar way to human opinion leaders and their relationship to the fourth estate. In early studies of the Two-Step Flow Model of Communication, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that human opinion leaders were highly trusted and, because of this, their views and opinions are accepted by their followers. However, Brady and Meany asked the question: does Search Engine Optimization (SEO), in its role in enhancing website rankings, also influence news and persuade users? They used the Computers Are Social Actors (CASA) paradigm (Nass, Steuer and Tauber 1994) to adapt Katz and Lazarsfeld's model to fifth estate media forms and technologies. Given that we now have word of mouth distribution of information via the Internet, by applying CASA to the Two-Step Flow model Brady and Meany claim that the technology represented by the Internet is not merely a neutral technology but is itself an information source acting in a similar way to human opinion leaders.

To demonstrate this claim, Brady and Meany gathered data from SEO professionals, in this instance those who work for companies that advertise a search engine optimization service, by conducting a questionnaire with short answer questions as well as quantitative multiple choice questions. Using these mixed methods, Brady and Meany found strong similarities between SEO and human opinion leaders in the roles they each play as

they provide selected information to their publics. Importantly, the research found a similarity in trust level between the computers as social actors and humans, but it was unavoidable that search results could be manipulated by SEO techniques, thus skewing the information that users of the fifth estate receive.

Together these chapters provide us with a way to understand the changes that human actors are facing as they enter the digital world. We hope they also provide a step towards understanding the creation of space for all communication forms, particularly those that are typically not considered to be a part of the press but are in fact fast becoming central forms of this evolving world we call the fifth estate.

References

Cooper, Stephen D. *Watching the Watchdog: Bloggers as the Fifth Estate*. Spokane, WA: Marquette Books, 2006.

Cunningham, Stuart, and Graeme Turner. *The Media and Communications in Australia*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2006.

DeFleur, Melvin Lawrence, and Sandra Ball-Rokeach. *Theories of Mass Communication*. New York: Longman, 1989.

Dutton, William H. "The Fifth Estate Emerging through the Network of Networks." *Prometheus* 27, no. 1 (2009): 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/08109020802657453.

Flew, Terry. *New Media: An Introduction*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, and K. Soper. New York: Random House, Inc., 1980.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*. Translated by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989.

Hill, Stephen. *The Tragedy of Technology*. London: Pluto Press, 1988.

Holt, Jennifer, and Alisa Perren. *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Jericho, Greg. *The Rise of the Fifth Estate: Social Media and Blogging in Australian Politics*. Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2012.

Katz, Elihu, and Paul Lazarsfeld. *Personal influence: the part played by people in the flow of mass communications*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1955.

Murray, Simone. "Charting the Digital Literary Sphere." *Contemporary Literature* 56, No. 2 (2015): 311-339. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/591465.

Nass, Clifford, Jonathan Steuer, and Ellen R. Tauber. "Computers Are Social Actors." In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, April 24-28, 1994. New York: ACM Press (1994): 72-78, DOI: 10.1145/191666.191703.

Schwartz, Raz, and Germaine R. Halegoua. "The Spatial Self: Location-based Identity Performance on Social Media." *New Media and Society*, 17, No. 10 (2014): 1-18, DOI: 10.1177/1461444814531364.

Statista. "Number of apps available in leading app stores as of June 2016." Statista, last modified June 2016, https://www.statista.com/statistics/276623/number-of-apps-available-in-leading-app-stores/.

Waller, Judith Cary. *Radio: The Fifth Estate*. Chicago: Houghton Mifflin, 1946.

Wang, Tricia. "Talking to strangers: Chinese youth and social media." Doctoral dissertation, University of California*,* San Diego, 2013. Accessed 3 February 2015, http://bit.ly/TALKINGTOSTRANGERS.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERROGATING THE FIFTH ESTATE

CHIKA ANYANWU

Situating the Fourth and Fifth Estates

Using Habermas' public sphere, this chapter argues that the fourth and fifth estates are founded on the enduring ideology of accountability/ watchdog functionality and public participation and that technologies of the day affect how such roles are performed. While social media is often regarded as the fifth estate, it is the ubiquitous nature of the technology that enables radical forms of conversation which we subsume for an estate. I argue that in discussing fourth and fifth estates, the question should be less about legitimacy or supremacy of one over the other, but more about understanding the fundamental role of the estates, how they are able to perform such roles, and the conditions under which they operate. The other important question is whether, in today's neoliberal economy, the estates are still capable of enabling a participatory public sphere and whether it would still be realistic to expect accountability/guard dog functionality from them (Kakabadse et al. 2010), rather than a watch dog functionality where the media alerts and enables public debate on issues of general concern.

Media technologies are physical manifestations of enduring consciousness which originate from public participation (Gilmore and Osial 2012). The fourth and fifth estates are therefore embodiments of enduring participatory democracy and participatory public sphere through which society communicates, produces, repairs and maintains reality (Carey 1989). According to Habermas et al., "only in the light of the public sphere did that which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all" (1989, 4). Geoff Livingston argues that "the fifth estate is us: the citizens, the person with a phone, a computer, a tablet that can respond, write their own point of view, state how they feel about things and perhaps even start ground swells and movements of change (in Switzer, 2011 n.p.).

There is therefore a need to distinguish between *the media* as an agency of influence, and *media* as a tool of communication. The estate is not the technology but the ideological consciousness and participatory conversation it enables. The tension between the fourth and fifth estates (Jericho 2013) is based on narrow public perception and expectations of the fourth estate as an institution and the fifth as the technology.

This chapter understands that media organizations are businesses which are a public trust and as such require resources to effectively carry out their duties to society (Boston Globe 2009). With this in mind, when we analyze media operations we need to factor in their viability or sustainability options and states. Based on recent social media acquisitions, I argue that the competition for and the acquisition of successful start-up social media companies by powerful conglomerates demonstrate that, while the initial intention of social media organizations could be for the public good, competitive economic forces from powerful media conglomerates make such intentions very difficult to realize. Apart from undermining their core social values, the acquisition by powerful media empires compromises the fundamental principles which gave birth to their initial legitimacy and enabled public trust and patronage.

Using Castells' (2009) theory of identity and power, it could be argued that the role of mainstream media in the construction and communication of participation has been fraught with public distrust, and that such distrust has led audiences to migrate to an assumed better alternative which has been referred to as the fifth estate. This new estate has been seen by some (Dutton 2009; Jericho 2013) as located within social media platforms. It is also interpreted as an attempt at reconfiguring power positions in order to refocus dominant ideology from mainstream media to a perceived better alternative (Inglis 1988). For example, the Occupy Movement enabled a collective plebiscite for those who felt let down by mainstream media and who believe that political and economic power has been invested into a small minority without adequate checks and balances by mainstream media (Waters 2011).

Neoliberal political economy, on the other hand, also dictates that the fourth estate has become compromised as a credible guard dog tasked with defending disenfranchised members of society. This loss of credibility arises because media operations run the same business models and seek the same profit margins as the conglomerates that they are supposed to keep in check (Donohue et al. 1995). They seem to have neglected their core value proposition as a public trust, charged with social engineering. I use the term social engineering to define a type of social capital which

evolves as a result of information exchange which influences public consciousness and engenders collective or individual action.

The traditional fourth estate operates a hierarchical management structure which entrusts and empowers media organizations with the interpretation and representation of what constitutes the interest of the public. Its viability and ownership structure is determined by a neoliberal market economy where success is measured by its ability to satisfy the interests of its shareholders and investors. Social media or the fifth estate, on the other hand, is indirectly controlled by the same economic powers that control the fourth estate. However, its operational strategy is in close proximity to its audiences through participatory and collaborative engagements. Such a close relationship builds trust and gives people a sense of participation and ownership. While both the fourth and fifth estates operate within capital intensive environments and differing organizational structures, one engages its audience through corporate dependency control (fourth estate), while the other engages its audience through social capital dependency control (fifth estate).

Rauchfleisch and Kovic posit that "social media represent the most acute and very immediate form of interaction between users who are not merely a passive audience, but active and interconnected agents" (2016, 2). In other words, the fifth estate enables a participatory public sphere, or as Dutton et al. distinguished, the "fifth estate is a potentially potent political force, but without the centralized institutional foundations of the fourth estate. It is composed of decentralized distributed activities" (2012, 7). Newman and Dutton defined the fifth estate as similar to the fourth estate by offering information and not being controlled by the state, but, distinctly "by being anchored in networked individuals and their collaborative networks, rather than the press and other institutions" (Dutton et al. 2012, 15). It is therefore important, according to them, for us to "shift the focus away from a strict dichotomy of media to the actors, focusing on the use of the Internet and other media by the press in contrast to their use by networked individuals of the fifth estate" (ibid. 18).

The fifth estate is about interaction, socialization and collective engagement and liberation. It circumnavigates old and formalized cultural protocols which are fraught with control and silo structure. It is a virtual public sphere whose coffee houses transgress geopolitical boundaries. It is a space where members brew their own coffee and at the same time share the recipe with other coffee drinkers in order to socially engineer a coffee drinking habit among members of the public. It is therefore premised on the power of social capital. This simple exchange is built on what English cleric and scholar Thomas Robert Malthus would regard as geometric

membership participation which enables multiplication of participation faster than traditional media, or the fourth estate, which still operates on mathematical control. The strategy of such coffee houses enables the barista to use distributed self-help brewing techniques to empower more coffee drinkers by providing free recipes for their local coffee vending machines. The coffee drinkers decide what recipe to try and how often they need to drink. They become amateur baristas themselves. They feel part of the coffee drinking club. But behind these coffee drinking experiments lies the birth of an emancipated social group, the coffee house elites or connoisseurs of ideas. But if we focus our attention on the coffee machine (technology) rather than the social conditioning of coffee drinkers, we negate the key value proposition of social media: the distribution and exchange of common cultural experience.

It can be argued that when nineteenth century British Parliamentarian Edmund Burke acknowledged the importance of the press gallery as the fourth estate, he was not referring to the tools or technologies of journalism, or the institutional ownership of the press, but instead to the fundamental role that those sitting in the gallery played in challenging and leading public debates about parliamentary decisions and policies. He was acknowledging the power of accountability in the legislative systems of government and how those social critiques in the gallery deciphered legislative documents so that the public could understand and indirectly participate in the process of their own leadership. This ability to bring to the open the decision-making processes of parliament as well as question public interests, underscores the fact that the position occupied by law-makers is as important as the public scrutiny which challenges such a decision-making process. It is this kind of social responsibility which defines both fourth and fifth estates.

We can therefore argue that the fourth and fifth estates have the same social responsibility, information analysis and dissemination, and that the effectiveness of the delivery of such service depends on the ideological position of its ownership structure and strategy of engagement. We can also argue that the concept of a fifth estate is not new and that it is not technology driven or determined. While new technological platforms such as social media have influenced alternative media strategies and, as a result, affected how audiences relate to old media platforms, the core value function of both the fourth and fifth estates is still the same—information management. As far back as 1924, during the centenary celebration of the Franklin Institute, Little told his audience that:

> This fifth estate is composed of those having the simplicity to wonder, the ability to question, the power to generalize and the capacity to apply. It is,

in short, the company of thinkers, workers, expounders and practitioners upon which the world is absolutely dependent for the preservation and advancement of that organized knowledge … It is they who bring the power and the fruits of knowledge to the multitude who are content to go through life without thinking and without questioning. (1924, 299)

Such pronouncements, made many years before anybody could conceptualize the word Internet, expounded the power of an information society, a society whose intellectual capital or productivity is built on public consciousness or becomes part of the social structure. It is therefore important to re-evaluate our instrumental definition of the fifth estate as social media. In 1964, Gross extended Little's position. He saw the centrifugal role of media in enabling national scientific development, not because he wanted journalists to become scientists or vice versa, but simply by acknowledging the powerful position information managers occupy in enabling public discourse and in the sharing and exchange of information through open and robust debate. It is therefore this "simplicity to wonder and the ability to question" that make the estates the vanguard of modern society rather than the technologies which are used to communicate them.

Fifth Estate as Social Capital

I will use social capital theory to situate the fifth estate because it is premised on collaborative engagements, open debate and discourses of social issues. Adams and Hess indicated that social capital is "directly related to personal and collective well-being and an increased capacity for a community to respond to threats and interventions" (2010, 141). In other words, the collective resilience of a community, their ability to share information and leverage from each other's strengths, as well as reassess their social structure, enable them to overcome adversities and open new opportunities. Such capacity is founded on information exchange and collective intelligence. This is the edge that new media platforms such as social media have over old or traditional media platforms, not because such participatory information sharing is new, but because the structure of traditional media ownership is conglomerated and hierarchical. Participatory information processes have existed in traditional societies like African ones for centuries through community gatherings, age groups and town criers. Participatory and communal life has defined these people for centuries (Anyanwu 2013). Social media merely emulates the success of such participatory cultures.

Qun et al. used the work of Tönnies to argue that "individuals who share values and beliefs are linked by social ties. Such social ties are assets in network success. They enable groups to make informed decisions which can either enhance the success or failure of their organization" (2009, 326). Social media works as a collaborative system and such sense of collective aspiration and responsibility is the key to a modern public sphere. This collective sense of belonging generates unquantifiable social goods.

Various other researchers have highlighted the importance of social capital within community networks: Coleman (1988); Sen and Cowley (2013); Hossam (2009); Qun et al. (2009); Alston (2002); Vorhaus (2014); Burrowes (2011); Dutton et al. (2012); Switzer (2011); O'Neill et al. (2005); Lewis et al. (2008); Macnamara (2015); Jackson and Moloney (2015); Fisher (2015); and, Lewis et al. (2008). The social capital which emanates from social media as "networked collective action" is its ability to influence public consciousness about issues that affect them (Milan, 2015). The difference is that such actions are not merely sociological, but sociotechnical in nature. By sociotechnical, I mean that the audience is not a mere consumer but also a producer, whose technical skills come into play in their ability to circumnavigate corporate and government gatekeeping. In analyzing social and mobile media, Milan identified some important factors which set a social and mobile media platform apart from other media platforms: "it shapes interactions at the micro level, rather than simply facilitating them; it understands media as sociotechnical through the intersection between human agency which uses machine to facilitate collective identity action, and popular network administrators" (2015, 2) or post leaders who become pseudo opinion leaders or choreographers, by directing the flow of information.

In their analysis, Sormanen and Dutton said that "the fifth estate develops from individuals who are enabled by ICT networks and information which are independent of authorities, to increase their communicative power in order to bypass and hold powerful institutions or society accountable" (2015, 2). In other words, there are human and instrumental intersections in the use of social media as public sphere. Such a relationship is similar to what Giddens (1979) refers to as structuration, an interface between micro and macro society in the formation of social change. Such social structure starts from individual attitudes which collectively form societal guiding principles. It is a form of social kinship which, according to Burgess et al., "promotes a sense of value, belonging, identity as well as enable continuing ties" (2010, 98). In these communities, conversation is the central element. It is an open communication system.

People engage on issues which affect them. Members are collectively responsible for each other by ensuring that community protocols are not broken or breached because any such breach will affect the reputation of every member of the community.

According to Hossam, "social capital represents in a sense the goodwill, engendered by the fabric of social relations and which often facilitates action" (2009, 420). Measuring and capturing such social capital, and the values of community and individual identity, becomes very important in helping to build a sense of community. It is more so for people who are culturally or socio-economically weak or disenfranchised, or those who dwell on the fringe of societal discourse whose voices are often forgotten or marginalized. Such collective wisdom, or social capital, enables them to build some tangible sense of belonging, ownership and support. Social capital is therefore another "way of bridging the effects of inequality in a disadvantaged neighborhood" (Browne-Yung et al. 2013, 21). These are the fundamental principles that bring people together as social groups. It is this principle that enables media groups, especially alternative social media groups (ASM) to exist and flourish. These social values are what society expects from media organizations. These are also the same values that mainstream media is unable to deliver due to the structure of its ownership and operation. Such a participatory relationship within social media does not guarantee a solution to societal problems, but it can enable such groups to engage in conversations which could galvanize their skills to collectively find solutions. It is such collective intelligence that generates the capital within social groups.

Fourth and Fifth Estates as Public Spheres

It is worth noting that in the early days of the bourgeoisie public sphere, journalists were not really neutral, in fact they were not what we know today as journalists. They were intellectual critics who challenged powerful establishments, especially landowners who made laws to forestall any resistance to their privileged positions. In their analysis of the concept of publics in the public sphere, Habermas et al. (1989) emphasized the need to be cautious when using the term public to represent general participation. For example, they cited the example of a public building as connoting a space built with public funds for public participation, but not necessarily as a free space for everybody to enter without restriction, even when the doors are open. The powerful and ruling elite are recognized as public figures, and yet they are not publicly available to everybody. On the other hand, the idea of private does not

necessarily imply a sense of security or exclusivity, but, instead, was used to distinguish between common and public figures, hence in the military, non-commissioned soldiers are regarded as privates. This demarcates their status as people without authority to command or lead others, and those who are commissioned with responsibilities. If we extend this to the role of media as enabling the public sphere, one may wish to ask whether the public sphere is geared towards common citizens (privates) or public citizens (the rich and affluent).

The public sphere selects from a group of collected ideas, elements that represent a general consensus or those that have at least majority relevance or appeal rather than those that meet everybody's private needs. Media organizations appeal to public opinion and sometimes to the lowest common multiple (LCM). Social media, through its participatory structure, enables its members to voice their opinions, hence the importance social media users attach to the number of hits, tags, retweets, likes, and other forms of dissemination, acknowledgement or viral reach. But whether such opinions are listened to, effect any change or are simply used to fill the number of hits is another matter. Whatever the outcome, the important impression is that participants are able to air their views. According to Habermas et al., "the press and broadcast media serve less as organs of public information and debate than as technologies for managing consensus and promoting consumer culture" (1989, xii).

In the Habermasian bourgeoisie public sphere, writers and critics were hired and used by powerful political elites to advance their positions: "The estates negotiated agreements with the Princes of the day on issues of conflicting power claims involving the demarcation of estate liberties" (Habermas et al. 1989, 27). Through such negotiations an acceptable balance is often reached. The early occupiers of the fourth estate were literary critics and power brokers more than journalists. They published intellectual pamphlets which formed some of the philosophical ideologies of modern society; John Locke's treatise on Tolerance, Milton's Liberty, and Paine's Common Sense are some examples (Burrowes, 2011, 27). But through their intellectual dexterity, critics and writers infiltrated the political systems and thus started advocating for freedom and market reforms. According to Laurence and Burger, the first leading press, the *London Gazette*, was never in the hands of the opposition (in Habermas et al. 1989, 59). Again, modern journalistic autonomy has been synonymous with industrialization and commercial expansion (Krause, 2011). It is therefore important to critically evaluate our expectations of the fourth and fifth estates, and the assumptions we have of their power to influence change or their ideologies subjectively and objectively in any given