



# RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE

'Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, the power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as times change, truly are powerless, because they cannot think new thoughts.' *[Salman Rushdie]*



A representation of a particular situation or process in such a way as to reflect or conform to an overarching set of aims or values.

# Why Narratives?

- Humanity → defined by what it believes
- Socially-constructed ideologies are the foundation of social behavior – religions, laws, etc.
- Narratives therefore offer cohesive belief systems that can govern human behavior.
- Narratives have always been spread – word of mouth, newspapers, magazines, broadcasting on radio and television.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century – the internet, online media and smartphones.

# Influence of online media

JAN  
2020

## DIGITAL AROUND THE WORLD IN 2020

THE ESSENTIAL HEADLINE DATA YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND MOBILE, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE

TOTAL  
POPULATION



**7.75**  
BILLION

URBANISATION:  
**55%**

UNIQUE MOBILE  
PHONE USERS



**5.19**  
BILLION

PENETRATION:  
**67%**

INTERNET  
USERS



**4.54**  
BILLION

PENETRATION:  
**59%**

ACTIVE SOCIAL  
MEDIA USERS



**3.80**  
BILLION

PENETRATION:  
**49%**



we  
are  
social



KEPIOS

8

SOURCES: POPULATION: UNITED NATIONS; LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES; MOBILE: GSMA INTELLIGENCE; INTERNET: ITU; GLOBALWEBINDEX; GSMA INTELLIGENCE; LOCAL TELECOMS REGULATORY AUTHORITIES AND GOVERNMENT BODIES; APIII; KEPIOS ANALYSIS; SOCIAL MEDIA: PLATFORMS' SELF-SERVICE ADVERTISING TOOLS; COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EARNINGS REPORTS; CAFEBAZAAR; KEPIOS ANALYSIS. ALL LATEST AVAILABLE DATA IN JANUARY 2020. ♦ COMPARABILITY ADVISORY: SOURCE AND BASE CHANGES.

we  
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- Narratives are more accessible than ever.
- How do we navigate this new era where our lifestyles are so heavily dependent on the internet and consuming data readily?
- How can we maintain our own individualism of thought, free from the political and conventional biases that are fed to us through online media?



# My Research Paper


## Aims

- Explore the extent to which political narratives sustain political power.
- The methods through which political power can be sustained through narrative.
- How can we challenge/dismantle the narratives that dictate our lives?  
**'a sense of shared personal history'**  
**(Fivush, 2009, p.93)**

## Findings

- Narratives expressed through political discourse can be seen to have great influence the reception of political ideologies, which both preserves social cohesion, as well as distorts social reality
- Promotion of unified thought / limiting discourse
- Distraction
- Deceit & deception
- Shared experiences among masses can form a resistance narrative.

**'Trust in a knowledge-based society involves unreflective acceptance of, and trust in, a given state of affairs as it presents itself and is perceived.'**  
**(Segre, 2016, P.98)**



# Limitations / Loose Ends

- Examples of oppressed or marginalized groups using shared experiences to form counter-narratives – i.e. Women's Liberation Movement.
- Implies all counter narratives are beneficial to the individual through challenging oppressive power structures
- The oppressive use of political power sustained through narrative was the foundation of my essay, thus it largely fundamentally ignores the idea that beneficial and harmful narratives exist both within and outside of political discourse.
- With online media, narratives are moving into the hands of the individual – we are subject to narratives created by anyone which is beneficial in that we can obtain an array of views from varied perspectives, yet also harmful in that harmful ideologies can be brought to public readership so easily.

# Maintaining Individualis m

- Freedom of thought is important for wellbeing and progression.
- Minimalist vs Maximalist mentality to online media in general and to narratives.
- Being aware of narratives – challenge them – read with a critical eye and consider opposing viewpoints before deciding if we identify with a given narrative.

# Conclusions

- Social media gives us the opportunity to make our voices heard.
- However, with so much information available to us, we need to be aware of narratives that may cloud our judgement and limit our creative process.
- Following narratives without a critical and objective mindset leads us away from freedom of expression and towards blind allegiance to other's narratives.

*Take it with a pinch of salt.*



# Thank you for listening!

I would love to keep the conversation going –  
let's connect on LinkedIn !

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