Social Media and New Protest Movements

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Presentation:

1. Connective action

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2. Digital Enthusiasm and Emotional Contagion

3. Connective leadership

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1. Connective action

2. Digital Enthusiasm and Emotional Contagion

3. Connective leadership

4. Algorithmic personalization

Paper

Poell, Thomas, and José van Dijck. (forthcoming). "Social Media and New Protest Movements." In *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media*, edited by Jean Burgess, Alice Marwick, and Thomas Poell. London and New York: SAGE Publications Ltd.
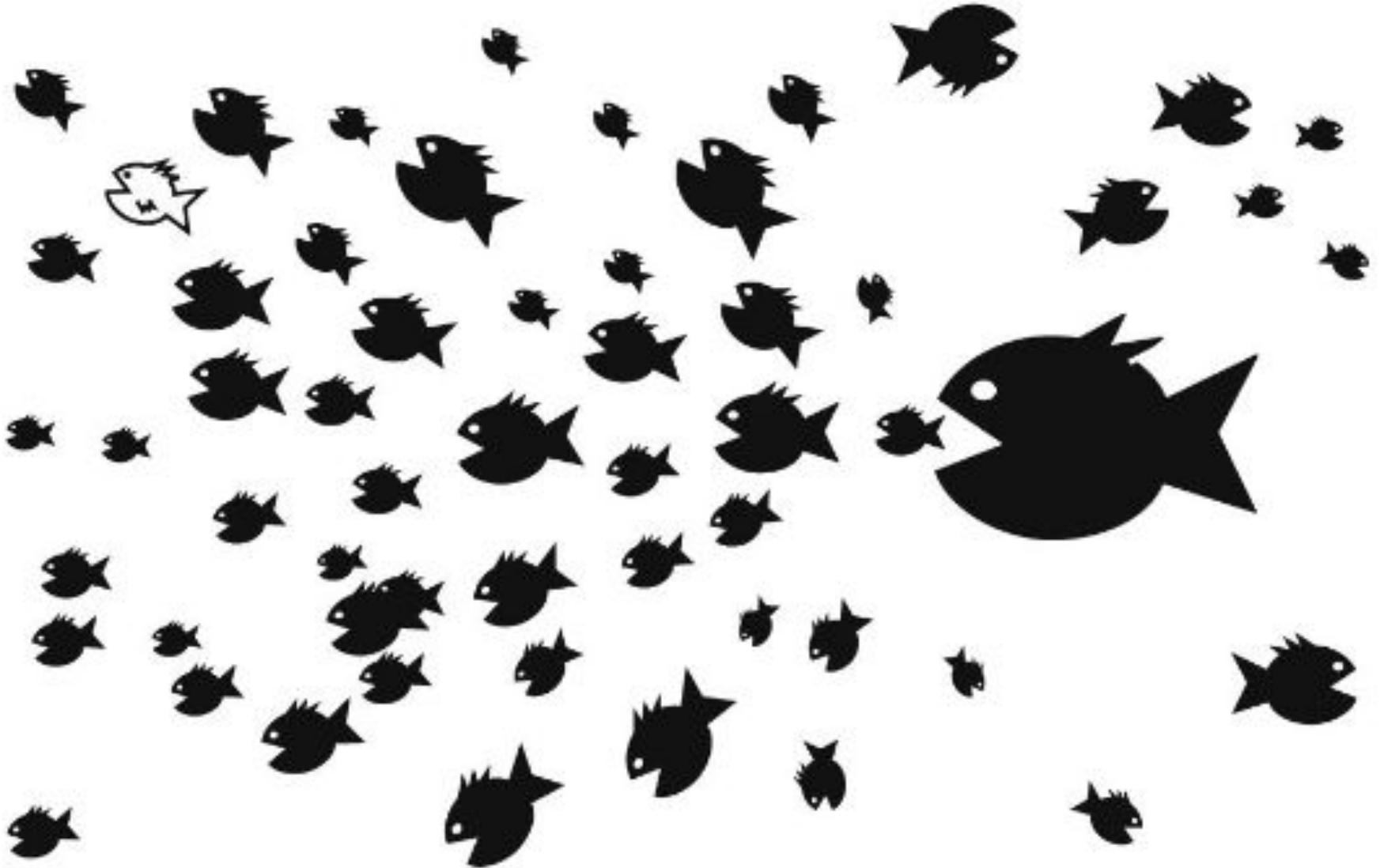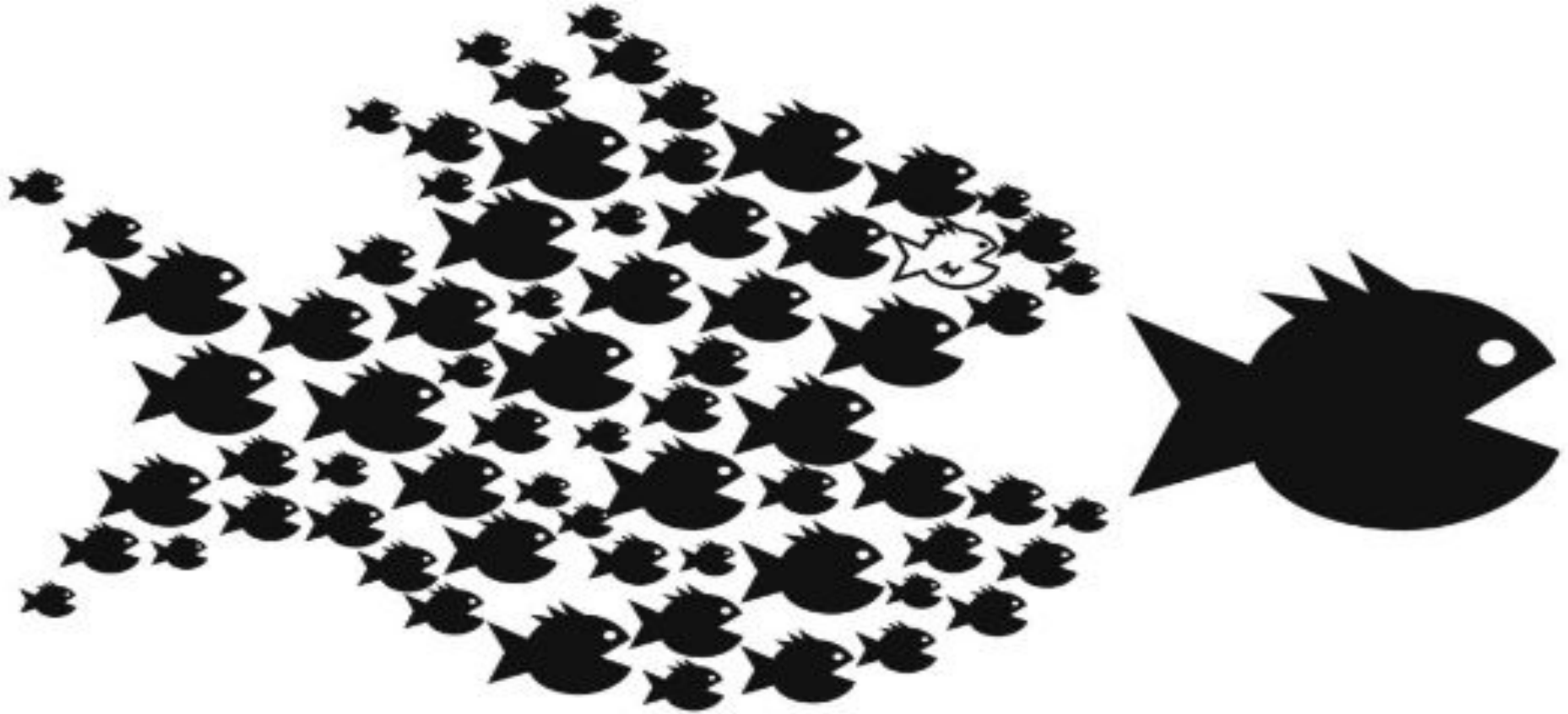
1. CONNECTIVE ACTION

Social media & bottom-up, distributed forms of protest

- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 739-768.
- Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age.* John Wiley & Sons.
- Margetts, H., John, P., Hale, S., & Yasseri, T. (2015). *Political turbulence: how social media shape collective action.* Princeton University Press.

Collective action problem

Resource-rich organizations

ORGANIZE!

Collective action frames
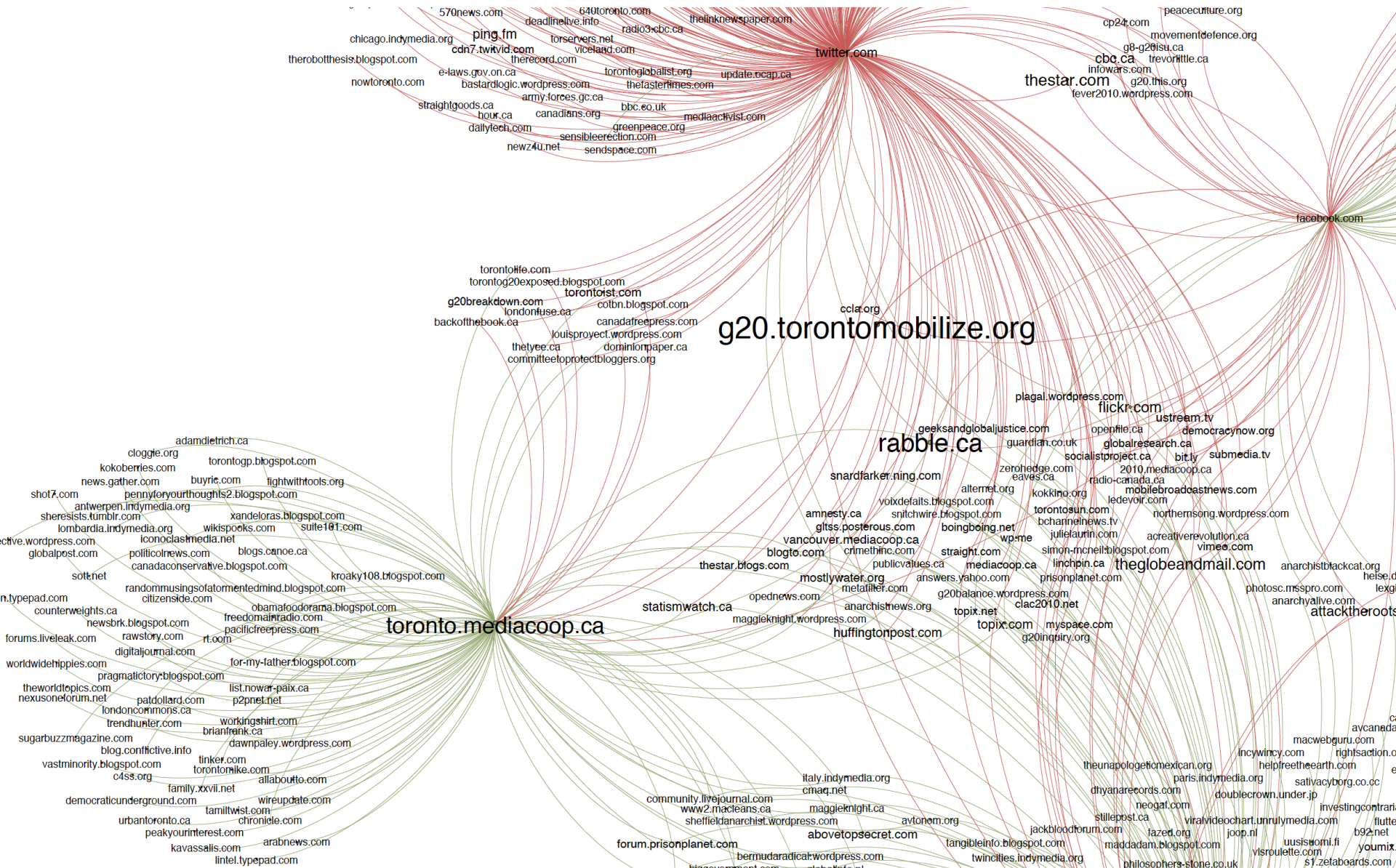
Bennett & Segerberg (2012, 752)

Participation becomes self-motivating as personally expressive content is shared with, and recognized by, others who, in turn, repeat these networked sharing activities. When these interpersonal networks are enabled by technology platforms of various designs that coordinate and scale the networks, the resulting actions can resemble collective action, yet without the same role played by formal organizations or transforming social identifications. In place of content that is distributed and relationships that are brokered by hierarchical organizations, social networking involves co-production and co-distribution, revealing a different economic and psychological logic: co-production and sharing based on personalized expression.

Meme

Organizational connectors:

Event coordination:

Information sharing:

CONNECTIVE ACTION
Self Organizing
Networks

- Little or no organizational coordination of action

- Large scale personal access to multi-layered social technologies

- Communication content centers on emergent inclusive personal action frames

- Personal expression shared over social networks

- Collectivities often shun involvement of existing formal organizations

CONNECTIVE ACTION
Organizationally Enabled
Networks

- Loose organizational coordination of action

- Organizations provide social technology outlays - both custom and commercial

- Communication content centers on organizationally generated inclusive person action frames

- Some organizational moderation of personal expression through social networks

- Organizations in the background in loosely linked networks

COLLECTIVE ACTION
Organizationally Brokered
Networks

- Strong organizational coordination of action

- Social technologies used by organizations to manage participation and coordinate goals

- Communication content centers on collective action frames

- Organizational management of social networks - more emphasis on interpersonal networks to build relationships for collective action

- Organizations in the foreground as coalitions with differences bridged through high resource organization brokerage
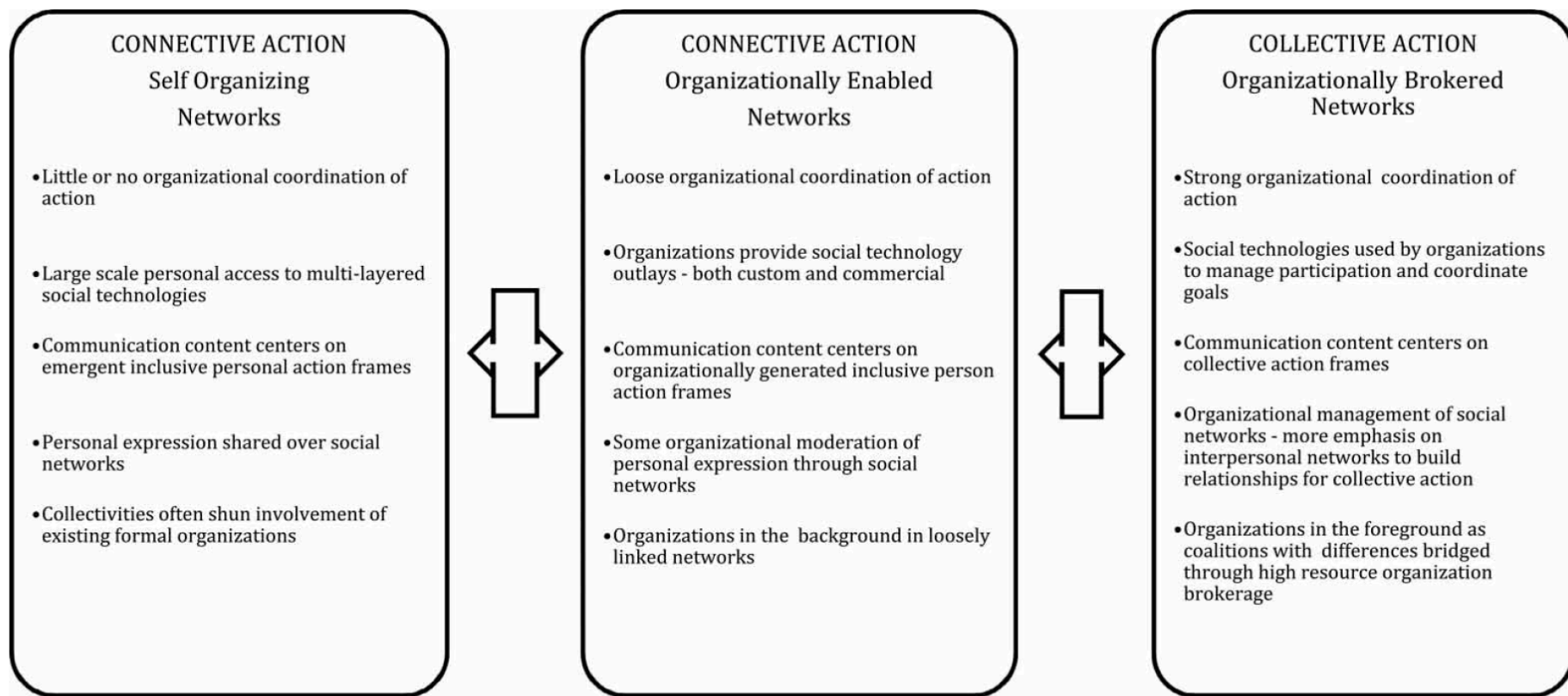
FIGURE 1 Elements of connective and collective action networks.

2. DIGITAL ENTHUSIASM AND EMOTIONAL CONTAGION

Relevant research

- Gerbaudo, P., & Treré, E. (2015). In search of the 'we' of social media activism: introduction to the special issue on social media and protest identities. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(8), 865-871.

- Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.

Collective identity revisited

WE ARE THE 99%
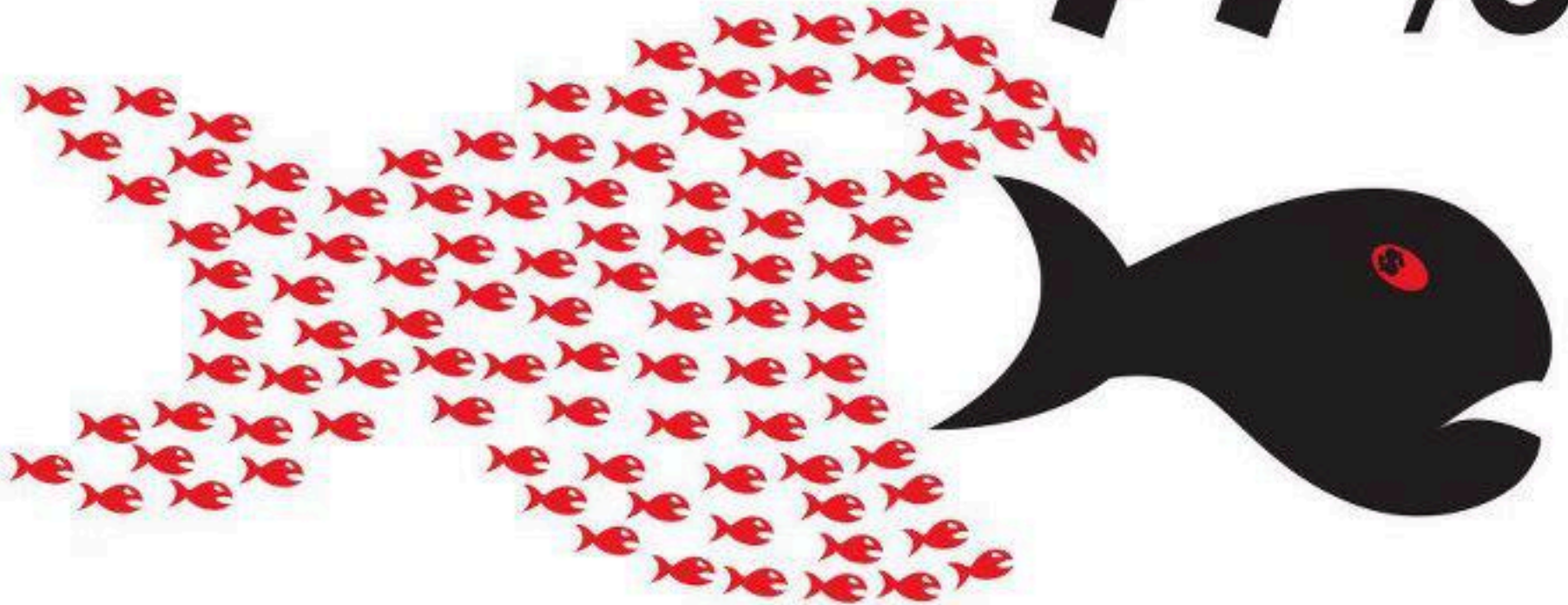
AND WE ARE HUNGRY

Criticizing Bennett & Segerberg

Opposing networks to collective identity disregard the fact that personal networks are not substitutive of but complementary to collective identity (Gerbaudo & Treré 2015, 867).

Emotion work & contagion:

- First, the explosion of moments of digital enthusiasm was facilitated by the activist admins' adoption of a passionate style of expression aimed at instilling a sense of hope among page users. This positive communication was manifested in the use of motivational language and messages predicting the ultimate success of the movement.

- Second, moments of digital enthusiasm arose from the positive response of ordinary page users who overwhelmingly supported the narrative proposed by page admins, contributing to an impression of collective solidarity and resolve through avalanches of likes, solidarity shares, and supportive comments. (Gerbaudo 2016, 256)

Admins of *Democracia real Ya* Facebook page (Spain):

"We already have 20,000 thousand indignant followers on Facebook! (April 10, 2011)

"Protests are growing like mushrooms in the entire country!" (April 12, 2011).

"We are already 30,000 indignants confirming their participation in the state event!! Invite your contact and let's continue growing!!!" (April 26, 2011)

"The moment of revolution has come 15th of May. Let's all take to the streets." (April 28, 2011)

Users of Democracia real Ya FB page

"I am coming,""Let's go!" "Let's all stand together, "It was time!"

"This is it, we need to continue waging war, this does not have to stop!" (May 13, 2011)

"Real power resides in the people." (May 13, 2011)

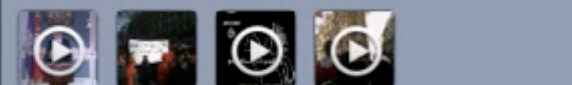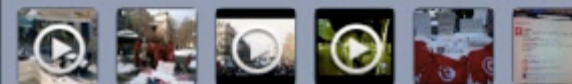# On the ground

3. Connective leadership

Publications

- Poell, T., & Darmoni, K. (2012). Twitter as a multilingual space: The articulation of the Tunisian revolution through# sidibouzid. *NECSUS. European Journal of Media Studies*, 1(1), 14-34.
- Poell, T., Abdulla, R., Rieder, B., Woltering, R., & Zack, L. (2016). Protest leadership in the age of social media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(7), 994-1014.

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Morocco: Militant Website Sustains DDoS Attack
Written by **Hisham Almiraat** · Tunisia, Egypt

The Moroccan militant website *Mamfakinch!* has come under a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack this Sunday blocking the access to its main platform for several hours. The website is now back online. What is *Mamfakinch!* and why has it been attacked? read »

### China: Wi-Fi monitoring system in Beijing cafes and bars
Written by **Oiwan Lam** · China

According to Mingpao Daily, Beijing Police has issued a notice to all the cafes and bars which provide Wi-Fi access to their customers to install a RMB20,000 monitoring system. Upon installation, users have to register their ID in the counter before logging in the Wi-Fi network. The notice was issued... 4 · read »

The Politics of Surveillance: The Erosion of Privacy in Latin America
Written by **Katitza Rodriguez** · Latin America
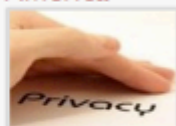
While most Latin American countries have democratically-elected governments, many still fail to respect human rights, including the right to privacy. Across the region, there have been multiple scandals involving government officials and intelligence agencies engaged in illegal surveillance of communications.

These include numerous chilling examples of how interception technologies are being misused to spy on politicians, dissidents, judges, human rights organizations and activists. read »

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2.0 Tools for Advocacy

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Step-by-step guidance on blogging while protecting your privacy, for personal safety. read »

Guide: Blog for a Cause!

Sami Ben Gharbia (interview 2012):

In English, we mostly tweet about news and facts, no debates. We also tweet about human rights, since this issue makes a lot of 'noise' in the West. We used French mostly to criticize and 'insult' the French because of their cowardice at the beginning of the revolution. For us Classical Arabic was more important than the Tunisian dialect. We wanted the rest of the Arabs to understand us, and our actions. Even when we communicate with Tunisians we use Classical Arabic, if we think it's a matter that concerns all Arabs. Tunisian dialect is only used, if we consider the tweeted information as a local matter. About 20 to 30% of our communication is in Tunisian dialect, mostly to make jokes and use irony
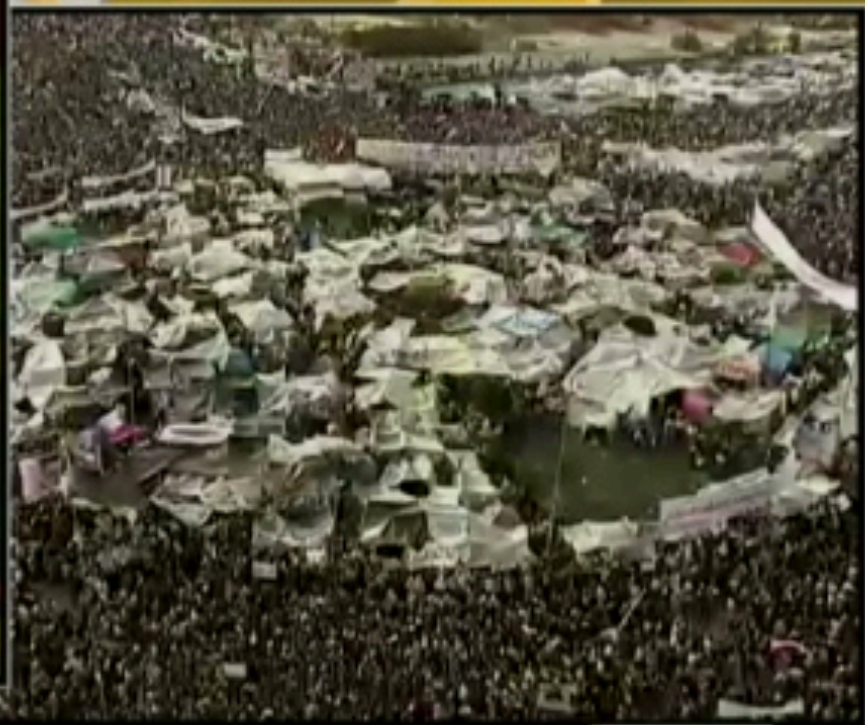
NASSER WEDDADY
Activist

EGYPT
UPRISING

LIVE
CNN

UPDATE Groupon founder apologizes for controversial Super Bowl ads 8:22 AM ET

Weddady (interview 2012):

We have been working for years on developing a strategy that includes the complete media machine: understanding media relationships between broadcasted media, printed media, satellite channels, and news agencies'. This also entails 'identifying, recruiting, and influencing correspondents in strategically chosen places, and building relationships with them'

Sami Ben Gharbia (interview 2012):

Our aim is first to get the information out of Facebook because it's a closed platform. Not everybody has access, or knows how and where to find the information on Facebook. After that we publish it on a blog with a clear structure, pages, archives, where the usability of the information is refined. It can also be re-publish on YouTube. Then we tweet the url to inform, where one can see the information.

KULLENA KHALED SAID

So please, everyone, there are no heroes! The heroes are the ones on the streets. The hero is everyone of us. There isn't one of us here that is on some high horse leading the masses.

Can page admins and top Twitter users be seen as activist leaders?
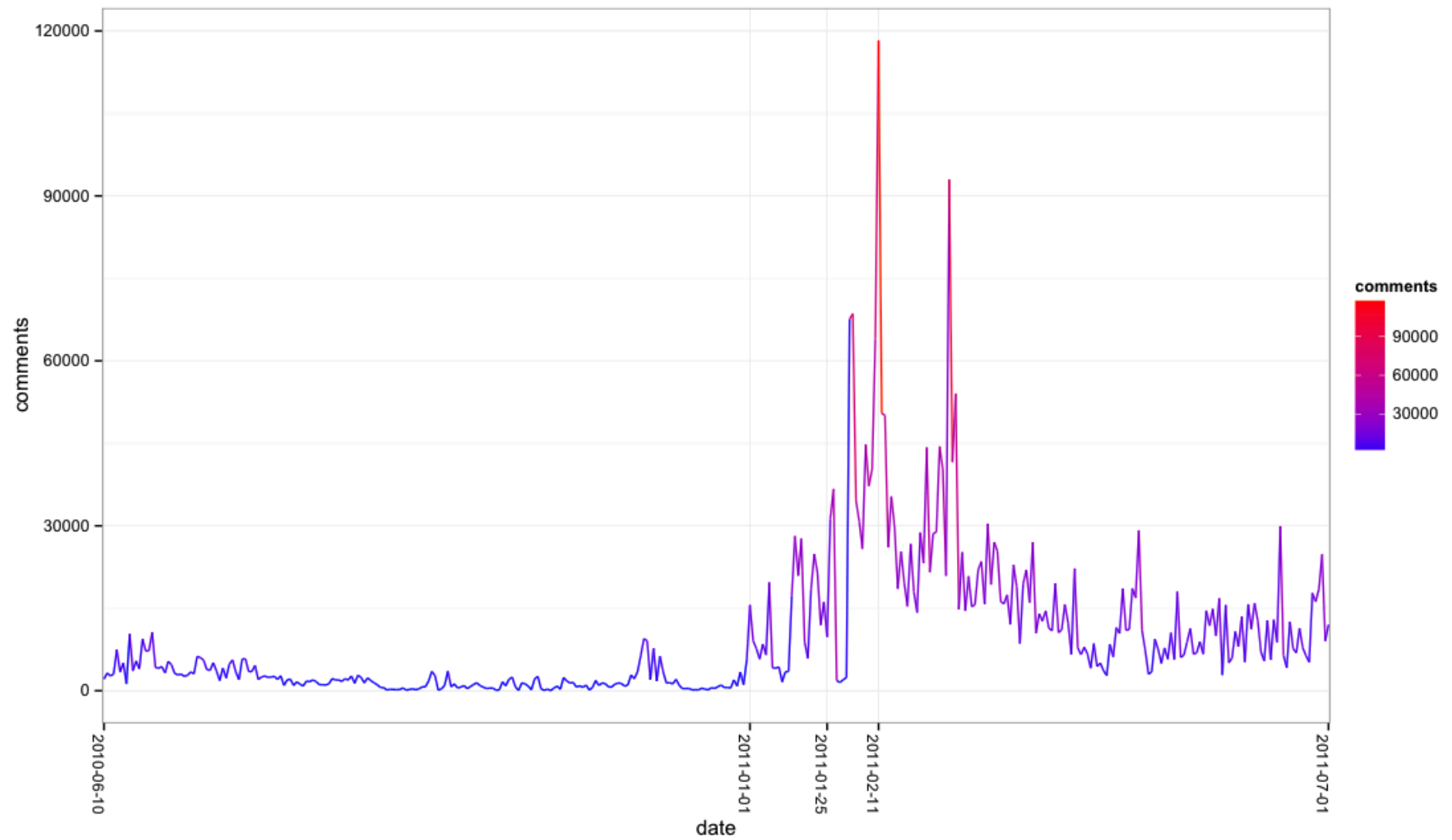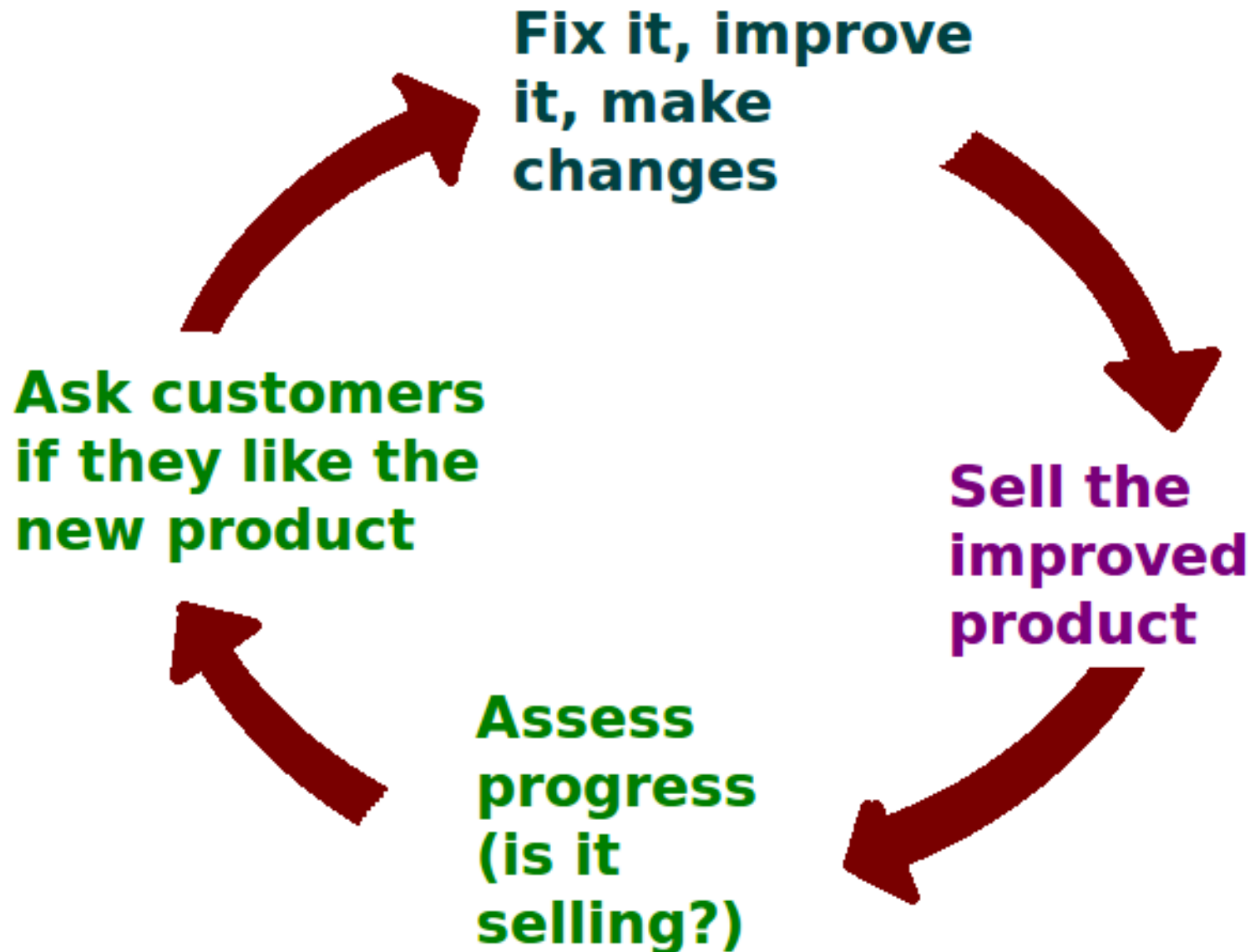
comment timeline, per day

Socio-technical configuration

Marketing Activism

"and if the perpetrator wants to disunite the people. This won't happen. We are Egyptians against terrorism and extremism from any person."

"Today is the 14th … January 25 is Police Day and it's a national holiday … if 100,000 take to the streets, no one can stop us … I wonder if we can??"

Looping process

Fix it, improve it, make changes

Sell the improved product

Assess progress (is it selling?)

Ask customers if they like the new product

2010/05/18

Volatile assemblages

"the admin "has deceived us and has used our energy for destroying the country because it appeared that he is not Egyptian originally and he's an agent."

Social movement leadership	Connective leadership
Mass media	Social media
Celebrity	Anonymity
Commanding, proclaiming	Inviting, steering
Following	Participation
Collective identity framework	Branding
Formal organization	networks, streams

4. Algorithmic personalization

Poell, T., & Borra, E. (2012). Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr as platforms of alternative journalism: The social media account of the 2010 Toronto G20 protests. *Journalism*, 13(6), 695-713.

Poell, T. (2014). Social media and the transformation of activist communication: exploring the social media ecology of the 2010 Toronto G20 protests. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(6), 716-731.

Community formation?

"setting out to discover potential communality in the practice of the movement" […] "community is a goal to achieve, but togetherness is a starting point" (Castells (2012: 225).

Techno-commercial processes of personalization

How social media compare as advertising platforms

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Snapchat	YouTube
Monthly active users	1.393bn	288m	300m	187m	70m **of which 20m-30m are estimated to be active**	100m **could be close to 200m now but this is unconfirmed**	1bn+
Average cost of advertising – cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM)*	$1.54	$12.16	?	$27.90	?	Adweek reported that advertising on a 'my story' could cost brands $750,000 a day. This is unconfirmed by Snapchat.	?
Percentage of users who log in daily	70%	36%	49%	13%	17%	?	?
Percentage of platform users who are millennials	75.6% **18-34-year-olds**	23.8% **18-34-year-olds**	43.1% **18-34-year-olds**	13% **15-34-year-olds**	17.9% **18-34-year-olds**	32.9% **18-34-year-olds**	82% **18-29-year-olds**
Pros	The biggest of the social networks, and the one with the most options for targeting.	People like to tweet while watching TV so advertisers are able to create 'two-screen' campaigns combining TV and Twitter.	Appeals to a younger generation who view Facebook as their parents' social network. Works well for brands that have strong visuals.	Access to a professional audience with accurate information about people's professional lives: people can be targeted by job title, employer, industry and even skills. LinkedIn members have twice the buying power of the average web audience, according to Comscore.	Users come to the site in a mood receptive to shopping. Many are creating boards around life events such as weddings, childbirth and redecorating, which advertisers are keen to tap into.	Users are highly engaged, and need to actively press a button to view a story, so advertisers can be sure attention is not wavering.	Holds users' attention for a long time: they can spend hours watching videos. A familiar advertising medium, very similar to creating material for TV.
Cons	Advertising is becoming more expensive.	Because users do not need to use real names or reveal much about themselves, does not allow as much targeting as Facebook.	Only a limited number of brands allowed to advertise at the moment. Lack of links on the site makes it hard to direct customers to products.	Users do not log on to LinkedIn as often as other networks.	Just one advertising format: Promoted Pins.	Stories and associated ads disappear after 24 hours. Ads are not shareable and there are no outbound links.	Viewers do not like pre-roll adverts and often skip them. Brands cannot request a specific slot, so there is a risk the ad will be playing just before something unpleasant.
Options and latest developments	Two options for ads: as a sponsored post in Facebook's news stream, or on the right-hand column. Allows advertisers to target users based on past purchases and demographics, even outside Facebook. Rumoured to be creating a video hub to make it easier to find and view video content.	Three options for advertising: promoted tweets, promoted accounts and promoted trends. Twitter ads can be targeted based on what users search for and what they reveal in their profiles. Also allows targeting according to what users have done online, outside Twitter.	Launched advertising a year ago with selected partners. Recently started allowing marketers to include links to their own products and websites from posts.	Two options: ads that appear in the sidebar, or sponsored updates that appear in the news feed. Recently launched a tool similar to Facebook's Atlas, which allows advertisers to target LinkedIn users outside the platform.	Reported to be planning to introduce a 'buy' button that would make it easier for users to make purchases directly from the platform. Offers advertisers access to the 'Pinstitute', a programme that teaches users how to create successful 'Pins'.	Advertisers sponsor 'stories', or collections of many people's pictures, often around specific events. Snapchat also recently launched Discover, where publishers such as the Daily Mail, Vice, Yahoo, CNN and ESPN display stories. Companies can buy ad space around this content.	Four options: display ads next to or below the YouTube player; semi-transparent overlay ads that appear over the bottom 20 per cent of a video; skippable video ads that can be inserted before, in the middle or after a video and non-skippable ads that must be viewed before the video is shown. Experimenting with a paid-for, ad-free service.

Ephemeral publics

Challenges for future research

1. Technologies, Economic Models & Practices

2. Evolving infrastructures & Strategies

3. Political-cultural configurations

Interdisciplinarity!

Thank you for your attention!

Mail suggestions to:

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Publications:

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