

## The Role of Media in Alliance of Civilizations and Dialogue of Religions

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### Abstract:

In an era where media serves as a cornerstone for knowledge dissemination, opinion formation, and communication, its exploitation by violent extremist groups has reached unprecedented levels. This underscores the urgent need to explore how various media and communication platforms can be harnessed to promote awareness and foster constructive dialogue. This paper will examine the dual role of media in both peacebuilding and the propagation of hatred, presenting concrete examples that illustrate its potential to strengthen alliances among civilizations and enhance interreligious dialogue, solidarity, and peace initiatives. Furthermore, we will identify instances of media misuse that exacerbate divisions and incite animosity. In conclusion, we will provide foundational principles of media literacy designed to cultivate critical thinking skills, empowering individuals to engage with media and new media more responsibly and effectively, to promote peace, dialogue and alliance, and counter extremist dialogue and hate speech in the digital space – which often times, trespasses the digital sphere to the offline world.

**Keywords:** Media-Communication- Alliance- Dialogue- Media Literacy.

### Introduction:

Today, our world is experiencing a new golden age of technological and technical development, bringing countries and peoples closer together and transforming our vast planet into a small village. We even find ourselves discussing a new virtual population, the Facebook people, who reside in the blue world of social media. This proximity has changed the interests of many, making the understanding and acquisition of world languages essential for communication through social media, for benefiting from foreign programs and applications, or for traveling to new places and exploring them physically after first experiencing them virtually or electronically.

This closeness and shared living in a virtual world have also brought individuals from different communities together. Each user now has a list of foreign friends with whom they only communicate via modern means of communication: phone, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat...), in addition to staying updated on world events through live broadcasts or original content, without needing traditional communication methods that are subject to censorship or transmission through national channels.

While globalization has turned countries into a single economic market, global media has united various societies and peoples into one community. Communicating via social media may seem easy at first glance, lacking a cultural aspect, yet it has created a virtual society with its own culture, customs, traditions, language, and norms. Engaging with this society requires specific rituals, many of which pertain to technical aspects (accessing the network, logging into a site (username and password), or an application), followed by reviewing messages and notifications before considering sharing a post or status update, and moving on to real-time communication with virtual friends using a special language (abbreviations, emojis, GIFs).

In addition to creating a new culture, media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information. The diversity of media outlets, their orientations, and editorial lines contribute to forming a comprehensive picture of events through critical analytical reading of the media content, especially online newspapers, news posts on social media, and various video content on YouTube across different topics and fields.

Before discussing modern media and its relationship with intercultural dialogue, it is essential to distinguish between two fundamental terms: media and communication, due to their interconnectedness.

**Communication** is the exchange of meaningful messages between two or more parties. According to Shannon and Weaver, the communication process requires transmitting a message from one place to another, from a sender to a receiver. Roman Jakobson emphasized the importance of investigating language (or discourse) in all its diverse functions, which he classified into six categories (Jakobson, 1987):

1. **Expressive Function:** Pertaining to the sender's signals expressing themselves, their personality, and psychological state.
2. **Conative Function:** Related to the receiver's gestures aimed at influencing the sender.
3. **Phatic Function:** Involves words aimed at maintaining communication between the sender and receiver, like phrases such as "hello" and "yes".
4. **Referential Function:** Refers to what is understood from the general context.
5. **Metalinguistic or Descriptive Function:** Appears in meaning and lexical significance.
6. **Poetic Function:** Relates to the aesthetic aspect of the message (choice and arrangement of words).

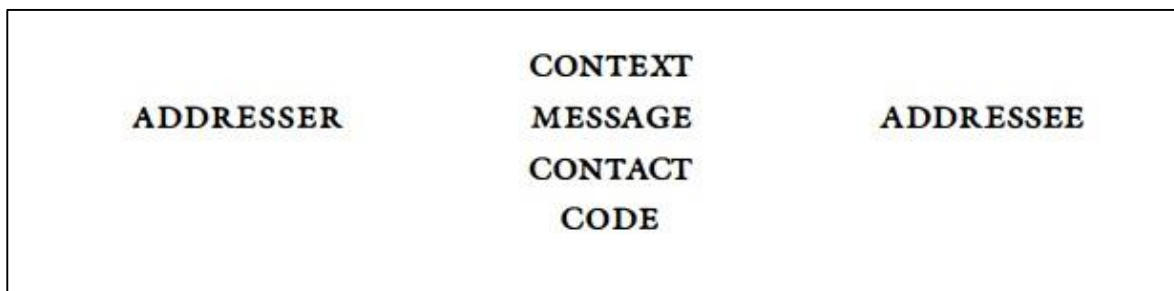
From Shannon's definition and Jakobson's classifications, we can derive several essential conditions for effective communication, including:

- Presence of a sender.

- Presence of a receiver.
- Existence of a message carrying meaning.
- Shared general context.
- Communication via language (verbal and non-verbal).
- Interaction or feedback.

In this context, Jakobson outlined the stages of the communication process and the importance of key participants, stating that the sender sends a message to the receiver. For the message to be effective, it requires a 'context/reference' that the receiver can perceive, either verbally or expressible verbally, a 'code' shared entirely or at least partially between the sender and receiver (i.e., between the encoder and decoder of the message), and finally a connection, a physical channel, and psychological/psychological communication between the sender and receiver that enables them to connect and maintain communication (Jakobson, 1987)

Jakobson summarized this communicative process in a diagram as follows (Jakobson, 1987).



This concerns communication, its conditions, and the process that enables the establishment of a communication bridge between the self and the other. But what is the relationship between communication and media?

If communication is the exchange of messages between two or more individuals, in a generally agreed-upon context, understood through language and words, and involves interaction with each message in a process of give-and-take between sender and receiver, then media encompasses all means, techniques, and both official and unofficial entities, in their various forms and developments, which are used to convey messages, symbols, and meanings to groups or categories of individuals, to pass on news and disseminate information. It is a process of communication using technical or technological tools, which are often directed at the public, without seeking immediate feedback and without direct communication with the recipient. Media is divided into two types: traditional media and modern media.

Traditional media refers to the various means and techniques that have been circulated in the past and are still in use, which include:

- Audio Media: This refers to radio, named audio because it relies on the

sense of hearing to convey messages and auditory symbols to the listener.

- **Visual Media:** This is manifested in newspapers and magazines, which are visual because they rely on the sense of sight to convey their messages. The reader must engage with the media product and decode it to understand and grasp the message or analyze a particular image, relying mainly on readable texts, articles, or images.
- **Audiovisual Media:** This refers to television, which combines both image and sound, using readable texts, images, video clips, and live event coverage, alongside reliance on audio messages, thus engaging the recipient through both auditory and visual means.

Modern media, or what is commonly referred to as digital media or new media, refers to the internet or the World Wide Web. This medium is characterized by its integration of all previous media forms; it contains a vast number of symbols, including auditory, visual, readable, watchable, and hearable content. Its significance lies not only in its rapid spread and ease of access but also in its engagement of the audience in the media process itself, through the ability for users to publish their own news and content, or share messages and media they have received, on a broader scale. This transition allows the audience to move from consumption to interaction and then to production, which is referred to as "active reception" (as opposed to "passive reception").

Despite all being forms of media, there are significant differences between traditional and modern media. Some of the distinguishing features can be outlined as follows:

- **Interaction:** Interaction with traditional media is difficult, whereas interaction with modern media is immediate, achieved through pressing the "like" button, "dislike" button, sharing content, or leaving comments on the publishing page or the content creator.
- **Censorship:** Traditional media is subject to regulation by specialized entities that scrutinize the content of media or entertainment materials, playing a role in social, moral, and religious oversight, ensuring that nothing contradicts state principles or societal norms. In contrast, modern media does not face these restrictions, offering more freedom and openness.
- **Anonymity:** While traditional media often requires individuals to disclose their identity, such as on television or other traditional platforms, modern media ensures greater anonymity, allowing the use of pseudonyms, account hiding, and control over viewership.
- **Flexibility:** In traditional media, individuals are often required to be present in front of a television screen or radio at a specific time to access particular media content. In contrast, modern media allows users to access any media content at any time and in any space of their choosing,

enabling them to save or download the media to their devices and control what they wish to view.

After exploring what media is, its types, and its developments between traditional and modern forms, as well as some characteristics of modern media, a question arises: What is the nature of the relationship between modern media and cultural dialogue? Do these modern media tools play a role in creating a bridge between the diverse cultures of the world? If so, how does this dialogue occur? What mechanisms are relied upon? What are its prospects?

These questions likely stem from the modern era dominated by globalization and characterized by tensions in international crises, particularly regarding economic, ecological, political, and religious aspects. Focusing on culture is considered the first step in building an international community where security and peace prevail, as culture encompasses language, beliefs, customs, traditions, literature, arts, and heritage. It forms the foundation of an individual's intellectual structure, convictions, practices, and principles. Understanding the culture of others and establishing a cultural and civilizational dialogue among different cultures is essentially the establishment of a dialogue among various members of the international community, ensuring equal opportunities and respecting and valuing differences, considering this diversity a wealth and richness for humanity and a direct contribution to human progress.

Given the importance and urgency of intercultural dialogue in the current era—especially in light of civil, ethnic, and religious wars, as well as terrorist and racist attacks, most of which are direct results of the inability to accept the other, misunderstandings of their culture and values, or ignorance of them—various international organizations, human rights bodies, and educational and cultural institutions in both Western and Arab countries have initiated efforts to encourage the establishment of a civilizational dialogue between cultures and religions, encompassing all peoples of the world without exception. Due to the multitude of these initiatives, I will mention only a few examples:

- The United Nations Declaration in 1995 as the Year of Tolerance (United, 1998).
- The Japanese initiative for a dialogue of civilizations between Japan and the Islamic world, launched by then Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono in 2000.(Abdenasser, 2006)
- The United Nations Declaration in 2001 as the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations.
- The United Nations Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the General Assembly on November 2, 2001, in Paris. (UNESCO, 2001)
- The establishment of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2005 (initiated by Turkey and Spain).

In this regard, media is a double-edged sword; while it aids in the development of peoples and the growth of their awareness, some exploit it to disseminate misinformation, hate speech, or fanaticism. Intellectuals utilize media to raise awareness and uplift society, while civil society uses it to mobilize for protests, as witnessed globally during the "Arab Spring". Politicians also leverage it to promote their positions. Social media has been employed to address the reading crisis in Morocco, notably through public reading initiatives like "Aji Nqraw" (Let's Read), "Sa'a lil-Qira'a" (An Hour for Reading), and "Dakhala bi-Kitab" (Entrance with a Book), as well as being utilized by scholars to normalize scientific discourse in everyday life and disseminate research to the public. However, extremists also exploit these platforms to propagate radical and intolerant ideas.

Statistics indicate that the number of websites associated with terrorist organizations rose from four in 2001 to nearly twenty thousand by 2011 (Al-Safi, 2016). A study by the Brookings Institution showed that between October 4 and November 27, 2014, forty-six thousand (46,000) accounts on the social media platform Twitter were used by supporters of the terrorist organization known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Berger & Morgan, 2015).

However, in our engagement with modern media, unlike traditional media, we interact with a virtual, intangible world where everyone plays the role of producer, and consumer simultaneously. The user determines when, where, how, and what to engage with; they assess the quality of the content presented and critique it, then produce their own material.

This virtual and non-material nature of the internet leads some users to be skeptical about the credibility of interactions through this medium and its effectiveness. Meanwhile, others view it as a trap to be wary of or a whirlwind eager to draw users into an endless abyss, far from reality, a sentiment echoed by many thinkers.

In this context, we mention the thinker Jean Baudrillard, who is considered one of the prominent contemporary theorists on media and modern communication. He focuses on semiology, the study of signs and symbols, and argues that digital media have created a vast array of symbols saturated with subjective meanings, leading to a world where the relationship between the signifier and the signified has disappeared, and reality has become lost in a virtual technological maze (Baudrillard, 1976).

In contrast to those cautious about modern media, many thinkers and intellectuals have observed the proliferation of modern media and its invasion of daily life through social networks and the internet, whether on computers, phones, or other modern technologies. They have recognized the role of media in shaping culture and national and international awareness. This realization has prompted them to consider harnessing technology to find solutions to the crises faced by countries and societies in various fields. Moroccan scholar Abdelmalek

Achaboun emphasized during a seminar titled "Reading and Culture in Morocco" (Symposium, 2018) the necessity of uniting print media with the internet to overcome the reading crisis in Morocco and Arab countries. Meanwhile, the internet has been utilized to create job opportunities and combat unemployment and economic crises through e-commerce platforms and electronic protest campaigns using hashtags.

The increasing reliance on social media to voice opinions, protest, or address social issues such as harassment and the oppression of women, or to tackle economic crises (e.g., YouTube, filling out forms, product testing, e-commerce), or to address political and human rights crises through petitions or sending messages to governments (as exemplified by Amnesty International's "Write for Rights" campaign), and the significant international engagement and success of these campaigns, raises questions about the role of media in intercultural dialogue and the promotion of values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

As Marshall McLuhan points out, media should not be viewed in isolation from the technologies employed, the topics discussed, and the target audience. The media used in each era helps shape society, creating new surrounding conditions that influence the way individuals think, thus becoming an extension of humanity. McLuhan also highlights the importance of the symbols and meanings used by media and their impact on the audience (McLuhan, 1964).

Does media play a role in promoting peaceful dialogue between different cultures? Does it help reinforce values of acceptance, coexistence, and mutual respect? Or does it propagate contrary values? How can media be harnessed in favor of the principles of shared living, international solidarity, and peaceful dialogue among the world's various cultures and religions?

The Austrian writer Karl Kraus said: "One ought to acknowledge the significance for mankind of the simultaneous invention of gunpowder and printer's ink".

This quote encapsulates humanity's capacity for both good and evil, as well as for invention, innovation, and creativity, whether in ways that benefit humanity and contribute to its progress or in ways that destroy and sow anxiety, war, and threaten the stability and continuity of human existence.

Just as nuclear power has been utilized in inventions that advance humanity in science, unravel the mysteries of existence, and discover distant planets and galaxies, it has also been harnessed to develop weapons and nuclear reactors, referred to as "weapons of mass destruction". Their use would mean the destruction of more than half the planet, and their proliferation could lead to human extinction. This is without mentioning the wars and international conflicts that have arisen because of or under their pretext, as seen in the Iraq War and conflicts with Iran.

Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, modern media also has two sides, and

engagement with it can take different directions. While it can be harnessed for humanitarian issues, it is also a platform for promoting violence. Just as intellectuals and human rights advocates use it to promote peace and human values, extremists exploit it to spread their racist, fanatical, or terrorist ideologies. However, in this paper, we will focus on the positive aspects of media in fostering dialogue between cultures and creating a bridge among the diverse spectra of global societies, despite their differing backgrounds, traditions, languages, and religions.

Given the diversity of modern media in its forms and colors, as well as the broad concept of culture that encompasses many aspect of individual and societal life, I have decided to focus on three specific areas in this paper. These are the key components of a person's culture and central themes in the conflict between individuals and societies:

1. Language.
2. Belief.
3. International cooperation and solidarity.

What are the significant contributions of modern technological media in bringing communities closer together in the face of language differences? What avenues has it created to transcend religious and ideological divides and moral or value frameworks? Have these avenues and mechanisms facilitated the establishment of a genuine dialogue between communities? If this new means of communication has successfully created a bridge between individuals and communities separated by natural seas and human borders, what forms does this dialogue take? What are the manifestations of a united virtual community, despite the presence of individuals from geographically distant areas? Conversely, if modern media has failed in this endeavor, what obstacles hinder achieving this unity, and what strategies can be employed to overcome them in order to foster a cultural and civilizational dialogue aimed at creating an international community that coexists in safety and peace and embraces diversity?

### **Section One: Modern Media and Linguistic Diversity**

Language is the most significant evidence of human development and sophistication, marking a transition from primitive stages. It is one of the key characteristics that distinguishes humans from other living beings. While animals rely on their senses to gather information and use sounds to communicate, these sounds do not reach the level required for detailed information exchange. According to scientists, the sounds emitted by animals—such as those used by monkeys to warn of imminent danger—constitute a form of communication, but they lack the specificity needed to describe the nature and location of the threat, among other details. Thus, they cannot be considered language in the full sense. (Macwhinney, 2005).



In contrast, human language, which researchers argue arose as a biological necessity for survival through natural selection, is richer and allows for more precise and detailed information exchange.

Humans communicate in two primary ways: the first is non-verbal communication, often referred to as body language, and the second is through the verbal language that has evolved over time. Non-verbal communication encompasses various bodily and vocal manifestations, often spontaneous and instinctual, such as:

- Tone of voice.
- Speech rate.
- Delivery style and pronunciation.
- Eye contact.
- Facial expressions.
- Hand gestures.
- Body posture and movements.

While analyzing movements and expressions is crucial—given that body language constitutes about 55% of the messages we convey (Workplace Strategies for mental Health, n.d)—this part of the research will focus on verbal language, which primarily relies on words for communication, whether spoken or written. This focus is due not only to the conscious nature of verbal communication but also to its diversity and its role as a fundamental factor contributing to ignorance of others and the rich cultural and civilizational diversity of humanity, which can be one of the main obstacles to dialogue between cultures.

Research conducted by the American Summer Institute of Linguistics, published in a dictionary of all the world's languages in 2009 (the *Ethnologue*), recorded approximately 6,909 languages spoken worldwide (Anderson, 2010). Subsequent updates by the center, after it changed its name to SIL International, revealed in the 21st edition of the dictionary in 2018 that there are over 7,097 living languages around the globe (*Ethnologue.*, (n.d)).

It is important to note that language is not limited to currently spoken languages; it is categorized into several types. According to SIL International, languages can be divided into five types (International, (n.d)):

- Living Languages: These are languages still considered in use by a group of individuals.
- Extinct Languages: This category includes languages that have disappeared in recent centuries.
- Ancient Languages: These are languages that became extinct thousands of years ago, and it is required that there be documents or scientific evidence proving that the language was once spoken by a people at a certain time.
- Historical Languages: These languages must differ from the modern languages that descended from them, and evidence must exist showing

that these languages were spoken by a particular people at a certain time.

- **Constructed Languages:** Also known as artificial languages, these must have a community of speakers and must be passed down to at least the second generation, with the purpose of facilitating human communication and having literature that demonstrates their use. Computer programming languages and revived languages are excluded from this category.

As observed, the world is home to a linguistic diversity of no less than 7,000 living languages, along with many other linguistic classifications, each comprising a lengthy list of languages. What role does modern media play in this diversity? What impact does it have in fostering cultural and civilizational dialogue based on linguistic aspects? Has modern media succeeded in creating a communicative bridge between speakers of different languages? If it has succeeded in this endeavor, what methods and mechanisms have enabled it to do so? Conversely, if it has failed, what obstacles and constraints have hindered the establishment of a cultural dialogue among the diverse tongues of the world?

Language is a means of expressing the self and society. It conveys individual experiences and emotions, reflects the culture, customs, and traditions of a people, as well as the environment in which one was raised and the mentality of their community. Through our manner of communicating with others and defining symbols and social roles, we also express the ethical system embraced by society or the individual. By unifying language, we enhance the sense of belonging and nurture the need for social and psychological security. UNESCO sums this up by stating: “Languages are not just a means of communication but represent the very fabric of cultural expressions, the carriers of identity, values and worldviews.” (UNESCO, 2009)

Thus, linguistic diversity reflects cultural diversity, and interaction with individuals speaking different languages constitutes cultural dialogue. In this context, in addition to developing its own digital language and culture, as mentioned in the introduction, modern media has contributed to the linguistic aspect through various experiences and mechanisms, some of which can be viewed positively while others may be considered negative to some extent. I will first present the key contributions of digital media to cultural dialogue from a linguistic perspective before exploring the negative impacts of some of these mechanisms.

### **Empowering Users to Learn Languages:**

Modern media, particularly the internet, allows users to explore various fields and discover new worlds. It also provides opportunities to learn different languages through numerous available mechanisms, such as:

- E-books.
- Mobile applications.
- Educational videos.

- Online learning sessions.
- Educational websites.

Additionally, it facilitates the translation of texts from one language to another, enhancing users' understanding through popular translation tools like Google Translate and other translation sites and dictionaries. The internet also allows users to listen to foreign songs and follow their programs with translations in various languages, making it easier to understand and acquire new vocabulary, as well as enabling conversations with foreigners to practice and utilize the learned language.

### **Utilizing Visual Media:**

Modern media relies heavily on images and videos, enabling messages to reach a wider audience without requiring an understanding of the language or text. This feature helps disseminate messages across different populations, fostering interactions among individuals from various cultures and language backgrounds, thus creating discussions and interactions around the issues presented in the message.

These mechanisms, along with others not discussed here, have contributed to bringing individuals and communities closer together despite their differences, fostering international discussions on various topics—political, economic, social, etc.—without the necessity of learning all the languages of the world, while also facilitating the learning of distant languages. However, despite these positives, irresponsible use by some individuals has negatively impacted the linguistic landscape in various ways, including:

- The emergence of hybrid languages resulting from the mixing of multiple languages within the same sentence (e.g., "Frarabic").
- The reliance on abbreviations (considered by linguists as a "linguistic disease") at the expense of standard languages.
- The spread of linguistic errors and the contribution to their proliferation.

These general observations, along with others specific to each language, have attracted the attention of certain extremists from various regions, leading them to reject the use of any language other than their mother tongue and to oppose dialogue in foreign languages. For instance, Arabs accuse those who use French of being loyal to colonialism, and anyone using other languages is seen as serving foreign agendas and conspiring against Arabic and Arabs. Such views are often justified as a defense of the mother tongue or Arabic, regarded as the language of the Quran, the holy book for Muslims. This stance is usually framed under the banner of "it's majestic; the Arabic language" (Shahrour, (n.d)), advocating for its preservation against the perceived threat posed by the spread of other languages (Anwar & Jamal, 2015). Dr. Mohamed Amara, a lecturer at Beit Berl Academic College and a researcher at the Arab Center for Rights and Policy Studies, states in this regard:

“Language has two dimensions: functional and emotional. The emotional dimension of language is crucial because it is linked to national, cultural, religious, and many other factors. At the same time, language serves practical functions; it thrives and flourishes through use. If we want a language to remain vibrant and alive, we must utilize it across its various levels in all aspects of our daily lives.” (Symposium, 2018)

Certainly, these practices are not exclusive to Arabs and the Arabic language. Some French language extremists consider the language of "Molière" to be the mother of all languages, asserting that there is no need to learn other languages, especially since most foreign research is quickly translated into French. They argue that learning anything else is not worth the time, effort, and money. Similarly, English speakers may view learning another language as a waste of time, given that English has become a dominant global language economically and scientifically.

Many academics and researchers have noted the spread of "linguistic diseases" through various social media and modern communication channels, which affect living standard languages, especially among children. This manifests in their writing and creative expression, where they mix standard language with colloquial forms and online chat communication. This has led experts to emphasize the importance of using modern media rationally and to advocate for the preservation and proper use of standard languages. They have also recognized the rise of language extremists and their aggressive behaviors, prompting a call to clarify the advantages of modern media, the benefits of linguistic openness, and to outline strategies for interacting with foreign languages without undermining the mother tongue. Others have worked to counter the claims of language extremists with scientific arguments and a call for humanity and coexistence (Khalidi, 2018).

They have stressed the necessity of maintaining a critical spirit before navigating the complexities of modern media and the importance of using it positively and effectively through "media literacy" programs. While these programs have become widespread in schools and universities in Western countries, they are still in a developmental phase in underdeveloped and developing societies. Additionally, there is a need for pedagogical plans to integrate modern media into educational processes, with educational institutions and teachers supporting students throughout this experience (Melo Rosa, 2001).

Despite the actions of language extremists who reject linguistic diversity—who remain a minority—linguistic pluralism is an undeniable reality. The phenomenon of multiple languages has become global due to the increasing awareness of the importance of languages and the cultures of other societies, along with the ongoing allure of modern media through several mechanisms, including:

- Free access.

- Flexibility in choosing time and place for learning.
- Diverse learning methods, including music, games, reading and listening lessons, and lectures.
- The ability to engage with native speakers through dedicated educational sites or social media.
- Connecting languages to the countries that speak them and their cultures, with opportunities for virtual travel to those countries (through films, documentaries, programs, images, etc.).

Now that we have explored the contributions of modern media to the linguistic sphere and its successes, as well as the challenges it faces in promoting a culture of linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue, we will turn our attention to another essential component of culture: the religious or doctrinal aspect. If language serves as an expression of culture or a mirror to it, religion is one of its determinants and contributes to shaping its norms and customs, including practices related to festivals, community and religious rituals, social behavior, attire, and the delineation of social roles and taboos.

What role does modern media play in this domain? Has it succeeded in dispelling misunderstandings between different religions? Has it built a bridge for civilizational dialogue among them? If it has succeeded, what mechanisms has it employed? If it has failed, what obstacles have prevented its success? And how can these challenges be overcome?

## **Section Two: Modern Media and Religious Diversity**

The organization of Religious Tolerance, a Canadian group that promotes religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence, stated in an article in 2015 that there are approximately 19 major religions in the world, divided into about 270 large religious groups and many smaller ones. It estimates that there are around 34,000 Christian groups globally, along with over 5,000 living deities worshiped daily, and more than 3 million deities specific to Hinduism alone, considering the ancient Hindu gods that are no longer worshiped in our current era (Organization, 2015)

These religions and beliefs vary among the Abrahamic, Asian, Hindu, and African religions, as well as between monotheistic and polytheistic faiths, or those that believe in sanctity without a belief in a creator, like Buddhism, for example. Each of these religions has its own concepts of the sacred and the profane, carrying unique meanings and representations of the world and humanity. They offer existential answers that fall outside the realm of scientific inquiry, making it impossible to definitively assess their validity. This distinction sets scientific research apart from spiritual or doctrinal faith. Science seeks answers that can be universally agreed upon, while faith relies on spiritual conviction and belief without the need for evidence. In the absence of the ability to prove or disprove the existence of deities or the truth of a religion, each

believer of a particular faith or deity considers themselves to possess the truth and the secrets of existence, believing they are on the path of guidance and righteousness. They regard their religion as the correct one, and their deity or deities as the most worthy of reverence.

Blind adherence to various religious texts and the belief in the superiority of one belief over another are among the key factors that drive some believers to assert their legitimacy and feel the need to spread their beliefs, even resorting to violence, fighting, and killing. They justify this as a humanitarian duty, believing they are saving followers of other religions or non-believers from inevitable punishment. This mindset leads others to refuse to engage with those who hold different or non-religious beliefs, as if this difference were contagious and could impact their own faith.

Such fanaticism and extreme behaviors are not new nor are they confined to one religion or belief system; they are as old as religion itself. The consequences of these attitudes extend beyond what we currently witness in the actions of groups like ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) or in the kidnappings and mass killings orchestrated by the Christian group "The Army of God" (AOG). They also encompass the numerous wars and violent conflicts carried out historically under the guise of religion, which often share the same criteria employed by contemporary extremist organizations. These criteria can be summarized in three main points (BBC, (n.d)) achieving a religious objective, 2) permitting war or fighting by a religious leader, and 3) promising a reward (spiritual, within the religious context) to those who participate in the battles.

Given the lengthy list of these wars, which number in the thousands, I will limit myself here to mentioning the most significant of these religious wars in the following points:

**Wars of Apostasy:** This series of wars took place between 632 and 634 AD, initiated by Caliph Abu Bakr following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, targeting the tribes that had renounced Islam (Jawarna, 2014). One of the main reasons for their departure from the faith was the belief that with the death of the Prophet, the religion itself had died. Additionally, there was a lack of acceptance regarding Abu Bakr's appointment as the caliph, as well as disagreement with some Islamic legal provisions. Eleven armies were mobilized to combat the apostates, as detailed in the "Atlas of the Wars of Apostasy" in the following table (Al-Mughlouth, 2008):

Sequence	Islamic Army	Direction of the Army	Leaders of the Apostates
1	Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As	Borders of Greater Syria	Instilled fear among the wavering Bedouins
2	Amr ibn al-As	Dumat al-Jandal	Qudā'a, Wadi'a, al-Harith
3	Khalid ibn al-Walid	Buzakha, al-Bathā, al-Yamama	al-Taliḥa al-Asadī, Malik ibn Nuwaira, Musaylima the Liar
4	Ikrima ibn Abi Jahl	al-Yamama – Oman – al-Mahrah – Hadramaut – Yemen	Musaylima the Liar
5	Sharhabil ibn Hasana	al-Yamama – Hadramaut	Musaylima the Liar
6	al-Ala' ibn al-Hadrami	Bahrain (Jawatha) – Darin	al-Gharur (al-Mundhir ibn al-Nu'man al-Nu'mani)
7	Hudhayfa ibn al-Muhsin al-Ghifari	Daba from Oman	Dhū al-Tāj; Laqit ibn Mālik al-Azdī
8	Arfaja ibn Harthama al-Barqi	Oman – al-Mahrah – Hadramaut – Yemen (completed by Ikrima)	al-Amir al-Muṣbiḥ
9	Tareefah ibn Hājez	East of Hijaz – Banu Sulaym	Iyās ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd Yalil
10	al-Muhajir ibn Abi Umayya	Yemen – Kinda – Hadramaut	al-Aswad al-Ansī (killed a day before the Prophet's death), al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, Qays ibn Makshūḥ
11	Suwayd ibn Muqrin al-Muzani	Tihama, Yemen	—

**The Crusades:** These were a series of campaigns that extended from the 11th to the 13th century, with a publicly declared objective of recapturing the Holy Land from Muslim invaders and aiding the Byzantine Empire .

**French Religious Wars :** The French Religious Wars were a series of conflicts that took place in France during the 16th century, primarily between Catholics and Protestants. These wars lasted from 1562 to around 1598 and can be divided into eight separate wars (Protestant, (n.d)):

- **First War:** 1562 to 1563.
- **Second War:** 1567 to 1568.
- **Third War:** 1568 to 1570.
- **Fourth War:** 1572 to 1573.
- **Fifth War:** 1574 to 1576.
- **Sixth War:** 1576 to 1577.

- **Seventh War:** 1579 to 1580.
- **Eighth War:** 1585 to 1598.

**Thirty Years' War :** The Thirty Years' War lasted from 1618 to about 1648 (Manière, 2016) and erupted between the Protestant Union and the Catholic League in the historic region of Bohemia (which largely corresponds to present-day Czech Republic). The conflict then spread to other parts of Europe and passed through four phases:

- **Bohemian War:** 1618-1625.
- **Danish War:** 1625-1629.
- **Swedish War:** 1630-1635.
- **Swedish-French War:** 1635-1648.

**Islamic Jihadist Operations :** Islamic jihadist operations have manifested in a series of terrorist acts, which can be either individual or attributed to extremist Islamic groups (such as Al-Qaeda, Taliban, ISIS). These operations target either Muslim groups or states that terrorists consider to be apostate (for example, the events of May 16, 2003, in Casablanca, Morocco, and the January 1, 2017, nightclub attack in Istanbul, Turkey), or they are directed against Western countries that extremists view as hostile to Islam or as responsible for spreading corruption and strife (such as the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the March 11, 2004, events in Madrid, Spain).

In this context, Robert Spencer, the director of the "Jihad Watch" at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, noted in an interview with journalist Saurav Dutt published on Medium that there have been over 30,000 jihadist operations worldwide since September 11 (Spencer, 2018).

What role has modern media played in promoting a culture of interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence? Has it truly been able to confront or mitigate religious extremism?

Undoubtedly, the media has indeed brought closer together different countries of the world and their cultures. It presents events in multiple languages and through images that require no linguistic commentary, thereby clarifying what is happening in various parts of the world and enabling individuals to engage in collective interaction and dialogue despite physical distances and possible differences.

In addition to bridging gaps linguistically, the media also fosters religious connections through a range of mechanisms that are distinctive to modern media compared to traditional communication methods. Among the key tools that allow users to initiate religious dialogue based on mutual respect are:



**Digital Books :** When dealing with religious matters, reliance has often been placed on what the prevailing religion in society conveys about other faiths and beliefs, or what is published by religious leaders. In countries with dictatorial regimes, particularly in many Arab nations, a number of books are banned from entering the country, and their publication or circulation is prohibited, often under the pretext of security reasons or maintaining societal stability and values. In some cases, biased or misleading translations of Western books have been published without proper review, either intentionally or unintentionally.

However, the internet has changed this dynamic by facilitating the publication of digital books in their original languages and providing multiple translations in various languages. This opens up the possibility for everyone to research reliable references and return to original sources.

Regarding religions, users now have the opportunity to explore what other faiths present by accessing their sacred texts and related intellectual productions from their adherents. Thus, modern media allows researchers to conduct their studies independently, forming their own positions and opinions based on their understanding of the original texts without needing an intermediary to convey biased representations.

**Forums :** Forums are a distinctive feature of modern media, allowing the creation of public discussion spaces where various topics and opinions can be addressed, and references can be cited. This rational discourse is built on the principles of dialogue and acceptance of differences and diversity.

In this context, forums dedicated to interfaith dialogue are established, enabling the exchange of religious views and beliefs on various issues, without infringing on users' rights to express themselves or make judgments.

Specific forums for particular religions exist, such as Islamic and Christian forums, providing users the opportunity to engage with various discussions, issues, and viewpoints, as well as to pose questions to forum members and interact with them.

**Religious and Educational Websites :** One of the most important mechanisms used by modern media to introduce religions is through religious or educational websites. These sites are affiliated with religious organizations or groups and are managed by specialists in the field, including researchers and religious leaders. Their goal is to promote a particular religion, provide information about it, and answer questions from interested followers.

These websites allow for communication with the page administrators via phone, email, or site messaging, addressing posed questions with reliance on evidence and reasoning. They utilize a variety of techniques to reach a broad audience, from children to young adults, and from men to women. Some of the key techniques include:

- Articles
- Video clips

- Audio recordings
- Pamphlets
- E-books
- Research papers
- Lessons
- Games
- Competitions
- Conferences
- Opportunities for employment by joining the site's team or writing articles

**Networking Among Individuals :** Modern media, particularly through social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, apps, and chat rooms), facilitates the establishment of connections among various individuals in the global community. It allows users to communicate with virtual friends from foreign countries, different cultures, and diverse religions. This opens the door for cultural and religious dialogue and direct knowledge exchange with adherents of world religions, fostering familiarity and normalizing interactions. This helps to eliminate the sense of strangeness and unreality perpetuated by the absence of representation of these religions in societies.

While these mechanisms primarily aim to promote religions and increase their followers, rational and conscious use of them can further bridge gaps between the world's religions and establish a peaceful dialogue among them.

As with all aspects of modern media, its uses vary according to the goals and values of its users. While the internet can be employed for dialogue, discussion, and the promotion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, it can also be exploited to spread extremist ideas, instill fear in others, and threaten those who do not align with radical groups. This is evident in the horrifying images of violence, murder, beheading, and intimidation that ISIS publishes daily. Such media strategies have become integral to the terrorist plans of extremist organizations, a phenomenon referred to as "media jihad".

Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda, articulated this in a message to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi dated July 9, 2005, stating: « However, despite all of this, I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma. And that however far our capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us. And we can kill the captives by bullet. That would achieve that which is sought after without exposing ourselves to the questions and answering to doubts. We don't need this » (ODNI, 2005)

The use of cyber jihad and other extremist actions by various religious and ethnic radicals can be attributed to the increasing use of social media, the rapid

spread of electronic publications, and the ability to globalize content easily. Additionally, the powerful impact of visual media can either attract sympathizers and gain their support or instill fear in opponents while showcasing strength against them.

This dual nature of modern media highlights the challenges it poses in fostering understanding and tolerance while simultaneously being a tool for division and violence. For these reasons, there is a continuous emphasis on the importance of critically engaging with everything promoted on social media and avoiding passive consumption in the face of the overwhelming amount of information and posts presented to users daily. There are also efforts to automatically block certain images and scenes on social media to mitigate their psychological impacts on viewers.

To address these concerns, special services have been provided for parents, allowing them to control what their children view and the content they receive on websites and pages. Additionally, various laws have been enacted to protect children from violence and exclusion on social media, criminalizing digital violence in several countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Hawaii. Meanwhile, the struggle to enact similar laws in other countries continues.

This ongoing effort highlights the need for a balanced approach to media consumption, ensuring that users, especially children, are shielded from harmful content while promoting a safer online environment.

### **Section Three: Modern Media and International Solidarity**

In the era of globalization, where the world has become a small village due to economic and technological openness and modern media, the terms cooperation and solidarity have transcended their local or national meanings. We now speak of international solidarity among peoples and international cooperation among countries, organizations, and transcontinental bodies.

Virginia Dandan, the independent expert on international solidarity at the United Nations Human Rights Council (appointed in June 2011) (OHCHR, n.d), defines solidarity as the conviction that connects differences and opposites, uniting them in a heterogeneous manner, while enriching them with universal human rights values. Consequently, international solidarity does not seek uniformity but aims to be a bridge for these differences and opposites, connecting diverse peoples and countries with varying interests in an atmosphere of mutual respect and mutually beneficial relations, infused with principles of human rights, equity, and justice. (Puvimanasingh, 2013)

International cooperation refers to the collective efforts of countries to assist weaker nations across various fields, including economic, security, developmental, social, and cultural areas. This cooperation aims to reduce disparities between nations, achieve parity and international security, and uphold human rights values. Currently, international cooperation is considered a

component of human rights and a principle of international human rights law. Like many rights included in this framework, international solidarity is a recent concept, integrated into the development and humanization of international charters. The United Nations General Assembly explains this development and the stages it underwent before being recognized and incorporated into charters and international relations, stating that the idea of collective human rights was first proposed in the 1960s by the Non-Aligned Movement. The recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination changed the fate of the international community of states, international law, and relations. The intention was to broaden the scope of people's rights to include more groups by elevating the duty of cooperation to achieve the goals of the United Nations Charter, alongside the emerging principle of solidarity. In this way, the implicit duties inherent in human rights were to be transformed into concrete obligations. These initiatives peaked in the 1970s when several peoples' rights were included in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which contains various relevant and legally binding duties. Subsequent efforts led to the recognition of several rights, including those related to development, peace, the environment, minorities, and indigenous peoples. The emerging principle emphasizes recognition of additional rights, some of which have been incorporated into treaty texts and have continued to evolve, as seen in laws, policies, and practices. Consequently, the principle of international solidarity itself has become an established principle.(UN, 2009)

One might ask after reading these lines: How can this principle be applied? Are countries genuinely obliged to engage in international cooperation initiatives? What are the consequences of failing to do so? If so, what are these consequences? Do these penalties interfere with the sovereignty, decisions, and characteristics of states? And if there are no penalties or consequences for refusing to assist a particular country, what is the significance of formalizing international cooperation?

The memorandum presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addresses these questions, stating that legal instruments and policies that encompass international solidarity and cooperation are practically applied through numerous actions within the framework of international cooperation, demonstrating that state practice aligns with their convictions or legal opinions and that States collectively contribute within various global, regional, and non-regional organizations with multilateral and bilateral arrangements, once again evidencing their solidarity in principle and practice. And that additionally, many practices undertaken by other stakeholders, alongside state actions, form a remarkable array of actual practices consistent with the recognition, either implicit or explicit, of international solidarity as a principle of international law.(UN, 2009)

Thus, the (Nations, (n.d)) does not limit the process of international

solidarity and cooperation to the formal practices of states and their laws or initiatives but extends to the efforts of organizations, associations, and civil society, whether international, regional, or local, and whether multilateral or bilateral. The memorandum then defines the legal nature of the principle of international solidarity as a principle of international human rights law, confirming its non-binding nature, stating that while most arrangements guiding cooperative practices fall within the realm of non-binding law (aspirational law and international public policy rather than existing law), there is clearly a higher value of solidarity and a relevant system of values that can guide the gradual development of international law, and the legal domain at the regional and national levels, toward establishing a principle of international solidarity characterized by integration and consistency, as well as an emerging right for peoples and individuals to international solidarity. (UN, 2009)

After exploring the concepts of international cooperation and solidarity in international charters, as well as their importance in achieving international security, justice, and ensuring human rights across various fields—economic, social, environmental, etc.—we have clarified the non-binding nature of international solidarity for states and the reasons behind states' insistence on its activation despite this. We also examined the stakeholders involved in realizing it. The remaining questions are: What is the role of modern media in the field of international solidarity? How does it contribute to activating international cooperation and solidarity? What mechanisms does it rely on? Has it succeeded in bringing individuals together and enhancing international solidarity? If not, what obstacles hinder modern media from unifying international public opinion and motivating states and organizations to work together?

As previously mentioned, modern media possesses a unique characteristic that distinguishes it from traditional media: rapid and widespread dissemination. This feature is leveraged by human rights advocates around the world to raise awareness of violations perpetrated by states or certain entities against specific groups in society. They use social media to call for translations into various languages and broad dissemination to generalize solidarity, expose violations, and hold responsible parties accountable.

Although international solidarity is not a recent phenomenon, modern media has simplified and expanded its reach. While those interested in human rights issues used to write letters—such as campaigns to write solidarity letters for political prisoners and human rights defenders or letters to governments requesting the repeal of specific laws, particularly those organized by Amnesty International over 60 years ago (Amnesty International Australia, 2015)—now, thanks to social media, news can spread across the internet with the click of a button, reaching a much wider audience.

As technology has evolved and societies have adapted their methods of influence, human rights defenders have also developed their strategies. They

now rely on, in addition to traditional methods, more modern approaches that align with societal developments and lifestyles. To advocate for human rights, legal advocates—individuals and organizations, whether international, regional, or local—employ various mechanisms, including:

**Emails:** This is a direct evolution of the traditional paper letters that were previously used. Instead of sending physical letters with associated costs and waiting weeks or months for them to arrive, text messages can now be sent to a specific account, which volunteers then print out and deliver to the relevant authorities in bundles.

These emails are considered one of the most significant means of public pressure on decision-makers and one of the most effective forms of psychological support for those in need of solidarity. Among the many successful campaigns, most of which were led by Amnesty International, we can mention (Amnesty International UK):

- The case of **Albert Woodfox**, who was released after spending over 44 years in solitary confinement.
- The rescue of **Moses Akatugba** from Nigeria, who was sentenced to death for stealing three phones at the age of 16 after spending 10 years in prison.
- The release of human rights lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** in China, **Esraa al-Taweel** in Egypt, **Phyoe Phyoe Aung** in Burma, and **Yorm Bopha** in Cambodia.

These campaigns, which spread across social media and garnered international support from various parts of the world, remind governments that they are being monitored and that they must adhere to human rights charters and ensure fair trial conditions for all, regardless of race, religion, or political ideology. They also remind those who are suffering injustice that there are advocates for their rights, restoring hope to those arbitrarily detained for political reasons, and showing them that there are others fighting for justice and human dignity. Here are some testimonials from those who benefited from solidarity campaigns:

"Those messages kept us alive... Thank you to everyone who had the courage to speak against injustice". — **Nadezhda Tolokonnikova** and **Maria Alekhina** (arrested during a protest against Putin's regime).

"It's uplifting to think that there are still people who care about the rights of others". — **Yecenia Armenta** (detained after making some confessions to a priest and subjected to over 15 hours of torture).

**Online Petitions:** In this technique, a specific issue faced by a particular group in a certain geographical area is highlighted, detailing its circumstances and impacts on the online public opinion. People are then invited to sign the petition by entering their full name and email address, along with their country of origin, as a form of support and unconditional solidarity. There is also space for comments and suggestions to justify the signing. Once a certain number of signatures is reached, the petition is closed and submitted to the relevant authorities. The purposes and goals of these campaigns vary widely, including, for example, petitions advocating for animal rights and protection from laboratory testing, saving dolphins, promoting education for children with autism, reducing the cost of school supplies, saving olive trees in Turkey, and halting executions.

While pressing a button to sign an online petition in a virtual world may seem ineffective—due to its ease and non-material nature—these signatures, when combined and given their international character, can exert significant pressure on the relevant authorities and compel them to heed the collective international decision.

Given the numerous successes achieved through this technique, I will mention only a few representative examples:

- The release of journalist **Jason Rezaian** by the Iranian government on January 20, 2016, after receiving 541,229 signatures on the petition posted by his close friend **Charles-Antoine JOLY**. (Change.org., 2015)
- The success of Amnesty International's campaign in securing the release of **James Gatdet**, a former spokesperson for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (opposition), and **William Endley**, a South African citizen and former advisor to South Sudan opposition leader **Riek Machar**, while also having their death sentences overturned on November 2, 2018. They had been charged with treason and sentenced to death since their respective arrests on February 12 and February 23 (Amnestu International USA, n.d).
- The imposition of a halt on the exploitation of marine resources in the **Chagos Islands** in the Indian Ocean by the United Kingdom. This area is regarded as one of the most important marine reserves today. Despite the area being larger than both Germany and Italy combined, over 221,000 signatures from more than 223 countries compelled the Foreign Secretary to respond to the public demand for marine resource protection in 2010. A few years later, the campaign was expanded to urge the U.S. to protect marine resources in Hawaii and establish environmental reserves to prevent extinction. This request was answered by President Barack Obama in 2016 with the establishment of the **Papahānaumokuākea** Marine National Monument, the largest marine reserve in the world (Avaaz, (n.d)).

The director of the Global Ocean Legacy project, Matt Rand, acknowledged the importance of signing the online petition in a comment on the success of these environmental petitions, stating:

"The voice of people around the world is critical to showing our leaders that the time to protect our oceans is now. The 1.3 million people who signed... were a big part of getting this done". (Avaaz, (n.d))

**Hashtag Campaigns:** The hashtag technique (#), as mentioned earlier, enables interaction with a specific issue across the globe. All users need to do is use the hashtag symbol to join a virtual community focused on a particular matter. By using the same tag, individuals from different geographical locations can be identified.

The hashtag technique has gained widespread popularity, becoming almost a reflex response from citizens whenever an incident occurs in a community. Due to its various applications—both serious and trivial—I'll highlight only three notable examples:

- **#Not\_All\_Men (#الرجال\_كل\_ليس\_#):** This campaign was launched by advocates for women's rights, both men and women. The slogan emerged ironically in response to those who justify violence and discrimination against women. Feminists noticed that whenever women's issues were raised in patriarchal societies, proponents of male-dominated thinking would respond with "Not all men". While advocates recognize that "not all men" are rapists or sexual harassers, the slogan emphasizes that the issue pertains to women as a whole and warns against the dangers of crafting justifications for the violations women face worldwide. It calls for a focus on the current state of women rather than getting sidetracked by marginal discussions about "not all men".
- **#Pride:** This campaign was launched by advocates for LGBTQ+ rights, calling for the right to live freely and reduce the violations they face in parts of the world that have yet to recognize their sexual identities. By simply writing the hashtag "Pride", one can find a collection of images documenting the physical and psychological violence inflicted upon them, merely for being genetically different (at the chromosomal level).
- **#WeAreAll... (#كلنا\_...):** This general model expresses solidarity with individuals or places around the world. By using the hashtag "We Are All" and adding a word indicating a person's name or a location, one can join a vast army of supporters locally, nationally, and internationally. A notable national example that gained international attention is the case of Hayat, who was shot dead while attempting to migrate via boat from Tetouan to Spain. This incident sparked the hashtag **#ThePeopleWantToAbolishCitizenship**, expressing public outrage over the systematic assassination and the way the case was handled. One of the significant outcomes of this protest was the internationalization of Hayat's



case, highlighting it as a concern for a broad segment of Moroccan youth, leading Amnesty International to demand that Morocco conduct an investigation into the murder of Hayat Belqasim.

## Conclusion

Despite the importance of modern media and the increasing awareness of its impacts, its use as a mechanism for awareness and a developed means of communication has often been random and unstructured. The growing utilization of these media in research, presentations, schools, and workplaces has emerged as a spontaneous outcome of individuals' evolving thought processes, often without scrutiny or understanding. Today, it has become an integral part of modern daily life, serving as a means of communication, a source of information, a way to keep up with local, national, and international events, as well as a tool for entertainment and work.

While modern media plays a significant role in promoting international solidarity and facilitating cultural exchange, as outlined in this research, these efforts remain largely incidental and uncoordinated. A notable observation during my research was the lack of academic references and studies that highlight the importance of modern media in cultural dialogue and its role in bridging religious divides, except for some studies conducted by centers focused on countering terrorism and cybercrime, which emphasize the use of the internet in what is termed "digital terrorism" and the dangers posed by social media and online violence to children—especially in the context of cyberbullying, which has led many children and adolescents to depression and even suicide attempts.

In light of the absence of similar research focused on utilizing modern media to promote a culture of dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful international coexistence, the primary goal remains to confront the negative aspects of modern media and the threats faced by users—from extremist and fanatical ideas to the spread of misinformation and lies. To mitigate these risks, researchers have developed a new approach for selecting information, known as "media literacy".

Media literacy, which is increasingly being taught in various schools and universities, is an electronic educational tool aimed at creating aware users of modern media and social networking sites. This discipline covers a range of topics, including user protection, digital security, and the positive use of modern media, transitioning from passive consumption to active engagement based on production following consumption. One of the most significant contributions of modern media is its facilitation of academic research and critical thinking when receiving information.

Regarding academic research, media literacy proposes various mechanisms, including verifying the legitimacy of a site by examining its focus and specialization. For example:

- **Sites ending with ".com":** These are classified as "social" or general sites that can be consulted for entertainment purposes only and are not academically accredited, as they are not subject to oversight and can be established by anyone.
- **Sites ending with ".net":** These refer to all internet sites, and similar to social sites, they are also unregulated and unaccredited.
- **Sites ending with ".ma/.uk/..":** These indicate the country of the site (e.g., .ma for Morocco) and are likewise not subject to oversight.
- **Sites ending with ".org":** These are dedicated to associations, organizations, and official institutions. They are therefore monitored and vetted, and their content is reviewed, making them accredited as long as the material aligns with their specialization (e.g., a medical organization is accredited for medical literature but not for religious or artistic subjects).
- **Sites ending with ".edu":** These are the most academically and scientifically credible, typically associated with educational institutions (colleges, universities, research centers, etc.). The information they provide is often produced by academics and researchers, and the material is more reliable when it falls within the researcher's field of expertise.

For media and media content, media literacy suggests a series of questions that recipients of information should consider before determining the credibility of what they receive through images and news. These questions facilitate a pause before accepting information, prompting recipients to analyze the content, thus helping them develop critical thinking and awareness of self and the influences involved in persuasion. Some of these questions include:

- How did the image/text capture my attention? What mechanisms were used? (colors/fonts/shape/size).
- What information is being presented? What does the content producer want me to understand?
- How might another recipient interpret this message? (For instance, if the image shows a child throwing stones at a tank: how would a Muslim Arab, a Palestinian, a Jew, a Christian, a human rights activist, an Israeli, a mother, or a child understand it?).
- What information has been emphasized, and what has been omitted? (For example, if the information states that youths caused chaos in front of a government facility leading to a traffic stoppage, why emphasize "chaos"? Who are these youths: citizens, foreigners, students, unemployed, employees...? Why weren't their voices heard? Was it chaos or protest? What happened afterward: arrests, violence...?).
- Who is the producer of the information? (A journalist, a student, a religious figure...?)
- Who owns the site? (A political party, an association, an individual...?)

- Who funds the site? (A political party, an official or governmental entity, an individual...?)

Despite their significance, these mechanisms are primarily preventive against lies and deceptions, providing an opportunity to cultivate critical thinking capable of analyzing information and imagining its impacts on others. This brings us closer to understanding others' perspectives and psychology, and perhaps embracing and comprehending them. Above all, the goal remains to develop electronic mechanisms to promote a civilized mindset, receptive to the other, and to spread high human values through more effective and widely disseminated means. To achieve this, we must initiate academic and scientific research with contributions from international organizations, intellectuals, and researchers worldwide, combining efforts to confront extremist and fanatical ideologies, and elevate humanity toward a peaceful international society.

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