

## **Abstract**

The tendency for democratic and authoritarian governments to enact internet shutdowns has grown to massive proportions over the past decade, owing to the capacity of social media and digital platforms to mobilize masses. The emancipatory potential possessed by information technology gets challenged by regimes seeking to preserve their legitimacy and retain power.

The impacts that authoritarian measures have on digital governance in the past years have become manifold and continue to pose a threat to human rights. This research argues that internet shutdowns are inherently authoritarian practices aimed at repressing freedom of expression in protesting atmospheres. Using Practice Theory and the framework of Digital Authoritarianism, this dissertation shows the tendency for states to stifle voices of dissent and quash opposition. This dissertation will showcase how authoritarian systems tend to exploit power in order to exploit digital spaces to serve the regime and how the citizen machinery overcome the dis-connective actions imposed by repressive regimes.

**KEYWORDS:** Kill-switch, Shutdowns, Authoritarianism, Repression, Technology, Protest