

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

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Aidan Bevis & Jeanette Cano
University of Cincinnati

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 susceptible 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

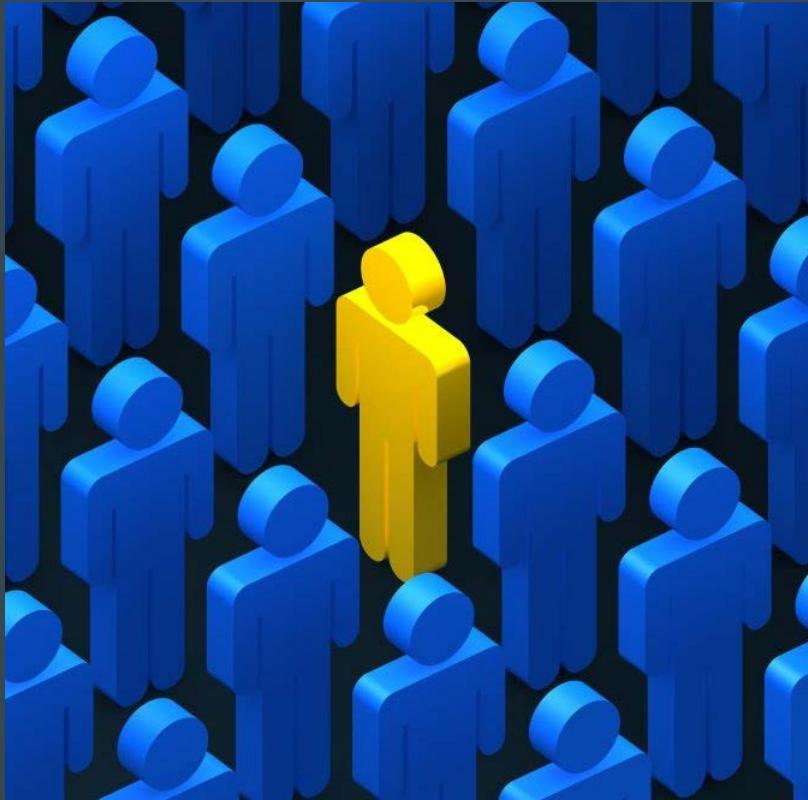


How does this influence Generation Z?

- 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.)