Digitally networked grassroots

Social media and the development of the movement for black lives and immigrant rights movement in the United States

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## List of Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A4C</td>
<td>Alliance for Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACLU</td>
<td>American Civil Liberties Union</td>
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<td>AFB</td>
<td>American Farm Bureau</td>
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<td>AIC</td>
<td>American Immigration Council</td>
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<td>AILA</td>
<td>American Immigration Lawyers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>America's Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAJI</td>
<td>Black Alliance for Just Immigration</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAN</td>
<td>Border Action Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>Border Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>The Black Lives Matter Global Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOLD</td>
<td>Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPP</td>
<td>Black Panther Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>BYP100</td>
<td>Black Youth Project 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Center for American Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARACEN</td>
<td>Central American Resource Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASA</td>
<td>CASA de Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Center for Community Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCJ</td>
<td>Concerned Citizens for Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHIRLA</td>
<td>Center for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIRC</td>
<td>Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Computational Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>DACA</td>
<td>Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREAM</td>
<td>cf. Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>Florida Immigrant Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIRM</td>
<td>Fair Immigration Reform Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIRR</td>
<td>Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWJ</td>
<td>Farm Worker Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIJC</td>
<td>Hawaii Immigrant Justice Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICE</td>
<td>US Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICIRR</td>
<td>Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights</td>
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<td>ILCBC</td>
<td>Immigrant Legal Center of Boulder County</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRNI</td>
<td>Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILCM</td>
<td>Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota</td>
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ACRONYMS

IOC Immigrant Organizing Committee
M4BL Movement for Black Lives
MALDEF Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
MICAP Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project
MIRA Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Inc
MIFN Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network
MORE Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment
MPI Migration Policy Institute
NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAL New American Leadership
NALEO National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
   Educational Fund
NBIRC New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center
NCIC National Capital Immigration Coalition
NCJIC National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support
NCLR National Council of La Raza
NRIS Northwest Refugee and Immigrant Services
NDLON National Day Labor Organizing Network
NGA National Guestworker Alliance
NIF National Immigration Forum
NILC National Immigration Law Center
NJIPN New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
NOW National Organization for Women
NYIC The New York Immigration Coalition
OSF Open Society Foundation
PRWORA Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
Puente Puente Human Rights Movement
RIFA Reform Immigration for America
RMIAN Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
SCLC Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SEIU Service Employee International Union
SLVIR San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource
SMO Social Movement Organization
SPLC Southern Poverty Law Center
TIRRC Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
UFW United Farm Workers
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UWD</td>
<td>United We Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VdLF</td>
<td>Voces de La Frontera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonatierra</td>
<td>Tonatierra Community Development Institute</td>
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This research project is firmly rooted in many different communities. Beginning back in 2014, the project turned out to be a lot of fun and gave me the opportunity to learn from a diverse range of people. I am grateful to all of them.

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Summary

The advent of social media heralded great promises for social movements. First, social movements would be emancipated from the confines of geography. Since disparate activists can now communicate directly, protest can spread and scale quickly. Second, since social media allow activists to build horizontal networks, they would no longer rely on organizations and their leaders to organize mobilizations, opening up the possibility for more egalitarian social movements.

This book develops a unique approach to provide nuanced answers to both these assertions. Using new data sources and computational techniques, it addresses long-standing questions about how movements grow and develop leadership. Central to the approach are movements’ “relational dynamics”: the way relations are structured between activists over time and across space. Using a combination of computational, qualitative, and geographical analyses, the book shows that online activism is still firmly rooted in place and relies on leadership. But it also shows that the role of space and leadership has transformed in important ways, allowing more room for activists who were previously on the margin.

Thus, social media (re)produce inequalities in social movements, while simultaneously providing new means of analyzing relational dynamics. Contrary to popular understanding, these do not inherently produce egalitarian outcomes, and are just as likely to increase rather than decrease tendencies towards inequalities and conflict.
Nederlandse Samenvatting

Wat is de rol van sociale media in de ontwikkeling van sociale bewegingen? Sociale media en protest lijken tegenwoordig onlosmakelijk met elkaar verbonden. De verwachting was dat sociale bewegingen minder beperkt zouden zijn door lokale omstandigheden, omdat activisten verspreid over diverse locaties eenvoudig kunnen mobiliseren via sociale media. Daarnaast bestond de hoop dat sociale bewegingen minder afhankelijk zouden zijn van hierarchische organisatiestructuren en leiderschap, doordat activisten, in theorie, onderling egalitaire horizontale netwerken kunnen vormen via sociale media.

Dit proefschrift ontwikkelt een unieke relationele benadering om die verwachtingen te onderzoeken. Een innovatieve combinatie van kwalitatieve bronnen, geografische analyses, en digitale methoden, maakt het mogelijk om de structuur van netwerken over lange periodes en in diverse locaties in kaart te brengen. Dit geeft aanleiding om bestaande inzichten over de verspreiding van protest en leiderschap te heroverwegen.

Uit dit onderzoek blijkt enerzijds hoe het belang van plaats en leiderschap is veranderd door sociale media. Zo zijn er bijvoorbeeld nieuwe mogelijkheden voor het overdragen van emoties, en zijn activisten die voorheen gemarginaliseerd bleven zichtbaarder geworden. Anderzijds blijkt uit dit onderzoek hoe digitale protestnetwerken geworteld zijn in zogenaamde 'grassroots'. Leiderschap en de verspreiding van protest blijven daarmee afhankelijk van lokale gemeenschappen.

Deze bevindingen benadrukken dat door sociale media zowel overeenkomsten als tegenstellingen in gemeenschappen zichtbaarder worden. Bovendien bieden sociale media veelbelovende mogelijkheden om onderzoek te doen naar sociale bewegingen, maar worden daarmee ook onvermoede nieuwe vormen van analytische onzekerheid geïntroduceerd die nadere aandacht eisen. In tegenstelling tot gangbare verwachtingen moeten we daarom rekening houden met de manieren waarop sociale media bijdraagt aan ongelijkheid en conflict in sociale bewegingen.
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