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English Researches:

- **Associate Prof. Dr. Yasmin Elsayed - Prof. Dr. Amany Albert** - Beni Suef University
Dr. Aya Said - Canadian International College

Echo Chambers in News Coverage and their Role in Shaping Geopolitical Narratives

7

Abstracts of Arabic Researches:

- **Dr. Faisal Kamil Nagmeldin Mohamed** - Liwa University - Al Ain
Associate Prof. Dr. Ghada Mohamed Othman Salih - Liwa University - Al Ain
The Implications of Social Media Influencers on Generation Z:
An Applied Study on the TikTok Platforme 40
- **Associate Prof. Dr. El-Sayed Abdul Rahman Ali** - Liwa University - Al Ain
Recent Trends in Integrated Marketing Communications Research and Studies 41
- **Dr. Amal Mohamed Mohamed Henish** - Al-Azhar University
Semiotic Analysis of Cartoons on Israeli Social Media Pages Targeting Arabic during
the Aggression against Gaza: The "Israel Speaks Arabic" Page as a Model 42
- **Dr. Asmaa Ahamed Gooda El-Ebshehy** - Higher Institute of Media and Communication Arts in 6th of October
Employing Social Listening Tools in Analyzing Sentiments and Public Opinion
Trends toward Issues of the Egyptian General Secondary Education
(Thanaweya Amma) 44
- **Dr. Samih Elsayed Sharaki** - Al-Azhar University
Dr. Osama Mustafa Abd Elwhab - Al-Azhar University
Television Advertising and Adolescents' Purchase Behavior in the Egyptian
Villages: A Field Study 46
- **Dr. Ahd Maher Abu Draz** - Umm Al Quwain University
University Students' Use of Multimedia in Higher Education and the Gratifications
Derived from it: A Field Study on Universities in the United Arab Emirates 48
- **Dr. Mona Ebrahim Abdelhafz Abdrasol** - Al-Azhar University
Dr. Shimaa Ahmed Mohamed Refaat - Al-Azhar University
Egyptian Public Trends towards Using Reels as Cybersecurity Awareness Tool on
Social Media: A Field Study 49

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Echo Chambers in News Coverage and their Role in Shaping Geopolitical Narratives (*)

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of "echo chambers" discussions on political conflicts in war-torn regions and zones of unrest, examining their role in shaping explanatory narratives of events. It also investigates how active participants within these echo chambers interpret political disputes. Data were gathered through structured interviews with 25 media and journalism experts, representing both academic and professional sectors.

The results demonstrate that echo chambers have a substantial influence on media coverage, with the degree of their impact varying based on editorial policies and target audiences.

Moreover, these chambers were found to facilitate the propagation of extremist opinions and misinformation, thereby distorting public perception and misguiding the formation of public opinion.

The study highlights the central role of echo chambers in building audience trust in their content, which significantly shapes political attitudes. Nonetheless, they face major challenges regarding impartiality and credibility, often being swayed by the political agendas of dominant stakeholders.

Keywords: Echo Chambers, News Coverage, Geopolitical Narratives.

Introduction:

In the past two decades, media platforms have undergone a profound transformation due to the rapid advancements in social media, which has become a primary arena for exchanging information and opinions on geopolitical issues and political conflicts — or alternatively, for managing, escalating, and steering these issues while heightening polarization toward specific directions. Due to technological advancements, news coverage is no longer governed by official or monopolistic media discourse reliant on a monopolization system as it once was. Today, the audience possesses the capability to produce and distribute media content independently.

Within this context, the phenomenon of "echo chambers" has emerged on social media platforms. These are closed groups where information and ideas are repeatedly exchanged and similar opinions are reinforced. Political actors and opinion leaders have exploited these chambers to amplify their ideologies and fortify their positions, potentially resulting in diverse narratives about conflicts and political disputes. This creates a parallel reality distinct from the traditional news coverage provided by official media outlets. Therefore, it becomes essential to study the impact of discussions within echo chambers on news coverage and their role in shaping geopolitical narratives.

Problem Statement:

Media has witnessed significant shifts in the era of diverse digital platforms, where audiences have become producers rather than mere recipients of news. These platforms are no longer limited to broadcasting news; they also enable individuals to interact directly with events and exchange opinions about them. As a result, virtual communities have emerged within digital environments, where information and news are exchanged or disseminated through ideological filters and preconceived stances. This phenomenon, known as "echo chambers," aims to reinforce specific perspectives on geopolitical issues and political conflicts. Through repeated dissemination and interaction, these narratives are amplified among community members, potentially influencing the reshaping of media narratives.

The study's central problem lies in understanding the impact of discussions within echo chambers on news coverage and whether they contribute to shaping geopolitical narratives and political conflicts. While these chambers may facilitate the rapid exchange of information, foster political discussions, and often bolster polarization, their effects on public opinion formation and the alteration of media narratives remain largely ambiguous. Their tendency to steer media discourse toward specific paths amplifies divisions and polarization among audiences regarding sensitive political issues.

This raises the question of the extent to which echo chambers shape audience perceptions of political conflicts. Do they truly enhance public awareness, or do they instead propagate polarization, deepen divisions, and exacerbate disputes? Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the role of these chambers in shaping political and geopolitical narratives through interviews with academic experts and digital media and journalism practitioners. It seeks to understand their perspectives on the influence and interaction of echo chambers with news coverage, their efficacy in disseminating information, and the extent to which engagement within these chambers contributes to reshaping or altering public opinion on political conflicts. Additionally, the study examines whether such interaction leads to changes in the news coverage provided and its impact on reshaping media narratives related to political conflicts, thereby enhancing

our understanding of the role these chambers play in influencing news coverage within geopolitical contexts.

Study Objectives:

The study aims to achieve a primary goal: "To analyze opinions about echo chamber discussions of news coverage and their role in shaping geopolitical narratives and political conflicts through interviews with experts in digital media and journalism." From this main objective, several sub-objectives emerge, as follows:

- Gathering experts' opinions on the effectiveness of echo chambers in disseminating information and their adherence to fundamental media principles.
- Evaluating the impact of interactions within echo chambers on shaping audience attitudes, increasing polarization towards specific orientations, and influencing public opinion regarding political conflicts.
- Examining the capacity of these interactions in echo chambers to alter news coverage, with the aim of transforming or modifying media content.
- Analyzing the role of echo chambers in reshaping media narratives related to political conflicts by understanding how these chambers contribute to constructing and altering narratives on political and geopolitical issues.
- Exploring the influence of echo chambers on news coverage in geopolitical contexts and determining whether they contribute to improving or modifying the way political issues are addressed in the media.

Study Importance:

The importance of the study is reflected in two main dimensions:

1. Theoretical or Scientific Importance:

- The study enhances scientific understanding of the impact of echo chamber discussions on news coverage by analyzing their role in shaping geopolitical narratives and political conflicts.
- It provides a novel contribution to the academic field by investigating modern digital interactions that influence public opinion and political media, which is a contemporary and significant topic in the fields of media and communication.
- It enriches the literature on the role of social media platforms in shaping media discourse and directing political debates in the digital media era.

2. Societal or Practical Importance:

- The study raises awareness among the public, media decision-makers, and policymakers about the role of echo chambers in shaping or

polarizing public opinion on geopolitical issues, thereby enhancing understanding of the social and political impacts of this phenomenon.

- It offers a practical tool for media institutions and research centers to understand the influence of echo chambers on shaping media narratives and political conflicts, enabling them to develop media strategies aimed at disseminating information accurately and impartially.

Literature Review:

Literature Review represents a crucial foundation for understanding the research topic, as it illuminates the phenomenon of digital echo chambers from various perspectives. To offer a comprehensive view, the studies are categorized into five main themes: (the emergence and evolution of echo chambers, the factors influencing their formation, information polarization within them, the impact of technology and social media, and strategies for addressing them). This review aims to explore the scientific contributions in this field, facilitating a deeper understanding of the relationship between echo chambers and information behavior in the digital era.

Regarding the emergence and evolution of echo chambers, digital echo chambers are a cognitive phenomenon linked to individuals' tendency to seek out information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, a concept known as confirmation bias. With the development of the internet and social media, this phenomenon has become increasingly visible and widespread, with digital platforms playing a pivotal role in amplifying it and shaping user interaction patterns. In this context, (Han et al., 2023) explored the influence of media content on echo chambers, revealing that conservative media reinforce ideological biases within echo chambers through comments that align with these biases, while progressive media offer a more diverse space for opinions. These findings intersect with those of (Cinelli et al., 2020), who demonstrated that platforms like Facebook and Twitter, which rely on news-feed algorithms, encourage user engagement with others who share similar views, thereby enhancing the influence of echo chambers. In contrast, platforms such as Reddit and Gab, which operate through sub communities, exhibit greater interaction diversity, thereby reducing the impact of these echo chambers.

Furthermore, (Currin, Vallejo Vera, and Khaledi-Nasab, 2022) proposed strategies to address echo chambers, such as the Random Dynamic Nudging (RDN) mechanism, designed to mitigate the influence of echo chambers by altering interaction mechanisms, thus fostering intellectual diversity in discussions. These strategies contribute to reducing the effects of algorithms that reinforce biases within echo chambers.

(Wang et al., 2020) examined the role of social and cognitive biases in intensifying political polarization within echo chambers, showing that these biases deepen divisions among individuals and increase interactions within

closed circles that lack intellectual diversity, thereby exacerbating the influence of echo chambers on users' political views.

In this regard, (Bright, 2017) provided broader insights into the influence of political orientations on the formation of echo chambers, indicating that political parties with extreme ideologies are more likely to form echo chambers compared to moderate parties. This reflects the role of political ideology in shaping interaction patterns within these chambers.

Through these studies, it becomes clear that digital echo chambers are the result of a complex interaction between technological algorithms and social and political biases. Research has shown how digital platforms contribute to the reinforcement of this phenomenon, making it a fundamental component in understanding contemporary internet behavior and the polarization of information within these closed chambers.

These studies demonstrate that the formation of echo chambers is influenced by a complex interaction of cognitive, social, and technological factors. They also suggest that digital interaction, cognitive biases, and closed interactive environments all contribute to reinforcing intellectual divisions and polarization, highlighting the need for further research to understand the impact of this phenomenon in various social and political contexts.

Echo Chambers and Information Polarization: Recent studies have shown the impact of echo chambers on enhancing social and political polarization, as limiting interaction between individuals with similar opinions deepens the gaps between different groups. In this context, (Yang's, 2024) study demonstrated that echo chambers in social networks such as Twitter foster limited interaction between different ideologies, leading to the formation of aggregation patterns that increase bias and weaken democratic expression, thereby contributing to the deepening polarization among users.

Concerning the effect of echo chambers on the spread of misinformation, (Diaz Ruiz and Nilsson, 2023) added an important dimension by analyzing how hostile narratives and group affiliations are exploited to reinforce extremist views. The study concluded that this strategic use of misinformation significantly contributes to social and political polarization by narrowing the scope of dialogue and increasing information isolation.

On other social media platforms, (de-Lima-Santos and Ceron, 2023) examined coordinated behaviors within echo chambers on Facebook, showing that the exchange of misleading narratives within these chambers enhances political polarization and negatively impacts public health. They pointed out that this digital behavior deepens divisions and limits intellectual diversity among individuals.

In the context of health crises, (Jiang, Ren, and Ferrara, 2021) examined the complex dynamics of echo chambers during the COVID-19 pandemic on Twitter, revealing that right-wing communities were more cohesive than others. The study confirmed that these dynamics contribute to reducing interaction

between different ideologies, enhancing information isolation and political polarization, which increases the gap between different groups.

(Geschke, Lorenz, and Holtz, 2019) confirmed that social and technological filtering contributes to the fragmentation of society into separate echo chambers, where interaction is limited to individuals with similar opinions. This behavior enhances polarization and isolates individuals from diverse information, thereby narrowing cognitive horizons and deepening divisions between social and political groups.

Finally, (Garimella et. al, 2018) investigated the impact of political echo chambers on Twitter, showing that users are significantly exposed to views that align with their own, reinforcing the existence of echo chambers. The study also highlighted the role of "gatekeepers" who consume diverse content but produce biased content, thereby contributing to political polarization. It further introduced the concept of the "cost of neutrality," which refers to the difficulty faced by users who attempt to bridge the gaps between echo chambers while maintaining their central position within the network.

These studies clearly show that echo chambers are not merely a technical phenomenon but the result of a complex interaction between social, political, and technological factors, leading to the enhancement of political and social polarization and deepening the gaps between individuals and communities.

Regarding the impact of technology and social media, technology and social media play a crucial role in shaping echo chambers and enhancing informational polarization. Algorithms and user behaviors contribute to directing individuals toward content that supports their existing beliefs. In a recent study by (Modgil, et.al, 2024), the impact of echo chambers during the COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted, where it was observed that the confirmation bias within these echo chambers significantly affected decisions related to supply chains, pushing users to deepen pro-positions within those chambers, thus enhancing division and exacerbating polarization.

On the other hand, a study by (Figà Talamanca, Arfini, 2022) explored the impact of filter bubbles created by algorithms in shaping echo chambers, demonstrating how repeated content supporting the same ideas fosters intellectual closure within these chambers, exacerbating polarization. In this context, a study by (Garimella et al., 2018) focused on the role of social media in shaping political echo chambers, showing that these platforms contribute to the redistribution of similar opinions among users, thereby reinforcing ideological biases and reducing intellectual diversity.

In a previous study by (Möller, 2021), the role of algorithms in determining users' exposure to selective content was emphasized. It showed that social media platforms enhance homogeneity within echo chambers, limiting the diversity of information users are exposed to. Meanwhile, (Flaxman, Goel, Rao, 2016) revealed that social networks and search engines contribute to increasing ideological segregation by exposing users to content aligned with

their views, thus reducing exposure to opposing perspectives, particularly in ideologically-driven news.

In a study by (Kitchens, Johnson, and Gray, 2020), the effect of echo chambers and filter bubbles on news diversity and consumption across different social media platforms was analyzed. The findings showed that Facebook enhances diversity, but with more extreme partisan leanings, while Reddit was more moderate, and Twitter showed no significant impact in this context.

These studies suggest that algorithms and digital interactions play a significant role in shaping echo chambers, increasing polarization, and reinforcing ideological biases. As these effects increase, the studies call for improvements in platform algorithms and the promotion of news diversity to reduce ideological isolation and decrease informational polarization.

Regarding strategies for dealing with echo chambers, some studies have proposed solutions aimed at reducing the impact of this phenomenon and promoting intellectual diversity among individuals. In a study by (Namazzi, 2024), the importance of increasing media literacy and enhancing critical thinking among social media users was emphasized. The study showed that these skills help individuals confront the impact of echo chambers by examining and critically evaluating information, contributing to reducing intellectual closure.

Similarly, a study by (Sakhiya, Rathod, 2024) suggested that increasing political engagement could be an effective solution to avoid falling into echo chambers. The results showed that individuals with a higher political interest are more likely to seek and verify information from diverse sources, enhancing their ability to expand their intellectual horizons and avoid ideological bias.

The study by (Currin, Vallejo Vera, and Khaledi-Nasab, 2022) proposed using a random dynamic delivery mechanism (RDN) to periodically present random opinions to users. This approach helps to reduce polarization and break down echo chambers by exposing individuals to diverse viewpoints, promoting balance in consumed information.

On the other hand, a study by (Dubois et al., 2020) explored the role of opinion leaders and opinion seekers in reducing the impact of echo chambers. The study showed that these individuals tend to adopt advanced information verification behaviors, making them less prone to falling into echo chambers. These behaviors contribute to fostering positive interaction with information from diverse sources, thereby building trust in media.

Strategies for dealing with echo chambers vary, including promoting critical thinking, increasing political engagement, using random mechanisms to diversify opinions, and focusing on the role of opinion leaders. All of these strategies contribute significantly to reducing polarization and promoting balanced interaction among individuals from diverse intellectual backgrounds.

Cognitive Framework of the Study (Overview on Echo Chambers):

Echo chambers, a recent phenomenon in the realm of social networks, have garnered significant attention from researchers due to their profound implications. Their role in propagating information, reinforcing beliefs and opinions, and potentially fostering inequality within networks and societies underscores the critical need for comprehensive understanding. Despite the lack of a clear definition, existing research has primarily concentrated on five aspects of echo chambers: their attributes, underlying mechanisms, modeling, detection, and mitigation strategies (Mahmoudi et al., 2024).

Echo chambers refer to the situation where people ‘hear their own voice’. In the context of social media, it refers to situations where users consume content that expresses the same point of view that users hold themselves. As social media platforms largely rely on algorithms to generate large quantity of content, which can lead to the emergence of conspiracy theories, other forms of distorted information, and even extremist groups with a shared ideology, which further lead to the emergence of echo chambers (Modgil et al., 2024).

The difference between echo chambers and filter bubbles:

(Figà Talamanca, Arfini, 2022) explained the difference between filter bubbles, which result from algorithms that present content aligned with users' preferences and lead to intellectual isolation at the individual level, and echo chambers, which are created by users themselves through interactions with people who share the same beliefs. While echo chambers can exist in offline environments, they expand more significantly online. (Figà Talamanca, and Arfini, 2022) also discussed their social impacts, as both concepts reinforce intellectual isolation and polarization.

Digital echo chambers or filter bubbles, which are environments formed around particular topics whose objective is to promote a given political-ideological position. echo chambers are social systems of interaction created to deal with the process of informational overload brought about by the consolidation of digital media in people's daily lives. Echo chambers produce their identities through continuous interaction with content that aligns with their ideological positions, which enhances their cohesion and continuity. Echo chambers handle the surplus of meaning produced by digital media by continuously reproducing content that aligns with their positions, which reduces complexity and enhances consistency (Palmieri, 2024).

Extant research has identified how a digitized media environment leads people to live in echo chambers in two respects. The first is selective exposure. People tend to choose like-minded information over challenging one; such a tendency has been facilitated upon the rise of partisan media in conjunction with the increasing media selectivity. Likewise, by their own choice, people are surrounded by similar voices. Second, algorithms managing personal news feeds are postulated to be customized based on the users' prior browsing

history. This supports the insular consumption of the news against opposing ideas. This phenomenon has been conceptualized as filter bubbles. (Han et al., 2023).

Both echo chambers and filter bubbles are commonly characterized by ideological segregation (the tendency of individuals to associate with others who share their viewpoints) and by partisan polarization (the adoption of more extreme views). Echo chambers are associated with “fragmentation of users into ideologically narrow groups”, with “political fragmentation and social polarization”, and with “segregation by interest or opinion [that] will ... increase political polarization” and “foster social extremism”. Similarly, filter bubbles are a “centrifugal force pulling us apart”, “in which algorithms inadvertently amplify ideological segregation”. In this way, the increasing ability to interact online is viewed not as a unifying force but, rather, one that may tear apart the fabric of society as individuals adopt more extreme views (Kitchens, Johnson, and Gray, 2020).

Characteristics of echo chambers:

Echo chambers are a phenomenon that occurs in social networks where like-minded individuals gather in closed groups, leading to the reinforcement and repetition of shared beliefs and opinions. An echo chamber can be defined as a group possessing the following characteristics:

1. **Formation of a group by like-minded individuals:** Individuals who share the same beliefs and opinions tend to gather together.
2. **Prevalence of interactions within the group:** Interactions among group members are more common compared to interactions with individuals outside the group.
3. **Reinforcement of beliefs within the group:** Shared beliefs and opinions among group members are reinforced and become more extreme over time due to continuous interaction (Mahmoudi et al., 2024).

These characteristics make echo chambers a closed environment that reinforces existing ideas and reduces exposure to different viewpoints (Mahmoudi et al., 2024).

Media Polarization:

Polarization is a phenomenon characterized by the intensification of opposing viewpoints on a particular matter, resulting in the division of a group or society with divergent beliefs, attitudes, or ideologies. This divisive process reduces the opportunity for productive dialog and compromise among individuals. The emergence of new communication technologies plays a significant role in the formation of polarization (Xing et al., 2024).

Types of Media Polarization:

Many studies, such as Iyengar, S., & Hahn, K. S. (2009), Stroud, N. J. (2010), Pew Research Center (2016), and Tucker, J. A. et al. (2018), have identified types of media polarization as follows:

1. **Affective Polarization:** This refers to the growing differences in emotions and feelings between individuals or groups toward specific issues, especially in the political realm. This type of polarization increases feelings of hatred or hostility toward individuals who hold conflicting views.
2. **Ideological Polarization:** This type of polarization is related to the increasing disagreements over ideological or political stances, where the media encourages individuals to adopt more extreme views, leading to deepening divisions between differing groups.
3. **Social Polarization:** This refers to the division within society based on social values or beliefs that are reinforced through the media, leading to the segmentation of society into divergent groups with clear differences in social stances.

Causes of Polarization:

Media polarization is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon shaped by the intersection of media infrastructure and individual and social behaviors. Scientific studies indicate that this phenomenon cannot be attributed to a single factor but rather emerges from an intricate network of media and psychological mechanisms.

Berman's study highlights that engagement with controversial content serves as a primary driver of polarization. Social media platforms rely on algorithms that prioritize divisive content, as it enhances user interaction and increases the time spent on the platform. While this approach aims to boost profitability, it concurrently escalates social tensions by amplifying provocative content. Consequently, algorithmic bias not only fuels division but also entrenches psychological and cultural barriers between individuals and different groups, further deepening societal divides.

In the same context, the concept of "echo chambers" stands out as another fundamental factor in the polarization process. As demonstrated in Stroud's study (2008), social media platforms enable users to selectively filter content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, leading to selective exposure that isolates them from opposing viewpoints. Although this cognitive isolation may provide users with psychological comfort, it restricts their ability to grasp diverse perspectives, thereby exacerbating polarization between different social groups. Stroud's findings reveal that individuals who consume news through specific media outlets tend to engage exclusively with content that reinforces their positions, ultimately entrenching their political and social divisions over time (Stroud, 2008).

Thus, media polarization can be understood as a dynamic interaction between the digital platform infrastructure and users' selective consumption patterns. While these platforms pursue economic objectives by maximizing engagement, individuals simultaneously contribute to the polarization process by selectively consuming media. Hence, it is essential to consider new media strategies that promote intellectual plurality and mitigate the negative effects of echo chambers and selective exposure, fostering a more open and inclusive media environment.

Misinformation and fake news are major contributors to the amplification of media polarization, as they spread inaccurate or biased content that reinforces extreme positions and deepens societal divisions. A study by (Friggeri et al., 2014). Revealed that false information travels faster than accurate news across social media platforms, exacerbating polarization. This dynamic makes fake news an effective tool in reinforcing gaps between individuals and groups, hindering mutual understanding, and escalating social tensions (Friggeri et al., 2014).

Digital media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are key factors contributing to media polarization, as these platforms personalize content based on users' individual interests. This personalization deepens divisions between different groups, isolating individuals within information bubbles that reinforce their current beliefs and limit exposure to opposing viewpoints. In this context, (Pariser, 2011) warned about the impact of the "filter bubble," where this phenomenon prevents individuals from encountering dissenting perspectives, thereby intensifying social and ideological polarization (Pariser, 2011).

On the other hand, affective polarization is associated with an increase in hostility and negative emotions toward individuals or groups with opposing views. A study by Iyengar and Hahn (2009) found that individuals exposed to news through media that reinforce their political leanings become more emotionally divided from their political opponents, which intensifies tensions between social and political groups. (Iyengar, and Hahn, 2009)

At the same time, ideological polarization is linked to growing interest in ideological and political issues, where media contributes to the reinforcement of extreme positions. (Tucker et al., 2018) highlighted that extremist political movements often find a fertile environment for growth in digital media, leading to the exacerbation of ideological divisions within society (Tucker et al., 2018).

Research Questions:

1. To what extent can echo chambers be considered effective platforms for transmitting information accurately and impartially from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?
2. How does the interaction within echo chambers contribute to shaping the public's attitudes and opinions on political conflicts from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?

3. How do the discussions within echo chambers influence the audience's alignment towards specific opinions?
4. How do the discussions in echo chambers affect the news coverage of geopolitical issues and political conflicts from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?
5. Does the interaction within echo chambers lead to changes in the content of media coverage provided by traditional or digital media from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?
6. How do echo chambers contribute to reshaping the media narratives related to political conflicts from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?
7. What role do echo chambers play in improving or changing the way geopolitical issues are addressed in the media from the perspective of media and journalism experts (study sample)?

Methodological Framework:

▪ *Type and Method of the Study:*

This study is classified as an explanatory research study that aims to understand the mechanisms and factors through which digital echo chambers across social media platforms contribute to reshaping geopolitical narratives and directing the trajectories of political conflicts. This type of research is well-suited to the nature of the phenomenon, which requires an in-depth analysis of content and a thorough understanding of the communicative processes that emerge within closed digital environments. The study employs a qualitative approach, as it is the most capable of uncovering the implicit meanings and interpretations provided by media and journalism experts regarding how these narratives are formed. This is achieved through thematic analysis based on systematic coding and interpretive extraction of the main recurring themes identified in the in-depth interview data.

The qualitative approach in this study relies on Thematic Analysis following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), through the following stages:

1. Repeated review of the interview data to ensure a comprehensive understanding.
2. Initial open coding to extract key ideas.
3. Grouping codes into preliminary thematic categories.
4. Reviewing the themes and linking them to the study's framework and research questions.
5. Identifying the final themes and formulating clear definitions for each.
6. Writing the thematic analysis and connecting it to theoretical literature and previous studies.

These procedures enable a deep interpretation of how political narratives are formed within digital echo chambers.

▪ **Study Instruments – In-depth Interviews:**

The study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary data collection tool, based on their ability to:

- Access participants' direct experiences.
- Understand professional perceptions related to the formation of narratives within echo chambers.
- Extract implicit meanings that quantitative tools cannot provide.

▪ **Instrument Validity:**

The validity of the instrument was verified through:

- Presenting the interview guide to three experts specializing in digital media and qualitative studies.
- Conducting a pilot interview to ensure the clarity of the questions and their ability to generate the required information.
- Reviewing relevant literature and previous studies to ensure the questions' consistency with the established theoretical frameworks.

▪ **Reliability:**

The reliability of the data was enhanced through:

- Recording interviews with participants' consent.
- Accurately transcribing the interviews and applying triangulation by comparing the data with the literature and the expertise of other researchers.
- Repeatedly reviewing the data at different coding stages to ensure consistency.

▪ **Study Population:**

The study population consists of:

- Media and journalism experts in traditional and digital institutions.
- Specialists in analyzing news coverage on social media platforms.
- Academics studying transformations in digital media and its impact on public opinion.

This population is distinguished by its direct cognitive and professional expertise regarding the mechanisms of forming geopolitical narratives within echo chambers.

▪ **Study Sample:**

The study employed purposive sampling, including 25 media and journalism experts, selected according to clear criteria, including:

1. At least five years of professional experience in media institutions or in digital content analysis.
2. Direct involvement in the creation or analysis of journalistic narratives.
3. Advanced knowledge of the geopolitical impacts of digital media.

4. Diversity of specializations to ensure balanced academic and professional representation.

★ Rationale for Sample Selection:

1. Experts are best positioned to interpret how narratives are formed and the influence of echo chambers on news dissemination.
2. Purposive sampling aligns with the qualitative approach, which aims to access deep sources of knowledge rather than achieve statistical representation.
3. Theoretical saturation was reached at the 22nd interview; nevertheless, data collection continued until 25 participants to ensure completeness.

■ Study Boundaries:

- Topical Boundaries: The study focused on the knowledge and expertise of media professionals regarding the formation of media narratives, the influence of echo chambers on news circulation, public opinion formation, and political conflicts. The scope of the study was limited to interaction mechanisms through digital media and did not extend to aspects unrelated to journalism or social media use.
- Geographical Boundaries: The study sample was selected from media and journalism experts working in traditional and digital media organizations in Egypt. This geographical scope was chosen due to the concentration of professional expertise and the accessibility of participants for conducting in-depth interviews.
- Temporal Boundaries: The interviews were conducted over a three-month period, from October 1, 2024, to January 30, 2025. This timeframe allowed for systematic collection of data while ensuring relevance to current trends in digital media and ongoing geopolitical developments.

★ Rationale for Selecting the Study Timeframe:

- Coverage of the conflict period and its direct impact: The selected period begins on October 1, 2024, to include the initial escalation phase of events between Israel and Hezbollah, allowing the observation of media interactions at the peak of conflict-related discourse.
- Observation of the post-ceasefire phase: The study extends until January 31, 2025, following the ceasefire on November 27, 2024, enabling the analysis of how media narratives were reshaped in the aftermath of direct military conflict.
- Availability of abundant digital and media data: This period witnessed a high volume of media content and social media interactions,

providing a rich dataset to measure the dynamics of narrative formation within digital echo chambers.

- Tracking narrative shifts over time: The timeframe covers the pre-conflict, during-conflict, and post-conflict stages, allowing for an understanding of temporal changes in media narratives and digital public opinion trends.
- Alignment with major regional and geopolitical events: The selected period coincides with key developments in the region, including the ongoing Israeli – Lebanese confrontations, the Israel – Hezbollah ceasefire, and events related to the Syrian crisis, such as reports regarding Bashar al-Assad's departure from Syria, alongside the continuing war in Gaza. This alignment underscores the significance of the chosen period, given the clear reflection of geopolitical intersections in digital media discourse.

Study Results:

First: The Impact of Echo Chambers on News Coverage of Geopolitical Events:

The responses from participants clearly indicated that all those involved in the interviews pointed to the significant influence of these pages on the way political events are covered, although this influence varies in intensity and nature depending on the editorial policy of the site and the target audience.

Experts' opinions varied, with some stating that pages discussing conflicts and wars may influence urgent political decisions based on the information published on them, though this influence is partial. Others added that the impact of these pages is not substantial when compared to the editorial policies followed by media institutions, as political coverage is often under administrative and executive supervision to ensure that media outlets align with national policies. The impact varies according to each site's editorial policy, with the methods of presenting events shifting based on the media institution's direction.

On the other hand, there was a contrasting view that these pages may amplify extreme opinions and contribute to the spread of misleading information, which affects the formation of public opinion inaccurately. Such pages can create what is known as "information bubbles".

At another level, responses included the idea that these pages play a role in creating a diversity of opinions and stories, which provides a broad space for different geopolitical political narratives. Some participants further added that these pages contribute to opinion diversity due to their reliance on the general public as a source of content.

Additionally, participants confirmed that pages discussing conflicts can lead to the reinforcement of geopolitical political stories in a unified manner

when supported by political agendas, while in other cases, they may contribute to greater diversity depending on the editorial policies of the site and the target audience.

In general, it appears that echo chambers on social media platforms impact the coverage of geopolitical events in various ways. Some pages guide public opinion and reinforce unified narratives, while others provide a broad space for diversity and differing opinions. The impact of these pages depends on the nature of the content shared, the political or media goal behind it, and the agendas of the parties dominating these pages.

The findings of the first theme demonstrate clear consistency with previous literature on the emergence and development of digital echo chambers. Overall, studies agree that confirmation bias constitutes the cognitive foundation upon which these closed environments are built, as evidenced by research such as Han et al. (2023) and Cinelli et al. (2020), which highlighted the pivotal role of algorithms in reinforcing selective engagement and reproducing intellectual homogeneity. The results also align with prior research indicating that digital transformation has contributed to the evolution of echo chambers from a traditional social phenomenon into a more complex and influential digital structure, driven by mechanisms of algorithmic personalization.

Despite this consistency, the literature reveals points of divergence that enrich the theoretical understanding of this theme. Some studies suggest that the impact of algorithms is not uniform across all platforms; while platforms like Facebook and Twitter exhibit high levels of ideological homogeneity, others, such as Reddit, display more diverse interactive spaces. This indicates that the development of echo chambers varies according to the technical architecture of each platform. Furthermore, literature differs in estimating the weight of psychological and social factors compared to technical factors. While studies such as Wang et al. (2020) emphasize the centrality of social biases in shaping echo chambers, others argue that technology is the most influential factor. Some studies also introduce a historical perspective, suggesting that echo chambers are not purely digital constructs but rather extensions of traditional social sorting behaviors, which have become more pronounced through modern digital tools.

Thus, it becomes evident that the findings of the first theme are largely consistent with the literature in explaining the conceptual and technical foundations of echo chambers, while also opening up significant research divergences related to platform variation, the multiplicity of psychological and social influences, and historical interpretations of the phenomenon. This, in turn, supports the construction of a comprehensive theoretical framework that reflects the complex, multidimensional nature of digital echo chambers.

Second: The Accuracy and Impartiality of Media Coverage in Echo Chambers:

The majority of the participants noted that these pages cannot be considered impartial, as they are often controlled by political or ideological groups seeking to promote their own agendas. These pages are often directed by specific countries or groups that promote ideas and trends adopted by the entities controlling the pages. For instance, Al Jazeera supports the Palestinian cause against the occupation, while Saudi pages take a neutral stance in covering conflicts such as the Sudanese conflict.

Another direction in the responses indicated that these pages are often controlled by electronic militias, which leads to the reduction of opinions into a knowledge bubble that only promotes the ideas they adopt, without considering diversity or objectivity. These pages do not provide absolute neutrality but follow diverse editorial policies influenced by the political affiliations of the entities that control them.

Participants confirmed that these pages are mostly managed by political groups, affecting the credibility of the news. They promote biased positions in the coverage of political conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Syrian conflict. They pointed out that the concept of "neutrality" has disappeared from the media lexicon, especially on social media, where biases are clearly visible, referring specifically to media coverage of events in Syria and Palestine.

The findings of the second theme reveal a notable intersection with previous literature addressing the accuracy and neutrality of media coverage within echo chambers. Most studies affirm that these digital environments contribute to the reinforcement of political and ideological biases at the expense of accuracy and objectivity. For instance, research by Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson (2023) and de-Lima-Santos & Ceron (2023) highlighted that politically orchestrated digital groups — or so-called “cyber militias”—play a direct role in reproducing selective narratives that serve specific agendas, which aligns with participants’ observations in this study that the pages in question are often managed by political actors or state entities seeking to entrench particular narratives. The findings also correspond with Garimella et al. (2018), who argued that echo chambers reproduce “knowledge bubbles” lacking diversity and reinforce biased perceptions of geopolitical issues.

Nevertheless, the literature also reveals significant points of divergence compared to the findings of the second theme. While previous studies often focused on the technical role of algorithms and publishing platforms in shaping biases within echo chambers, the current results underscore a more prominent dimension: the direct control of content by political actors, extending beyond algorithmic influence alone. Additionally, some studies differ in estimating the level of neutrality; for example, Bright (2017) suggested that limited spaces for

diversity may exist within certain digital environments, whereas participants in this study reported a near-complete absence of neutrality in complex political issues, particularly those related to the Arab Israeli conflict and the Syrian crisis. Literature also diverges in interpreting the source of bias: some studies attribute it to individual user behaviors (confirmation bias), whereas the findings of this theme highlight the organized and institutional nature of bias, manifested through the centralized management of pages by politically or ideologically aligned entities.

Thus, the second theme reflects a substantial consistency with the literature linking echo chambers to the amplification of political bias and the erosion of objectivity, while simultaneously offering a sharper perspective on the direct role of political actors in shaping these biases, thereby expanding the research discourse from focusing solely on algorithmic effects to recognizing the authoritative and organizational structures controlling narrative production within digital environments.

Third: The Impact of Echo Chambers on News Credibility:

Participants emphasized that these pages have a significant impact on the credibility of news and objectivity, as news is carefully selected and presented with clear biases. For instance, pages supporting the Syrian regime spread rumors contradicting reality regarding the fall of the regime, lacking professional objectivity. In covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some participants noted that Western media primarily adopts the Israeli narrative, affecting objectivity and diminishing news credibility.

These pages often promote specific political agendas, which weakens the credibility of news in major conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This highlights the importance of verifying sources and carefully selecting news. The responses indicate that political biases significantly affect news credibility, reflecting the need for caution when dealing with news on these pages and emphasizing the importance of diversity and objectivity in media coverage of political conflicts.

The findings of the third theme demonstrate a clear alignment with previous literature emphasizing the profound impact of echo chambers on news credibility. Studies such as Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson (2023) and Garimella et al. (2018) indicate that closed digital environments reproduce selective narratives that serve specific political agendas, leading to a notable decline in information reliability and an increase in the dissemination of misinformation. This was evident in participants' accounts, who confirmed that ideologically driven pages —such as those supporting the Syrian regime or Western pages biased toward the Israeli narrative — select news according to preexisting political orientations, directly affecting the objectivity and neutrality of coverage. The results also correspond with de-Lima-Santos & Ceron (2023), who highlighted that echo chambers contribute to recycling narratives that contradict reality,

particularly in complex conflicts such as the Russia–Ukraine war or the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, emphasizing that digital selectivity heightens doubts regarding news credibility.

However, the findings of this theme reveal some nuanced divergences compared to previous studies. While literature often focused on the technical factor — particularly the role of algorithms in reinforcing informational bias, the participants’ accounts clearly underscore the direct political influence on credibility, as many pages are managed by states or organized groups deliberately manipulating narratives. This level of organization may not be as prominent in studies that emphasized individual user behavior or algorithmic filter effects. Additionally, the results differ from studies suggesting the existence of limited spaces of credibility within echo chambers (e.g., Kitchens, Johnson & and Gray, 2020), as participants’ testimonies reveal a more pronounced collapse of media neutrality, especially in reports concerning armed conflicts.

Thus, the findings of the third theme show substantial consistency with the literature linking echo chambers to diminished news credibility, while also providing a clearer perspective on the systematic and deliberate nature of political bias, thereby deepening the understanding of the organizational frameworks that reproduce distorted narratives within digital environments and highlighting the increasing need for rigorous source verification and the promotion of informational diversity.

Fourth: The Impact of Interaction on Shaping Public Opinion:

The results of the in-depth interviews revealed that pages discussing conflicts and wars play a central role in shaping the public's opinions and attitudes toward political issues. This is evident through the provision of diverse content, including information, news, expert opinions, and political analyses based on logical reasoning and emotional appeals. This approach contributes to building public trust in the content published, thereby enhancing the influence of these pages on shaping their views.

Moreover, the study showed that these pages serve as platforms for discussion and interaction, where users share their opinions and experiences, which increases political awareness and stimulates critical thinking among the audience. These pages also play a role in setting priorities for political issues by focusing on specific events or conflicts, thereby directing public attention and influencing what is considered important or urgent in the political context.

In addition, the pages can influence the audience through various persuasive techniques, such as images, videos, and attention-grabbing headlines that elicit emotional responses, thereby enhancing their ability to affect political attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the results indicate that continuous interaction with these pages can lead to the formation of shared mental frameworks among followers regarding conflicts, contributing to either the unification of stances or

increased polarization, depending on the nature of the content and the political orientation of the page.

The findings of the fourth theme demonstrate a high degree of alignment with previous literature on the role of digital interaction in shaping public opinion. Most studies agree that pages and digital communities dedicated to discussions of conflicts and wars contribute to guiding audience attitudes and shaping their political viewpoints by providing diverse content that combines factual information, expert analyses, and emotional dimensions, as highlighted by McCombs & Shaw (1972), Eveland & Hively (2009), and Chadwick (2017). The results also align with research emphasizing the ability of digital platforms to enhance trust in the presented content and to provide broad spaces for interaction and discussion, thereby increasing the influence of these pages on audience attitudes and political responses.

However, the findings reveal some divergences compared to previous studies. While literature often suggests that the impact of such pages may be limited in certain contexts due to individual factors such as users' cognitive levels or preexisting biases, the findings of the fourth theme indicate that interaction within echo chambers can be far more powerful when informational, analytical, and emotional content are integrated, allowing these pages to shape public opinion in a more systematic manner aligned with political agendas. Additionally, whereas some studies treated interaction as a purely technical factor, the results here emphasize the strategic role of content in enhancing influence on audiences, indicating that interaction extends beyond digital participation to guiding users' impressions and political behaviors.

Thus, the fourth theme illustrates that interaction within digital echo chambers plays a central role in the formation of public opinion, showing clear consistency with prior literature regarding the importance of digital engagement, while also offering more nuanced insights into the systematic power of this influence and the link between diverse content and audience-targeted strategies, thereby enriching the theoretical understanding of echo chambers' role in shaping political attitudes during conflicts.

Fifth: Behavioral Patterns of Interaction within these Pages:

Various behaviors are exhibited, reflecting the audience's level of interaction with content. This interaction ranges from likes and shares to discussions and comments, which may sometimes carry an aggressive or polarizing tone, reflecting the division of stances among followers. Some pages even transform into platforms resembling political forums where the audience expresses their opinions, whether in opposition or support .

On the other hand, the results indicated that the impact of these pages is not limited to merely conveying information, but extends to framing events and evoking emotions through storytelling and message repetition. This enhances polarization and contributes to shaping the mental image around various issues.

However, the impact is not always positive or accurate, as some pointed out that certain pages sometimes lack full credibility, diminishing their influence on more aware followers.

Regarding behavioral patterns associated with interaction within these pages, varied comments included support, objection, and at times complete disregard or sarcasm. It was also noted that some individuals tend to engage in heated discussions, while others prefer to retain information or adopt a neutral stance to avoid getting involved in conflicts.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that pages discussing conflicts and wars are significant platforms for influencing public opinion but are not the sole source upon which the audience relies to form their stances. Friends, family, and other media play complementary roles in this process.

The findings of the fifth theme align with previous literature examining patterns of interaction within digital echo chambers. Numerous studies indicate that interaction with content ranges from superficial engagement, such as likes and shares, to more complex interactions through comments and discussions, which may at times carry provocative or divisive tones, as highlighted by Yang (2024) and de-Lima-Santos & Ceron (2023), who emphasized the role of such interactions in reinforcing political and social polarization. The results also correspond with studies showing how these pages are used to craft messages and repeatedly narrate events, thereby deepening intellectual homogeneity and exacerbating divisions among audiences, consistent with the concept of “information bubbles” discussed by Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson (2023) and Garimella et al. (2018).

However, the findings reveal some nuanced divergences compared to previous literature. While earlier studies often focused on the influence of algorithms and platform design in promoting divisions, the results of the fifth theme show that individual behaviors within the pages — such as information retention, adopting a neutral stance, or engaging in heated discussions — play an independent role in shaping the degree of impact these pages have on audiences. The results further indicate that the influence of these pages is not absolute, as the credibility and quality of the content affect their ability to shape the opinions of more discerning followers, a dimension that has not been emphasized as strongly in prior research. Finally, the findings highlight that friends, family, and other media sources play complementary roles in shaping attitudes, reflecting that the influence of digital echo chambers is relatively limited and dependent on users’ social and cultural contexts.

Thus, the fifth theme demonstrates that interaction patterns within digital conflict and war pages are diverse and complex, showing clear consistency with previous literature in identifying their impact on political and social polarization, while also adding new dimensions related to individual user behaviors and the influence of other information sources, thereby enriching the

theoretical understanding of echo chambers in the dynamics of digital interaction and public opinion formation.

Sixth: Changing Media Coverage Style:

The results of in-depth interviews with the sample revealed a clear difference in opinions regarding the impact of interaction in echo chambers on media coverage. Some opinions indicated that interaction within pages discussing conflict and war news leads to changes in media coverage styles to meet audience expectations and ensure continued engagement with the content. Interaction significantly influences media coverage, with audience reactions and opinions on events often being conveyed. The majority emphasized the tangible impact, including improving the quality of information and focusing more on humanitarian issues. Interaction within pages tends to enhance coverage of topics that spark widespread discussions, thereby increasing content dissemination and influencing media coverage priorities, as seen in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where interaction with topics related to human rights violations was noted.

However, some opinions raised reservations about the impact of interaction, suggesting it does not lead to fundamental changes in media coverage styles but remains limited. Others stated that interaction might promote discussions of specific angles of the issue in talk shows, but it does not lead to permanent shifts in media coverage patterns.

The findings of the sixth theme indicate that interaction within digital conflict and war pages influences media coverage, showing a high degree of consistency with previous literature that highlighted the role of echo chambers in shaping digital media priorities and amplifying content dissemination, particularly on topics that generate wide discussion and public interest. Studies by Currin, Vallejo Vera & Khaledi-Nasab (2022), Garimella et al. (2018), and Wang et al. (2020) have shown that audience interaction contributes to improving information quality, drawing attention to humanitarian issues, and influencing media coverage priorities, as evident in the coverage of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.

However, the findings reveal important divergences compared to previous studies. Participants noted that the impact of interaction may be limited or temporary and does not always lead to substantive changes in media coverage style; at times, it merely directs discussions toward specific angles without effecting a comprehensive restructuring. Moreover, the degree of influence appears to depend on the nature of the topic and the target audience, a contextual dimension that has not been emphasized as strongly in prior research.

Thus, the sixth theme demonstrates that digital interaction plays a significant role in influencing media, while also acknowledging clear constraints that determine the depth of change in coverage style, reflecting a

balance between the capacity to influence and the objective and contextual limitations of digital media processes in conflict environments.

Seventh: Impact of Interaction on News Reports:

Responses indicated that these interactions contribute to improving the quality of information and diversifying perspectives. They also help increase focus on humanitarian issues that matter to the audience. On the other hand, interaction encourages media outlets to quickly correct errors and respond to popular reactions, enhancing the credibility of reports.

Conversely, some respondents expressed reservations, stating they had not noticed significant effects on news reports, or that interaction might lead to adopting some ideas without causing significant changes in coverage styles.

These results highlight the variability of the impact of interaction within echo chambers on media coverage styles and news reports. The extent of this impact depends largely on the nature of the media outlet, its objectives, and how responsive it is to audience interaction.

The findings of the seventh theme indicate that interaction within digital echo chambers contributes to improving information quality and diversifying perspectives, as well as enhancing focus on humanitarian issues of public interest. This aligns with previous literature emphasizing the role of digital interaction in enhancing news credibility and accelerating error correction. Studies such as Wang et al. (2020), Garimella et al. (2018), and Currin, Vallejo Vera & Khaledi-Nasab (2022) have shown that digital engagement can prompt media institutions to respond swiftly to audience feedback, thereby increasing the reliability of news reports and fostering community interaction.

However, the findings also reveal significant divergences compared to prior research. Some participants noted that the influence of interaction is not always impactful on reporting style or the content of reports, and that certain interactions may lead to the adoption of particular ideas without inducing substantive changes in editorial practices. Additionally, the results indicate that the degree of influence varies depending on the nature of the media outlet, its objectives, and its responsiveness to engagement, a contextual factor that has not been emphasized as clearly in previous studies, which often focused on the general impact of digital echo chambers irrespective of media characteristics or editorial policies.

Thus, the seventh theme demonstrates that the effect of interaction on news reporting is diverse and contingent upon the editorial and strategic context of media outlets, reflecting a balance between the influential capacity of echo chambers and the practical constraints that shape news coverage.

Eighth: Reshaping Media Narratives:

The interview results revealed that media pages discussing conflicts and wars play a prominent role in reshaping or reinforcing media narratives around political issues. This role is evident through the use of various media techniques, such as framing, repetition, and the use of impactful images and emotional content. Some participants indicated that these pages exploit human and emotional narratives to support their positions, thus contributing to reinforcing a particular narrative and escalating tensions between conflicting parties.

Regarding the impact of these pages on geopolitical issues, the majority cited prominent examples such as the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, where pages supporting the Palestinian cause showcase images of destruction and civilian suffering to frame the conflict as a human rights and humanitarian issue. Some participants also highlighted digital campaigns like "Save Sheikh Jarrah," which helped spread the cause globally and foster international sympathy. Furthermore, some participants mentioned conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, which are presented from different media angles focusing on human rights, shaping specific impressions about the conflicting parties.

The results also showed that pages discussing conflicts often rely on emotional arguments and human stories, making them effective in attracting the audience's attention. For example, some noted that intensifying and diversifying coverage contributes to shaping public opinion, while others explained that these pages influence the framing and reinforcement of narratives for certain stances and events.

On the other hand, some participants stated that the media framing presented by these pages might sometimes produce unbalanced or biased narratives. Certain pages may exaggerate the impact of specific events or downplay them according to their objectives, leading to a limited impact on the credibility of media coverage.

The results conclude that media pages are powerful tools in reshaping narratives around political conflicts, either by reinforcing certain stories or creating new angles to understand geopolitical issues. However, their impact is contingent on the presentation methods, balance, and neutrality of the media.

The findings of the eighth theme indicate that media pages discussing conflicts and wars play a prominent role in reshaping or reinforcing media narratives around political issues, which aligns with previous literature highlighting the capacity of digital echo chambers to influence public opinion through strategies such as framing, repetition, and the use of images and emotional content. Studies by Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson (2023), Garimella et al. (2018), and Bright (2017) have shown that relying on humanitarian and emotional narratives enhances audience attention and affects the formation of political attitudes. The results also confirmed the role of these pages in

highlighting humanitarian issues, such as the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and digital campaigns like “Save Sheikh Jarrah,” consistent with observations by Jiang, Ren & Ferrara (2021) regarding the impact of digital campaigns on public opinion and the expansion of international support for specific causes.

However, the findings reveal important divergences compared to previous studies. Some participants noted that the framing used on these pages can sometimes be biased or unbalanced, amplifying or downplaying specific events according to the objectives of the controlling entity, which may reduce their influence on the credibility of media coverage. The results also highlighted that the impact of these pages on narratives largely depends on presentation methods, content balance, and objectivity, a dimension that has not been emphasized as clearly in prior literature, which often focused on the general influence of digital echo chambers regardless of content quality or editorial balance.

Thus, the eighth theme demonstrates that these pages are powerful tools for reshaping media narratives, yet they operate within constraints related to presentation style and editorial biases, reflecting the complex relationship between digital interaction, media techniques, and public opinion formation in geopolitical conflict contexts.

Nine: The Role of Echo Chambers in Improving or Altering the Coverage of Geopolitical Issues:

Participants' opinions varied regarding the role of pages discussing news related to conflicts and wars in enhancing news coverage of political issues or increasing confusion and divisions. Some researchers indicated that these pages contribute to improving news coverage by presenting multiple viewpoints, enriching the discussion, and reflecting expert and public opinions, which helps the media build a comprehensive approach to these issues.

On the other hand, others warned that these pages may increase confusion and divisions, especially if they lack neutrality and credibility, as they can deepen polarization and promote misleading information. This divergence of opinions is also reflected in views that these pages provide multiple perspectives, but they often increase confusion when they are biased or promote extremist rhetoric.

Regarding the impact of these pages on how the media handles complex geopolitical issues, some participants pointed out that they might help broaden the scope of analysis and provide multiple narratives, which assists the media in setting coverage priorities and correcting misinformation. However, others noted that the media might be compelled to align with the emotional aspects of the public, which could affect its objective coverage.

Some opinions emphasized that pages discussing conflicts provide a platform for alternative news, allowing groups that lack sufficient representation

in traditional media to voice their views. However, others indicated that the impact of these pages remains limited at times, as their usefulness depends on the coverage standards and reliability they adhere to.

It is worth noting that the impact of these pages extends beyond just improving or distorting news coverage. They also contribute to promoting humanitarian values or spreading violent rhetoric. This dual impact highlights the importance of adopting a critical and objective analytical approach in the media when addressing geopolitical issues.

The findings of the ninth theme indicate that digital echo chambers play a nuanced role in enhancing or reshaping media coverage of geopolitical issues, which partially aligns with previous studies emphasizing the capacity of these pages to present multiple perspectives and enrich discussions, reflecting both expert and public opinions and assisting media outlets in adopting a comprehensive approach to complex issues. Studies by Currin, Vallejo Vera & Khaledi-Nasab (2022), Garimella et al. (2018), and Yang (2024) have shown that echo chambers contribute to broadening analytical scope and increasing engagement with controversial topics, thereby enhancing the ability to correct misinformation and prioritize coverage. The results also confirm that these pages provide a platform for alternative news, allowing groups underrepresented in traditional media to voice their perspectives, consistent with Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson (2023), who emphasized the role of digital platforms in promoting source plurality and intellectual diversity.

However, the findings reveal significant divergences compared to prior literature. Some participants noted that the influence of these pages can sometimes exacerbate confusion and divisions, particularly when they lack neutrality and credibility, potentially deepening polarization and spreading misinformation — a dimension less emphasized in studies that primarily focused on the positive impact of echo chambers. The results also indicate that the effect of these pages on coverage depends heavily on the credibility and editorial standards of each media outlet, and that coverage may sometimes conform to the emotional inclinations of the audience, affecting its objectivity. This reflects the dual nature of digital echo chambers' influence, which can either reinforce humanitarian values or propagate violent discourse depending on page management and editorial policies.

Thus, the ninth theme demonstrates that the role of echo chambers in media coverage of geopolitical issues is complex, contingent on the balance of neutrality, source credibility, and editorial practices, highlighting the need for critical and objective analysis when engaging with news in geopolitical conflict contexts.

Summary and Discussion of the Study:

The study addressed the impact of discussions taking place within "echo chambers" regarding political conflicts linked to countries and regions involved in wars and conflicts. It explored the role of these discussions in shaping narratives that explain events and how the key players within the echo chambers interpret political disputes. The results of the study indicate that the impact of these chambers is complex, as they can either enhance diversity of opinions or contribute to unifying narratives. They can also support objectivity or reinforce bias and polarization.

Concerning the impact of echo chambers on geopolitical narratives, the study found that these chambers significantly contribute to shaping political and geopolitical narratives. While they may offer space for diverse viewpoints, their influence depends on the editorial policies of the media institutions and groups managing these chambers, sometimes leading to the reinforcement of unified narratives driven by political agendas.

On the other hand, the study suggests that the accuracy and neutrality of news published through echo chambers are often questioned, as such news is frequently influenced by specific political or ideological orientations that aim to serve particular interests. The lack of neutrality in media coverage, especially in major conflicts, often makes the bias evident.

Regarding the effect of interaction within echo chambers, the study revealed that it plays a significant role in shaping public opinion by amplifying extremist views and generating "information bubbles" that deepen political divisions. This impact goes beyond merely directing the audience, influencing the editorial policies of media institutions.

As for media agenda bias, the study shows that most echo chambers adopt certain political or ideological agendas, leading to biased and directed coverage. These pages promote narratives that may be distorted or biased, impacting the credibility of the news.

Despite the negative impact of echo chambers, the study indicates that they may provide opportunities for diversity and pluralism in certain media contexts, especially in environments dominated by large media institutions. However, the greater challenge remains in fostering objectivity and credibility through source verification and transparent editorial policies.

In conclusion, the study shows that echo chambers play a complex role in shaping political and geopolitical narratives, as they can either promote pluralism or reinforce biases. To address the challenges posed by these chambers, it is essential to develop independent editorial policies and increase public awareness of the dangers of "information bubbles".

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the current study, the following practical recommendations are proposed at multiple levels:

1) For Media Institutions:

- ★ Adopt transparent editorial policies that clarify political orientations in geopolitical reporting to help audiences contextualize information.
- ★ Strengthen newsroom fact-checking units to monitor echo-chamber content, identify misleading narratives, and correct them proactively.
- ★ Develop professional guidelines for handling content emerging from echo chambers, using it as an indicator of public trends rather than as a primary information source.
- ★ Promote in-depth explanatory journalism to clarify mechanisms behind echo chambers and narrative construction.

2) For Journalists and Media Practitioners:

- ★ Train journalists to analyze digital echo-chamber dynamics, including hashtag spread, dominant narratives, and polarization patterns — without adopting these narratives uncritically.
- ★ Strengthen multi-source verification, particularly in war and conflict coverage.
- ★ Encourage journalists to produce balanced counter-narratives supported by documentation and diverse sources.
- ★ Integrate digital ethics training to address hate speech, incitement, and aggressive online discourse.

3) For Social Media Platforms and Algorithm Developers:

- ★ Review recommendation-algorithm designs to reduce filter bubbles by incorporating diversified content exposure.
- ★ Provide users with tools to control content sources and visibility settings.
- ★ Highlight high-risk conflict-related content with warnings and links to credible sources.
- ★ Encourage collaborative research monitoring systems to track digital polarization patterns.

4) For the Public and Media Literacy:

- ★ Develop training programs in digital and media literacy for youth and university students.
- ★ Encourage diversified information consumption and “verify before sharing”.
- ★ Raise awareness of the dangers of emotional manipulation and extremist discourse.

5) For Policy-Makers and Regulatory Bodies:

- ★ Develop regulatory frameworks balancing free expression with protection from misinformation.
- ★ Support the establishment of national or regional observatories to monitor geopolitical discourse online.
- ★ Promote partnerships between media institutions, civil society, and academia to address digital polarization.

6) For Academic Research:

- ★ Conduct cross-country comparative studies on echo chambers and geopolitical narrative formation.
- ★ Expand quantitative and qualitative studies tracking audience interactions in specific conflict contexts.
- ★ Develop analytical narrative-tracking models to measure bias and polarization.
- ★ Explore the psychological and behavioral dimensions of users in echo chambers.

Future Studies:

- How echo chambers affect public attitudes toward geopolitical conflict issues.
- The role of echo chambers in spreading misinformation, fake news, and rumors.
- An analysis of the impact of echo chambers on media policies in countries experiencing political and geopolitical conflicts, particularly concerning how media cover these conflicts.
- The impact of echo chambers on media pluralism in geopolitical coverage, and whether they contribute to enhancing diversity of opinions or increasing political divisions.
- How interaction between individuals within echo chambers (such as likes, comments, and shares) influences the formation of geopolitical and political narratives.
- An analysis of how echo chambers impact voter behavior and political orientations, particularly in disputed geopolitical contexts.
- How echo chambers influence the way geopolitical issues are addressed in traditional media (television, newspapers, radio), and how narratives are adjusted based on interactions in these chambers.
- How echo chambers affect national identity building and the reinforcement or challenge of national narratives during periods of political or military conflict.

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