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From Knowledge to Wisdom

# Journal of US-China Public Administration

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## Contents

### Management Issues and Practice

- Challenges of Fourth Industrial Revolution on Ethics in the Public Sector** 1  
*Maria Bordas*

- Measuring of Intellectual Capital on Company's Value** 17  
*Hanifah, Mujannah, Erini Junita Sari, Marisa Putri*

### Theoretical Investigation

- Does Rationality Really Work in Bureaucratic Organizations? A Critical Juncture Perspective** 24  
*Bojindra Prasad Tulachan, Gi-Cheon Park*

### Government and Democracy

- A Spirited Run-Up to the 2023 Zimbabwe General Elections: Twitter-Induced Momentum for Voter Registration Campaigns, Voting and Opposition Politics Dilemmas** 31  
*Tapiwanashe Hadzizi*



# Challenges of Fourth Industrial Revolution on Ethics in the Public Sector

Maria Bordas

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The Fourth Industrial Revolution represents a fundamental change in the way we live, work, and relate to one another. It is a new chapter in human development, enabled by extraordinary technology advances commensurate with those of the first, second, and third industrial revolutions. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, or Industry 4.0, conceptualizes rapid change to technology, industries, and societal patterns and processes in the 21st century due to increasing interconnectivity and smart automation. Moreover, the new IT technology such Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and wide usage of internet (leading elements of so-called “Fourth Industrial Revolution”), increased efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in the field of public sector and public administration. Social media have changed and are changing the world, and more importantly, will influence in the future too. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is about more than just technology-driven change; it is an opportunity to help everyone, including leaders, policy-makers, and people from all income groups and nations, to harness converging technologies in order to create an inclusive, human-centered future. The real opportunity is to look beyond technology and find ways to give the greatest number of people the ability to positively impact their families, organizations, and communities. However, the Fourth Industrial Revolution largely presents numerous challenges to public administration in developing countries that lack enough human and material resources to execute the ensuing huge technological advancements. We have acknowledged that the 4IR has different challenges such economic, social, political, and organizational. The fast and major technological changes offer the chance to improve human life, but they also create concerns about the future. One of the biggest fears related to the new technologies is that the robots and the artificial intelligence will replace the human factor in work leading to the “technological unemployment” even the field of public administration. This research is trying to analyze and give some answer to above mentioned issues.

*Keywords:* Fourth Industrial revolution, social media, public administration

## Introduction

This paper aims to shed light on the unethical issues in public administration which emerged due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) during the last decades.

Four forms of industrial revolutions evolved during the last two centuries: The first one introduced the steam engine, the second one the mass industrialization, the third one had been known as the digital revolution, and the fourth one had been the 4IR. In the focus of 4IR, we can find the Internet of Things (IoT). Relevance of

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the IoT is that during the last decades Internet that became a network and is used every day in a growing manner is sufficiently influencing the life of citizens, e.g., smart cities, robotics, Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI). These fields of the IoT mean the 4IR.

At the beginning of the second millennium, information, and communication technologies, such as smartphones, e.g., dramatically changed the world. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media networks as a new type of media and smartphone technology have changed interpersonal interaction, communication patterns, and social and political discussions. The academics of political science, sociology, international relation, media, and communication have conducted hundreds of studies on various aspects of social media usage (Golan, Arceneaux, & Soule, 2019).

It is well beyond dispute the fact that the Internet is playing an unavoidable role in providing information to the public on homeland political events and the international political arena.

Moreover, the Internet is attracting net users into political life and encouraging them to get involved in political activities.

4IR has had an impact on the economy and society by reshaping all industries, such as production, consumption, transportation, and delivery of services. Citizens can have access to more efficient public services by using e-Government, e.g., in the form of smart cities, that can reach to less consumption of energy and water supply in their home, or electronic case management, when citizens can arrange their administrative cases from home, can get health care services and education on lower prices and on better quality, promote transparency and accountability in the field of state contract and public procurement, and improve communication between citizens and government, etc.

In the developed countries the governments have made effort to give a better life for citizens by using 4IR, which, however, has had certain challenges, as well. One of them is unethical issues in the public sector.

The Internet has become vital for political discussions and political participation. In the beginning, the Internet was used as a one-way communication tool for political parties to inform the public through their websites. In developing countries, especially in Africa, access to the Internet is supported by satellite technology which can overbridge the weaknesses of infrastructure on the field. As a side effect of the pandemic COVID-19, millions of people using the Internet have put pressure on broadband networks.

This paper will examine first, how the 4IR helps the development of ethics in the public sector, in the field of politics, public governance, and public administration, e.g., management of election campaign, better communication with the voters, more efficient public services, administrative case management, transparency, counter-terrorism, etc.

In the second part of this paper the forms of unethical behaviour in the public sector, because of 4IR, will be explored, e.g., using the Internet by the governments to hinder citizens for political goals, intervening in internal matters of other countries for political aims, manipulating voters during election campaigns, using personal sensitive data to attack political enemies, growing state-corruption, etc.

### **Development of the Forth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is growing out of the third but is considered as a new era rather than a continuation because of the explosiveness of its development and the disruptiveness of its technologies. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is the current and developing environment in which disruptive technologies and

trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are changing the way modern people live and work.<sup>1</sup>

In this case, disruptiveness means that the disruptive technology is one that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry or a ground-breaking. The Internet of Things, or IoT, is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines.

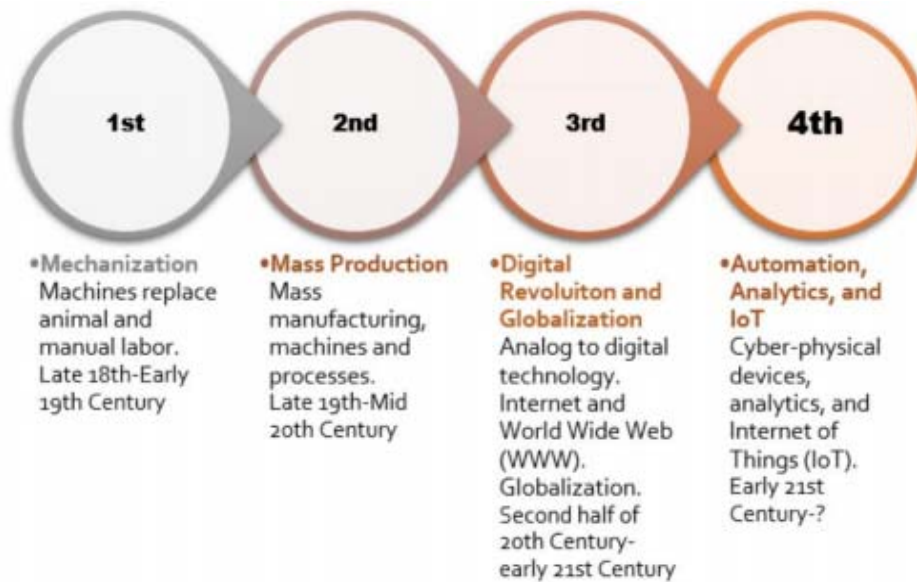


Figure 1. Industrial revolutions (Shank, 2016).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution represents a fundamental change in the way we are living, job, and relate to one another. It is a new chapter in human development, enabled by extraordinary technological advances commensurate with those of the first, second, and third industrial revolutions.

These advances are merging the physical, digital, and biological technology in ways that create both huge promises but at the same time potential insecurity and menace.

Specific technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution include, but are not limited to:

- artificial intelligence;
- Internet of Things;
- robotics;
- Virtual Reality;
- mobile devices;
- 3D printing;
- smart sensors;
- big data/analytics;
- augmented reality (AR);

<sup>1</sup> First used the expression of Forth Industrial Revolution by Klaus Martin Schwab (German engineer and economist best known as the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum) in 2016. He determined the Forth Industrial Revolution as “The Forth Industrial Revolution is the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. Large-scale machine-to-machine communication (M2M) and the internet of things (IoT) are integrated for increased automation, improved communication and self-monitoring, and production of smart machines that can analyze and diagnose issues without the need for human intervention”.



- data visualization;
- cognitive computing;
- location detection;
- customer profiling;
- blockchain;
- quantum computing;
- cloud computing.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is about more than just technology-driven change. It is also an opportunity to help everyone, including leaders, stock-holders, and ordinary people from all income groups and nations to harness converging technologies to create an inclusive, human-focused future. The real opportunity is to look beyond technology and find ways to give the greatest number of people the ability to positively impact their families, different business organizations, public administrative elements, and communities.

In the developed countries the governments have made effort to give a better life for the citizens by using 4IR, e.g., the IoT, smart cities, administrative case management based on e-Government, more efficient public services, such as energy and water supply, education, healthcare, etc. The 4IR has led to a more democratic government with strengthening transparency, accountability, and better communication with the citizens.

Of this total, 92.6 percent (4.32 billion) accessed the Internet via mobile devices and 4.1 billion are active social media users.

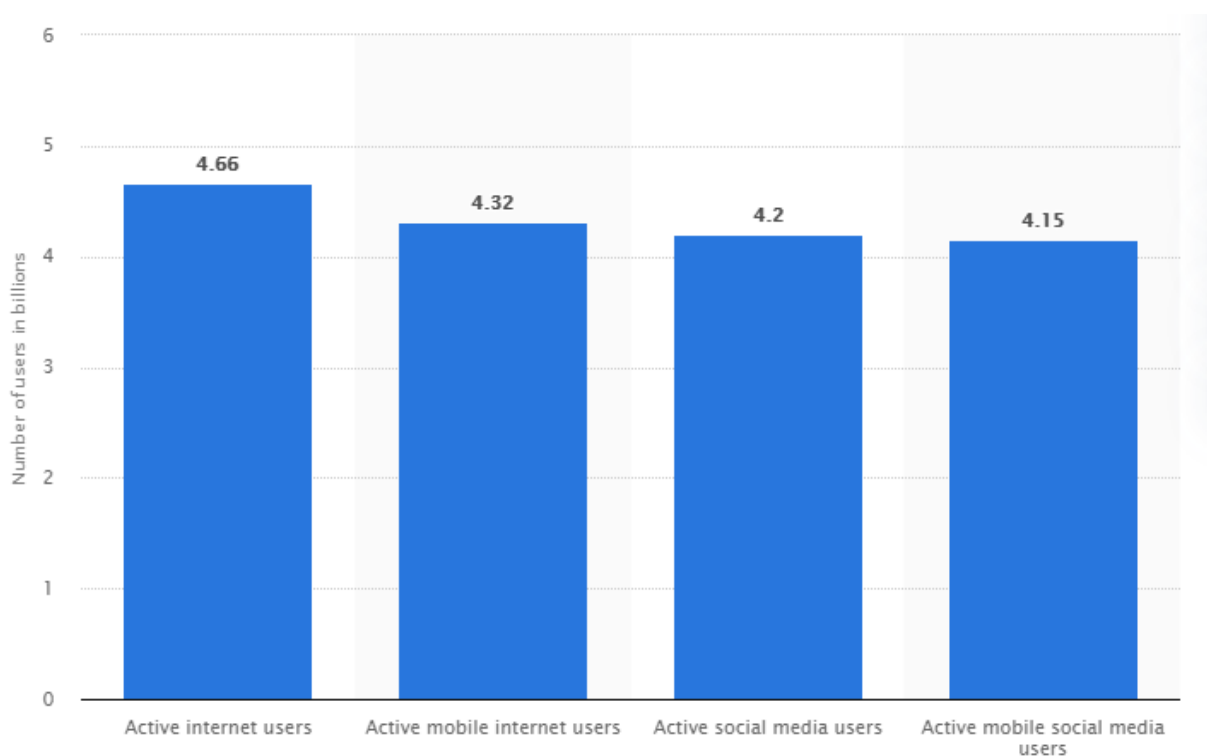
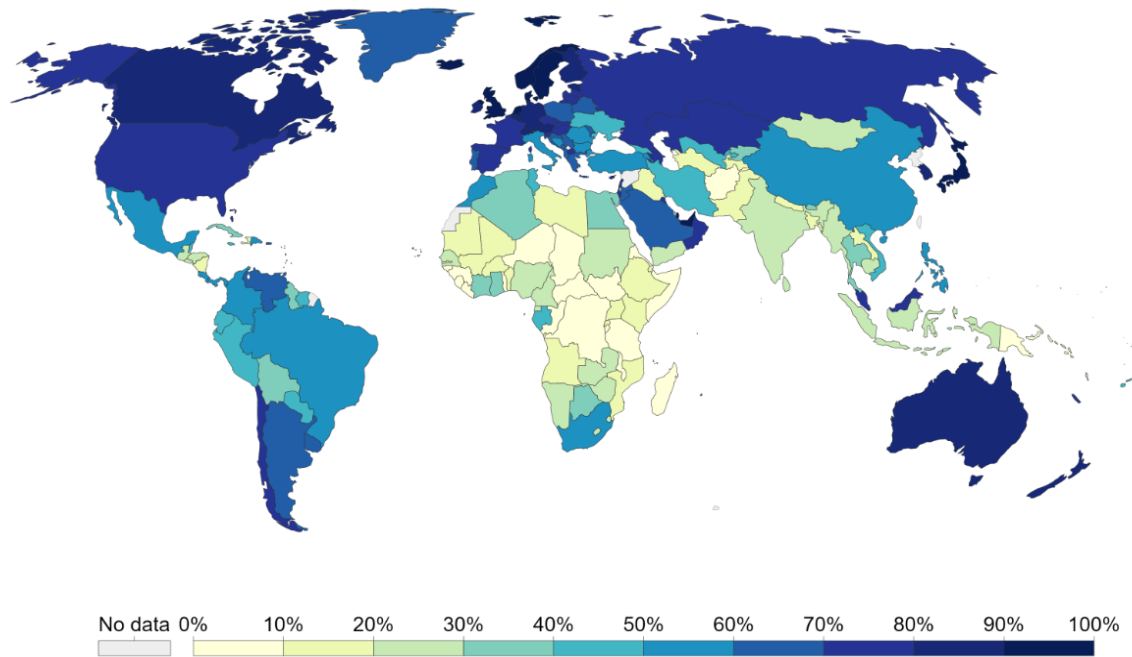


Figure 2. Global digital population as of January 2021 (in billions) (Statista, n.d.).

Some important challenges remain, however, and there is still work to do to ensure that everyone around the world has fair and equal access to life-changing digital connectivity.

Unfortunately, access to the Internet is far equal for all people (See Figure 3).



Source: World Bank

OurWorldInData.org/technology-adoption/ • CC BY

Figure 3. Share of global population using the Internet (Our World in Data, n.d.).

The map shows the share of the population that is accessing the Internet for all countries of the world. Internet users are individuals who have used the Internet (from any location) in the last three months. The Internet can be used via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV etc.

In richer countries, more than two-thirds of the population are typically online. And although usage rates are much lower in the developing world, they are increasing.

China and India take the top two slots despite having only 50 and 26 percent online, respectively. The top six countries by users (and the only countries with over 100 million) in 2016/2017 were:

1. China = 765 million;
2. India = 391 million;
3. The United States = 245 million;
4. Brazil = 126 million;
5. Japan = 116 million;
6. Russia = 109 million.

Unfortunately, the 4IR has risks as well, which especially has challenges for developing countries. One of the risks is related to eventual rising of joblessness.

Africa is a major producer of many key mineral commodities, with bountiful reserves of metals and minerals such as gold, diamond, cobalt, bauxite, iron ore, coal, and copper across the continent. Some of the major mining countries in Africa are the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. In South Africa, around half a million workers are employed by the mining industry. If we are taking into count the possible full automatization of the mining industry, we could understand the size of the problem in the black continent.

New technologies threaten to strengthen and extend the already existing inequalities internally i.e., within the country and between countries. The 4IR has had certain other challenges, as well. One of them is the unethical issues in the public sector. Secondly, 52% of Africans covered by mobile broadband do not use it, mainly because of its high cost (Velluet, 2021).

That digital, mobile, and social media have become an indispensable part of everyday life for people all over the world. More than 4.5 billion people now use the Internet, while social media users have passed the 3.8 billion people. Nearly 60 percent of the world's population is already online (Kemp, 2021), and the latest trends suggest that more than half of the world's total population will use social media by the middle of this year.

### The Social Media's Influence on the Political Processes

Facebook, currently the largest and dominating social media platform in the world, has 2.4 billion users. Other social media platforms including YouTube and WhatsApp also have more than one billion users each.

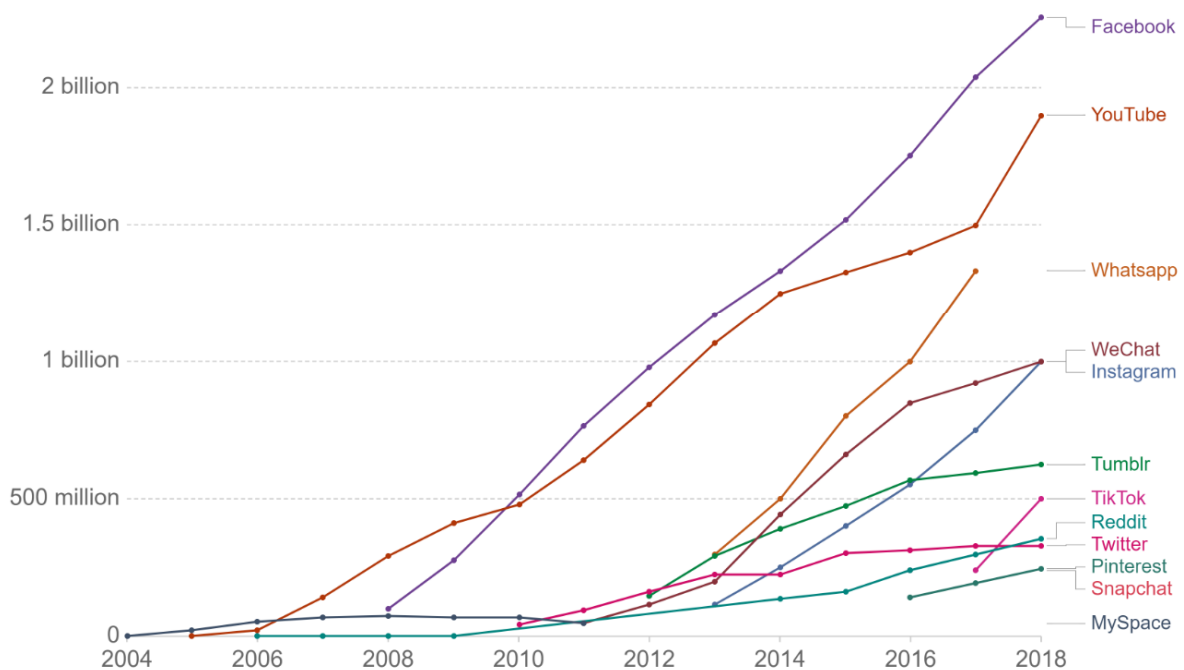
These numbers are huge—there are 7.8 billion people in the world, and almost half of it, 3.5 billion are online. This means social media platforms are used by one in three people in the world, and more than two-thirds of all Internet users.

Social media have changed and are changing the world, and more importantly, will influence in the future too. Facebook became a world power (See Figure 4). YouTube is also extremely popular.

The rapid and vast adoption of these technologies is changing how we find partners, how we access information from the news, and how we organize demand to political change.

#### Number of people using social media platforms, 2004 to 2018

Estimates correspond to monthly active users (MAUs). Facebook, for example, measures MAUs as users that have logged in during the past 30 days. See source for more details.



Source: Statista and TNW (2019)

CC BY

Figure 4. Number of people using social media platforms (Our World in Data, n.d.).

Following questions arise: Who uses social media? When did the rise of social media start and what are the largest sites today? Here we answer these and other key questions to understand social media usage around the world.

We begin with an outline of key trends and conclude with a perspective on the rate of adoption of social media relative to other modern communication technologies.

Social media's rate of growth in the US and other western countries, even in China and India is unimaginably high—in speed and to some extent also in reach—to that of most modern communication-enabling technologies, including computers, smartphones, and the Internet.

The rise of social media is an extraordinary example of how quickly and drastically social behaviours can change: Something that is today part of the everyday life of one-third of the world population was unthinkable less than a generation ago.

Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, WeChat, and Instagram are the top five social media platforms globally, with over one billion active users each. In the wealthiest countries, the proportion of young people using online social networks exceeds 90% and teens spend on average more than four hours online every day.

Fast changes like those brought about by social media always spark fears about possible negative effects. Specifically, in the context of social media, a key question is whether these new communication technologies are harming political and social issues.

In democratic countries with a sufficient system of checks and balances, the government is hindered to use social media for unfair political aims, such as spreading fake news about political rivals, expropriating online media for election campaigns, suppressing political programs of the opposite political side, etc. Never have such high-powered propaganda tools deployed in society.

Social media in well-functioning democracies can serve a better communication between the government and citizens, either in the political competition or in the decision-making processes of the government in certain issues, such as climate change, immigration policy, etc.

However, some autocratic governments, e.g., Russia or China, limit the access of citizens to the IoT to spread their one-sided approach, and to influence them. Hence, the citizens do not receive objective information; public opinion will be manipulated.

Autocratic governments often intervene in the political processes of other countries, too, e.g., Russia, by using social media.

The rights to keep sensitive data of individuals, e.g., religion, political view, race, etc., are often violated, when governments collect and use these data for their aims, e.g., to politically influence the citizens.

Social media in fragile states are often used to organize street demonstrations, riots, or revolutions against the government to fight for a more democratic and just society. This led e.g., to the development of the Arab Spring in the Islamic World.

In the events of Arab Spring, a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests in the Middle East and North Africa between 2010 and 2012, social media such as Facebook and Twitter played a significant role in facilitating communication and interaction among participants of political protests (Stepanova, 2011).

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of 4IR in the Political Sphere**

In democratic countries with a sufficient system of checks and balances, the government is hindered to use social media for unfair political aims, such as spreading fake news about political rivals, expropriating online

media for election campaigns, suppressing political programs of the opposite political side, etc. Social media in well-functioning democracies can serve a better communication between the government and citizens, either in the political competition or in the decision-making processes of the government in certain issues, such as climate change, immigration policy, etc.

People can express their opinion about public matters more easily, than by voting in the election, or public hearing to be held by a Member of Parliament (MP). People, in this way, feel more and more that their opinion counts in the political processes.

As disadvantageous effects of social media on politics should be noted when people form a social media group, e.g., in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., with those who are thinking in the same way but do not read good quality newspapers or watch political analyses or reports in the TV channels.

These phenomena do not encourage people to have other information than in their social media group, and they will not have information from other aspects, so, their political standpoints become on-sided. In worse cases, the so-called fake news and conspiracy theories spread dramatically in this way.

Just let's think of the evolvement of the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 all over the world, how many conspiracy theories spread in the social media about China or American billionaires who intentionally wanted to attack the West in this way or kill in quantities, elderly people. Fake news in social media announced that vaccines against COVID-19 are poisoned, aimed to kill people by conspirators. It has resulted that a significant part of the population in the countries is against the vaccines and challenges the governments in this way.

Those who did not get on vaccines hindered dissolving quarantines making the life of those who have already got on vaccines hard, and furthermore, promoted mutation of COVID-19 virus. This circumstance has led to further problems, such as the overwhelming health care system which cannot provide sufficient health care services for those who need them but are not with COVID-19.

It became urgent to liven up the slowed-down economy, which was the result of restrictions ordered by the governments because of the COVID-19.

Many lost their jobs, or many firms went to bankruptcy; consequently, the governments had to the fact of the growing number of unemployed. Governments were hesitating for a long time if to introduce law enforcement means, such as obligating people to get on vaccines, prohibiting people not getting on vaccines to enter public places, such as public transport, restaurants, movies, theatres, sports events, etc., or, obligating people who do not want to get on vaccines to pay for their health treatment related to COVID-19, pay higher insurance fees for this, or not to work, but stay at home.

Introducing these measurements means a political loss for the governments, but they are even forced to do because of public interest, such as to end spreading COVID-19, dissolving restrictions, giving jobs and income again for the people, stabilizing the health care system, restoring regular operation of the economy, etc.

In Hungary the government bought vaccines from China and Russia to have an even better political relationship with these two countries. These vaccines were not, however, approved by the Pharmaceutical Agency of the European Union, and the Hungarian government did not give sufficient information about these vaccines to the citizens. The opposition media revealed that the Chinese vaccine was not for the elderly above 60, because it did not give immunity for these people. This further pushed people to spread conspiracy theories in the social media why to be against vaccines.

The internet-based form of communications in crisis affected countries is often used as a platform for organizing public demonstrations. Social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information,

and create web content in real time. This is a reason why the demonstrations, riots in Iran 2009-2010, and revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt got nickname of “Twitter Revolution” too.

It is especially important for the people to express their opinion in this way in autocracies and dictatorships, where certain human rights, such as freedom of speech, or the right to assembly are limited.

Another example can be mentioned in Hungary when social media had an important role to give sufficient information to people in an important public matter in an autocratic government system, where there is no access to public data.

It is already well-known that autocratic regimes like Turkey, Russia, and China, limit the access to internet. Russia after the invasion to Ukraine applied very strict regime against free social media and internet usage.

### **Using IoT by the Government to Manipulate Voters**

Governments can inform citizens by the Internet about public goals, their difficulties how to implement them, their results, etc., on the homepage of public authorities. Social media have changed this tradition of the Obama government that was established in the framework of the cloud computing project.

The government can establish a website, where citizens can ask about public matters, and give relevant information to their questions, e.g., about climate change, immigration, COVID virus, etc. Also, the citizen can write their opinion to the government about these issues. Based on the citizens’ questions, opinions, comments, governments can see if a proposed governmental decision is supported by most of the citizens, or not. Governments can easier and faster make conclusions in this way than to hold an expensive referendum.

Using IoT can serve transparency and accountability, when governments inform people about its operation, such as public tenders, its procedures, winners, or about the state budget, or local government budget.

The practices of the governments can strengthen democracy in the way of transparency, availability of public data, increase of accountability, better communication.

The other result of the cloud computing project introduced by the Obama government was the e-Government when citizens can arrange their administrative cases from home or in a public house, where everybody has access to the Internet. E-Government made public administration spectacularly efficient because citizens did not have to go to the public authority personally and stood in a long queue for a long time; also, business firms could decrease their costs in this way. In other words, e-Government using IoT can serve good governance, i.e., a more democratic political system, where the checks and balances system sufficiently work.

### **Misusing IoT by Governments to Manipulate Voters During Election Campaigns**

Using IoT evidently has several positive impacts on governance, but during the last decade, it has been a practice of populist governments to misuse and manipulate people and win elections.

It was Donald Trump in the United States that condemned the media accusing it of being biased, and began to inform the public about his ideas and thoughts by short messages using Twitter. This new habit of Donald Trump led to a practice in which he spread fake news to the public without any limitation or check. During the siege of the Capitolium in Washington D.C., in 2021, Donald Trump encouraged people to break into the building to fight for nullification of the election he considered falsified. His Twitter was blocked by the provider. This case shows that social media have not been under sufficient control, but it can spread fake news without any limitation.

When politicians and high-level government officials write fake news in their Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, only the Internet provider can block these messages. It is the case even if Mark Zuckerberg the owner of Facebook was summoned in 2016 to the Congress of the United State to explain what measures he took to eliminate misuse of Facebook. Moreover, in the same year, Mark Zuckerberg apologized to EU lawmakers on Tuesday, saying the company had not done enough to prevent misuse of the social network and that regulation is “important and inevitable”. (It is well-known that in April 2018, the data-mining company Cambridge Analytica was able to harvest 87 million users whose personal information was accessed by a political consultancy that worked for Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.)

The other form of misusing IoT by politics is to spread fake news about political rivals, especially during election campaigns. The only way to defend from this is to sue those who wrote libels, but it takes time because legal procedures are long, longer than the election campaign that results from the election.

In dictatorships misuses of IoT are even much harsher than in democratic states. In Russia, e.g., special state-run clandestine institutions (it is in Saint Petersburg in Russia) established by the Russian government hire well-paid youth who speak foreign languages and spread fake news under false names of social media in Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, about political candidates of election campaigns, who they do not want to win.

It had been proved by the CIA and the FBI in the United States that Russia intervened in the American election campaign in this way.

It was also revealed by the CIA and FBI that in 2006 the Russian government sent agents with falsified documents, e.g., passport, ID card, to the USA who opened Facebook as American citizens and especially in the competitive, disputed electoral districts (where the fight between presidential candidates seemed to be especially harsh), they spread fake news by joining social media communities, about Hilary Clinton who was the challenging presidential candidate of Donald Trump.

There has been a special Russian “invention”, the so-called “kompromat”, when the Russian government creates cases with the help of the agents of FSB (Russian Intelligence Service) or GRU (Russian Military Intelligence Service) to dox political enemies, especially during the election campaign.

This kind of “kompromat” has already appeared in Hungary in January 2022: Russia is politically interested in the winning of the recent governing party, the FIDESZ, organized by the FSB a case in which they provoked a conversation between businessmen close to the opposition parties and former officials of the Mayor’s Office, and intercepted it. Later, this recorded conversation was manipulated and reported on social media by an unknown man, “Anonymous”<sup>2</sup> whose face was covered by a hood. The aim of this “kompromat” was to discredit the mayor of the capital, Budapest, who is a leading politician of the alliance of opposition, which is the united opposition parties that have challenged the governing party, the FIDESZ in the election of 2022. The Mayor’s Office set up an ad hoc investigation committee to investigate the case, then it concluded it was a “kompromat” organized by the Russian intelligence service, the FSB, and this “kompromat” has been ordered by the Orban’s FIDESZ (Imre, 2021).

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<sup>2</sup> Originally, “Anonymous” is a name of a decentralized international activist/hacktivist collective and movement widely known for its various cyberattacks against several governments, government institutions and government agencies, corporations, and the Church of Scientology already active from 2003. In Hungary, a FIDESZ guided Anonymous started to distribute some fake news for discrediting the opposition-led city council in Budapest in 2021. The real name of “FIDESZ Anonymous” up to now is unknown.

To reveal corruption cases and discrediting issues of the private life of politicians happened in another election campaign, too, i.e., in 2009 before the local government election. The “attorney-law of the devil” through the Internet (from an unknown website) revealed that a mayor of a Hungarian city participated in a sex-party with prostitutes in a yacht in the Adriatic sea. It was of course the violation of sensitive personal data, which is regulated as a crime by the Criminal Code, but the criminal investigating authorities could not find the persons who created this unknown website.

In Hungary, the recent government spreads its government propaganda by its media empire, e.g., the so-called Soros’ plan (Bauchamp, 2018)<sup>3</sup>, or the immigrant danger (Gorondi, 2019), and can successfully brainwash people. It is one of the reasons why the recent government could win the elections of 2014 and 2018: the government suppressed the opposition media step by step during the last 12 years, after they first had won the election with 2/3 majority, and did it by buying opposition newspapers, or withdrew licenses of Radio and TV channels. As a reaction to this media monopolization of the government, it has been a practice during the last decade that the opposition established online journals or broadcast on YouTube which cannot be quitted in any way.

A new phenomenon from the side of the Hungarian government is to use social media for this aim. An apparently independent non-profit organization was established at the beginning of 2022, to which a huge amount of money, more billions HUF was transferred by the government. This newly established non-profit organization, similar to the Russian “know-how”, hires many people to open Facebook, and spread government propaganda or fake news about opposition politicians, or it uses algorithms to manipulate users of social media by messages (Tibor, 2021).

Dictatorships, such as North-Korea, China, Russia quit the Internet, or limit its use by screening news, to hinder people to get objective information, and can prevent social unrest, street demonstrations, or riots.

### **Using 4IR Against State-Corruption**

E-Government can successfully prevent state corruption. If the government is obligated to publish public data about its operation, such as public procurements, state contracts, public money, salaries, and assets of politicians and public servants, corruption cases can be easily revealed. Its goal is to hinder state corruption with increasing accountability of politicians and public servants.

However, if the government is reluctant to provide public data when it is asked, the only opportunity is to sue the government. These forms are as follows: They do not send it electronically, but only copy the documents for extremely high fee. They select among the data, and do not submit the full documents, or delete some part of the document. Government often declares data asked from them to publish as a state secret for many decades to hide the information in this way. Court will decide these cases, and obligate government to publish public data. It on one hand is a long legal procedure; on the other hand, if the jurisdiction’s independency has been violated by the government, these legal cases will not be efficient to have access public data. This had been happening in Hungary since 2010, when the recent government won the election for the first time.

Hungary has been ceased to be a free country. Concerning the Bill on Protection Against Coronavirus, the Political Capital Institute stated that: “The remaining checks and balances in Hungary will cease to exist and

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<sup>3</sup> The Orban government between 2015 and 2017 launched a hysteria campaign against George Soros Hungarian origin US billionaire, former FIDESZ supporter because he wanted an open sociality in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the FIDESZ passed the so-called “Stop Soros” law.



the country will likely witness a new wave of attacks against the free press". Some political analysts already some years stated that Hungary is not a democracy anymore but has been a so-called "illiberal democracy" with increasing autocratic feature (Szekeres, 2020). Hungary, according to the report of the Transparency International, has fallen to the worst place on the rank of state corruption of the member-states of the European Union. State corruption has been extremely high here: European Union sources disappear to the oligarchs of the governing party, or the friend and family members of the Prime Minister, Orbán.

OLAF, the investigation organization of the European Union, has already revealed several corruption cases that misuse EU funds, but the OLAF does not have the right to intervene in criminal procedures in member states, but only can report to the state attorney, who, in Hungary, is unwilling to open a criminal procedure the oligarchs and family members of the prime minister. Hungary has, in this way, become a hotbed of state corruption. Investigative journalists can successfully reveal these corruption cases of the government in Hungary, and publish them on social media, or, in YouTube, but only rarely with criminal consequences.

The non-democratic government often uses cyberattacks against state authorities, or high-level politicians to acquire sensitive information. In the American election campaign of 2006, the Russian government's agents broke up the email of Hilary Clinton, the presidential candidate to discredit her with what she wrote in her correspondence. The same happened to President Trump's children, who negotiated with a Russian attorney who offered them compromising information about Hilary Clinton. This latter case could not influence the election of 2006, because it turned out only after the election, but led to constitutional impeachment against President Trump.

### **Problems of Sensitive Data and the 4IR**

In democratic states, there must be an act on protecting personal data, especially sensitive data, such as race, political view, religious issues, health condition, criminal procedures, etc. The law on protecting personal data does not allow to publish personal data, or, to give it to unauthorized persons, or organizations.

To acquire personal data can happen in two illegal ways: In one case hackers break up the Internet system of a public authority, banks, or data of private users of the Internet. Sensitive personal data can be used against political enemies to discredit them. These cases cannot be revealed by criminal investigating means, due to the unknown website from where these data are spread in social media. The scandal of Pandora Papers in 2020 revealed the offshore bank accounts of leading politicians all over the world. In most cases of the last years, it is not known who the perpetrator was, not as in the case of Edward Snowden, or Julianne Assange? In 2021 the so-called Pandora Papers, the unprecedented leak of documents reveals the real owners of more than 29,000 offshore companies having a size of almost 3 TB (Ahmed, 2021). Millions of leaked documents and the biggest journalism partnership in history have uncovered financial secrets of 35 current and former world leaders, more than 330 politicians and public officials in 91 countries and territories, and a global line-up of fugitives, con artists, and murderers.

The PEGASUS scandal broke out in 2021 and revealed that governments bought spy software from an Israeli business firm to acquire information about journalists, politicians from their cell phones and email; however, the Israeli business firm stipulated in the sales contract that the spy software can be used only against terrorist to reveal their terrorist activities or organized crimes.

Countries are also developing new methods for data development and sharing such as the "World Statistics Cloud" that aims at improving the quality of information and reducing the costs of producing public data. In

public procurement, data mining is being used for auditing in order to monitor when governments are issuing bids and to identify red flags, patterns of collusion, and false information. Researchers at the Corruption Research Center Budapest have examined huge volumes of data sets of public procurement procedures from EU countries by searching for abnormal patterns such as exceptionally short bidding periods or unusual outcomes (e.g., no competition for the winning bid, or bids repeatedly won by the same company).

By going paperless, the governments can also tackle corruption and eliminate red tape. For example, in January 2019, Argentina became a paperless government, with the full digitalization of public administrative procedures. They also started to introduce the digital identity for all citizens, and they expanded the digital services. Artificial intelligence and predictive analytics are also potent tools for tax authorities and customs agencies to detect and deter tax evasion. Second, reformers in government can leverage new technologies to reduce the discretion that unscrupulous bureaucrats abuse to extract bribes, for instance in the processing of permits and licenses. The automation of bureaucratic processes reduces vulnerabilities to human fiddling.

There are numerous countries applying the technology of 4IR, where the leadership is trying to have more efficient public administration and governmental bureaucracies to make government leaner and smarter.

4IR to make public administration more efficient:

- Cloud computing by the Obama government;
- Against long queue and long wait: The client can arrange his or her administrative cases from home in a quick and flexible way. They can pay administrative fee, too, by an electronic finance system of the state budget, which is connected to cell phone or Internet;
- Poor people can use e-Government in public houses;
- Consumer can save energy (heating or lighting) in their homes by using smart applications;
- E-health services: Patients can get information of their examination, medical findings, lab diagnostic, from health institution via internet, and smart watch on old and sick people sends information to doctors from their homes, e-receipt;
- Home office during the pandemic.

Using IoT in the fragile states:

Unfortunately, we should recognize that the Internet can also be exploited by terrorists. While the many benefits of the Internet are self-evident, it may also be used to facilitate communication within terrorist organizations and to transmit information on, as well as material support for, planned acts of terrorism.

The Internet can be used for the glorification of terrorist acts, incitement to commit acts of terrorism, radicalization, and recruitment of terrorists, dissemination of illegal content, facilitating communication between terrorist actors, and the training of potential recruits. For example, the 9/11 actors used the Internet to collect information such as flight times; to communicate reliably and in real-time among themselves and with terrorist cells; to share information and coordinate their attacks, steal social security numbers, and obtain fake drivers' licenses. Moreover, the leader of the 9/11 attacks, Mohamed Atta, went online from Hamburg, Germany, to attend U.S. flight schools.

Despite the heinous nature of terrorist acts, alleged terrorists should be afforded the same procedural safeguards under criminal law as any other suspects. It is extremely difficult to determine the borderline between the expression of opinion (part of the basic human rights) and advertising terrorism (which is already a breach of criminal law).

Fragile states are safe heavens for the terrorist groups, because there is no public security, due to the lack of strong and efficient police and military, especially, when the country is full of a high rocky mountains, like Afghanistan, deserts, like Libya, or jungles, like Somalia. In the uncontrolled state borders, like in the countries of the Sahel in Africa, or in the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the Pashtun area, terrorists can easily change their basis, when they are in danger.

Terrorist groups can use the IoT for their aims:

- Terrorist leaders can give speech using the Internet from their hiding-place, how for example Osama bin Laden, or his successor, Ayman al-Zawahiri did it several times, announcing their aims of global jihad, or comment the situation in the Syrian and Iraqi war.

- When Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the former leader of the Islamic State (ISIS), claimed in Mosul in 2015? To be the caliph of the Islamic States (ISIS), it was announced by the Internet so that all over the world know it.

- The Islamic States made the best homepage for itself to advertise its terrorist activities and the life of the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, also, to recruit men to be the warrior of the Islamic State (ISIS), and young girls to be a wife of these warriors. Many warriors of the terrorist organizations from the Islamic world went there and joined the Islamic State (ISIS). Even more, it was so attractive for the young people in western countries who saw a good adventure in it that many two or third-generation young Muslims, or even Christians went from the developed countries of the European Union to join the Islamic State (ISIS).

- The Islamic State (ISIS) can successfully influence the two or third-generation young Muslims, who have problems with the integration into the western societies, and consequently, have an identity crisis, to radicalize and become a follower of the global jihad. Most of the perpetrators of the suicide terrorist attacks in western European countries, like France, Belgium, and Germany, in the last years, were from these so-called “lone wolves”.

Terrorists, however, do not use IoT in many cases to avoid being killed by combat drones but keep connection personally. Al-Kuwaiti, the messenger of Osama bin Laden, delivered messages to bin Laden personally to his house in Abbottabad. It took 10 years for the CIA to find this messenger, and through him, bin-Laden themselves.

Terrorists can successfully use the IoT to acquire security numbers, driving licenses, ID cards to have a false identity, like as happened in the case of 9/11. Israel developed the PEGASUS spy application (see above), by which they can intercept talks of the terrorists, or other devices by which they can target them with combat drones.

### **Conclusion**

Major technological achievements as the Artificial Intelligence (AI) may imply significant public policy issues. As electricity and other technical development did in the past, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming our world today. There is no question that the potential to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) for positive change is enormous. On the other hand, government officials and political leaders cannot manage it alone. A task of this magnitude requires start-ups, medium, and large companies, and civil society—an entire GovTech ecosystem—function together to develop innovative solutions and improve outcomes. However, it is not only the ability of governments to be adapted to the new conditions. There are also severe social problems that may get bigger due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution making policy intervention extremely crucial.

It has been evident that openness and transparency is the best way to prevent corruption in the public sector because it makes state officials be more accountable for their decisions. In democratic governments, the IoT makes it an option for the citizens to have more information about government authorities.

However, what is working in the business world is not necessarily working in the public administration.

Nevertheless, if the government tries to hinder this right of citizens, e.g., with bureaucratic legal regulations, or forcing them to sue government authorities before the courts to give the data they asked, or if the government attacks those politicians, non-profit organizations, and journalists who reveal their corruption cases, these unfair attitudes of governments together with the insufficient operation of controlling authorities can easily lead to the hotbed of state corruption.

Advances in technology have led to unprecedented, rapid access to vast amounts of data on societies, the economy, and the environment. To keep up with this, governments, organizations, and citizens are in a new state of experimentation, innovation, and adaptation. The “data revolution”, which refers to both quantities of data now available and technological innovation, has the potential to tackle key issues in society including corruption.

Traditionally it has been difficult to expose corruption due to large quantities of data. However, digitalism and the popularity of big data have led to new data management techniques to prevent fraud and abuse in the public sector. In underdeveloped countries, especially in some African countries, rapidly improving access to electricity should be a key policy priority. Governments should view energy security as a function of investment in renewables and the foundation for future growth.

The proliferation of technology of 4IR (big data for capturing, data mining for detecting, mobile applications for increasing accessibility, and forensic tools for reducing opportunities for corruption) has the potential to create unparalleled opportunities for transparency and anti-corruption. However, technology is not a quick fix or fast solution because of the need for financial investment into the public administrative sector, plus the need for an adaptation to new technology.

The technology of 4IR has become transparency’s greatest ally to anchor integrity in the public sector. Coupled with political resolve, the digital revolution can disrupt corruption in ways we never imagined possible.

Several countries are trying to streamline their bureaucracies to make government leaner and smarter. This is no small challenge, as it requires a shift in mindsets for bureaucracies to serve citizens, rather than the other way around.

The emergence of GovTech start-ups is allowing new forms of co-creation of public administrative services, especially at the local level. These smaller, more agile companies are starting to make an impact, advancing new solutions to old ways of doing things. The GovTech applications are also helping to transform government and, in some cases, challenging the state’s monopoly over the delivery of services. For example, they provide a cost-effective solution to data-analytics-as-a-service to governments that are struggling to recruit data science teams. Unfortunately, the technology of the Fourth Industrial Revolution has a double face. The phenomena of global terrorism and organized crime can emerge due to highly advanced technology which can cause slavery of children and other vulnerable groups of people in communities due to unscrupulous fortune promising online platforms. It is argued here that all governments need to be ready to adapt to the challenges represented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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# Measuring of Intellectual Capital on Company's Value

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Intellectual capital (IC) can help companies achieve their goals, especially in terms of performance improvement, by evaluating their employees through their creativity, ideas, and analytical skills. This becomes a must for the company so that unique resources and character can be managed properly to achieve maximum company value. The researcher selects a sample of research consisting of banking companies listed in 2018-2020. Based on sample selection criteria, 45 company samples were obtained. The results of the study showed that: (1) The intellectual capital did not affect profitability, (2) the intellectual capital affected firm value, (3) the ROA did not affect firm value, and (4) intellectual capital affected the value of the company through ROA as intervening variable.

*Keywords:* intellectual capital, company's value, profitability

## Introduction

The existence of the ASEAN economic community (AA) in 2015 is one of the phenomena that has encouraged the era of openness to the business world through innovation with a global way of thinking to compete amid the fierce competition of business today. The resource-based theory is defined as the assets, organizational processes, attributes of the company, and the knowledge controlled by the company used to be able to understand and apply its strategy in achieving excellence in free competition (Penrose, 1959). The company benefits from the attractiveness of investors to the company's investments, so that it can provide value-added and will affect the company's performance (Pulic & Kolakovic, 2003). Companies want to better evaluate the ability of knowledge, the creativity of employees, ideas, and analytic abilities through intellectual capital (IC) (Horibe, 1999). The rise of the era of knowledge-based economy, and technology, requires companies to use their intellectual power as much as possible rather than physical ones to achieve corporate value goals. Pulic (1998) measures to assess value-added efficiency as a result of the intellectual coefficient of intellectual value-added enterprise—VAIC™ (Value Added of Intellectual Capital). VAIC™ is a tool used to measure a company's intellectual capital performance.

Traditional companies fail to capture IC in disclosing financial statements because they are unable to maximize the company's value-added. The researcher used the company's value using the Tobin q ratio. When the company gets maximum profitability, it will have an impact on increasing the value of the company (Pulic,

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1998). Banking companies were selected as a sample of research because they are companies that are dense in intellectual wealth (Ulum, 2008).

The main problems of this study are:

1. Does IC affect on company's value?
2. Does IC affect profitability?
3. Does profitability affect a company's value?
4. Does IC affect on company's value through ROA as an intervening variable?

## **Library Review**

### **The Foundation of Theory**

**Stakeholder theory.** This theory explains the importance of companies meeting the needs of stakeholders. The company has the best tool by conducting good and maximum economic resource management activities to encourage the company's financial performance and value to meet stakeholder expectations (Watson, Shrivies, & Marston, 2002). In addition, all stakeholders are entitled to information about the company's activities that will impact them.

**Resources based theory (RBT).** Resources based theory is a theory put forward by Penrose (1959) that deals with how companies can manage their resources so that they can be superior to other companies and beneficial for the company's performance in a sustainable manner. Companies with the advantage of resources from within the company will be superior to companies that have resources from outside the company.

Resource-based theory (RBT) is a theory used to analyze profits when competing with companies with superior knowledge or economics that rely on intangible assets. As intellectual capital to be a value-added to the company, management must be able to manage the intellectual resources owned to become one of the company's advantages compared to other companies. Competitive advantage will be created if intellectual capital can be managed properly and can generate added value that will be an advantage for the company and will affect a company's performance. Resources are everything that is owned and controlled by the company, in the form of assets, employee capabilities, technical knowledge, organizational processes, and the provision or design of strategies improving the company's value (Pulic, 1998).

**Intellectual capital.** Intellectual capital is a way to combine intangible assets, property, intellectuals, people, and infrastructure that enable companies to perform their functions well. Intellectual material of knowledge, property rights is a combination of factors of people, processes, and customers that deliver outstanding performance called intellectual capital (Brooking, 1996).

### **Intellectual Capital Measurements**

So far, intellectual capital has not been mentioned in the financial statements. Therefore, introduce a metric that indirectly measures intellectual capital through its value. VAIC<sup>TM</sup> is a tool for measuring a company's intellectual capital performance (Pulic, 1998).

**Value Added of Intellectual Capital (VAIC<sup>TM</sup>).** VAIC<sup>TM</sup> is calculating a company's intellectual capability ratio by summing the coefficients (Pulic, 1998). VAIC<sup>TM</sup> identifies the organization's technical capabilities that can be considered indicators of a company's performance, which is also a summation of the three components above, formulated as follows:

$$\text{VAIC}^{\text{TM}} = \text{VACA} + \text{VAHU} + \text{STVA}$$

**Company value.** The value of the company can provide a foundation of prosperity for shareholders or investors. A high stock price has a high value because it is considered capable and so important benefits for holders stock. The ratio can indicate the management of investors' assessment of the company's past performances and its prospects. The company's value can be projected into Tobin's q (Chen, Cheng, & Hwang, 2005).

### **Hypothesis Formulation**

#### **The Influence of Intellectual Capital (IC) on Profitability (ROA)**

The previous results showed VAIC™ affects financial performance (Ulum, 2008; Nuryaman, 2015; Chen, Cheng, & Hwang, 2005). With good intellectual capital management, then the company can create value-added useful in increasing the company's ROE. This means that when the intellectual capital of a company's value becomes the higher the ROA of a financial company is increasing. Therefore, with good intellectual capital management, the company can improve the company's performance. The first hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H1: VAIC™ affects ROA.

#### **The Influence of Intellectual Capital (IC) on Company's Value**

Stakeholder theory (Freeman & Evan, 1990) can explain that all corporate activities begin with the creation of value creation. Stakeholders value companies that can create value well because with good value creation the company will certainly be better able to meet the interests of all stakeholders. Increasing the company's value with resources that have intellectual capital can maximize and optimize existing resources to earn profits. This is supported by research conducted by Salvi et al. (2020) and Nuryaman (2015). The second hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H2: VAIC™ affects the company's value.

#### **The Influence of Profitability (ROA) on Company's Value**

As companies with high profitability then management will show the success of the performance it does. Based on stakeholder theory (Freeman & Evan, 1990), if the profitability of the company is high then the level of shareholder satisfaction is high because the company can be managed properly. The growth in profitability from each period is considered a positive signal by investors regarding the company's improved performance and increasingly promising business prospects in the future to assist the company's management in increasing value creation and reducing losses that may arise for stakeholders. Poraghajan (2013) showed that intellectual capital affects ROA. The third hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H3: ROA affects the company's value.

#### **The Influence of Intellectual Capital on Company Values Through ROA as an Intervening Variable**

The management of company resources is aimed at being able to increase the company's value. Therefore, the company's increased profits will be able to improve welfare for shareholders (Nuryaman, 2015). The fourth hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H4: VAIC™ affects a company's value through ROA as an intervening variable.

### **Research Methods**

#### **Research Design**

This research is an empirical study conducted to prove the influence between intellectual capital and a company's value and to show the success of companies in generating profits using ROA as an intervening



variable. The population in this research object is all banking companies listed during the period 2018-2020 which amounts to 45 companies selected to be research samples according to criteria.

### Independent Variables

The independent variable in the study was the intellectual coefficient (VAIC<sup>TM</sup>) method. VAIC<sup>TM</sup> developed by Pulic (1998) states that three main components can be seen from the company's resources, namely Value Added Capital Employed, Value Added Human Capital, and Structural Capital Value Added.

**Intervening variables.** The intervening variable in this study is ROA. In large part, the profit comes from sales and investments made by the company and ROA is also a picture of management's performance in managing the company (Al-Musali & Ku Ismail, 2016).

### Data Analysis Techniques

**Multiple linear regression analysis.** The researcher used two equations generated in this study. Multiple linear regressions are based on linear relationships between two or more free variables; the model with them is as follows.

$$Y = \alpha + \rho_1x_1 + \rho_3z + \varepsilon_2 \quad (1)$$

$$Z = \alpha + \rho_1x_1 + \varepsilon_{1...} \quad (2)$$

**Path analysis.** Test inferential statistics in this study uses the path method or path analysis. Mediation testing can also be done using the Sobel test. This Sobel test is done by testing the indirect influence of independent variables with dependent variables through intervening variables. Indirect influences of X to Y through Z are calculated by:

$$Sp2p3 = \sqrt{p3^2Sp2^2 + p2^2Sp3^2 + Sp2^2Sp3^2}$$

The results of the analysis show the relationship between intellectual capital and company value.

## Results and Discussion

### Description of the Object of Research

This study uses financial statement data in banking companies listed on the Indonesia stock exchange in 2018-2020. Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, it can be explained as follows:

1. The intellectual capital had the lowest value (minimum) of 1.132 and the highest value (maximum) of 11.480. The results showed that the amount of intellectual capital sampled by the study ranged from 1.132 to 11.480 with a mean of 2.54929 and a standard deviation value of 1.334490.

2. The ROA had a low value (minimum) of 0.001 and the highest value (maximum) of 2.398. The results showed that the magnitude of profitability sampled by the study ranged from 0.001 to 2.398 with an average value of 1.01771 and a standard deviation value of 0.376152.

3. The company value variable had the lowest value (minimum) of 0.111 and the highest value (maximum) of 177.480. The results showed that the size of the value of the companies that were sampled from the study ranged from 0.111 to 177.480 with an average value (mean) of 10.66867 and a standard deviation value of 20.994151.

### Classic Assumption Test

**Normality test.** The normality test is performed to find out what is done by paying attention to the value of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test from the following SPSS output results: The result can be stated this regression model is normal distribution because it has a value greater than a significant level of 0.05.

### Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Based on the data of research results and output of the SPSS program, it will be explained below:

**Multiple Linear Regression Equation 1.** The first regression is to analyze the effect of intellectual capital (X) and ROA (Z) on the company value (Y) so that the output of SPSS is obtained as follows.

**Significant test of individual parameters (Test t) (1).** If the ROA level is smaller than 0.05 then it can be said that independent variables affect dependent variables. The hypothesis test based on the effect of each variable on the bound variable is as follows, shown in the table below:

Table 1

*Test Results t (Partial Test) Equation 1*

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardizes	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Konstantina	-10.748	7.877		-1.364	0.177
Intellectual capital (X)	4.957	1.816	0.315	2.730	0.008
Profitability (Z)	8.627	6.442	0.155	1.339	0.185

### *Significant test of individual parameters (Test t) (2).*

Table 2

*Test Results t (Partial Test) Equation 2*

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardizes	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Konstantina	0.922	0.098		9.406	0.000
Intellectual capital (X)	0.037	0.034	0.133	1.096	0.277

Based on the partial test table, it can be concluded as follows:

The effect of intellectual capital (X) had no effect significant on ROA (Z). The proof of the statement is based on a significant value greater than 0.05. Based on these results, the first research hypothesis (H1) is rejected. The effect of intellectual capital (X) on the company's value (Y) showed that intellectual capital (X) had a significant effect on a company's value (Y). The proof of the statement is based on a significant value lower than 0.05. Based on these results, the second research hypothesis (H2) is accepted. The effect of the ROA variable (Z) on the company value (Y) showed that ROA (Z) had no significant effect on the company's value (Y). The proof of the statement is based on a significant value greater than 0.05. Research hypothesis (H3) is rejected.

**Path analysis.** The hypothesis test based on path analysis to test the effect of intellectual capital (X) on company's value (Y) through ROA (Z) as an intervening variable can be seen in the following outlines:

$$Sp2p3 = \sqrt{p3^2Sp2^2 + p2^2Sp3^2} + Sp2^2Sp3^2$$

Based on the results of path coefficient value which is  $0.884/0.857 = 1.032$ , it showed that the resulting influence is significant, so the fourth research hypothesis stating that intellectual capital influences a company's value through ROA as an intervening variable is accepted.

## **Discussion of Research Results**

### **Effect of Intellectual Capital on ROA**

Intellectual capital does not affect ROA, so the first hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the utilization of capital efficiency used by a company has not been able to increase the ability to generate the ROA of a company because the company is not successful in managing human resources against corporate profits. How a company manages physical and financial capital efficiently can be judged based on the company's capital employed. This research is in line with the results by Rahajeng and Hasibuan (2020) and no line with Al-Musali and Ku Ismail (2016), Nuryaman (2015), and Chen, Cheng, and Hwang (2005).

### **Effect of Intellectual Capital on Company's Value**

Intellectual capital affects a company's value, so the second hypothesis is accepted. There is a line with results from Nuryaman (2015). Company's management increases value creation as a result of their activities and may arise for their stakeholders (Pulic & Kolakovic, 2003).

### **Effect of Profitability on Company's Value**

The results show intellectual capital does not affect profitability, so the third hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is no effect of profitability on a company's value and no line with the result of the research by Nuryaman (2015) and Salvi et al. (2020), and this result was in line with the Hypothesis 3, because the profitability ratio in the company does not have a good ability to earn profits based on stock capital so as not to affect the company's value.

### **Effect of Intellectual Capital on Company's Value Through Profitability as an Intervening Variable**

Intellectual capital affects a company's value through ROA as an intervening variable; hence the fourth hypothesis is accepted. The results show that ROA can mediate the relationship between intellectual capital and a company's value (Pulic & Kolakovic, 2003). It is necessary to have high competitiveness to survive the competition and added value resulting from the management of intellectual capital able to encourage companies to have a competitive advantage (Ulum, 2008). The results of this study are not much different and comparable to research by Nuryaman (2015) and Rahajeng and Hasibuan (2020). ROA growth that tends to be high will attract investors to invest so that companies are expected to be able to manage intellectual capital resources efficiently in creating added value for investors.

## **Conclusion**

This research obtained the following conclusions:

1. Intellectual capital does not affect ROA because the utilization of capital used by a company has not been able to increase profitability because the company has not managed human resources against the company's profits.

2. Intellectual capital affects a company's value. In appreciating the market value investors have considered the influence of intellectual property owned by the company.

The higher the stock price, the higher the investor will place company's value and higher intellectual capital resources compared to the low company.

3. ROA did not affect the company's value. It can be concluded that there is no effect of profitability on a company's value because it is due to that the ratio of ROA in the company does not have a good ability to earn profits based on stock capital. In addition, because ROA indicates the rate of return the equity of the capital

company itself to generate net income so that too much working capital in the form of inventory and the company is unable to finance other operational activities that cause ineffectiveness in the use of working capital that will affect the company's value.

4. Intellectual capital affects a company's value through profitability as an intervening variable. This shows that intellectual capital governance is effectively proven to be able to increase a company's value in this study measured by Tobin's.

### Advice & Limitations

Researcher conclusion that has been revealed by the authors above, for future research the author provides is the following advice: The authors suggest that researchers may further add a period to the study and suggest for further research can add other variables beyond intellectual capital variables, company value, and profitability. Limitations of this study are: This study only used samples in banking companies and used three periods only in 2018-2020. The upcoming researchers were expected to add other variables related to the company's performance as well as add corporate governance variables as part of IC disclosure.

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# Does Rationality Really Work in Bureaucratic Organizations? A Critical Juncture Perspective

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A pool of literatures in line with the notion of rationality projects that the rational people in bureaucratic organizations perform well. The other line of literatures on rationality cites different stories with limitations on rationality. In line with this, the objective of this paper is to investigate whether rationality really works in bureaucratic organizations in the neo-liberal economic terrain of Nepal. In doing so, the paper looks from critical juncture perspective of political paradigm shift and its impact on bureaucrats and bureaucratic organizations. The analysis reveals increased dependence of bureaucrats on domestic or foreign donors. Seemingly, the growing trend to be loyal towards them has replaced rationality, especially after the restoration of democracy in Nepal. The conclusion asks for right men in right place for timely delivery of goods and services to the public.

*Keywords:* rationality, bureaucracy, critical juncture perspective, Nepal

## Introduction

Bureaucratic organizations are formal and structural organizations, where the bureaucrats carry out specified activities to reach the goal and thereby facilitate the public goods and services (Weber, 2015). Formal rules then develop kind of standardized behaviors, coordinating various sub-units, regulating the flow of information, and specifying hierarchical relationships (March, Schulz, & Zhou, 2000). The nature of the bureaucratic organizations is hierarchal with the decentralized power of distribution in all the functional units (Buchanan, 1996). Taylor (1911) further argues that rationality under scientific management is scientific study of the work processes, and careful selection of the workers for better performance in the organizations. The rationality of the bureaucrats in any organization makes greater contribution to meet the objective/mission set in advance in the presence of top-down bureaucratic power practices (Eisenstadt, 1959). On the other, rationality in bureaucracy is more functional because of the unique characteristics of bureaucratic organizations (Weber, 2015). Despite the facts, the odd course of bureaucratic organizations in Nepal motivated us to write this paper.

However, a little is known about behaviors of bureaucrats and their organizations in Nepal. Of 250 years of Monarchical regime got collapsed after the social uprising of 1990. The country then practiced multiparty democracy and the major concern of the political parties was to transform the authoritarian society to a

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democratic one. In this line, social uprising of 1990, the Maoist insurgency from 1997 through 2005, and the social uprising of 2005 were major political events in the history of Nepal (Pyakurel, 2008). As a matter of fact, the bureaucracy seemed to have changed its way of operation, especially in terms of rationality in performance and disbursing public goods and services. As is obvious, bureaucrats and their organizations seem to have had an odd course. Thus, we argue that the Nepalese bureaucrats and organizations are unlikely in the trajectory of delivering goods and services based on rationality, theoretically. Rather, they are more towards finding donors within or outside of the country for projects and are likely to be loyal towards them. Therefore, the objective of the paper is to examine whether bureaucrats and their organizations with their rationality are projecting full working capacity in providing goods and services to the public in Nepal.

Following we make review of literature on rationality and performance, rationality in bureaucracy and rationality, society, and administrative culture, briefly. Secondly, we project political paradigm shift from critical juncture perspective in that the paper cites the major bureaucratic practices before and after the social uprising of 1990 and 2005 and observe bureaucratic operation, especially rationality perspective in terms of full working capacity of the bureaucrats in the changed political system. Thirdly, we make a critical assessment as how bureaucrats and their organizations function in Nepal. Finally, we make a conclusion along with theoretical and practical implications that would urge the stakeholders to make changes at policy-level for better delivery of goods and services to public from the Nepalese bureaucrats and their organizations.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Rationality and Performance**

Looking at the theory of rationality, organizations do have formal structures, rules, and regulations and if they are carried out well, the performance of the organizations is enhanced (Weber, 2015). On the other hand, “rational action involves choosing and organizing the most appropriate means available for the achievement of a given goal” (Hearn, 1978). In line with this notion, the public would have better goods and services from their bureaucrats and their organizations. Thus, the division of labor is made based on the capacity of the individuals and accordingly the task is assigned to them for higher performance (Taylor, 1911).

The performance in this sense is not by default, rather it is the rationality of the individuals who do have the capacity of making judgment and making rational decision in the organizations (Weber, 2015). Fundamentally, the capacity to distinguish what is right and wrong is therefore the strength to make rational decision. As a matter of fact, public goods and services are well distributed, and the public get benefitted to a larger extent. However, March and Simon (2005) argue that the bureaucrats at decision making level try as satisfying rather than optimizing it based on the available choices. However, we argue that rationality is quite abstract and is doubtful whether it leads to increased performance of the individuals. This is because the individuals have got a number of constrains and limitations for rationality to make it functional. We can't simply be judgmental of the increased performance of the individuals based on rationality they have. So our proposition is that rationality is unlikely to lead to increased performance of the individuals in temporal-spatial, and cultural context of Nepal.

### **Rationality in Bureaucracy**

From bureaucratic perspective, rationality plays a vital role in bringing the jobs done in the organizations. The recruitment of the rational individuals is to develop the sense of doing right things in the bureaucratic

organizations. Therefore, Tylor (1911) argues that the trend most of the bureaucratic organizations make is selecting the right candidates in the right places. This is almost everywhere across the globe in the belief that only the rational people can perform better than irrational ones.

In this regard, Weber (2015) argues that they should have certain educational level primarily and other criteria met to pass the layers of the examinations. This is not other than the assumptions public do have in terms of rationality in bureaucratic organizations while performing their assigned tasks around their field. However, administrative activities cannot be separated from home or politics—the result would be a different story (Hearn, 1978). Thus, we argue that rationality does not solely correspond to performance of the individuals. There are numbers of factors that constrain or limit the rationality of the individuals. With changed context of neo-liberal economic terrain, the individuals are not satisfied with what they earn from their work. They have individual and family wants and desires in the market place and their earning is not sufficient in a consumer country like Nepal. So our proposition is that rationality does not function well in bureaucrats of bureaucratic organizations in neo-liberal economic terrain of Nepal.

### **Rationality, Society, and Administrative Culture**

Tylor (1911) has the notion that rationality from division of labor and their specialization between managers and workers is to find the best way to perform the assigned task. In this line, the society is legitimate to have the recruitment of the rational people as their expertise, experience, and non-judgmental activities are highly applicable in boosting the organizations and the society itself. Therefore, the public perceive the better individuals and hold better prestige compared to the ordinary citizens. The individuals in the bureaucratic organizations as Rothschild-Whitt (1979) states are supposedly more energetic, smart, and thereby behave in more rational way to increase the image and power of them.

Fundamentally, the objective of rationality for Weber (2015) in the bureaucratic organizations is to maximize the public goods and services to the public, and thereby legitimize that the rational individuals are the ones, who can better perform and behave more rationally than the ordinary ones. However, Simon (1962) argues that individual constraints like “personal advancement, interpersonal differences and bounded rationality” (as constraints) fail to satisfy the organizational goals.

Administrative culture of a country is often the reflection of the society as how it is evolving and experiencing through matters of a great deal as it is always interwoven in the formal and informal administrative activities. Dwivedi (2005) puts his view that the cultures are historical products and thereby past experiences, myths, and traditions project modal psychological orientations. Fundamentally till the date, four types of administrative are found: “universalism versus particularism, ascription versus achievement, classical versus political bureaucracy and authoritarian versus participatory” (Dangol, 2005).

Kumar (2011) argues that society holds certain characteristics like nepotism, favoritism, and others which are reflected in the public administration. He further states that the administration has the capacity to influence the society as well and the other way round is that they interact each other and influence in the same way. More than that, political and economic environment in that society also affects the administrative culture (Kumar, 2011). Further, the growing trend of donors and recipients is another serious and emergent concern when dealing with rationality and performance after 1990s in South Asia, including Nepal. So we argue that the bureaucrats like to work closely with the donors and are more responsible towards them. This is because they

can easily make money from the projects they get from the donors. So our proposition is that rationality in Nepal is unlikely functional in bureaucrats of bureaucratic organizations with growing concern of the donors and donor organizations from within and outside of the country.

### **Political Paradigm Shift: A Critical Juncture Perspective**

#### **Bureaucracy in the Early Stages and in the Monarchial Era**

Getting back to the early history of bureaucracy, Thar Ghar System (six families) seems to have monopolized the recruiting system and there comes a Rana regime in which *Chakari and Chaplusi* (an act of opportunism) becomes a culture amongst the bureaucrats (Dangol, 2005). The 30 years of party-less *panchayat* system went no further, rather power and prestige was in the center. And the present bureaucracy also seems to be status quo and in the same line to find various ways to satisfy their both official and political masters (Thapa, 2010).

This is to examine the fundamental characteristics of traditional bureaucracy and the modern bureaucracy. The process versus result and stability versus change orientation can be considered to better understand the basic norms of both bureaucratic practices. The traditional bureaucracy is more process-oriented and entertains status quo, whereas the modern bureaucracy is result-oriented and prefers change as per the changing environment (Dangol, 2005).

With the changes in public administration policies of 1991, the bureaucrats are likely to use universalistic work system based on formal structure, rules, and structure to that of Weberian perspective. However, there is a suspension, especially in the process of doing work, Nepalese culture is more towards particularism in which legal-rationality functions at a minimal level and opposite to the clientelistic form of bureaucracy (Dangol, 2005). Rationality was functional minimal at least within the autocratic political system since hard punishment was made if bureaucrats and their organizations were careless on their responsibilities. With the wave of democracy in South Asia, and eventually in Nepal, the bureaucrats and their organizations held freeriding within the political and bureaucratic system, rationality was not aiming to increase performance of the bureaucrats and their organizations.

#### **Bureaucracy after the Social Uprising of 1990 and 2005**

With the success of the social uprising of 1990 in Nepal, the country got into multi-party political system. The frame of references and the rules of the game were massively changed in the constitution, in 1990 (Hutt, 1991). The bureaucracy based on autocratic regime made a transfer from authoritarian to a democratic one. Trade unions got highly politicized (Tulachan & Felver, 2019; Tulachan, 2020; Tulachan & Rai, 2020; 2021) and unionization extended to bureaucratic organizations in Nepal as well (Tulachan, 2019). *Chakari and Chaplusi* (an act of opportunism) and *afno manchhe* (one's own people) were the basic attitudes of the people projected accordingly in the post-Social Uprising in Nepal (Jamil & Dangol, 2009).

During 27 years of democratic practices, Nepalese bureaucratic organizations seem to have lost more rationality in terms of full working capacity and providing public goods and services to the public. Public seem to have highly frustrated looking at the ways the bureaucratic organizations are working in making decisions and providing goods and services to the public and hold no interest in bureaucratic organizations (Pyakurel, 2008). This is often the case when a society has high power distance, bureaucratic organizations prefer to serve certain group of people than working for the preferences of the public, breeding clientelism in the society



(Jamil & Dongol, 2009). Thus, rationality did not mean performance of the bureaucrats at all in Nepal during this era. The governments were made short-lived and they had excessive freeriding within the bureaucratic system. They were rather in pursuit of projects from the donors so that they could make more financial benefits within the system. This ultimately led to more excess of donors within and outside the country and was more responsible towards donors, substantially.

### **Rationality in Bureaucratic Organizations in Nepal**

Rationality holds equal meaning and perception in the Nepalese context as well. Bureaucratic organizations are basically regarded as the places where the rational people with some academic background and the experience do have something to do in disbursing the public goods and services. Given the framework, the rational individuals are entitled to carry out the assigned tasks as per the daily routine in the given section. However, government employees tend to be responsible to their managers or political masters, but not towards public (Thapa, 2010).

Looking at the present context of Nepal, the Nepalese bureaucratic organizations are failed to address rationality in the assigned tasks. However, the frame of reference for individuals in getting into the public services is very tough. They must go through several written and oral examinations and they need certain level of education and experience as per the designations they are applying for. But, looking at the phenomena the rules of the games for rational behavior have been frequently violated at almost all sections of public services (Shakya, 2009). The public are getting minimal goods and services as the bureaucrats are less willing to work for the betterment of the society.

Rationality in the bureaucratic organizations would fail when the interaction between bureaucrats with the political membership/ideology or the political leaders within the same political group. These vested groups are likely to serve the political parties they belong to, rather than the public goods and services to the public. This is what people are realizing for a long period in the Nepalese context, where rationality is extremely superficial and has hardly anything to do in maximizing working capacity of the bureaucrats and thereby disbursing public goods and services.

Practically, rationality is unknown to many of the bureaucrats and their organizations in Nepal. Even if they have been recommended by politicians or people they knew by in-laws or acquaintance, they tend to be more responsible towards the donors, who provide them projects. They are always in pursuit of having better and bigger projects from the donors so that they can systematically make financial benefits from the projects. So there has been a big shift from being loyal to people who provided them jobs to people or organizations who provide them projects more frequently.

### **Critical Assessment**

Rationality in bureaucratic organizations is exposition of fuller working capacity for better performance. The logic behind higher performance and better goods and services to the public is that the individuals are from specific educational background and they are the ones who have the knowledge how, when, and why to perform a task. However, the story Weber demonstrated in German context was startling. It was beyond rationality in bureaucratic organizations when the bureaucrats had interactions with the political leaders. The effort to influence the political leaders massively decoupled the idea of rationality which led to full of corruption and minimal goods and services in Germany.

However, a little different approach is seen in the interactions in the Nepalese context. The 1990s constitution led the bureaucrats to have the member of the sister organizations of the political parties. The very provision is that the bureaucrats were sharply divided into various groups and interacted with the political parties in the government in terms of policies and plans, and even bargaining for personal gain. This resulted in maximization of serving the political leaders than serving public goods and services to the public. Even reward, promotion, and transfer were made with the group they belonged to in terms of political ideology. The frequent interaction has heightened the relationship of the bureaucrats (or vice versa) and distanced them from their responsibilities and the public. More recently, the bureaucrats are in pursuit of finding projects from the donors within or outside of the country. They make financial benefits within the system from the projects they get from the donors. This is possible time and again when governments are instable and coalitional. Nepalese bureaucrats and their organizations, for reference, have been more inclined towards individual benefits, rather than providing goods and services based on rationality they have. Nowadays, irrational behaviors of the bureaucrats and their organizations are massively increasing and this has led them to become corrupt in the Nepalese society.

### Conclusion

The conclusion marks that the bureaucrats and bureaucratic organizations are not in the direction of rationality at the event of delivering goods and services to the public. The loophole lies in the recruitment process as the right person is hardly selected in the right place. The reason for such practice in bureaucracy goes to political paradigm shift in the country. While making a shift from authoritarian regime to a democratic one, the democratic forces wanted their men in the bureaucratic organizations, replacing the others. They meant it so because it would be easy to run the country by large. As a matter of fact, the appointment was not based on meritocracy, rather based on political party loyalty or someone you know by in-laws or acquaintance.

Every political party when they got in the government recruited their political activists or closed ones for whatever bureaucratic posts available. They didn't care about the fit for the particular jobs. Matter of fact, the Nepalese bureaucrats and their organizations are in pursuit of finding projects from donors and have shown increased sense of loyalty towards them. As a matter of fact, it is minimal functional from the perspective of rationality. This trend has led to the weakest or no performance of the bureaucrats and their organizations. This is what the major contribution of this paper. Secondly, this paper is a preliminary one with a case of Nepal. In this case, empirical papers would validate the propositions we have raised in this paper. Therefore, the researchers are asked to examine the validity and reliability of this paper in future.

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# A Spirited Run-Up to the 2023 Zimbabwe General Elections: Twitter-Induced Momentum for Voter Registration Campaigns, Voting and Opposition Politics Dilemmas

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Conflicting claims have been proffered in the public discourse concerning the efficiency of social media in relation to its impact in political processes in the African context. Due to modernization, Zimbabweans have become *digital citizens* using social media for political engagement and participation. This paper explores how different actors are utilizing Twitter in promoting voter registration and essence of voting as the 2023 general elections are fast approaching. It further examines the challenges opposition politics face in the context of democratization and the efforts of the ruling party to hold on to power beyond 2023 general elections. To this end, an extensive digital ethnographic inquiry was conducted in unpacking the aforementioned political issues.

*Keywords:* governance, voting, online politics, Twitter, authoritarian regime

## Introduction

The advancement in communication technologies across the world has altered, and modified the way people relate/interact to each other. The use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok, and Telegram has revolutionized the communication processes in society in recent times. Digital platforms offer an alternative to the consumption of information as traditional forms of media such as radio and television, are no longer the only source of information. According to Pandalai (2016), social media managed to offer competition to information hierarchies, accessibility and provided a new platform for information exchange. Social media created participatory platforms of communication, where everyone can produce information to the public (Walsh & Connor, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, the majority of citizens have embraced social media use in recent times, with an estimation of six million people with access to internet. According to Bailard (2012) there was a commendable increase in harnessing digital information technology in Africa, which is a good ingredient for democracy in the region. Thus, McLeod, Daily, Guo, Eveland, Bayer, Yang and Wang (1996) noted democratic governance is based on the ability of the masses to partake in electoral processes and engage various actors in the political space through different engagement platforms. In support Dalton (2017) argues political engagement ensures the longevity of democracies, and it strengthens the pillars of popular rule in developing democracies. Studies have testified that media consumption encourages political engagement. News use promotes political engagement by

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broadening political knowledge and perceived efficacy, while guiding peoples' attitudes and judgment (Thorson, Swafford, & Kim, 2017). Researchers have equally proved that the uptake of online news, including through social media such as Twitter, motivates participation in political processes (Chan, Chen, & Lee, 2017).

In Zimbabwe, politicians, activists, and journalists have resorted to the use of social media such as Twitter in educating, informing, and enlightening the masses on political matters such as voter registration, corruption, human rights abuse, and voting. The Zimbabwean society is highly polarized and divided, especially on political affiliations/lines. They're notable supporters and sympathizers of the ruling party, Zanu and supporters of opposition parties and its different expressions or factions which include Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC), MDC-T, Transform Zimbabwe and Alliance for People's Agenda (APA). Apart from polarization, Zimbabwean political landscape is associated with a history of political violence since its establishment as a modern state, a dark path of political abductions of opposition opponents, political assassinations, impunity, rigged elections for example the 2008 general election, abuse of the law, economic decay and captured institutions.

Against this history, this paper underscores the role social media (special focus on Twitter) plays in espousing its potential, capabilities, and limitations in facilitating political participation and engagement in Zimbabwe, an environment which is uneven politically. It is fair, for one to highlight that the Zanu-PF led government in power is committed to regulating and restraining the digital space in the country through legal and non-legal means. In addition, Zimbabwe is increasingly turned into election-mode through spirited campaigns on Twitter aiming at encouraging people to register to vote especially, the young people. More so, on the other hand as the country prepares for the 2023 general elections opposition parties have a monumental task ahead of them. The challenges for opposition parties include the need for reforms, massive mobilization of rural voters, countering Zanu-PF propaganda, informing the citizens about their alternative polices as government in waiting, and the assurance of protecting people's vote in 2023.

This paper brings to the fore and offers a logical explanation of political analysis of the Zimbabwean political situation in the context of a digital society. The researcher demystifies the claims in the political circles currently, which is that the 2023 general election is a game of numbers. Therefore, in a sense most people are equating, dislodging, or pushing Zanu-PF out of power with an encouraging large number of people to vote. More so, the paper extrapolates in detail the limits of social media in authoritarian regimes. The researcher also provides a deep analysis of how chaotic and divided Zimbabwean opposition politics is ahead of the upcoming 2023 general elections.

### **Background of the Study**

With the invention of various Information Technologies in modern society, the majority of scholars view social media as a new platform for political socialization and a quick way of bringing young people to political processes across the political divide. According to Best and Krueger (2005) the internet is increasingly becoming a significant source of political participation for young people who are mainly not into politics. Political participation is a diverse and broad set of activities. According to Chatora (2012), political participation highlights the efforts made by citizens in influencing the choosing of and/or the actions conducted or undertaken by political representatives. The various forms of political participation include, but not limited to, registering to vote, voting, citizens' involvement in electoral campaigns, and acquiring of information

concerning political parties. In addition, political participation also encompasses actions aligned to civil protests, advocacy, lobbying, and attending to community political caucuses.

According to Afrobarometer (2014) there was a notable increase in the uptake of news through the internet in Africa from 2008 to 2014, from 2.6% to 14.5% respectively. The increase of smart phone usage in the continent was on the rise and it combined with rejuvenated and efficient fiber optic-networks. In support by Castells (2011), Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) embedded in the use of mobile phones and access to internet, gives opportunity for citizens' affordable and convenient means of engaging in politics. In the same vein, Shapshak (2017) noted that across the African continent, Facebook had 170 million users.

According to Norris (2001) the internet might be the panacea to the concept of, "democratic deficit" which many political establishments experience. Thus, in creating an E-government, social media provides an interactive medium which solidifies the functions of direct democracy by improving the relations between politicians and citizens (West, 2004). A good example is the case of President Goodluck Jonathan who used Facebook to engage citizens for his presidential campaign in Nigeria in 2011 and he won. In addition, in another electoral process in Zambia in 2011, civic society, non-governmental organizations and activists utilized social media to monitor the presidential election through use of Twitter and Facebook. E-government is a necessary concept in the African context, since most of African countries are regarded as young democracies. They are associated with the legacies of state capture, electoral malpractice, violence, and high levels of poverty (Freedom House, 2017).

In the name of embracing the diversity of the concept of political participation in paradox, in Tunisia it facilitated the "Jasmine Revolution" and in Egypt it led to protests which dislodged Mubarak from power. In light of this, some scholars have argued that social media is a national security concern. According to Tufekci (2017), social media has been abused in some instances and used as a communication tool for spreading information which causes political turmoil. Through social media platforms, deviants and protesters are empowered in coordinating protests, and spreading fake news with ease in instances where governments stifle dissent and try to control public discourse.

In Zimbabwe, the government has not yet blocked social media openly like what Nigeria did in June 2021, when instead the government blocked Twitter in retaliation to the Telecommunication Giant, which had brought down President Buhari's tweet. Zimbabwean government's distrust of social media and other communicative channels by the citizenry is overt. It is fair to highlight that, the Zimbabwean political landscape is not entirely open and democratic for citizen political participation. Free speech and the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly are heavily monitored. Citizens who publicly express political opinions critical of the government are regularly subjected to arrest or harassment. The regime has enacted a plethora of laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Miscellaneous Offenses Act, and more recently the Patriotic Bill, which are still in motion and seek to severely limit public debate and criticism of government. This heavy regulation of the political space curtails citizens' right to freely participate and debate pertinent political issues.

### **Theoretical Framework—Deconstruction Theory**

The concept of binary opposition refers to related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning and it is embedded in the discourse of structuralism. The theory of binary oppositions by Derrida (1967) argues that, the co-existence of two elements is in hierarchical relationship with each other, one is viewed as superordinate, while

the other is subordinate. In politics and sociology, all elements of human culture can only be comprehended in relation to one another and how they operate within larger society. Cultural studies' research explores the relationships between different groups of people, rich or poor, or uneducated, male or female which leads to prejudice and discrimination. In this research, the theory was used in exploring how differing political opinions, affiliations, views and philosophies between individuals, political parties, or groups expressed on Twitter, create binary opposites in the Zimbabwean political landscape, leading individuals to regard the opposite group/individual who differ with them politically as threat, puppets, and traitors.

### **Research Methodology**

The research utilized a qualitative research methodology. It explored the role Twitter is playing in creating momentum for voter registration and encouraging people to vote as the 2023 general elections are fast approaching. All this is occurring in a political environment where the opposition is confronted by a myriad of challenges, which need to be addressed before the election and time is running out. As part of embracing contemporary research methodologies, Twitter was extensively used as a source for data collection. A final sample of 50 tweets was used, with a special focus on tweets selected between January and June 2021 and they were thematically analyzed. A rigorous selection of tweets and replies which address the research problem were purposely selected for analysis on issues of voter registration, voting, and the dilemmas of the opposition politics in Zimbabwe.

In recent years, digital ethnography has gathered momentum, becoming the research field of choice. The use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp has increased. In addition, the use of social networks and mobile methods has also been on the rise. According to Ahlgren (2020) the influence of Twitter cannot be undermined; by 2020 the platform had 1.3 billion accounts, 336 million users who actively post at least 500 million tweets per day. Twitter is increasing its coverage and influence on peoples' lives, the way they communicate and engage. Researchers select Twitter as a data source because it comprises the largest datasets of user-generated information, which offers rich insights public opinion over various issues (Giachanou & Crestani, 2016). In support, Munoriyarwa and Chambwera (2020) concur that Twitter provides a dominant discursive space.

### **The Findings**

The role of social media, Twitter to be more specific has created a huge momentum of voter registration campaigns, voting, and the analysis political affairs in the Zimbabwean political landscape. It has created what the researcher termed "Twitter-binary opposites" as the findings clearly show either one is an opposition supporter or one belongs to the ruling party, Zanu-PF. A fair observation noted that, we have neutrals or apolitical Twitter active users. Worth mentioning, is that pseudo names were used in this research for the purpose of privacy and confidentiality. Through thematic analysis there were notable recurring themes which were observed, including election mode momentum, voter registration mobilization, political polarization, age and political participation, and opposition dilemmas.

### **Election Mode Momentum**

Two years away from the election, Twitter has already set the country into election mode and as it stands there's urgent need for the ruling party (Zanu-PF) led government to deliver on its 2018 electoral promises. On

the other hand, the struggles for the opposition to put its house in order, show its seriousness as government in waiting, and to convince the electorate that they can offer alternatives policies for governance continues. Election is very key in ensuring democracy. It gives room for political participation in governance and provides checks and balances for the government to its people. The quest for a free and fair election in 2023, it's already hovering around people's minds as revealed by Twitter;

If to be FOREWARNED is to be FOREARMED, take notice that, as Mugabe's right hand for 52 years and a key Architect of the First Republic in the 1980's. Mnangagwa knows too well that Zanu-PF prefers to hold elections in February/March and thus the plan to hold the 2023 elections in February/March.

#PastZimElectionsDates

\*1980: February 14 and 27-29 and March 19, Senate

\*1985: June 27-July 2

\*1990: March 23

\*1995: April 8-9

\*1996: March 16-17-Presidential

\*2000: June 24-25

\*2002: March 9-11- Presidential

\*2005: March 31

\*2008: March 29 and June 27-Run-off

\*2013: July 31

\*2018: July 30

Look Carefully and unpack 2023 election from this background context. (Twitter, 2020)

According to Mollah (2016), an election can only be free and credible when rules and laws which guide and direct the electoral process are followed and respected, ultimately people can genuinely choose the candidate of their choice to represent them. In support, Dye (2001) noted that election offers an opportunity for political leadership recruitment in democratic nations as it gives people the ability to give consent to their government and usher in democratic dispensation of their choices.

### **Voter Registration Mobilization**

On 14 November 2014, Zimbabwe confronted a new unanticipated challenge when the military tanks appeared on the streets, the army seized control of the state television station and major government buildings. This led to the resignation of Robert Mugabe paving way for Emmerson Mnangagwa to be inaugurated as president on 23 November 2017. The whole coup process created a legitimacy challenge and the 2018 election was called but the outcome was disputed as the incumbent won with 50.6%, 0.6% margin win against MDC's Nelson Chamisa (Mills et al., 2020). It is against this backdrop that, opposition politicians, journalists, leaders of student's movement, and human rights activists have resorted to the use of social media in mobilizing people to register to vote for 2023 general election, in order to resolve the political crises through the ballot.

There is no substitute for people power in electoral politics, and there is nothing more constant as change who time has arrived. People power must organize itself by registering to vote so that the MDC led by Nelson Chamisa can deliver the nation's main goal of prosperity.

Stay focused, fight with temerity, be humble, loyal, be with the people always, read as much as you can and have a clean political economy. Morals, values, ideological clarity and consciousness. Chamisa to the end #RegisterToVoteZW. (Twitter, 2020)



With the rise of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, it facilitated the participation of masses in the electoral affairs in Zimbabwe. Worldwide, social media has managed to ensure the success of electioneering process. Social media assists in carrying out the surveillance function and galvanizing voters to take informed decisions on parties and candidates with whom to support or cast their votes (Anderson et al., 2017). The majority of the electoral campaigns are occurring in the context where there is high use of internet and smartphones by the Zimbabwean youths, despite digital inequalities in the country. A ghost account, tweeted: “Survey predicts a Zanu-PF victory in elections. 2023 ED pfeeeeeeeee!!!!!!!” (Twitter, 2020).

In the same vein, Trevor responded:

Whose survey? We're sick and tired of these so-called surveys or reports which seek to justify election rigging and to stole people's votes before the election is even held. With the way the state of the economy is right now, it is only abnormal people who can't see that the ruling party is going to lose in 2023 general election. (Twitter, 2020)

### **The Youth and Voting**

According to UN Report (2020), Zimbabwe has an estimated population of 16.2 million. The population of young is with about 67% under the age of 35, with the 15-24 years old representing 36% of the population, and the under 15 accounts for 77% of the population. It is within this context that, the World Bank (2020) reports the grand total of the extreme poor in Zimbabwe as of 2020 amounting to 7.9 million, which is almost 49% of the whole country population. In support, the Afrobarometer (2021) noted that 87% of Zimbabweans endured lack of cash income “several times” or “always” in 2020, 91% say the government is performing badly on job creation and 62% describe the living conditions as “bad” or “very bad”. In essence, the economy is not working. Therefore, there's a need to address the issues of governance and unemployment. Politicians through social media are appealing to the young people encouraging them to register to vote and ultimately voting in the 2023 general election. The popularity of social media sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, mainly among the youths, gives a highly visible environment for candidates to promote themselves and engage with voters (Vitak et al., 2009).

#ImRegisteringToVoteBecause, I want Zimbabweans to be able to dream again. I want honest, hard work to be rewarded. I don't want charlatans and clowns to be the role models of the youth. I want the young to dream of being doctors, teachers, accountants and entrepreneurs, not mbinga (populist/influencers who flaunt/flash money/wealth in public with questionable sources). (Twitter, 2020)

In support, Timothy concurs:

Good evening young people. It is Friday, if you are broke, There is a solution, go register to vote Zimbabwe and elect leaders who can provide job opportunities for you. When I was 23, I was buying cars and living in my own apartment because the LOOTING was not this bad. (Twitter, 2020)

### **Political Polarization**

Social media had already been present during past elections in Zimbabwe, but it had been demonized and counter opposed even up to this day. On Twitter, trolls (*Varakashi*) are continuously pushing back on the effectiveness of social media in meaningful political processes. Their main argument is that social media is not the real world or the genuine reflective of issues on the ground across the country. Twitter users from across the political divide share different opinions and sometimes exchange insults and threats through tweets, further

polarizing the political landscape in the country. Most often times social media creates or manufactures propaganda as articulated by Noam Chomsky's propaganda model. Tweets below showcase how polarized Zimbabweans are based on political affiliation.

A common feature of Zimbabwean politics, be it in Zanu-PF or the opposition, is that nobody is allowed to publicly disagree with the party or leadership. To get the best ideas, public debate is necessary. Our problems are increasingly societal.

What do you mean by 'publicly disagree with party leadership'? The party's policies or the leaders' decision? There are guidelines on how members air their grievances to their party and its leadership.....not this haphazardness you want to push for. (Twitter, 2020)

One of the major dark sides of social media, has been polarizing of public opinion over social media sites and apparently it is one of the major critical threats to public life (Walsh, 2020) and this phenomenon heightens during political campaigns in different countries (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018). In addition, in their report on social media manipulation during political campaigns, they divulged that they were associated with misinformation, in 48 countries. In essence, social media in some instances has been the hub for fake news and propaganda.

### **Opposition Politics Dilemmas**

The majority of countries in post-independence Africa still are led by liberation movements or revolutionary political parties. In most often cases, elections are held and opposition political parties fail to attain state power and they always blame how the election process was conducted and handled. As the quest for democracy looms across the continent, election is the panacea to fulfill the project; it's a process of preferring the ballot over the bullet. Zimbabwe is among the African countries, which has experienced contested democracy characterized by rigged elections, disputed outcomes, flawed election process, and low voter turnout (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997; Hove & Harris, 2015).

Zimbabwe has a long history of violent elections since 1980 (Raftopoulos, 2002). Political science scholars observed that before the inception of the new 2013 constitution, Zanu-PF had "held electoral supremacy" (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997) and it had hugely enjoyed the rewards of the "winner takes-all" Electoral Act of 1987 (Sachikonye, 2003). Sithole and Makumbe (1997) further observed that the majority of elections held after 1980 had been for ceremonial purposes for power retention, characterized by poor voter turnout due to voter apathy. The prevalence of chaotic elections in Zimbabwe has been largely due to the state capture model, characterized by repressive media laws, abuse of state resources, state/party conflation, and control of state media through propaganda. For example, radio and television in Zimbabwe in both the pre- and post-colonial era were used for hegemonic political purposes at the expense of the opposition (Moyo, 2005).

Mathe (2018) observed that, Zimbabwe's media landscape is still uneven, the state/Zanu-PF enjoys the larger share of the state media. There's relatively a small private media sector characterized by online television channels and Internet Social Network groups such as *Pachedu*. The process for one to acquire licensing for private television and radio stations is restricted. In short, the state media does not provide equal coverage to all political players. In support, the presence of digital media such as the state-controlled television (ZBC) is dominated by the ruling party and does not give equal coverage to all political players (Moyo, 2005; Mugari, 2008).

Onto top of the mentioned challenges for the opposition, it is imperative that we also explore the dilemmas the opposition inflicts on itself and other related problems. The opposition faces an existential challenge of disunity and political turncoats. The Supreme Court Judgement in 2016 on the matter concerning who must lead the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is the case in point. After the death of its leader, Richard Morgan Tsvangirai, the 2016 Supreme Court judgement is one of the major challenges which still haunt those in the alternative discourse up to this day. The verdict further divided the Movement into factions, there's MDC led by Nelson Chamisa and the other one led by Douglas Mwonozora. The underlying case is that there's no unity (for different reasons) in the opposition to build a case against Zanu-PF. There's too much politicking and throwing of expletives at each other. In addition, the aftermath of the 2018 general election showed that there were "big" and "small" losers as part of the opposition politics. It further created room for more disunity and the lack of seriousness political dialogue among the opposition political players themselves to come together and craft alternative solutions/policies for governance. Opposition politics in Zimbabwe is characterized by an alternative opposing the opposition; it's a WE and THEY syndrome which dominates.

Regarding the notion of pushing for reforms (political or electoral), the writer believes that the opposition is not doing enough in pushing this agenda, and time is running out as the 2023 general election is drawing closer. In line with the reforms subject, Tanaka tweeted:

You don't get reforms by asking nicely but by showing your opponent your power. Mnangagwa outlawed protests for good reason; the crocodile understands the dangers of people power. Will the opposition accept this unconstitutional constrain on its power? Hopefully not. (Twitter, 2020)

Political players in the alternative most often times cry foul concerning how election management bodies are run such as Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), repressive media laws, weaponization of the law, abuse of food donations in rural areas and state capture. But, all these can be addressed if the opposition pushes through both legal and non-legal means, political pressure and lobbying of regional bodies to apply pressure on the government for equal political playing field to be attained.

## Conclusion

For every constitutional democratic state to be fully achieved, conducting elections is an integral part of the democratic process. The preference of the ballot over the bullet is still a contested issue in African politics. Zimbabwe is at a crossroad, as the rise of social media such a Twitter has provided citizens with platforms for political participation and engagement. Twitter-induced momentum over voter registration and encouraging the youths to vote in 2023 general elections is underway. However, it was also explored that voting in Zimbabwe has been contested since its independence, from the electoral process to the outcome of elections. Hence, it further creates dilemmas for opposition politics in the country, thus needing to be addressed before the 2023 general election.

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