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MODELING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL GROUP FORMATION

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ABSTRACT
Social media applications are in a unique position to impact the spread of norms across groups as they provide additional pathways for the interconnectivity and information flow beyond traditional boundaries. This research explores how social media affects cultural transformation using an analytical model and simulation. A model that encapsulates personal influence and social comparison as mechanisms for cultural transformation is presented.

KEYWORDS
Social Media, Social Influence, Norms, Virtual Communities

EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Social media has rapidly integrated into everyday life for many individuals around the world. In the United States, approximately 77% of all citizens use social media; worldwide social media users are estimated at 2.6 billion (Edison Research, & Salesforce.com. (n.d.), 2019). Technological advances such as mobile telephony, web 2.0, and the spread of broadband have provided conduits for applications rich in user-generated text, images, and video, as well as collaborative features that are the hallmark of social media.

As with all rapidly emerging technologies, defining social media necessitates looking beyond transitory features and platforms that dominate today, but can quickly be eclipsed in a matter of months. In essence, social media consists of software applications that allow individuals, organizations, and communities to interact, collaborate, form enduring connections, and build online communities for sharing and engaging in user-generated content (McCay-Peet & Quan-Haase, 2017).

Information and communication technologies facilitate self-disclosure, expressiveness, and other communication behaviors thought to be heavily influenced by norming processes (Varnali & Toker, 2015). Social media applications are particularly amenable for self-disclosure with profile building features and the ability to connect and compare based on information provided in profiles. This research finds that social media's collective social impacts become more pronounced with increased reliance on social media in place of traditional communication modes.

REFERENCES