



# Movements and its implications on social media protests

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## DESCRIPTION

There is no denying social media's ability to inspire individuals to take action. During the 2011 Arab Spring, also known as the "Facebook Revolution" and the "Twitter Uprising," academics and journalists first started talking about using social media as a tool for activism. Since then, activists, protesters, and revolutionaries have utilized social media to mobilize support throughout the world for campaigns against a variety of injustices. However, it also serves as a platform for the propagation of false information and division at a rate that is unmatched. The COVID-19 pandemic and the rise in social media use as a way to maintain connections in a socially remote society have given social media even more influence, yet it can fail to uphold its duty to prevent polarization. An interesting lens through which to view social media's role and responsibility and to comprehend the difficulties that the future of socio-political communication will face is the use of social media throughout COVID-19 to mobilize people from all political perspectives to respond to perceived injustices.

Social media's accessibility to journalism and information has reduced the "information imbalance" between those in authority and those working for change by giving both sides the information they need to support and understand their respective positions. This information can be presented to global audiences, inspiring agreement and discussion in non-geographic communities. Due to the visual nature of social media, evidence of injustice may be swiftly and extensively disseminated, which forces those guilty to take responsibility for their acts. Social media channels were the ideal vehicle for spreading this momentum since they provided powerful video. Once this flame was lit, social media evolved into a tool that allowed for the rapid organization of protests. Social movements can also use social media as a platform to enlighten and educate the public, especially now that more people are unable or unable to demonstrate in person. For instance, a push for

education on gender inequality was made in conjunction with the Reclaim the Nights/Reclaim the Streets demonstrations that were triggered by the death of Sarah Everard. Protesters repurposed the hashtag "#notallmen" to talk about women's experiences and steer the conversation away from the men-versus-women dichotomy that had the potential to incite counter-protests.

Recent upheavals and significant protests around the world have shown evidence of the specific ways in which digital infrastructures empower protest movements. But curiously, some of the same digitally-fueled empowerment techniques have also had the opposite impact, which is disempowerment. Additionally, many governments have created strategies to adjust to this new information environment. It allows fewer individuals resisting these new movements, frequently utilising a blend of traditional repression and cutting-edge strategies targeted at online media. In three crucial areas getting the public's attention, avoiding censorship and coordinating or logistics social media has immensely aided protesters and activists. Older forms of gate keeping, which relied on check point access control to a small number of broadcast stations, no longer, function as well or in the same way. Many people now have access to information through digital technology, which is something that most governments would prefer to keep from them. Street demonstrations can be planned on the spot. However, social media's impact on protest behaviour has nuanced and perhaps unanticipated effects, including risks to the longevity of movements and poor policy outcomes. Internet activism has frequently been criticized for encouraging "slacktivism" or the propensity to click links or like messages rather than taking actual action.

However, social movements are frequently misunderstood when the concept of "activities" is divided into online and offline contexts. According to Charles Tilly, social movements are fundamentally demonstrative in that they show worthiness, cohesion, size, and dedication. It takes

credibility to persuade others of the validity of a cause. Numbers show popular support, dedication shows the ability to endure and may cause disruption, and unity is a symbol of resolve. Therefore, rather than relying on an

arbitrary distinction between online and offline or between virtual and "the streets," participants' actions within a protest movement should be evaluated on the basis of whether they can accomplish those aims.