

Question 44-54 are based on the following passage. 50 successful case of using a blog as a 'watchdog' to expose numerous official corruptions in China in 2004 and 2005, thereby broadening the channel of political participation through blogs. This example illustrates the potential power of new media, which has already started to challenge the 55 existing political system.

This passage is excerpted from Yupei Zhao, "New Media and Democracy: Three Competing Visions from Cyber-Optimism and Cyber-Pessimism." ©2014 by Yupei Zhao.

Political communication scholars are keenly concerned with the extent to which new media is affecting politics. . . Accordingly, the following sections present the respective 5 positions of cyber-optimists and cyber-pessimists in relation to three key areas of the debate: how new media enable 60 minor parties to have a greater [or lesser] presence; how new media could make it possible to strengthen citizens' attempts in political participation; how citizens are using (micro) blogs to participate in political communication.

10 The first area of debate to be considered here is to what extent new media are able to put minor parties on a par with their larger counterparts, in terms of exposure. Minor parties are able to make use of new media technologies to disseminate information and promote themselves; typically, 15 these new technologies not only provide broader exposure for minor parties but also act as additional channels through which to challenge major opponents and break into the political debate. However, cyber-pessimists argue that a higher number of communication channels does not equate 20 with more democracy. Both minor and major parties tend to approach the Internet in utilitarian terms, using it as a tool to provide information about policies rather than as a new platform for the promotion of interaction and interorganizational links.

25 However, political cyber-optimists have criticized cyber-pessimists for being too extreme and maintain that new media might be the decisive element in pushing the democratic agenda of elections nowadays. For instance, based on data published by the Pew Research Center, sixty- 30 six percentage of social media users have participated in at least eight online political activities, such as encouraging people to vote or posting their comments on politics through social media. Thus, Internet voters may shape election campaign agendas to some extent. The fact that Barack

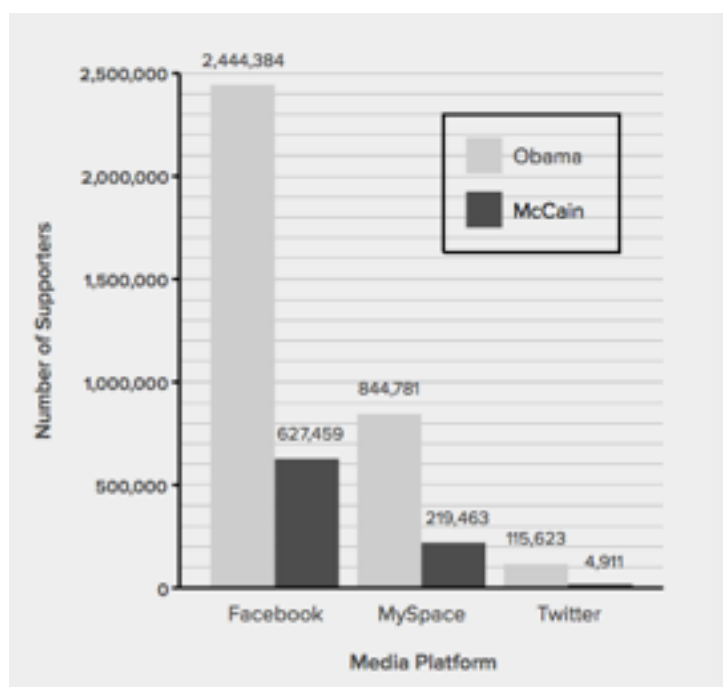
35 Obama obtained an electoral victory following a triumphant grassroots campaign and successful use of social media such as Facebook and MySpace is a case in point.

The third area of the debate to be considered here is the 40 phenomenon of citizen (micro) blogging. Citizens are using social media, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and Weibo, as a channel for participation in political discussions, aiming to directly or indirectly influence public concerns or even reshape the public agenda, promoting the democratic public sphere. Voltmer, in his empirical study of political 45 communication, revealed the interdependencies between politicians, citizens and the media, and highlighted why some media are more successful channels for democratic public communication than others. Voltmer cites the example of a Chinese blogger named Lixiaode, who was the first

55 existing political system.

Looking at the three key areas of debate outlined above, it is apparent that there is nothing inherently democratic about the new media; the extent to which they are being used to enhance democracy depends on who is using them and 60 why. . . [But whether] or not new media technologies are enhancing democracy, they are the driving force behind some radical shifts which are taking place in politics, and these changes are inevitably bringing with them both benefits and limitations.

Support of U.S. Presidential Candidates on Social Media Outlets in 2008 Election



Adapted from David Angotti, "No Debate About It" ©2014 Search Engine Journal

44

The author's central claim is that

- A) while there is disagreement about whether or not new media enhance democracy, all agree that they are changing politics.
- B) political candidates cannot influence elections without manipulating new media to benefit their campaigns.
- C) citizens must become more engaged in politics by blogging to truly exercise their democratic privileges.
- D) it is too soon to tell what new media's political effects will be, but they are generally thought to be positive.

45

As used in lines 1–2, “concerned with” most nearly means

- A) worried about.
- B) interested in.
- C) motivated by.
- D) uneasy about.

46

The author implies that cyber-optimists view the use of new media technologies by minor parties as

- A) the only solution to the problem of unfairness in elections.
- B) useful tools that may be dangerous in the wrong hands because of the limited understanding most people have of them.
- C) platforms that have been carefully developed by politicians in order to serve the needs of special interests.
- D) an opportunity to make the electoral process more democratic.

47

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) lines 10–12 (“The first . . . exposure”)
- B) lines 12–14 (“Minor . . . themselves”)
- C) lines 18–20 (“However . . . democracy”)
- D) lines 20–24 (“Both . . . links”)

48

The expressions “cyber-optimists” and “cyber-pessimists” (line 4) primarily serve to

- A) frame the debate surrounding new media and politics with familiar oppositional terms.
- B) legitimize the author's argument by creating a new kind of jargon to reference the players in this political field.
- C) clarify that there are only two possible positions to take regarding this issue, and they are opposed to one another.
- D) distinguish between major and minor parties with new terms that allow the reader to view them as positive and negative.

49

The author uses the Pew Research Center findings to imply that

- A) Barack Obama's victory was possible only because of social media usage.
- B) new media users influence real-world political events to some degree.
- C) cyber-optimists take an overly positive stance towards new media.
- D) cyber-pessimists do not understand how new media outlets are used.

50

Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A) lines 25–28 (“However . . . nowadays”)
- B) lines 28–33 (“For . . . media”)
- C) lines 33–37 (“Thus . . . point”)
- D) lines 38–44 (“The third . . . public sphere”)

51

The author discusses Lixiaode as an example of

- A) a new media user who made a political impact.
- B) an average person who misguidedly tried to change the world.
- C) a new kind of politician who began as an ordinary citizen.
- D) a scholar in political communications working to change the field.

52

Which of the following choices represents the greatest number of people?

- A) McCain's Facebook supporters.
- B) Obama's Twitter followers.
- C) McCain's MySpace friends.
- D) Obama's MySpace friends.

53

According to the passage, Obama's comparatively high usage of social media as depicted in the chart is an example of

- A) the links between new media use and political success.
- B) early adopters of technology benefiting from their timing.
- C) the importance of micro-blogging to reach supporters.
- D) minor candidates gaining exposure through new media.

54

We can infer from the chart that the McCain supporters who used the social media platforms studied were

- A) most active on Facebook.
- B) most active on MySpace.
- C) most active on Twitter.
- D) not significantly active on any of these platforms.

STOP

If you finish before time is called, you may check your work on this section only.

Do not turn to any other section.