The Spiral of Silence: Understanding Social Interaction in a Mediated Environment
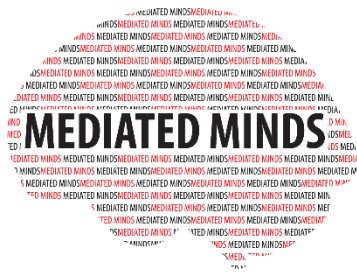
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Abstract — In this presentation, I will explain the social interaction in a mediated environment, through the Spiral of Silence with the goal of understanding how the media effects our current generation through many mediums. In this presentation, we will explore how the media affect generation Z by altering our views on important social topics through the use of the Spiral of Silence theory.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Spiral of silence is a mass communication theory developed by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. This idea expresses that individuals have a strong fear of isolation, this results from the idea that society might neglect and or exclude an individual if they decide not to conform to a ruling idea. In turn this leads an individual to remain silent rather than speaking their opinion, this tends to change with the social climate. The Spiral of Silence theory is present in the social media environment and continues to affect our views and our judgments on many different subjects today. We are evolving into what Dr. Kim et al.'s calls "Netizens". He conducted a study in 2014 that showed how "Netizen" leaders can create, decimate, change and influence the mass public in a social media environment.

II.   FINDINGS

Social media has a huge impact on today's generation and the study of this impact of such processes is in our young generation as well as the adolescent identity development. The analyzation of social and psychological elements control, weaken and eventually diminish the influence of such spirals. With the current influence of social media, consumers of a young age are more susceptible to be easily influenced by popular and modern social media influencers. The importance of understanding

the spiral of silence and how it affects a social media environment is the way it changes our views towards different subjects.

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The Spiral of Silence:
Understanding Social Interaction in a Mediated Environment

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Who Created The Spiral of Silence Theory?

❏ A mass communication theory developed
   by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann.

❏ Noelle- Neumann's theory about social influences
   have become one of the most controversial and widely
   studied views in social sciences

Spiral of Silence

❏ This theory expresses that individuals have a strong fear of isolation, this results from the idea that society might neglect and or exclude an individual if they decide not to conform to a ruling idea.

❏ In turn this leads an individual to remain silent rather than speaking their opinion, this tends to change with the social climate.

Social Media Environment

❏ With the current influence of social media, consumers of a young age are more susceptive to be easily influenced by popular and modern social media influencers.

❏ Studies have shown that generation Z is the most influenced by the Spiral of Silence in a digital environment

Generation Z (1995-2010)

❏ Typically spend 89 hours a day connected to some form of media

❏ 64% have constant internet access

❏ 90% of secondary students have a mobile device

❏ They have more purchasing power than any other generation at a comparable age

How does this influence Generation Z?

❏ More likely to voice an opinion through an online public platform rather than express that opinion in person

❏ More likely to delete a post that does not align with the climate of opinion

❏ When one voice becomes the popular/dominant opinion they create a new social standard

Conformity & Manipulation in the Spiral of Silence

❏ People conform to a single idea
  ❏ Mass media creates a real or presumed majority public opinion
  ❏ Making the majority views be amplified while the minorities conform to it
❏ Society is manipulated to believe that there is only one idea
  ❏ Which makes people believe they have to follow that idea
  ❏ Silencing or manipulating the minority views
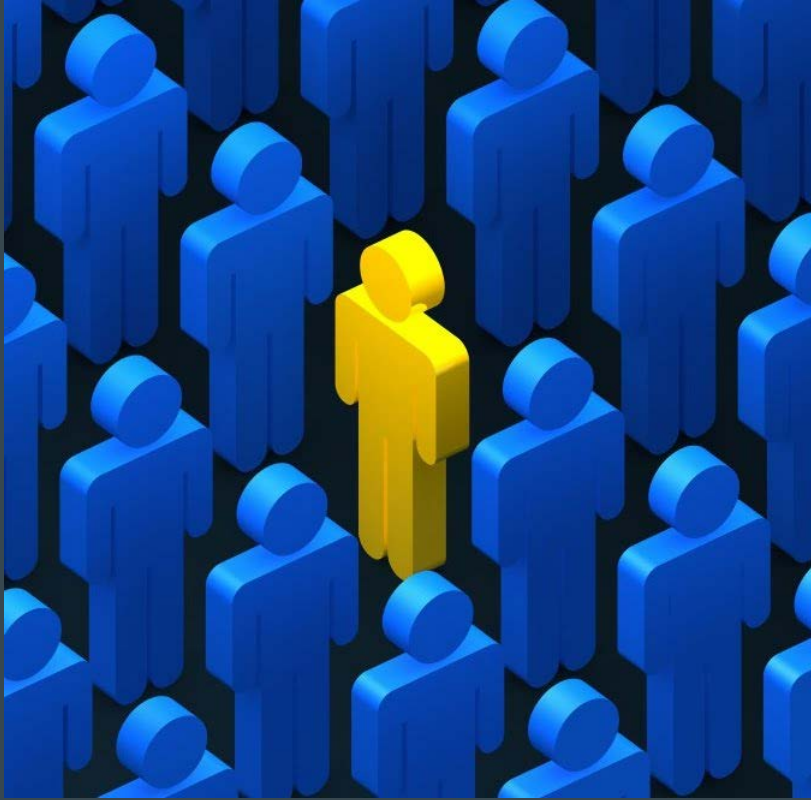
Conclusion

❏ It continues to affect our views and our judgements on many different subjects today.

  ❏ Resulting the society from neglecting and or excluding an individual if they decide not to conform to a ruling idea.

   ❏ We are evolving into what Dr. Kim et.al"s calls "Netizens".

  (His 2014 study showed how "Netizen" leaders can create, decimate, change and influence the mass public in a social media environment.)