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Master: Media Education

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM:
AFFORDANCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL
MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the internet and varied social media networks have led to the transformation of how social movements mobilise and organise their acts of activism. Some of the communicative practices that leaders of social movements and activists make use of reflecting the ways technology is being rooted in the roles and functions appropriate to the campaign.

The objective of this thesis is therefore to analyse the affordances and influence of social media usage on social activism and social movements across various countries of the world. The objective is achieved by focusing on how social media usage has impacted the different activist movement across the globe.

The study makes use of a systematic literature review, and the findings are presented and discussed considering relevant literature. The combination of qualitative researches, conceptual and high-quality research papers are systematically evaluated and narrowed down to serve as the data for this research paper. The thesis focuses on 16 articles published about social media activism with each separately examining a social movement with a specific organisational purpose and style.

At the completion of the analysis, the research concludes that social media allows for the swift dissemination of information across borders, encourages and facilitates the formation of the global public by allowing for interconnections between movement actors in different places. The research also acknowledges that some activists also employ social media for harmful and destructive objectives and admits that as effective as social media can be in enhancing the activities of activists and protests, it is not sufficient in other cases as physical efforts are required alongside online activities to achieve full efficiency of social media affordances.

Keywords:

Activism, protest, social media, communication networks, social media networks, social movement, systematic literature review.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, social media have been found to be very useful in enabling social movements in comparison to the conventional media method, which is bound by time and space. Social media, according to Berger and Nehring (2017, p.2), implies that social movements and activism 'seem to lack a territorial place because they cannot be fixed in time or space'. Activism or social movement has been defined by McCarthy and Zald (1977, p.1212) cited in Rucht (2017, p.40) as 'a set of conviction and beliefs in a populace which represents choices for changing some elements of the social structure and reward distribution of a society'. Also, Wilkinson (1971, 26-7) cited in Axtmann (2003) perceived a social movement as a calculated collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' community.

In addition to the spread of social media, the emergence of the internet has dramatically revolutionised peoples' ways of life, and the use of social media in personal action and social movements has increased in the last decade (Anderson, Toor, Rainie & Smith, 2018). In this information age, social media has played significant roles in recent mobilisations across the globe including the Arab Spring (Bacallao-Pino, 2014, p.1), the Nigerian Bring Back Our Girls movement (#BBOG) and Occupy Wall Street.

It is safe to add that many major contemporary protests across the globe were initiated and accompanied by severe social media activity (Poell and van Dijck, 2018, p.1). Social media has been so pervasive in this era because it requires few resources and formalities and affords activists and protesters opportunity to react to local events at a global level (Klein, 2000, p.2).

As instruments for communication and social action, social media 'promote the identity paradigm, which emphasises basic psychosocial aspects which include - the social construction of reality, collective identity, values and commitment to social issues' (Javaloy, Espelt & Álvarez, 2001, p.31).

Social media platforms, according to Gillespie (2010, p. 347), can be typified as digital mediators that assemble and bargain between different concerned groups such as end-users, developers and advertisers which each come with their aims and agenda. Helmond (2015, p. 7) on the other hand

argued that social media platforms are distinguished by the connection of their infrastructural model and their economic model of bridging the gap between users and advertisers.

Social media has led to revelatory changes in how political life is organised. As an example, online petitions only take a matter of days to amass signatures across the globe, get delivered and acted upon (Mele, 2016). Also, social media allow activists to connect through social networking sites. For a long time, involvement in social movements was traditionally attributed to “activism”, individuals in the present age who may not consider themselves activists now participate in online mobilisations (Hara, 2008, p.2). The employment of the internet and social media is the new and growing pattern in which activism is being democratised and practised in many parts of the world.

The advent of social media and internet has enabled the massive upsurge in its usage by political groups and activists. The emergence of social media has also led to mixed reactions and opinions as to the motive behind the usage of social media and whether this new development will end up having a positive or negative effect for the masses. Part of the differences in opinion has led to the various deliberations on the motive of political groups towards the usage of social media, thus resulting in making the invention become a disputed domain (Kahn & Kellner, 2005, p.80). Besides the fact that the motive of the internet and social media usage has become a contested terrain, there is also the issue of political groups deliberately using the internet for their gain instead of a means to an end or for solving other problems embedded therein (Halpin, 2012, p.19). It is pertinent to understand that social media usage by political groups in a capitalist society has diverse motives over the content of produced media as well as the ownership of media production (Fuchs 2014a & 2014b). This implies that the various forms of media always convey different motives and can be understood in different ways by the actors of the movement.

The use of the internet is like two sides of a coin. On the one hand, progressive and political groups or movement termed “the controversial and somewhat ominous activist cluster anonymous” (Norton, 2011). These groups have made use of the internet to combat different problems, including state tyranny, corruption and misappropriation of public funds. Similarly, these groups have championed the cause of freedom of speech, even though their actions are sometimes not legal (Coleman, 2011; Coleman & Ralph, 2011; Beyer, 2011).

On the other hand of the coin, some political leaders have placed restrictions on the internet affordances to interfere with social and political movements and activism. As a case study, the

Iranian election of the year 2009 and 2010 was termed, “Twitter revolution” because it led to the form of restriction placed on the accessibility of websites such as Google and Gmail by the government (Morozov 2009). Furthermore, the same happened during the Arab spring in the year 2011 with the government shutting down access to the internet to curb the protest which had intensified. It is against the preceding that the internet and social media are dubbed tools for political activism.

There is a rapid increment in the affordances of social media on the development of new social movements and activism. The internet and social media have grown to become potent and revolutionary tools which promote social participation (Javaloy, Espelt & Álvarez, 2001, p.31). Thus, it is evident that social media and the internet have significant effects on activism no matter how one perceives it, whether in a positive or negative perspective. The need to address issues relating to politics, economy and people’s wellbeing birthed political movements; thus, the term activism was born (Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 2005a, 2011; Vicari, 2014). It is therefore in place of all these preceding that this research aims to discover the impact or relationship of social media with activism and social movements.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Present day researchers have modelled their study to focus on a case scenario per time in the process of examining the affordances of social media in protest or activism. For illustration, Aday et al. (2010) in their book titled “New Media in Contentious Politics” were able to establish that social media during the Arab spring was not important as it could not be linked with activism that took place then; instead, it was involved in dissemination of information outside the region. On the other hand, Howard and Hussain (2011, p.35-48) opine that “social media was used in the tactics employed to carry out the Arab spring protests and that it had a direct effect on the Arab springs”.

Recently, social media have been widely utilised by groups and individuals across the globe as an instrument of activism and social movement. However, despite its use as an instrument for activism by social movements, social media is still widely considered a tool for socialisation and social interaction. The current situation is that the society generally is witnessing a range of

initiatives aided by new technological forms of interactive and participatory media. This allows the traditional mass communication model, with its centralized organization, elite gatekeepers and established relations with institutions of power, no longer have total control of broadcast media, especially with the new vistas of opportunity created by social media for the public to communicate, connect and deliberate online, Carpini & Williams 2001; Lievrouw & Livingstone 2006 cited in Couldry; Livingstone & Markham (2010: 52). Therefore, this study is designed to examine the role of social media in activism through scientific literature analysis.

Besides, there have been many deliberations on the effects of social media on activism. These deliberations consider whether there have been modifications in the dynamics of social movements or if current dynamics are being corroborated. Besides, some scholars believe that no significant effect of technology on social movement theory is apparent (Earl & Kimport, 2011, p.23). A conclusion that the distinctive contrast is that compared to the traditional media era, the tools being utilised by activists in this era are products of this new digital age can be easily arrived at. As social media continue to be a source of inspiration for individuals and groups, there is a need to understand social media powers that permit the instances of Internet-based social activism.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study is to investigate the affordances of social media on activism and social movement. The study is also specifically aimed at:

1. Examining the various ways social media are being used for activism and social movement in this contemporary world;
2. Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for activism and social movement;
3. Determining the effectiveness of social media use in activism and social movement.

1.3 Research Questions

It is against the backdrops of the statement of the problem and objectives of the study above that these research questions are to be undertaken.

- Which affordances have social media provided for activism and social movements?
- What are the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements?
- Is the use of social media by social movements effective in achieving the desired result?

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research into the affordances of social media practice in activism and social movement has yielded a range of essential insights over time. For this research, a systematic literature review of 16 studies examining the role or relationship between social media usage and its effects on activism and social movements is conducted. A systematic literature review is suitable for this kind of research work as it adds valuable contribution to this field of research by overcoming the limitations of using a single study as the only case study to be examined.

Also, it is essential to indicate that this research is not original empirical research, preferably, it is a collection of other scholarly studies that are analysed, and their various conclusions synthesised in order of arrival at the findings of this research.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study shall benefit students and scholars of Journalism, media personnel, practising journalists, researchers, media policy makers and government officials on the influence that social media on protests and activism. Besides, with the topical treatment of issues that are continually recurring because of the growth of the internet and social media, persons in the categories mentioned above, through this research work can be further equipped to deal with these issues and challenges.

Furthermore, this research work will serve as a basis for further researches into the field of social media and its influence on social protests and social activism.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to outline the concepts of social media, social movement, public sphere, network and ties. Besides, this chapter attempts to analyse the relevance and importance of these concepts to the discussion of activism as they continue to evolve daily. Activism has encountered development over the years with the advent of social media, thus making social media the new public sphere where discussions and deliberations about activism are conducted, with references to the works of Habermas, (1989), who propounded the public sphere theory where politicians and other members of a group meet and discuss the planned lines of action. This chapter also draws on the works of Granovetter (1983) who propounded the network ties which details the structure of relationships present in a community.

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

SOCIAL MEDIA

The advent of social media, which occurred a few years ago, was popularised by the ubiquitous nature of the internet which became affordable to individuals worldwide thereby leading to the formation of a network society (Castells 2003). This suggests that there has been a paradigm shift from the old means of communication to the new channels of communication through social media and the internet (McLuhan 1962, 1964; Mcquail 1983, 1997; Lazarsfeld & Katz 1955). Besides, there have been scholarly discussions on whether there exists complete shift from the old to the new means of communication as some scholars believe the latest communication methods did not replace the past; instead, they are both merged (Lievrouw & Livingstone 2002). To buttress this point, Bolter and Grusin (1999, p. 208), argued that instead of the paradigm shift from the old ways of communication to the new, there has been a “remediation” which allows traditional media to be taken over by the new media, refurbished and then imbibed by the new media which affords the adaptation of both the old and new media.

Substantial efforts have been made by scholars to define social media, its formation and its evolution, often using various vocabularies to explain the meaning. The term social media stresses the capability of individuals to partake in the creation of content for the press. The proliferation of social media has allowed the renewed participation in communication which involves many people and affords users the ability to interact and dialogue for content creation, which in turn shapes the

flow of interaction (Jenkins, 2006). Social media has been of great help to people to connect to different parts of the world.

Apart from the traditional media, social media has been a tool for interaction and communication by people across the world and the advent of newer forms of technology has enabled dialogue between people, which elicit immediate response and feedback in a matter of seconds. Besides, communication through various media channels has been positioned as an integral part of a wide range of mobilisations for social movement throughout history.

For this research, Castells' definition of social media will be used as he defines social media as "mass-self communication" (Castells 2010). 'Mass' in this context refers to the enormous size of information produced by the masses and the capacity of this information provided to either provide a solution or predict challenges. "Self" on the other hand implies the communication that happens between users consciously and who may disseminate such information to their friends or a potential mass audience as one of the characteristics of the internet is enabling the organisation of social movement through the usage of social media technologies (Rheingold 2002).

Shirky, (2011, p. 28), one of the early scholars of social media wrote that social media is a tool for social networking for collective action. In his work, he believed the communication world has become compact and even more sophisticated with more people getting involved. Social media has thus afforded people access to information and the leeway to get involved in public discussions, which has enhanced the competency of individuals in getting involved in collective action (Shirky, 2011, *ibid.*).

The opportunity that social media offers can be of help to social movement groups who lack structure and coordination in effecting the desired change. Right before the advent of the internet, traditional organisations and groups used coffee shops, group meetings and social hubs for the dissemination of information to their members, however, with the emergence of the internet, there has been a complete overhaul in the communication procedures for these organisations. Furthermore, the advent of the internet has led to the increment in the number of networked population from millions to billions (Shirky 2011, *ibid.*). The creation of social media channels such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter alongside its adoption by the populace has become crucial in our daily activities, to the extent that citizens, activists and both governmental and non-governmental organisations have become active users of these channels of social media.

Social media helps social movement networks through organisation, mobilisation, validation, communication and the enlargement of their scope of reach. Shirky, (2011, p. 31) in support of the statement above said social media has substituted the traditional methods of mobilisation for social movement groups and has become used by most movements that have taken place in recent time. Traditional media channels afforded the spread of information through different countries but took a longer duration before reaching a large number of people as against when such information is shared on social media. One of the relevant features of social media form of communication is the ability to circumvent the prejudices of the source of information by serving as a voice to citizens agitating for a change in the political terrain of their respective countries (Clark, 2012).

Shirky's critics debated that social media has not impacted the mobilisation system and has no role in mobilising individuals for social movements. (Gladwell & Shirky 2001, p. 153) The claim that social movements have been in existence in the world before the emergence of social media and the internet and these movements had conducted their affairs successfully without social media. They, therefore, claimed that it would be difficult to substantiate if, without social media, the recent insurgency in the world would not have taken place.

Nonetheless, Shirky, (2011, *ibid.*) maintained that the arrival of social media and the internet had not changed the reality that insurgencies occurred. Instead, the dawn of social media and the internet has modified the terrain which affords individuals and activists groups to operate based on various set rules. The relationship between social media and the different political and economic facets of life also enables the rise in the creation of social movements (Leenders & Heydemann 2012, p. 139). Consequently, social media can be regarded as a tool for mediation as regards to social change instead of a causal device.

Social media can also be used as a tool for information dissemination and act as the source of information, which cannot be restricted easily by a tyrannical government (Tufekci & Wilson 2012, p. 363). Similarly, Shirky opines that in a state of "shared awareness" with the populace experiencing displeasure over a certain issue, in what is known as "conservative dilemma", which mostly happens in a democratic government. This occurs when there is easy access to information via social media leading to increment in the awareness of the people. Therefore, most governments that are accustomed to having control over public information, now find itself having to address pressing issues of concern for the public, unlike the old way of responding to this type of situation

which entailed putting in place a restraint order on traditional media which include; radio, television and print media. Since the rise of social media and internet, such method has become ineffective in restraining people with access to social media (Shirky, 2011).

Nevertheless, with different countries around the world experiencing popular insurgencies that get broadcast on social media channels, this information receives rapid diffusion across the globe when compared to other media channels, especially traditional media (Serafeim 2012, p. 163). Besides, considering the enormous benefits embedded in the use of social media channels, they also can be used to accelerate the establishment of social movements in and around the world (Ozalp 2013).

2.2 SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Before proceeding, it is pertinent to include a couple of words on the study of social movements and why 'collective action' as a subject deserves consideration. There have been many deliberations about social changes that challenge the authority of the state and their battle to create a self-sufficient space. As the country is deemed as socially and politically developed and perpetually changeless, (Kirby 1997, p.1).

Social movement according to Della Porta and Diani (2009) has been classified as a process through which leaders of each group present their interests and make their complaints known through criticisms, thereby proposing results to challenges encountered by getting involved in different forms of activities. Social movements possess three key characteristics which are: 1) they have discord and clearly distinguished their oppositions in terms of their beliefs; 2) the structure of the movement is achieved through a compact use of unconventional networking system; and 3) they are aimed at making development, sustenance and the communal use of shared identities.

Social movement theory, which falls under the discipline of Sociology, has been in existence for a long time and seeks to clarify the motive behind the coming together of individuals to negotiate their collective social resentment. Social movements are regarded as public contests against authorities, a cultural phenomenon and the elite class by individuals who share similar goals and have a united ideology in tackling differences with oppositions and authorities (Tarrow 1994,

p.18). Both traditional and contemporary social movements make use of tactics, which establish networks, uniting individuals with common goals as a means of achieving the desired goal.

Meanwhile, the advent of modern technologies has brought about the confluence of the medium of communication dissemination, which includes the use of social media and other conventional media. The significant impact from the use of advanced techniques on the society has led to the belief in the emergence of a new dawn of information communication, and technological civilisation and social media play a pivotal role in the organising of social movement and the mobilisation of groups in a global scenario.

In conclusion, this section cannot end without highlighting the specific social commitment that collective action can empower. Activists themselves are aware of how their battles can be misconstrued and sometimes delegitimised by political or media talk. Social change, as Jessop (1972: 6) opines, can include a "rearrangement of built up establishments" (change developments) or may "add to a breakdown in the quiet concurrence of social request" (progressive developments). It can be recalled that while social movements and activists look for the change in the social request, interest in aggregate activity at an individual level is constrained by a solid feeling of social equity and it is through such action that activists realise their social and ethical commitments.

2.3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTIVISM

The motive behind the usage of social media by activists in a social movement, the functions and the impact it has on their progress are taken into consideration in this study. One of the necessary modifications between the roles played by social media usage and its functions is the internal and external roles. While domestic characters are all about organisation and structural coordination and decision making while debating, different figures refer to the mobilisation aspect, employment and their strategies, thereby creating a substitute medium of disseminating information to the

masses. Jordan and Taylor, (2004); Cammaerts, (2005); Van Laer and Van Aelst, (2010, p. 1146); Bennett and Segerberg, (2012, p. 739) at various times in their scholarly texts established eight core motives behind the practice of social media by activists and social movements which are:

ICT-supported communicative practices

- Internally organise, employment and networking
- Coordination of actions through mobilisation
- Discussion, deliberation, and decision making
- Dissemination of information

ICT-based communicative practices

- Preservation of artefacts from protest
- Surveillance of the environment
- Moral adversaries attack

Inward-oriented communicative activities refer to the capability of social media to allow internal groups to become extra effectual during the intervention of in-house interaction. Through the usage of social media, the cost of involvement is reduced, which leads to the advancement of employment and retaining of workers (members). Social media is regarded as a tool, which facilitates a smooth and fluent membership and asynchronous participation. Although the lower cost of involvement does not mean higher overall stages of political participation, the continued relevance of physical communication in the case of trust building and information safekeeping from the state security services must be accentuated too in this context.

In addition to the characteristics of social media, is the ability of social movements or groups to arrange for a cross-border or globalised link up with other groups and organisation, thereby establishing a big network that is not affected by time nor spatial constraints, thus leading to a spillover in movement.

Social media is a crucial tool for activists and protesters in that it enables the easy dissemination of information about goals and objectives of the organisation. In some researches, too much relevance is placed on the role of the internet while, mobile technologies and inventions such as

text messaging play a very relevant part (Gillian et al., 2008). For instance, the resignation of the Philippine President, Joseph Erap was because of the role SMS and mobile phones played in mobilising people against him. The reduction of cost and the increment of effectiveness in mobilising and organising social movement activities is one of the critical characteristics of social networking sites and smartphone usage, which enable real-time communicative practices.

Social media usage further allows members of activist or social movement groups to act as an intermediary in the process of achieving set aims and objectives for the group. It is the responsibility of activists to make their purpose realisable, but with the infusion of social media, the ability to disseminate information to other members of the group is significantly increased, thus becoming more efficient. Part of the affordances of social media usage has been that it creates new opportunities for citizens of a country or even members of the group to circumvent state controls.

As an extension, social media usage as a tool can help bring about deliberations among the members of the social group or movement. Online forums and mailing lists are among the tools used widely by activists as it serves and a pertinent part of many social changes, and most groups tend to use them as a tool for decision-making (Gillian et al., 2008: 157). This process has been reviewed from the point of how online debate can make robust discussions in the public sphere.

Recently, internet and social media users have been assigned some more functions other than the web-based practices. Activists use these networks against the networks of their opposition and even use them as weapons to strike at their ideological enemy. Therefore, internet and social media are tools used by activists for direct action such as “hacktivist” demonstration tactics (Jordan and Taylor, 2004).

Citing an instance of where social media and internet is used as a surveillance tactic by activists is the supervision of the state or public figures by the activists. The use of permeable handheld cameras presents on mobile gadgets incorporated with the networked facilities allows for these tactics (surveillance) to be possible. Monitoring is the outcome of what Mathiesen (1997, p. 215) calls “synoptic viewer society” or the general view of the whole society by a few. Social media can also be used to disseminate content, which is made by activists to disrepute the opposition; this can go viral and may be picked up by international bodies or media. A good instance of where

the (surveillance) tactics played a crucial role is in the student protests in the United Kingdom in 2011 and during the Arab spring.

Apart from the ability of social media to act as a surveillance tactic, it can also serve as library or archive or a repertoire where media contents such as texts, audio-visual materials produced by the social movement group regarding their tactics, plans and organisational ideas are kept. The eternal nature of these artefacts stored up enables the symbols and content to be transmitted efficiently to descendants after them, thereby creating the same ideological perspectives for the newer generations of activists and contributing to a shared history of activism and protest.

Through this means of archiving artefacts, social movements can convey information and can also impact impending activism through what is known as crusade spill over. The protest which started in Tunisia and subsequently spread to other Arab countries like Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Syria are instances of blistering diffusion of the movement spillover which is a direct reaction in the Arab countries spreading to other parts of the world like Spain, the United States and the United Kingdom and other countries experiencing social activism movement.

3.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research beams its spotlight on several themes and is thus divided into five main chapters. In chapters one and two, some of the primary schools of thought on social movement theory are outlined, but focus is on one main branch of social thought which is “Castells Network Theory” which argues that it is not only the technology that delineate modern societies, but also cultural, economic and political factors that constitute the network society.

The other theories treated are the “Public Sphere Theory” by Habermas and “Theory of Weak Ties” by Granovetter. Both Public Sphere theory and Network Ties theory are branches under the Network Theory. Thus, Network Theory is a furtherance of both theories. Although reference is made to both models, the concept of “Network Theory” forms one of the underlying themes of this thesis.

3.1

CASTELLS' NETWORK THEORY

For this research, the economic and social aspects of network theory would be the focal point of discussion because it is associated with globalisation and the role of electronic communications technologies in the society. Besides, the emphasis would focus on the criticisms levelled against this theory

Castells, who teaches Urban Geography at Berkley University has done quite some books on Geography, city and the information society. Also included among his written books is a three-volume study on modern-day capitalism, titled "The Information Age". The book has enjoyed much success regarding sales and acceptance by readers with Garnham (2004, p. 165) referring to the book as the politest version of the theory of information society. Castells came up with the definition of network theory as a society whose social structure is made up of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communication technologies (Castells 2004: p.3).

Castells highlights three processes that led to the emergence of this new social structure in the late 20th century which are as follows:

- **Economic reason:** The need to restructure the industrial economies of society to accommodate an open market approach.
- **Cultural and Political Reasons:** The freedom-oriented cultural movements of the late 1960s and the early 1970s which started with the civil rights movement, the feminist movement and the environmental movement gave rise to this.
- **Social reason:** The revolution which took place in the information and communication technologies sector gave rise to the beginning of this new social structure.

These processes, which led to the restructuring of the late 20th century as discussed above led to the transformation of the society. The change also occurred in three folds, which are;

- **New economy:** The community became more informational due to the invention of communication technologies, which allowed information to be accessible by everyone. Besides, there occurred a globally networked society where individuals were able to network with each other and form strong ties on a global scale.

- **Work/employment:** The employment created during the transformation period was flexible in that one could efficiently work from anywhere with the aid of the technologies that were invented, and this allowed for an individual to pick up many skills needed for various types of jobs.
- **Labour:** The labour force was generic in that it cut across all sectors present in the economy and allowed everyone to fit into different areas of specialisation. Thus, everyone was fixed up.

FEATURES OF THE NETWORK SOCIETY

- **Culture and politics:** the cultural identity in a network society is inclusive and flexible as all individuals from different racial backgrounds have their ideologies well represented in a network society thus facilitating a feeling of belonging and togetherness in the network. The political ideology is also communicated to the members of the system using the media as it allows the sending of information to a mass audience. This also attracts attention from all around the world, which in a way markets the ideology and beliefs of the network society. Furthermore, through communication technologies, which are in use, ideas and suggestions are communicated to the members with an expectation of feedback, which allows restructuring and re-organisation of a planned line of actions.
- **Time and space:** A new social structure is linked to a redefinition of the material foundations of our life, time and space. Timeless time describes the logical or biological sequences, which are surpassed by technology. This also allows one to be at multiple places simultaneously, that is, being in the office at the workplace and attending a meeting in another location via Skype. Furthermore, many activities can be arranged simultaneously, and one can easily partake in them.
- **Space of flows:** Space here refers to the distance regarding physical space, which no longer exists due to the virtual world the technologies have brought as most activities are done online or in the virtual world. Besides, the ability to organise the simultaneity of social practices without geographical nearness is another feature of a network society. Locality in the space of flows describes a scenario whereby most companies do not require a location because they can operate in the online and virtual world.

- **State:** Global floods threaten the sovereignty of a state or country, thus making it build partnerships with others states across the borders. Similarly, organisations are affected, and they also create alliances with other organisations. This helps in times of crisis as they can quickly call on their partners with which a partnership has been formed to come to their rescue. One of the other reason for partnership building is to achieve a common set goal which has made them agree. When a partnership is formed the relationship between the two states is known as a network state.
- **Information networks:** Information, communication and technology (ICT) have become an indispensable medium for the transformation process encountered in systems. It is also allowing easy dissemination of messages around all network members, depending upon information networks. Information networks shape the relationships of production, consumption, power and experience in a system and ultimately lead to the transformation culture.
- **Arrangement:** In a network society, centralisation of power to a unit is not in existence as the people are individually capable of taking their decisions as they deem fit. No one is made to be the chief decision-maker. Instead, they all come together to deliberate on issues and arrive at a conclusion. Hierarchies also do not exist, as members of the network are equals, allowing everyone to be accorded the same respect. The network members can also challenge the authority of the nation-state if their goals and ideas are not being materialised. This can lead to protest or unrest as they try to force the appropriate authorities to make things right.
- **Relationships in the network:** there is a shift of interpersonal relations from nuclei to the system. This means that the ties occur among all members of the net and not the central body as there is no centralisation of power nor hierarchy. Thus, every member of the system interacts with each other. There is also autonomy which makes socialisation become personalised and adapted to the culture of the system. Moreover, the ability to reprogram one's personality to suit the interaction between the systems is very crucial.
- **Inclusion and exclusion:** The most fundamental divides in the network society according to Castells (2004 p.29) are the divide between those who are the wellspring of innovation and value to the network society. People who merely carry out instructions and those who are irrelevant whether as workers (not enough education, living in marginal areas with inadequate infrastructure

for participation in global production) or as consumers (too weak to be part of the worldwide market).

- **Change:** For change to materialise, there must be a development in the network society, which is the pressure between the efforts of some networks to impose their opinions and efforts of others to resist their domination.
- **Empowerment:** This according to Castells is fortified by social media including networking sites (such as Facebook) and social movements that operate using the internet. He regards social media as evidence of trends within globalisation that promote cultural diversity, innovation and certain kinds of freedoms.

It is pertinent to understand that in the concept of the network society, the chief form of power is the control or influence over communication. Most social movements make use of communication as a tool to enhance their modus operandi, and the social media communication platforms have taken over as the new public sphere as discussed by Habermas who believes social media is now the way to go for most activists. This is due to the transformation effects of the network society and the advent of technological inventions.

NETWORKS AS SETS OF INTERCONNECTED NODES

Castells in his work clearly described network as a set of interconnecting nodes, examples of which are broadcasting systems, studios, computer-aided communications, and social networks service providers in the global network of media, among others (Castells 1996: 470). Going by the definition, systems are not connected to one centre; instead, they are by the logic of addition and omission (binary) with dispersed structures and decision-making pattern. The presence of networks is dependent on the effectiveness of nodes present in each system. Whenever some nodes refuse to function appropriately for the system, such nodes will be removed or phased out and as such replaced as the system reshuffles itself through a process likened to cells reproduction biological processes. The significance of each node is reliant on its capability to earn trust within the system through the dissemination of information and to serve as a connecting tool by grasping the procedures, which allows the process of precarious adjustments of the system (Castells, 1996: 470-471; 2000a; 2000b; 2009; Stalder, 2006: 135-136).

Castells' notion was to make use of the global networks of influential interchange as a locus standi to the perception of the system. However, he was not surprised as to how networks materialised into life, their evolution and nature of network ties, or the functionality of the information network, he only defines with few examples that maintain the deliberation in an abstract form (Castells, 2000a, p. 5-24; 2004a). Furthermore, Castells is of the assumption that technological invention is the most germane distinct prerequisite for the emergence of networks (Castells, 1996; 2004b; Fuchs, 2009, p. 97-123). He stressed further by backing up his perspective with an assertion that the rise of networks as a resourceful tool for social organization is the outcome of three characteristics that have shown their importance and efficiency in the developing techno-economic atmosphere, these features are namely: flexibility, scalability and survivability (Castells, 2004a: 5-6, Castells, 2009:23).

Castells further described the three elements; Flexibility as the ability to change depending on dynamic situations and atmospheres, as well as maintain set goals while the constituent is moving. Also, all means of communication is blocked as to access new connections. Scalability on its part means the ability of networks to expand or reduce in size with little interference. Survivability, on the other hand, points to the facts that systems have no centre, they can function within a vast array of structures, they also resist assaults to their nodes and encryptions, this is because the encodings of each network can be found in multiple nodes which can replicate the instruction and find a new way to operate.

In summary, Castells (2004a; 2009) outlined the network as groups of interrelated nodes, which process economic and other importance flows with the assistance of new technologies. These networks can be self-constructed and can also function according to the interests expressed within the nodes using the binary logic of inclusion or exclusion. The systems can also self-regenerate by presenting new actors and content as circumstances change. The self-motivated feature of networks makes them flexible, scalable and gives them the ability to survive which are the keys factors needed in a nonstop evolving techno-economic atmosphere (Castells, 1997.)

Castells in his work asserts the world is developing from the age of industrialisation to the information age. This is because of the emergence of ICT, especially the ones related to communication and biological processes. The society in which we live in remains capitalist, even

though the origin of technological resources through which it performs has evolved from energy into information, which means the society now thrives on information. Knowledge is paramount to the economic output of a state. Through communication, space comes into extinction and aids globalisation, furthermore, the prospect for a quick and non-simultaneous form of communication also impacts the relationship to time.

Castells further enlightens that even though networks are not a new means of social organisation, they have become a significant characteristic of social organisation (Castells 2000a, p.5). This is because of the advent of communication technologies that have afforded the devolution of structural control, which in turn aids the efficiency of networks about categorised structures. Concerning business organisation structures, Castells claims that the paradigm shift can be considered as the move from the straight-up system of the government towards the horizontal corporation (Castells 2000b, p. 176).

CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN NETWORK THEORY

Castells claims that information has become an integral component of each society, either capitalist or not. Going by the new network economy, information assumes a fundamental standpoint that is necessary for economic efficiency. A good example is the movement of capital into currencies. Merchandises are dependent on the easy access to information concerning relevant topics ranging from politics to climatic change and social styles amongst others. In that regard, the relevance of information in today's society is not a new development, according to Castells, what he opines is the informational change to the handling of information itself, "the action of knowledge upon knowledge itself "now serves as the origin of amplified production.

In Castells' inquiry of labour, he allocated job into networked labour. This is responsible for tending to the objectives of the network, also switched off employment these set of people have nothing to offer the network, and in the network economy they are called non-labour because their work has no worth. The territory of non-labours is also regarded as the territory of criminal organisations, which are mostly outside the network and Castells claims that the system can use such groups of people for rebellious purposes. Furthermore, networked labour can also be classified into two groups of self-programmable labour; which includes skilled and flexible workers with their interest aligning with the aims and objectives of the network, while general

work comprises de-skilled workers who had to reduce their level of skill for a job. Their primary objective is to be able to survive to prevent the relegation to the class whose labour lack value to the network.

3.2 CRITICISM OF CASTELL'S NETWORK SOCIETY

The first criticism levelled against Castells was his portrayal of modern-day world, which is conversant and lacks originality (Webster, 2002, p.115). His suggestions concerning the features of modern society seem banal as he tries capturing contemporary life; the gross importance of information and knowledge, the consistent differences between the knowledgeable rich and poor and the belief that the world is in a period of technological and communal break.

Other criticisms levelled against Castells have been against his study on the impact of information, production and the correlation between informational labour and capitalism. The criticism questions his assertion that the modern-day condition of affairs regarding economic and social structure is the new age instead of a progression of industrial capitalism.

3.3 OTHER THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND ACTIVISM

NETWORK AND TIES THEORY

Every individual has a network of relationship with people that they are somewhat related to in a social way. The social system comprises of an association between people ranging from close family to casual friends spread over the geographical spaces (Kadushin, 2012). Social networks consist of both strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1983). The fragile relationships are examined in contrast with the strong relationships. Granovetter defines the strengths of the interpersonal relations as the fusion of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services which are found amongst individuals (Granovetter 1973:1361). People with healthy relationships are closely knitted and reliant on each other. This makes up for the assumption that the people who consist of an individual's extended social network and are not tied strongly are those that constitute the weak ties.

Granovetter notes that individuals with weak ties will be underprivileged because they will have less access to information as they are on a low level on the social system table (Granovetter 1983:202). He also opines that people with many strong ties in their social circle are expected to have numerous strong relations amongst them. For instance, a person that possesses two or more neighbouring friends has friends who are supposed to be closely knitted by having strong ties between them. Thus, people with many healthy relationships and fewer weak ties are expected to have lesser social networks while people with more weak links are supposed to be accessible to diverse types of persons in their social network circle; therefore, weak ties tend to expand ones possible social network (Granovetter, 1973; 1983). Through weak ties, an individual is subject to a more significant and distinct set of people from which social capital is derived.

Granovetter (1973; 1983) further asserts that people with lots of weak ties possess social capital than those without them. Going by Bourdieu's definition of social capital, social capital is the collection of the possible assets linked to the control of a secure network which involves longstanding affairs of communal associate and recognition (Bourdieu 1986: 51). Weak ties afford persons freedom of information from extended fragments of a social system (Granovetter, 1974, 1983; Kadushin, 2012). Through the connections of an individual that is probably ones close tie network, there exists a higher affinity for the dissemination of information for the masses.

Facebook, one of the channels of social media enables the increment in size of people in a social network. The public groups on Facebook grant admittance to persons who get information and partake in deliberations with other individuals in the group. A consumer receives immediate admittance to the immense number of weak ties using the coinciding network of friends as well as partaking in groups that consists of users who are yet to be friends. With the usage of Facebook and other social media channels of communication, individuals from different parts of the world can partake in deliberations, share their opinions and views about a topic being discussed and from there begin to join forces. The more the weak ties developed from Facebook, the more an individual's social capital. For one to be able to improve and increase the weak ties using the channels of communication, social media and the internet, unanticipated interactions between individuals with little or no shared common interest must ensue.

One of the numerous disadvantages to the use of social networks is that they can be filled with only strong ties of individuals with shared values and goals. If an individual's circle of friends is

filled with people who have the same sentiments and mind set, they are likely to come across new thoughts as they all think in the same direction and manner. When there is no intersection of ideas, which are independent, development will be inhibited, and creativity stalled.

Elisa Parise, while deliberating the filtering effect of internet customisation which is otherwise known as “Filter Bubble” opines that the theory of filter bubble surveys the “evolutionary view of innovation” (Elisa Parise 2011:96). This concept explains that when a casual tad of information meets each other, they tend to form a new variant of innovation and idea, which occurs because of individuals with similar opinions coming up with same results. When ideas that are different come in contact, the outcomes become innovative.

When evaluating a set of people that consist of different set of individuals, they tend to contribute countless types of content, thoughts, evidence and their perspective of viewing an opinion differ, all these may not occur in a group with strong ties only. This type of variation in information derived will give rise to a massive network with the weak relationship, with individuals having little or no common shared values and ideas but just a single goal. Granovetter said the following about persons who do not possess many weak ties:

Such individuals may be difficult to organise or integrate into political movements of any kind since membership in movements or goal-oriented organisations typically results from being recruited by friends. While members of one or two cliques may be efficiently recruited, the problem is that, without weak ties, any momentum generated in this way does not spread beyond the group. As a result, most of the population will be untouched (Granovetter, 1983: 202)

He further added that persons who partake in social movements because they identify someone who is now participating thereby intensifying one’s social network through weak ties will produce grander possibilities of being “friends” with some who is outside ones close circle of friends. Social media is one of the tools that can be used alongside the internet for the expansion of one’s weak tie network.

Network and ties according to Melucci (1995: 43) can be construed to be “the mutual identity of social movement leaders which are constructed and negotiated via a repetitive galvanisation of the associations between individuals or groups in the social movement”. Through networking and ties, interaction is spawned thereby leading to the establishment of healthy relationships. In any given

social movement, it is essential to discover the strength of relationships in various groups. Using the tie theory, one can ascertain the strong, weak and the latent relationships.

The primary instrument of a social movement is the weak ties as it is very instrumental in their activities, while the strong relationships are regarded as being emotional and require more frequent interactions between individuals. The asset of the weak relations lies in the ability of organisations and groups to get sustenance from the network of support (soft links) regarding information gathering, resources garnering and learning from past experiences. While the same asset of healthy relationships is made evident in social movement works and closely related to the excellent sense of impetus and allegiance to the group. According to Haythornthwaite (2005:137), “latent social network ties indicate ties that are technically possible but not yet activated socially”. These types of network ties will become more significant when technology usage is involved.

The connection between the actors in a network system is a relevant characteristic of social movement and activism as they can influence their knack to prolong and harmonise social action. Bennett (2003, p. 739) believes Gerlach’s and Hines’ SPIN-model can be used to understand the networked activities that are democratic and deliberative. Looking into their research of the 1960s that was the study of religious organisations, Gerlach and Hines (quoted in Bennett, 2003, *ibid.*) were able to enumerate four main features of a SPIN model:

1. **Segmentation:** This consist of many distinct groups, which grow and eventually go extinct, dissociate and fuse, they can also either expand or contract in size.
2. **Polycentric:** These groups consist of multiple leaders who often times are temporary and even compete as the centre of influence. Members of these groups have various identities.
3. **Integration:** The standard interest also joins these sections in political crusade networks. These include universal opposition and philosophy. These factors supplement each other and help create the culture of the crusade.
4. **Networks:** This group consists of loosely knitted, sophisticated connections. Most times, the system is integrated into one another and there is no hierarchy, which causes overlapping among members, joint activities, ordinary reading matter and shared ideas and opponents.

In this model, with the help of interaction which is primarily online, weak ties become strong ties and the process of mobilising members turns into an offline communal action among members thereby promoting bond, shared identities and a shared sense of purpose. Still, on this model, technology is not viewed as the end goal but as a tool used to purposely bring about unswerving action in the offline world and to co-opt organisation and employment schemes with the dissemination of information and crusade plans.

In the same milieu, the distinctions of both offline and online ties are crucial. Generally, there is an undesirable view of weak ties and online interactions may be viewed as being less realistic than the offline communications, which require physical contact. Many acts of activism and protests require offline interaction and the need for trusted allies to prevent security forces sneaking up on their activities. In addition, due to the emergence of social media, there has been a rise in the new form of networked resistance, which taps into the power of weak ties, mustering millions of people who have the same ideology and have made their voices heard in favour of refutation of entitlements.

It has been debated that although “lazy activism” for instance slacktivism which is sometimes known as clicktivism, is popularly found among individuals who cannot afford to be present due to their schedule for “active” activism. Social media and Information technology usage has allowed for this type of resistance, which is a way of witnessing the injustice that leads to shared uniqueness and overall apprehensiveness.

Social media are influencing social actions and protests through the globalisation features it adds to it. Foreign advocacy networks precede the advent of the internet, but technological advancements are creating new openings for activists and their groups to organise and structure their activities at a global level (Tarrow, 2005, p. 3-4). Consequently, globalised networks are now computer-generated, fluent and now operate on a worldwide scale.

It is however pertinent to highlight the differences in the varieties of globalisation of activism activities. The first is trans-international activism, which deals with the type of activism whereby the members are spread in different parts of the world with formidable structural and organisational facilities with the set goal of restating issues of the grassroots levels to a more significant degree globally.

Transnational activism on the other end occurs in a group or organisation where there is a shared goal of reference, but the local groups are independent of the larger body thereby linking up with the international organisation with local issues for a global plan of solving such problems.

The third type of activism is known as the glocal activism, which refers to the application and infusion of foreign agendas and action plans and strategies in a local scenario caused by spill over in the movement of policy and ideas (Tarrow 2005:103). An instance is the spread of Gandhi's approach to peaceful action and political defiance. This affirms that with the globalisation that keeps spreading due to the emergence of the internet and social media, the rate of dissemination of strategic plans and ideas of activists has increased.

3.4

PUBLIC SPHERE THEORY

(NEW PUBLIC SPHERE AND ITS FEATURES)

Network society is characterised according to Castells is described by ICT intervention, regionalisation and a variant consistent and overlapping networks which exceed national borders and are solely based on technological inventions and not an outcome of it. Similarly, Habermas related the variations inherent in the public sphere from the 17th century to the 19th century in Europe to the change in the general area, which was because of the modifications that occurred in culture and technology. Even though print media was invented alongside the lowering of the cost of printing. The removal of British licensing act (the British License act required the Queen's approval for printing a newspaper or pamphlet, the repeal of which mostly liberated the possible content of publications. All these factors were the basis for the bourgeois public sphere. The advent of ICT in any given culture will affect the citizens in a bid to achieve an open area.

Castells has been able to portray the apparent notion that a contemporary definition of a public sphere is unlike what it used to be in the 18th-century bourgeois public sphere, which was the basis of Habermas theory (Castells 2008: 79). He later describes what he thinks the new open area should be like from his perspective. The public sphere as defined by Habermas and the ideal type Castells described and paid attention to was grounded in a society having different organisations and real core than the present day public sphere. Given this development, any concept of the open

area that is pragmatic in original settings should be seen from a different perspective. The material circumstances surrounding its birth partly shaped the Middle-class public field. Equally the physical conditions and organisational structures of the social systems become separate in the existing day. This implies that the public sphere will also assume a changed shape, which birthed the new open area.

From the perspective of a network society, the public sphere has evolved and therefore through its evolution shifted from the original open field as described by Habermas and has now turned into what Castells describes as the new public sphere. This new public sphere reflects the societal structure that existed before and consists of three defining features namely; expansion through national boundaries, described by the dyad of being both local and global concurrently.

At the outset, the new public sphere has developed and evolved past geographical boundaries and this development is accredited to the emergence of global media-systems which Castells takes account of:

Mass self-communication networks that are, networks of communication that relate many-to-many in the sending and receiving of messages in a multimodal form of communication that bypasses mass media and often escapes government control.
(Castells, 2008:90).

The knack to interact physically and even from person to person basically on a vast expanse affords members of a significant social movement the establishment of the form of the global interactive network, which can only be provided by the governments and prominent international organisations in the past. Furthermore, this method of communication is now under the control of persons who can topple major global organisations such as the government and the mass media system (Castells, 2008, p. 78). This is an accurate depiction of the significant evolution of how people and individuals interact. The institution of a mass communication channel which takes out most of the cost challenges, which the traditional communication method offers with executing movements on a global scale. (Shirky 2008) adds that social media has empowered individuals with little or no capability to reach out to the countless others in the globe. From the perspective of a network society, a global public sphere can materialise devoid of third party or mediators allowing people all over the geographical distances to connect effortlessly.

Furthermore, a network society according to Castells is both locally and globally concurrent (Castells 2004: 2008). He maintained that it is a setting in which both the global and regional networks intertwine to bond individuals with their society and the general populace. The outcome leads to an amalgamation of both national and international benefits and an allocation of values amongst global civil society and the worldwide network state (Castells, 2008:89) that allows the interaction and data dissemination in and across national boundaries. The ability to interact on a global scale beyond geographical distances and borders without restraints is a relevant feature of contemporary society as individuals are not just able to converse locally and internationally, but also capable of distributing and accessing data as well as establish interest groups.

Furthermore, sacrosanct among the features of the internet is the ability to store up information for easy accessibility for future usage, thereby creating a source of concepts and projects to use in public deliberations (Castells, 2008: 79). Social media tools such as Facebook and others are relating a history of Internet use and how it can be accessed quickly and from any part of the world using a smartphone or an internet connection. These tools serve as information repertoire, which is used at the domestic and international level and are as well a characteristic of the network society in that this information will provide worthy information on the analysis of the community for the future.

In conclusion, the new public sphere has been devolved. Castells from his perspective views the devolution of communication as a factor that led to the growth of the network society (Castells 2004). Interaction using internet has been dispersed in the sense that there is the existence of mass communication channel, which can circumvent media organisations and topple government controls (Castells, 2008). These interactive platforms have no way of shutting them down; thus, if a government wants to restrict Facebook from working, they would require the total collaboration of the Internet service providers (ISP), which is not expected to suffice (Cowie, 2011). Besides, Habermas has highlighted that it was the marketing of the media sector to the private ownership that has led to the waning of the public sphere. The outcome of marketing the media sector has resulted in frivolous content, thereby eliminating prudence from the channel of communication.

Nonetheless, social media platforms such as Facebook are often regarded as a platform for trivialising issues, as users are at liberty to create their content. Van Dijck, (2012) argued that

Facebook is a platform where corporate interests are being raised especially through advertising processes. While some others view it as the assemblage of private information (Pariser, 2011); yet users who make contents experience no restraint of any sort. Most social media platforms such as Facebook offer free services, which are devoid of restrictions on content and afford user-generated content in an organised means with no restraints by finance.

However, in the same vein as Habermas' criticism of the 20th-century newspaper, Facebook is still regarded primarily for trivialising issues, and since there are no financial restraints, the users tend to be less critical.

The network society connects people and enables them to share information as well as store up information that can be used in both local and global settings in an organised method. Habermas recognised the public sphere as a link for interaction, sharing of information and opinions about deliberations (Habermas, 1996:360); remarkably the same features can be said of the Internet and social media channel such as Facebook, as these tools are systems which aids the dissemination of information and individual's perspective around the world. Public sphere can also be described as a communication tool that arranges this network on the heart of mass communication and the internet (Castells, 2008, p. 78-93). With regards to social movement, social media tools such as Facebook tends to augment the interactive ability of protestors and the observers, for this reason, it should be regarded as a constituent of the new public sphere. Networks are the originator of power in the society (Castells, 2004) and by just providing the populace with the efficient means of creating networks the balance of power becomes altered.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This research is tilted towards answering the following research questions;

- Which affordances have social media provided for activism and social movements?
- What are the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements?
- Is the use of social media by social movements effective in achieving the desired result?

In a bid to answer these research questions, this research will conduct several literature reviews. The literature reviews are conducted on themes and perspective relating to social media, activism and the application of technology in augmenting the affairs and operations of social movements.

This research employs the Fink (2005) model for systematic literature review, which consist of seven steps namely; definition of words in relation to the research questions, choice of literature, defining the eligibility criteria for the data, evaluation for methodology and quality of articles chosen, standardized review of materials and then the synthesis.

Due to the vast body of literature concerning the concepts presented in this research, a thorough assessment and blending of different literatures from various scholars has presented this research with sufficient historical perspective. Moreover, systematic analysis on novel allows the discovery of regularities in primary studies that are conducted in a parallel method thereby accounting for the inconsistency found in the reviews (Cooper and Hedges, 1994: 4), which allows for the generalizations within the perspective and limits of the studies used in conducting the research (Davies, 2000: 366).

A systematic literature review as a research methodology is employed in the discussion of a wide range of questions which original empirical research cannot tackle, (for example, uncovering connections among many empirical findings; Baumeister & Leary, 1997, p. 311). It is also useful because it could be used to examine how the functions, impacts, affordances or relationships between social media use and activism or social movement differs by taking into consideration the study feature which includes, sample type, year of data assemblage, the category of the political system and sample scope.

In addition, a meta-analysis could be used to survey how the media functions regarding the globalisation effect social media has created thereby considering the historical, cultural and social context of each country and the level of organisational structures of each movement thereby advancing theories of how social media affects activism.

4.1 SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

A systematic literature review is a form of research synthesis. Research synthesis involves the different means of collection of different studies conducted and merging them into a distinct knowledgeable interpretation. The variant studies can also be combined into reviews on an explicit theme. It is pertinent to know the features of systematic literature review for an unbiased

application in one's research. The features of systematic literature review include; objectivity, orderliness, transparency and ability to be replicable.

Furthermore, it entails the search process of finding past studies which have been carried out on an area of specialisation and fusing them together. The benchmark for adding and elimination in the research review entails being objective and stating facts explicitly and being consistent with the execution so that the decision to remove or add is understandable by the readers and other researchers who might want to use the same criteria. By being explicit, one tends to eliminate any form of bias that might confuse the reader and allows reliability of the result. Researchers are also able to update the review later to incorporate discoveries.

The best way to go about executing this method for one's research is to adopt the mentality of a judge and jury instead of a lawyer; a judge and jury cynically assess the data to get an unbiased conclusion while a lawyer approaches the evidence to make a good defence for the debate (Baumeister 2013, p. 119-132).

As stated earlier, this research employs the Fink (2005) model of quantitative research method for the systematic literature review. This model, which is divided into seven phases, is discussed below;

- **The research question:** Three research questions have been drafted and will be answered by this research. The first question treats the affordances that social media have offered social movements and activism; while the second research question discusses the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements. The last question on the other end treats the use of social media by social movements and its effectiveness in achieving the desired results.
- **Choosing literature and databases:** The motive behind the selection of older literature materials is to elucidate key terms such as activism, social movement and protest. Castell's theory of network was chosen because it provides a solid foundation for a recent body of literature and research works. Furthermore, other theories such as public sphere theory by Habermas and the network and ties theory by Granovetter were employed to make allusion to the creation of a new realm for public discussion ushered in with the advent of the internet and social media, thereby suggesting the destruction of formal public realms as expounded by Habermas. Databases that would be used while garnering materials for this

research work include; JSTOR, EBSCO, PROQUEST and Directory of Open-Access Journals (DOAJ). All the databases mentioned are common databases, which are used in the University of Lapland and also serve as a link to quality articles for research work. Moreover, all these databases are linked to the University's search, which is LUC, Finna that will be used to conduct searches for this research work.

- **Defining the search terms:** The key search terms used in this research work are “social media”, “activism” and social movements”. In the process of the selection of terms, this research considered using “digital media” instead of “social media”, but further investigation into literature revealed that “digital media” encompasses both the social media platforms, old media, the text messages (SMS), internet and other features, however, this research is more concerned about the role of social media, not other types of media on activism and social movement.
- **Defining the criteria for available data:** The materials used for this thesis and as data are written in the English language. The journals and articles also have been peer reviewed, with all the journals and articles written from the year 2008 till 2017. These range of years are chosen because progressive activism using social media began around that period with the Obama electioneering campaign and the Arab spring amongst other. Furthermore, due to insufficient finance for this dissertation, all the materials used are found in the open access journals. Part of the reasons for purveying materials and journals in English is to enable easy access to this research to foreign audiences as English is regarded as the universal language of modern-day research.
- **Methodological evaluation of the quality of articles chosen:** Since this research is more of events around us, data would consist of empirical studies so that one can relate to it and so the result can be valid. Thus, the articles comprise of interviews, discourse analysis and conceptual data analysis from which synthesis of literature would come from.
- **Standardised review:** The articles that will be analysed for this research would be assessed by deploying the qualitative content analysis approach, with the research questions put into consideration. The content categories that served as the basis of analysis in the articles that were analysed include themes such as:
 - the application of social media in conducting the affairs of social movements and activists;

- the results and effects of the application of social media;
- the disadvantages that the affordances of social media allow;
- and lastly, its efficiency in attaining movements' complete objectives.

In research, the qualitative content analysis is a research design utilized in communication and media studies. It is a study of the corpus or contents of newspapers, radio and television programmes and scholarly literature. In fact, content analysis is employed to study the contents of all media products, including traditional and new media. Its goal is usually to discern patterns in the communication contents and draw conclusions from a systematic analysis of the contents. Walizer and Wienir (1978) describe content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. In addition, Kerlinger (2000) opines that it is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic and objective manner for measuring variables and arriving at a conclusion.

In addition, the concluding part of the research and arguments in the article will be analysed in such a way that they all reflect the chosen theoretical background and provide answers to the research questions.

- **Synthesis:** The materials that have been chosen for this research work would undergo the process of cross reading, that is, the materials would be blended with one another alongside the theoretical literature that has been chosen for this thesis. Synthesis in research is described as a graphic amalgamation of pieces of literature into each other.

4.2 SEARCHES AND ELIMINATION

To start with the searches and elimination procedure, a pilot research was conducted by using the search terms “Social Media”, “Activism” and “Protest”. The outcome of the search is outlined in Table 1. The articles that were selected in this process were strictly based on their titles and they enabled the researcher choose materials that are empirical and discuss activism using social media. All other articles that are not related to the field of media education, theoretical based, social sciences or media studies were eliminated.

Table 1: Articles searched and downloaded from databases to be used

Database	Searched and Found Articles	Downloaded Articles
JSTOR	328	
PROQUEST	684	
EBSCO	8	
GOOGLE SCHOLAR	16,700	
DOAJ	36	

After conducting the search above, no article was downloaded because the results gotten were too significant and the results had to be downsized so that a reasonable amount of materials that could easily use could be acquired. Another search was conducted with the same database to streamline the consequence and the result of the next quest is presented in the next table. The researcher also used the following criteria to eliminate irrelevant articles from the search; range of date, titles based on the relevance to the topic, while searches were done using the abstracts. The result is presented in the next table.

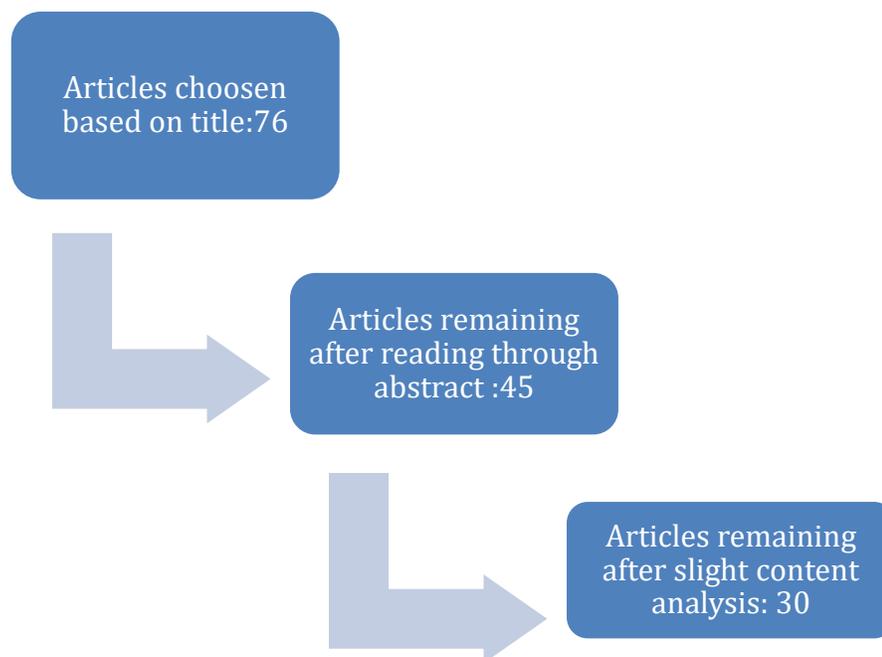
Table 2: Articles downloaded after downsizing article size through abstract

Data Base	Articles Found	Articles Downloaded
JSTOR	288	70
PROQUEST	18	18
EBSCO	8	1
GOOGLE SCHOLAR	2	1
DOAJ	36	22

After downloading the articles and streamlined them using the titles of each piece, the researcher began to read through the abstract of the remaining items in a bid to cut down the number of materials that would serve as data for the thesis. This process was conducted for 76 articles, reading through the abstracts and jettisoning articles, which had no relation to the topic of this research. At the end of the process, 45 materials were made it through this whole process.

Subsequently, after the articles have been reduced through elimination to 45, a slight content analysis was conducted on these articles, while also searching for the key terms in the reports. The articles that did not contain the key terms were jettisoned. Eventually, a total of 30 articles were left for further content analysis. The process of eliminating unwanted items, which do not relate to the thesis, is further outlined in Fig. 1

Fig. 1. Narrowing down articles through content and abstract analysis.



After the earlier round of elimination of unwanted and unrelated articles, the researcher began to peruse the remaining articles with the research questions in mind; If during the search, any article which is not related to the research question is found, such material is removed. After searching

for the first research question in the articles 23 articles were left, then the second research question was subsequently used for further elimination, which left the remaining articles to 16 items.

Figure 2 below shows the elimination process and narrowing down of materials using research questions as the search criterion.

Fig. 2. Narrowing down articles through research questions

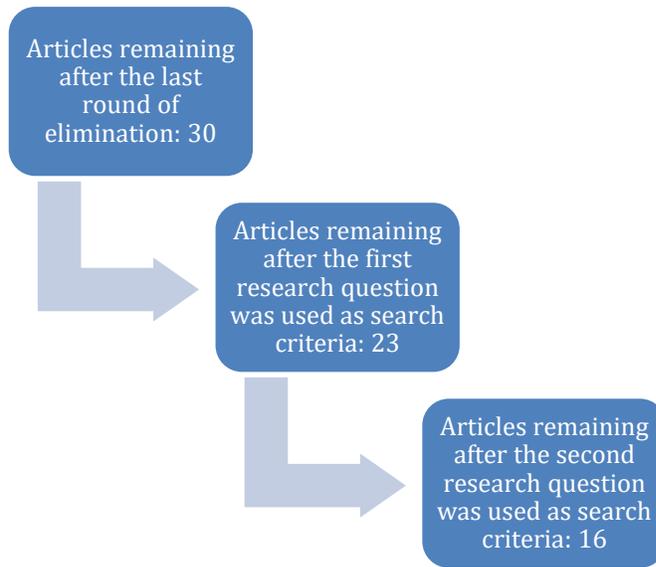


Table 3 displays the outcome of the final elimination process of the articles to be used as data, with the names, authors, publication year, databases that were used as well as search terms used in discovering the articles are displayed.

Table: 3 Final lists of articles used, author and year of publication.

Article Title	Author	Year	Journal/Book and Issue	Page
Student activists' affective Strategies during the 2010-2011 siege of the University of Puerto Rico	Alessandra Rosa	2016	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy. Vol. 36 No. 11/12	824-842

The Methodology Of Studying “Spontaneous” Street Activism (Russian Protests And Street Camps, December 2011–July 2012).	Alexander Bikbov	2012	Laboratorium. Vol. 4. No. 2.	275– 284
In the Name of the People: Democratization, Popular Organizations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador	Carlos de la Torre	2013	European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe, No. 95	27-48 ¹⁷ _{SEP}
Media Portrayals of Hashtag Activism: A Framing Analysis of Canada’s #Idlenomore Movement	Derek Moscato	2016	Media and Communication, Volume 4, Issue 2.	3-12
Concerning at distance: digital activism and social media empowerment between Latin-American migrants in Spain	Doctor David Ramírez PLASCENCIA	2016	<i>Journal for Communication Studies</i> , Vol. 9, no. 2(18).	69-87
Movement Society and Digital Protest: Fan Activism and other Non-Political Protest Online	Jennifer Earl & Katrina Kimport	2009	<i>Sociological Theory</i> , Vol 3; ProQuest.	220-243

New Tools, Old Goals: Comparing the Role of Technology in the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 2009 Green Movement	John Rahaghi	2012	Journal of Information Policy, Vol. 2.	151-182.
Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action	Jonathan A. Obar, Paul Zube and Clifford Lampe	2012	Journal of Information Policy, Vol. 2.	1-25
No Digital “Castles in the Air”: Online Non-Participation and the Radical Left	Linus Andersson	2016	Media and Communication, Volume 4, Issue 4.	53-62.
Connected Activism: Indigenous Uses of Social Media for Shaping Political Change	Marisa Duarte	2017	Australasian Journal of Information Systems, Vol 21	1-12
The Kefaya Movement: A Case Study of a Grassroots Reform Initiative ^[1]	Nadia Oweidat, Cheryl Benard, Dale Stahl, Walid Kildani, Edward O’Connell and Audra K. Grant	2008	Kefaya’s Successes	17-25

Internet Freedom and Political Change in Syria	Olesya Tkacheva, Lowell H. Schwartz, Martin C. Libicki, Julie E. Taylor,	2013	Internet Freedom and Political Space ^[L] _[SEP]	73-91
Making time for storytelling; the challenges of community building and activism in a rural locale	Sarah Copeland	2010	Seminar presentation, Net (Vol. 6, No. 2).	192-207
Virtuous networks: Machiavelli, speed and global social movements	Simon Glezos	2016	International Politics Vol. 53, No. 4	534–554
Facebook Revolutions: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Vedava BARAKOVIĆ	2011	Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Social Analysis, 1, 2	194–205
Media Activism from Above and Below: Lessons from the 1940s American Reform Movement	Victor Pickard	2015	Journal of Information Policy, Vol. 5.	109-128

5.0 Results and Analysis of Articles

The chosen literatures for this section of the study share similarities even though there are peculiar differences between them. The focus of this study is to investigate the affordances that social media bestow on activism and social movements, hence, the cases treated in the chosen literatures were strategically chosen in a bid to complement each other by showing some peculiarities in the characteristics of social activism as well as reactions to social media usage. The materials that were chosen for this research work passed through the process of cross reading, that is, the materials were blended with one another alongside the theoretical literature that was chosen for this thesis. This synthesis of literatures is described as a graphic amalgamation of pieces of literature into one other.

It is worthy to enumerate the themes on which the analyses of these articles are analysed. They include;

- Analysing the application of social media in conducting the affairs of social movements and activists.
- Analysing the results and effects of the application of social media.
- Understudying the disadvantages that the affordances of social media allow.
- And lastly, analysing the efficiency of social media in attaining movements' complete objectives.

Article 1

Concerning at distance: digital activism and social media empowerment between Latin-American migrants in Spain by David Ramírez PLASCENCIA.

This study focuses on the usage of social media platforms among Hispanics – Latin Americans in Spain, Colombia, Venezuela and especially Mexican migrants in increasing the spread of political engagement and public activism among these migrants, regarding crucial public, economic and political problems in their own homelands. The timeline was from January to July, 2016 during which several Facebook groups created by migrants living in Spain were placed under close scrutiny.

The scrutiny of these Hispanic migrants' Facebook accounts reveals that these group members living in Latin America are trying to get information about how to travel to Europe. Many of the posts and comments published there are also mostly related with immigration and labour matters. These Facebook accounts served as public spheres for the interchange of information about politics and social problems. Therefore, the migrants living in Spain could get updates about their homeland and occasionally engage themselves into political activism.

The paper thus concludes that the internet is a veritable channel for the creation of social engagement even among migrants as it affords them the opportunity of communication and interchange of ideas and information between thousands of people in split seconds, avoiding time and distance. Thus, the Hispanic migrants used social media platforms to discuss, organize and participate in public activism directed at resolving their homeland problems. In addition, they also used the social media networks to foster new relationships and maintain connection with the friends and family.

Article 2

Connected Activism: Indigenous Uses of Social Media for Shaping Political Change by Marisa Duarte.

This article's focus is on how indigenous actors employ digital technology, especially websites and social networking sites to advance their cause of political activism through social media affordances. Three cases of indigenous social movements online are the subjects of this study. They are the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, (EZLN) activism, Idle No More, and Rio Yaqui Water Rights Advocacy. It is worthy to note that these groups used the communicative affordances of the social media networks to practise a politics of visibility, cultivate solidarity among its internal structure, spread indigenous consciousness, enforce widespread governments' trust and inform numerous persons of the evils of colonialism.

However, a comparison of the EZLN activism, Idle No More, and the Rio Yaqui Water Rights Movement indicates the various kinds of community knowledge work that needs to occur before and around the period of activating digital tactics in Indigenous rights movements, which also

entails choices in the messaging and discourses of indigeneity, target of opponents' movement and selection of digital tools and techniques.

This research thus reaches a conclusion that in the study of the relationship between indigenous people and their usage of social media, the expression of strong voices through social media networks does not instigate government or the relevant authorities to act according to the yearnings of the people. Rather, indigenous activist and another other leaders should strategically fight for the embodiment of decolonization and seek performers of far reaching change.

Article 3

Making Time for Storytelling; The Challenges of Community building and Activism in a Rural Locale by Sarah Copeland.

There are assertions and opinions that uneven projection of voices and interests within a community can be partly addressed via the application of digital storytelling methods. However, while the employment of digital storytelling methods can enhance constructive dialogue and communal discussions for participating communities, imparting a sense of motivation to become involved from the beginning can be daunting. Therefore, this article beams its spotlight on other participatory media techniques that can be applied to spur participation in communal digital storytelling workshops that encourage activism. The study also examines roadblocks on the road to participation, with particular spotlight on the role of mandate for success of project.

In order to do this, that is investigating the effectiveness of digital storytelling as a cross-boundary method for community building and activism, a location in the countryside of the United Kingdom was selected by exploring issues and experiences with the natives. In addition, to help solve these issues, a workshop in North Yorkshire is taken as a case study to help identify the importance of place and of methods while conducting digital storytelling.

The article's conclusion is that in overcoming and solving the challenges that prove as barriers to organizing and facilitating community digital storytelling workshops, the resources to fund workshop equipment and places at workshops, time available, the group's context of place, motivation for participation and a feeling of self-confidence for participants make storytelling an

activity to be considered. It also mentioned how some important issues to rural community storytelling can aid the shaping of participatory workshops. These issues include how the ‘new cultural tools alter the use of narratives and the act of storytelling in fundamental ways.

Article 4

In the Name of the People: Democratization, Popular Organizations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador by Carlos de la Torre.

Unlike the first three articles that have been summarized which focus mainly on cases related to only a single scenario, a this article discusses and compares the different patterns of fostering participation in three peculiar regimes. This article analyses the strength of subaltern organizations when leaders are elected, it also studies the confrontation between governments and the opposition and finally considers the view of democratization of the coalitions that brought the regimes under review into power. The regimes under review are Ecuador, Venezuela and Bolivia.

This article argues that these regimes differed in their patterns of promoting participation. For instance, in Ecuador, participation is mostly reduced to voting in elections, while in Venezuela and Bolivia, formal and informal mechanisms aimed at promoting participation are experimented at the communal, local, and national levels. The strength of popular social organizations at the time these leaders were elected, the perceived stakes in the confrontation between government and the opposition and the views of democratization of populist coalition, explain these divergent patterns in promoting participation.

Thus, relating the article’s finding to the study of social media affordances on activism and social movements, democratization promotes inclusion and participation. This suggests that the democratic nature of social media, which allows everyone to air their voices and opinions without restrictions, allows for better and increased political participation. Unlike the less democratic traditional media that are controlled by a few gatekeepers and can be easily manipulated and controlled by the government. Traditional media of communication, which include radio and television broadcasting and print media, also contribute very little in fostering the objectives of social movements.

Article 5

Internet Freedom and Political Change in Syria by Olesya Tkacheva, Lowell H. Schwartz, Martin C. Libicki and Julie E. Taylor.

This paper discusses the Syrian's experience of the Arab spring. The article looked at the small-scale protest that started from a border town in Daara escalated into a full-blown protest that swept the whole country. The paper investigates the usage of social media platform from both the government and the opposition and how it helped in aiding their different courses. The timeline was between the beginning of the protest in 2011 and 2012 when it was exacerbated turning into a full-fledged war.

Two primary objectives of the paper were to determine the role the citizens play during the political turmoil, especially when the opposition was calling for an end to the Assad administration and exploring how deep and broad the effect of media censorship and how the government can manipulate the internet during the political crisis.

The paper concludes that the role of the internet in the Syrian Uprising, which has evolved into somewhat of an ethnic crisis, is relatively low due to the poor internet connectivity, poor connection, and government clampdown on the internet. It also notes that while traditional means of reaching people, such as Friday Prayer Meetings and funeral processions, remains more effective to mobilise the people in the uprising, the internet, however, allowed the political activists to awaken the consciousness of both the local and international audience.

Article 6

Advocacy 2.0: An Analysis of How Advocacy Groups in the United States Perceive and Use Social Media as Tools for Facilitating Civic Engagement and Collective Action by Jonathan A. Obar, Paul Zube and Clifford Lampe.

This paper is an analysis of the practical ways that advocacy groups of different purposes and interests in the United States of America employ social media and social media technology in communicating with their citizens and achieving their daily objectives. The authors of the article, Jonathan Obar, Paul Zube and Clifford Lampe conducted a survey on 169 persons from 53

advocacy groups in order to discover the effect and importance of social media and social media technology on their activities.

The article reveals that supporters of social media's democratizing function praise its capacity to empower and connect individuals as well as organizations or groups. Cases to support this argument include the political uprisings in the Arab world, known as the Arab Springs, the August 2011 London officials' request for the shutting down of Blackberry's instant messaging service because rioters were using it to coordinate their strikes. And more importantly, the United State's Tea Party launching in February 2011, where the party launched its Facebook-esque social media site known as the 'FreedomConnector' used to mobilize over a hundred thousand American citizens during the presidential race.

The paper concludes that social media aid advocacy groups and facilitate engagement and collective action in the following manner; strengthening outreach efforts, enabling feedback loops, strengthening collective action efforts through increased speed of communication and being a cost-effective tool that allows advocacy organizations do more with little resources.

Article 7

New Tools, Old Goals: Comparing the Role of Technology in the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 2009 Green Movement by John Rahaghi.

This paper focuses on a comparative analysis of the role of communication technologies in the success or failure of modern revolutions, with emphasis on two revolutions that occurred at different times in Iran. The two revolutions, which serve as the cases in point are the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Twitter Revolution of 2009.

The paper's objective is to discover the reason the communication strategy deployed in 1979 – the use of audiocassettes and pamphlets achieved its purpose of the revolution, while 3 decades later, in the Green Revolution or as the Western world dubbed it, the Twitter Revolution of 2009 where social media networks were used in the protest against the re-election of the then incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, seemed not to be capable enough in successfully achieving its goal. This is based on the assertion that social media alone lacked the ability to single-handed

facilitate revolutionary movements under authoritarian governments. Other goals of the paper include explaining lessons that can be learnt by revolutionary leaders and mass movement leaders about the use of new communication technology from the successes and failures of the events of 1979 and 2009.

The paper revealed that after studying the different communication technology employed in the two cases, the word of mouth communication was the most effective organizational method of communication in Iran in 2009. It revealed that in 2009, although there was widespread use of the internet and social media technology, there was very minimal empirical proof that social media aided the revolution in the areas of organizing, recruiting and motivating citizens. The paper indicated that social media mostly served the purpose of informing the outside world of the domestic violence occurring in Iran, but did not have the capacity of organizing, motivating and recruiting citizen for the 2009 revolution. This is in contrast with the revolution of 1979 that had with it, a strong network with a capacity of physically recruiting, organizing and motivating citizens for their revolutionary cause, in addition with their communication strategy of pamphlets and cassettes.

Therefore, when the Iranian government shut down internet services, there ceased to be a medium of communication and the goal of organizing a protest against the government could no longer be achieved because there was no clear leader of the 2009 revolution and there was no face to face communication of protest plans, hence there ceased to be motivation for the members of the activist group which also led to the failure in achieving the objective of the revolution.

Article 8

Media Activism from Above and Below: Lessons from the 1940s American Reform Movement by Victor Pickard.

The 1940s was a trying era for activists, media policy makers and communications experts in the United States of America as they all dealt with media's normative foundations and regulatory guidelines. This era was a time when media reform agenda was taking form both at the local social movement levels and inside elite policy circles. Thus, this paper takes into consideration, the tension within the growing media reform movement, with numerous number of them still currently

undergoing serious negotiation among media activists till date. The author suggests that the history of media in America is always cleansed of its controversial past as the “winners” are showcased as the sole authors and determinants of its past. Meanwhile, an in-depth look at the history of media in the US, especially its reforms and policies indicate how public outcry has helped develop what became the popular media model in the world.

The article reveals that most Americans are taught in school that press independence is a necessity for democratic self-governance. In addition, the article claims that evolutionary leaflets were employed for mobilisation during the freedom fight against the British as a well-known activist helped agitators during the period before the American Civil War.

Furthermore, in the 1900s, there existed a communist newspaper dubbed ‘The Appeal to Reason’, which was very well subscribed to. This facilitated the advancement of communist aspirant Eugene Debs’ presidential aspiration around that time. As a tribalised press, it offered support for minority ethnic groups. Subsequently, in the 1960s, another secret media helped maintain and endure the agitations and struggles of the people. However, in current times, social media have become important to media reforms as media reform struggles are centred on policies and decisions and are central to the change of the media itself.

The paper treated the 1940s media struggle to capture lessons to be learnt by new generation activists and reached a conclusion that American media could have decided to take a different route to development if the policies initiated in the 1940s by the reformers had been considered, there probably would have been a changed media system today; a system that places more emphasis on public service and not the commercial oriented media that currently exists.

Article 9

Media Portrayals of Hashtag Activism: A Framing Analysis of Canada’s #Idlenomore Movement
by Derek Moscato.

This article treats the employment of social media networking website, especially Twitter in the spread of Canada’s #IdleNoMore movement, which was bolstered by the success of the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movements.

The #IdleNoMore movement is an activist movement that launched its activities in Canada in November 2012, by Tanyo Kappo, an aboriginal activist and Law student of the University of Manitoba. The movement, which was created to inform the public of how a Canadian bill could negatively affect the country's aboriginals has spread and become a focal rallying cry for all Canadian aboriginals and also spread into the United States of America and other parts of the world. All of these were achieved through the usage of the hashtag, '#', a feature on Twitter that allows users combine their tweets around a single discussion or focus.

The study seeks to grasp how hashtag activism and online based social movements influence the reporting and discussion of social and environmental issues by the traditional media. It discusses how hashtag and other social media activists could be influencing and reframing debates about public and economic policies to change general perception and add social or historical context to social or environmental challenges.

In the end, the article concludes that hashtag activism is a catalyst for social movement and has helped give more credibility to the role of social media as a tool for increasing activism. It further concludes that media frames that were born out of hashtag activism set new boundaries for public policy debates and also reconstituted the composition of media audiences of aboriginal activism and the historical perspectives from which Canada's aboriginals were viewed and understood.

Article 10

The Kefaya Movement: A Case Study of a Grassroots Reform Initiative by Nadia Oweidat, Cheryl Benard, Dale Stahl, Walid Kildani, Edward O'Connell and Audra K. Grant.

This article puts into perspective the way the Kefaya Movement of Egypt was able to employ the internet and social media technology to spread its message to a wide number of citizens, and subsequently build a significant followership to challenge an incumbent government. It is important to note that the Kefaya Movement is a coalition of conflicting parties who came together for the sole purpose of challenging the incumbent regime in order to fight for the installation of democratic political reforms.

An important factor that worked in favour of the movement was the fact that the choice of its name, 'Kefaya', which means 'Enough', seated well in the psyche of the Egyptian masses and the elite, thus, it was easy for them to resonate with the messages broadcast by the Kefaya movement. At the height of the movement's activities, the movement was spread in 24 of the 26 provinces of the country and conducted protests with thousands of members across the country.

The movement allowed free membership into the movement through the website and successfully employed the internet and information technology in communicating its activities to its members. They did this through four strategies of communication. The first is contacting and communicating with members and the public through electronic messages. Secondly, they broadcast online advertisements and independent media publications. Thirdly, they published banners and political cartoons on their websites and collaborative bloggers and lastly, collated videos and pictures of physical and sometimes, sexual mutilations by state security officials.

In the end, the article confirms that with the aid of the movement's employment of the internet, the Kefaya movement served as a catalyst for citizen that had the internal urge to protest their situation. The movement was able to sow the seeds of protest, which had been a taboo in Egypt prior to the creation of the movement.

Article 11

No Digital "Castles in the Air": Online Non-Participation and the Radical Left by Linus Andersson.

In this paper, attention is paid to understanding digital or internet non-participation, especially as a communicative strategy in activism. The paper offers results from a study conducted on online presence in activist milieus that are connected to the radical left in Sweden.

The researcher argues that the online practices and use of social media as could be observed in milieus associated with the radical left suggests active non-participation and that this, in turn, is related to a political ambition to claim autonomy. He further states that with the conflict of surveillance and censorship, affordances of individualism, commodification of users and systemic constraints and affordances of connectivity versus the need for anonymity in activist groups, which

are dominant in capitalist societies, but are some of the features that are not permissible in a leftist society. Therefore, citizens of such society practice non-participation or passive participation in social media affordances.

The paper concludes by indicating that there exists evident scenario of active non-participation in digital media in societies studied by this article, which further open up new vistas for further research into activism and non-participation as a form of media practice. It is worthy to state categorically that the practice of active and passive non-participation or abstention as espoused by this article relates to the ideological positioning, values and beliefs inherent in a leftist society.

Article 12

The Methodology of Studying “Spontaneous” Street Activism (Russian Protests and Street Camps
by Alexander Bikbov

This paper opines that activism empowers protesters as the self-appointed spokespersons in challenging the relevant authorities place their demands and ensure that the government is accountable to the people. Thus, after the Russian parliamentary polls of December 4, 2011, widespread protests engulfed major Russian cities and went ahead in becoming a memorable experience for researchers. It is apposite to note that a unique feature of these protests in Russia is that they are devoid of patterns and structures that relate to institutional mobilisation—that is, venues of collective action.

With the aid of interviews, the researcher indicates that respondents’ social networks use had no role in the manner the protests are coordinated, rather, these social networks serve as a primary source of information with which the protest activities were carried out. That is, social networks provided information related to venues for demonstrations and a served as a platform for deliberation on issues relating to ideologies and ethics of the protest.

The researcher further revealed that another fact about the decision to participate in the protest was their disposition, which drove people to the issues and as long as it is within the precinct of the laws of the land. The rallies’ framework, in addition with the legal status, was a significant determinant of the turnout and the composition of the protesters. Hence in many cases, a protest

that was supposed to comprise 300 participants usually recorded attendance of two thousand. This was possible largely because of the media, which was used to inform the people of the date and time and that it is permissible by law.

The researcher therefore concludes that the mass protests after the 2011-2012 Russian parliamentary polls portray succinct instances of an interesting formula of participation, which show intelligence over politics, personal experience over institutional representation and legality over radicalism. A combination of all of these facilitated the success of the protests.

Article 13

Facebook Revolutions: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Vedava Baraković.

Just as was the case in many nations that adopted social media technology or the internet to propagate acts of protests and activism against governments and constituted authorities, Bosnia and Herzegovina was also incited to tow this trend due to the arguable successes of social media in toppling governments in some parts of North Africa and some Arab countries. This trend of events popularly called the Arab Spring recorded considerable success in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain. It is on the heels of these successes that some activist groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina sought to apply social media and the internet in its quest to mobilize citizens against the government.

This paper reveals that in the early period of the year 2010, two Facebook groups were created. They were the BH Labor Party and the To the Streets Group. Both groups were charged with objectives that were clearly stated in their Facebook groups, with the overarching goal of organizing anti-government protests. It is worthy to note that at the different occasions that these groups called for physical protest, nobody showed up physically, including the organizers of the protests. Eventually, one of the groups was shut down and ushered in the end of the first online revolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Against this foregoing, the article thus concluded that the possibilities offered by social media and the internet do not have far reaching significance unless they are augmented by well coordinated activities in the offline realm. Therefore, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the online

protesters lacked the structure of transforming their online activism into realistic action of gathering protesters on the street. Rather, their activism was restricted to posting links, likes and comments, therefore turning it into one-click activism.

Article 14

Student Activists' affective strategies during the 2010-2011 siege of the University of Puerto Rico
by Alessandra Rosa.

Having lost the right to make use of public campus spaces for their students' protests on the 14th of December, 2010, University of Puerto Rico student activist resorted to other strategies in a bid to continue their fight against the constituted authorities. This study thus concentrates its examination on the manner the student activists approached their activism activities and the way in which they built up their enthusiastic accounts through web activism. Students in the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) had confronted a severe reaction in the wake of losing lawful rights to utilise spaces inside the college to hold social occasions and gatherings for their dissents. This hindrance was intensified by the nearness of the police on the campus grounds.

The University Management needed to present arrangements that will influence educational cost and they endeavoured to handicap understudies' dissents utilising police, yet student activists could send messages utilizing telephone calls, SMS and for the most part, Facebook and Twitter. With these two social media networks, inhumane conducts of the police against students around the school posted online. This empowered them to arrange themselves and collect supporters enough to interfere with a discourse by Governor Luis Furtado in far-away Spain.

The student activists needed to devise different methods to battle for their motivation, therefore, they moved to the virtual space. They set up informal organisations, which empowered them to meet up and build up a feeling of the network without meeting physically. This allowed them accomplish their objective by guaranteeing a change in the running of the island.

This study thus confirms how web activism can aid social developments and create massive amounts of cooperation as exemplified in the second influx of University of Puerto Rico activists' use of the internet and social media is garnering support for their cause.

Article 15

Virtuous networks: Machiavelli, speed and global social movements by Simon Glezos.

This article employed the Machiavellian hypothesis of legislative issues to clarify the online revolutions that shook different sections of the world between 2011 and 2012. This article compared the methodologies of the 'Facebook Revolutions' including the 'Arab spring' and 'Occupy' to the subtleties of the Machiavellian hypothesis of mixing network working with activity as a method for doing viable activism and dissents.

The researcher consequently looks at how activists utilised the online media successfully in executing both the 'moderate' work of network building and the 'quick' work of seizing openings and maintaining a strategic distance from perils. The Internet offers a fast stage for more extensive and successful communication and dispersal of data and the advantages of this on progressive political development are clear.

The effectiveness of web-based social networking was anyway not confined to the capacity to share and get messages. It additionally offers a stage to frame gatherings and also the opportunity to associate and cooperate without physical meetings. The article also claims that even though Social media did not cause the uprisings, it offered better approaches for intensifying disturbances and drawing in the supporters.

One of the alternate capabilities of the online networking is that while it keeps protesters together as a gathering, it also offers an avenue for individuals in other parts of the world to lend their opinions to the discussion and be fully informed regarding their progress.

Article 16

Movement Societies and Digital Protests: Fan Activism and Other Non-Political Protest Online by Jennifer Earl & Katrina Kimport.

The increased utilization of the Internet and Social media has prompted similar increment in a term called Fan activism. Its expanding use has attracted researchers to the subject and they have throughout the years endeavoured to speculate and break down this new pattern and its viability.

The study also examines an internet platform known as petitiononline.com where anyone can enlist their objections and have the help of other ordinary individuals who utilise the platform. This examination likewise opens other opportunities in the challenges of activism, which is that they are no longer exclusively for political, government and human rights development. Furthermore, with the spread and ubiquity of the web and social media, there is currently a chance for activist to lead crusades for different issues that matter to them.

The study concludes that apart from employing the internet and social media for political activism and protest, there are several other claims and causes that are being pursued online, which sometimes include culture oriented or even consumer-based claims and objectives that are contrary to the conventional political causes that social media were initially used for.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research seeks to answer the following three research questions:

- Which affordances have social media provided for activism and social movements?
- What are the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements?
- Is the use of social media by social movements effective in achieving the desired result?

According to the pool of articles that were selected for this research, the answers to the three research questions are present in these articles and some of the articles indicate overlapping responses to the research questions. Overlapping as used in this context means that some of the articles attend to more than one research question, thereby leading to several articles responding to one or more of the research questions. Therefore, for clarity, the articles are divided into groups, according to how they answer each research question while providing a brief discussion for each group.

- **Research question 1: Which affordances have social media provided for activism and social movements?**

Student Activists' Affective Strategies during the	Alessandra Rosa	2016	International Journal of Sociology and	824-842
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2010-2011 siege of the University of Puerto Rico			Social Policy. Vol. 36 No. 11/12	
The Methodology Of Studying “Spontaneous” Street Activism (Russian Protests and Street Camps, December 2011–July 2012).	Alexander Bikbov	2012	Laboratorium. Vol. 4. No. 2.	275–284
In the Name of the People: Democratization, Popular Organizations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador	Carlos de la Torre	2013	European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe, No. 95	27-48 ¹ _{SEP}
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Concerning at Distance: Digital Activism and Social Media Empowerment between Latin-American migrants in Spain	Doctor David Ramírez PLASCENCIA	2016	<i>Journal for Communication Studies</i> , Vol. 9, no. 2(18).	69-87

Movement Society and Digital Protest: Fan Activism and other Non-Political Protest Online	Jennifer Earl & Katrina Kimport	2009	<i>Sociological Theory</i> , Vol 3; ProQuest.	220-243
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The Kefaya Movement	Nadia Oweidat, Cheryl Benard, Dale Stahl, Walid Kildani, Edward O’Connell and Audra K. Grant	2008	Kefaya’s Successes	17-25

Internet Freedom and Political Change in Syria	Olesya Tkacheva, Lowell H. Schwartz, Martin C. Libicki, Julie E. Taylor,	2013	Internet Freedom and Political Space ^[1] _{SEP}	73-91
Making time for storytelling; the challenges of community building and activism in a rural locale	Sarah Copeland	2010	Seminar presentation, Net (Vol. 6, No. 2).	192-207
Virtuous networks: Machiavelli, speed and global social movements	Simon Glezos	2016	International Politics Vol. 53, No. 4	534–554

In the articles listed above, it can be gleaned that the communicative platform used by activists has been one of the catalysts to the successful implementation of planned change by the activists. The first paper in the table above, by Jonathan Obar, Paul Zube and Clifford Lampe considers the use of the internet as a vital communication tool for galvanising support and funds raised for a cause. Utilizing the internet, politicians and leaders maximise the population to their advantage. In addition, since the world is now a global village, this has enabled transnational movement whereby one can gain resources from millions of people who are not within ones immediate community. There is increasing political participation through the proliferation of social media platforms. The rate at which messages travel through social media to a broader audience also helps in disseminating information to members of activist groups.

Most important is the fact that unlike the traditional media, feedback is immediate on social media as this allows activists to keep in touch, exchange ideas and get instant feedback on questions and quests. Besides, as the movement continued to grow through partaking in the Arab Spring revolutions, a process of global activism whereby new actors from different parts in the world continuously became involved in the network took place. This is made possible by the open communication environment that Social media presents which allows for the swift dissemination of information across borders. In the cases of new-fangled social movements, another pattern of communication was noticeable using social media, the cases analysed in the articles studied were

able through the connective actions of their followers to extend or transcend their localities through scale shifts and through such variations create globalised movement frames.

In Alessandra Rosa's article, the use of text messaging and Facebook made it possible to spread and gain support for ideas and causes by connecting with other individual actors and movements on a local as well as global level. While in Derek Moscato's paper, the activists made use of Twitter and Twitter hashtags to connect with hashtags from other movements and to establish a globalised setting involving activists from other campaigns. With such emblematic and broad background and based on connective activities and individualised sharing of complaints, it was partly possible to bridge the gaps between movements in different regions and countries.

Although there are variances between the two decentralised movements, for example, the #IdleNomore is less connected to one specific physical locality than the Rosa conflict, Kefaya conflict among others, the parallels here becomes apparent. In both cases, social media facilitated their emergence as critical populaces, while their media usage also allowed their grievances through individualised and connective acts of framing and meaning-making to become more prevalent and incorporated by similar even though distant social movement activists thereby extending the original protest ideology. Consequently, these two movements and the other movements listed above are not identical in structure and content, but they were partly constituted by how their issues were accessible through social media and how their simple action was diffused through social media.

In Victor Pickard's article, which focused on the traditional form of social movement, the result of social media use regarding global activism were less noticeable. Although, there were signs of scale shifts, in comparison to the other cases there was little sharing of connective personalised action. The function of social media for activism and reform was, therefore, unimportant because the movement's organisational structure was not affected and a geographical and digital Western epicentre continued to be strengthened (at the same time as this structure also changed the way the social media was used). Accordingly, the functions of social media in the process of activism and protests vary depending on what form of movement one studies. When looking at networked and new social movements, social media are employed differently – to function by encouraging and facilitating the formation of the global public by allowing for interconnections between movement

actors in different places. In the case of traditional social movements, a similar function for social media was in principle, non-existent.

- ***Research question 2: What are the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements?***

A critical look at the second research question, which focuses on the disadvantages of social media usage for activism and protests as available in the articles that are analysed in the chapters above. Certain notions, as presented in the theoretical section can help in the comprehension of the progressions arrived at in this study. In addition, in the discussion of this second research question, there is no table as seen in answering research question one, as the risks and disadvantages of social media usage is a universal feature present if social media is employed and can also be experienced in some of the articles used for this study.

Apart from the connective affordances of social media channels employed by the movement and the prospects of disseminating individualized action patterns and affective connections that social media offer, some of the social movements that appear in several of the articles seem to go beyond merely sharing their goals, plans and objectives online through social media, but they also portrayed the need to be physically close to their political peers so as to physically recruit, organize and motivate them. For instance, this can be achieved going by the work of Tarrow & McAdam (2005) as measures that connect both activists through the act of mediation, which is one of the features of social media. Although the need to be in the same place to, for example, coordinate a mobilization, plan activities, and establish movement ties is becoming less important thanks to social media, such connections are still necessary because a certain degree of ideological or affectual affinity seems to be needed for a transnational movement, or what Papacharissi (2015) calls an affective public to emerge.

Till date, this study has examined how the citizens are strengthened using social media for agency purposes. This has appeared in the form of activism and protests. The empowerment of the citizens through social media has been mostly positive, although, the ability of social media to disseminate, oversee a line of actions, launch movement campaigns and even aid global activism can also be used for destructive purposes. Here the disadvantage of social media usage by activists regarding

some of the tactics utilised have been disruptive and occasionally used to destroy properties, launch malicious campaigns offline and publish defamatory information, which can mislead the network.

Furthermore, social media tools and the very infrastructures of the Internet have neutral value and can be utilised for different events. These tools and actions can thus be viewed as a double-edged sword, which can be used constructively or destructively. The tactics involved in destructive social media activism includes; blocking access; destroying and defacing property; launching malicious activities; misleading information and destroying critical amenities. Destructive activism is present in each of these divisions, with the inherent abilities of the media to be manipulated in a bid to either endanger lives or property.

In the case of blocking access to the internet or social media, the Iranian government as indicated in John Rahaghi's article blocked the entrance to the website during the Iranian upheaval thus, preventing people access to information or dissemination of information. In the case of delegitimization of property, the internet is hacked to gain access to the website and vandalise it. Malicious activities are organised with the aid of the internet and social media infrastructure. This allows for cooperation when the conventional means such as face-to-face meetings are not possible.

Other forms of tactics used by activists to protest the actions of their target include website defacement, which is akin to vandalization which usually comes along with protests. For example, in Alessandra Rosa's article and in Alexander Bikbov article, activists group hacked servers to accumulate illegal information and to steal confidential information to sell. Political groups nowadays use the same tactics to carry out their politically motivated activities. Even though some of these activists are short-lived, some other ones are part of a prolonged conflict. For instance, the Arab insurgency, which led to the Arab Spring and the Facebook Revolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, hackers attacked opposing government websites inputting spams and defaced the sites and Facebook pages. Attacks of this nature have continued to grow and become more sophisticated since then and till date, with the inclusion of social media and psychological propaganda.

Undertaking an effective attack of any type demands coordination. The social media has also proved to be useful as online forums offer an easy and reasonable means to mobilise personnel. Additionally, social media channels have been designed in a way to resist surveillance. This allows activists who are already targets of supervision to conduct their activities, while reducing the risks of being interfered with. The government believe criminals and hackers might use the internet and social media to evade supervision, so they tend to block all access to social media and the internet. The ability of blogs and forums, which allows an individual to become their own media channel can be viewed as another weakness of the internet and social media. Topical issues, which are neglected by the traditional media can be featured on these new media. However, these new blogs have nothing to lose when they publish the wrong information and most times they are unwilling to confirm the authenticity of their reports and instead disseminate false information to the populace as this was the case in the Rosa led protest in the university against the school union.

Even though the internet provides an avenue for intimidation, it cannot be said to cause physical harm unless the threats take place physically outside the virtual life. Nonetheless, as social media use becomes vital to our daily lives and activities, the hindrances between the offline and the online worlds diminishes. The examples given so far have depicted how an attack on social media or online can interfere with work, how groups can operate virtually in an untraceable format to avoid supervision and how confidential information can be sold or leaked indiscriminately.

In this category of attack, it is a worrying potentiality that activists could manipulate vital infrastructures thereby leading to direct bodily harm. Even though it has not yet been recorded that activists have used social media technology to cause direct physical damage, some countries have been undertaking such attacks. Some years back, malicious codes have been sent directly to computers using software, but as of today it is likely for such malware to be seen over the net and shared through the media. Abyss Thomas C. Reed in his book maintained that in 1982, the CIA sabotaged software, which supervises a natural gas line that runs through Siberia. This same software has been programmed to interfere with the system after some time causing an explosion and significant destruction. Nowadays, as more critical infrastructure is connected to the internet,

the need for privileged access is diminishing, opening vulnerabilities to criminals, terrorists, and activists alike.

Research question 3: Is the use of social media by social movements effective in achieving the desired result?

With regards to the last research question about the effectiveness of social media in the achievement of activists' or movements' objectives or results, it is evident that different social movements have different outcomes depending on the media channel used and the structure in place for collective action. In the case of the Russian protest as discussed in Alexander Bikbov's article and in Carlos de la Torre article, the activists' organisational structure was significantly impacted due to the inclusive form of communication channel engaged by these movements. Communication was highly decentralised and the campaigns enjoyed unrestricted geographical boundaries, which was necessary to allow outsiders partake in the movements' struggles. This enabled global activism, as new members were able to participate and contribute to the movement. In these cases mentioned in the articles above, a flat organisational structure enabled individual activists from areas distant from the actual protests to connect to other movements and perform connective activities. Thus, these movements were able to establish mutual, hitherto personalised pattern of orientations.

In the case of Facebook revolutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina as discussed in Vedava Baraković's article, the decentralised pattern of movement made it possible for individual activists using Facebook groups, where supportive statements, comments and images could be posted by activists. In addition, distant followers were enabled to share personalised ideologies, which led to the creation of global ties with doctrines involving individual activists and movements. In the case of Aboriginal Canadians' #IdleNoMore as treated by Derek Moscato, the decentralised pattern of the movement allowed the possibility for individual activists, using Twitter hashtags, which allowed for the establishment of connections with other movements and struggles. Their specific hashtags epitomises these. These hashtags enabled the campaign to extend their original protests ideologies to a global level. In the case study mentioned earlier, they all were connected regarding

organisation and personalised dispersion of ideologies and connective activities made possible using social media.

However, there were also some differences since the Russian protest and the Facebook revolutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina were more geographically rooted activism movement compared to the Canadian #IdleNoMore movement, with the latter being more geographically spread. Still, these examples showed decentralised features that were made possible due to the diffusion of ideologies made possible via the use of social media, which made mutual meaning possible. Therefore, the organisational structure of social movements alongside their specific social media uses impacts how the protests and demonstrations are expressed and formed. It also determines how globally pronounced such protests or activism actions can be.

CONCLUSION

In a bid to fully understand the affordances of social media usage in activism and social movement, this research set out to answer three core research questions designed to give adequate responses to this quest. The objectives of the research, which are to examine the various ways social media are employed for activism and social movement in this contemporary world; assess the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for activism and social movement; and thirdly, determine the effectiveness of social media use in activism and social movement.

These objectives also dictated the research questions that served as the springboard on which this whole thesis was predicated upon. Thus, in line with achieving the objectives of this thesis and answering the research questions, this research reaches the following conclusions based on the secondary data collected from the articles that were analysed and not from personal empirical studies:

In enumerating the affordances that social media have provided for activism and social movements, the role of social media on the impact of activism and protests is indeed of some significance in the movements studied within this thesis. The globalised activism effect was often accomplished through the interactive establishment of shared frames of reference and brokerage between activists from different localities. These in turn, if not made possible directly by social media, were at least to a high degree facilitated by them because mutual action pattern was more

easily diffused through digitally enabled sharing, that connected activists in a network. As it became evident in the analyses included in this thesis, these processes were also informed by the movements' organisational structures. In cases of more decentralised movements, globalised activism was aided to a higher degree than in cases with more centralised, traditional corporate structures. These regulatory dynamics also influenced how movements and different groups, or movement actors applied social media.

In addition, global connections made possible by social media can be understood regarding bridging actors from different parts of the world both ideologically and effectually through common ideologies within and between movements and individual actors. For this to be realised, at least some degree of affection proximity is necessary. This concept helps us to understand how global ties and movements can be instituted through the sharing of sentiments and individual action plans and how these are mediated by social media tools which enhance connective action without the activists involved being in the same locality.

In the treatment of the disadvantages of social media to activism and social movements, the research admits that as much as activists, advocacy groups and movements in their clamour and struggles for positive causes, mostly employ social media, however some movements also employ social media for harmful and destructive purpose. The Arab spring can be considered as the application of the affordances of social media for the greater good.

Finally, in the determination of whether the affordances of social media by social movements achieve its desired result. The conclusion is dual pronged as the articles analysed reveal dual sides to this. While in some cases, social media alone helped in achieving the goals set out by the originators or activists, for instance, in the Canadian #IdleNoMore hashtag campaign. Social media helped publicize the objective till their struggle was successful. In some cases, however, for example, in the article titled, "*New Tools, Old Goals: Comparing the Role of Technology in the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the 2009 Green Movement.*" Social media alone could not achieve its objective of organizing and convening a physical protest to march against the incumbent Iranian government, because the peculiarity of the situation required physical recruitment, organization and motivation of citizen, in addition with the online activity to attain its goal. Therefore, in answering the third research question, social media contributes immensely to the success of certain

social movements and activism, to the point where some record complete fulfilment of their objectives. However, in some situations, along with social media activities, physical and offline activities are also required for certain movements to achieve complete fulfilment of their objectives.

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