

UCLA

Honors Theses

Title

THE REVOLUTION SHALL NOT BE CENSORED:Understanding the role of narrative resonance in grassroots movement resistance against state social media censorship

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/279944wj>

Journal

n/a

Author

Cui, Kaitlyn

Publication Date

2026-04-03

Data Availability

Associated data will be made available after this publication is published.

THE REVOLUTION SHALL NOT BE CENSORED:

**Understanding the role of narrative resonance in grassroots
movement resistance against state social media censorship**

Kaitlyn Cui

Political Science Departmental Honors Thesis

Advisor: Professor Salma Mousa

April 3, 2026

“Censorship does not simply extinguish voices, but reshapes them—training a generation to speak sideways, turning repression into a culture of coded speech.”

— Yi-Ling Liu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</i>	4
<i>ABSTRACT</i>	6
<i>RESEARCH MOTIVATION</i>	7
<i>I. INTRODUCTION</i>	9
<i>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</i>	11
<i>Social media and grassroots political mobilization</i>	12
<i>State co-optation of social media</i>	14
<i>The spectrum of state social media censorship</i>	15
<i>Grassroots resistance methods to state social media censorship</i>	18
<i>Narrative as censorship resistance</i>	20
<i>Research gaps</i>	23
<i>III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISMS</i>	25
<i>IV. HYPOTHESES</i>	27
<i>V. CONCEPT SPECIFICATION</i>	33
<i>VI. METHODOLOGY</i>	36
<i>QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</i>	38
<i>DATA SELECTION</i>	39
<i>CASE STUDY SELECTION</i>	40
<i>VII. ANALYSIS</i>	44
<i>PROCESS TRACING</i>	44
<i>Case One: 2011 Egypt Revolution</i>	44
<i>Case Two (Shadow Case): Belarus 2020-21 Election Protests</i>	49
<i>Case Three (Shadow Case): Hong Kong 2019-20 Extradition Bill Protests</i>	51
<i>QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES</i>	54
<i>VIII. CONCLUSION</i>	63
<i>APPENDIX: Process Tracing Case Study Instrument</i>	64
<i>WORKS CITED</i>	66

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the countless individuals who supported daily—through late nights of research and writing, early morning emails and meetings, afternoon office hours, and every moment in between. I was only able to complete this thesis under their encouragement, and this labor should not be rendered invisible.

To my professors. To my thesis advisor Professor Mousa: thank you for continuously pushing me to dig deeper behind the *why* and *how* of my interests, for keeping me on track when my ideas began pulling my project in all different directions, and for supporting me with research resources at every step of the project process. I'm grateful for the ways I've learned to think, communicate, defend, and problem-solve through our discussions. To Professor James, our Political Science Departmental Honors advisor: I think I can speak for each student when I thank you for instilling in us love, sensitivity, care, and pride toward our research. Thank you for patiently answering my questions during weekly office hours, for showing me grace when life brought me unexpected challenges as I took POL SCI 191H, and teaching an elegantly designed course that equipped us with tools to transform our bold research questions into feasible projects.

To my family. Thank you to my parents, who flew across the Pacific and settled in a different country so that one day their daughter may pursue education and opportunities out of passion and not necessity. Thank you to my 外婆 and 外公, who never failed to check in on my research progress during our biweekly phone calls. Thank you to my 奶奶, whose brave stories of political protests during adolescence inspired me to pursue political science in the first place and my final thesis topic. Last but not least, thank you to my friends who accompanied me throughout this yearlong process, listening to me work through my ideas, encouraging me to take care of myself throughout the process, and remaining fearless making my dreams a reality.

It is not an overstatement to say that I have been pushed to question my core beliefs throughout writing this thesis. *Why do I care so much about this topic, and how can I make others realize the same?* Learning to structure my own thought process and articulate it clearly, authentically, and persuasively pushed me to not only refine my academic writing, but also my sense of self and the very worldview through which I interrogated my research question. I have grown immensely as an academic and human being since the beginning of this process, and for this I am forever grateful. I dedicate this thesis to the next generation of activists, whose courageous voices and actions will continue catalyzing our political institutions to be more representative, equitable, and just towards marginalized communities.

ABSTRACT

How do grassroots anti-government movements build and maintain narrative resonance to resist state social media censorship? While political science scholars have championed social media as a transformative organizing tool, its strategic use to sustain movements beyond their initial mobilization remains underexplored. Social media has transformed the scope and speed of grassroots communication, mobilization, and network-building. Yet, state governments increasingly co-opt these same platforms to suppress dissent. This reveals a gap in conceptualizing how the same digital infrastructure that enables movement-building is used against them, and how movements respond to this critical tension. In response, this thesis posits a sequential two-hypothesis framework to explore how narrative resonance, constructed via framing theory and connective action theory and deployed via technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics, enables movement actors to personalize messaging and decentralize communications to circumvent state censorship. A categorical literature review framework aligns formerly disparate theories of state censorship tactics with movement resistance tactics, supporting process tracing and large-N quantitative analyses of empirical social media data empirically validate the theory of change across three case studies. The Egypt 2011 revolution serves as the primary case study, with the 2019 Hong Kong Extradition Bill protests and 2020 Belarus election protests as comparative shadow cases under most-similar and most-different systems designs. This thesis ultimately advances a movement resistance framework that centers actor agency to illustrate how the same social media features state governments co-opt to censor movements can be strategically reclaimed to position narrative resonance as a resistance mechanism, revealing avenues of impact and inquiry across political science research, regulatory reform, and grassroots movement strategy.

RESEARCH MOTIVATION

My interest in this research question originates from a childhood intellectual dilemma: who controls a political movement's narrative, and what happens to dissenters? My grandma's firsthand accounts of the Cultural Revolution represented my first lesson in political narrative by showing that authoritarian power is maintained not only through brute force, but through the construction of collective meaning and thinking. Criminalizing dissent, citizens became vessels of a manufactured narrative that failed to represent their perspectives. I realized the importance of free thinking and expression. When the state collapses collective consciousness into a single sanctioned narrative, public accountability vanishes and the institutions meant to serve us become vulnerable to tyranny and injustice.

The coronavirus pandemic complicated and deepened this understanding. Confined to my four bedroom walls, I was introduced to social media as a simultaneously emancipatory and a restrictive force. Social media connected to perspectives, resources, and movements I would never otherwise have encountered, yet simultaneously defined the limits of what I knew and how I knew it. My bicultural upbringing sharpened this awareness. As I switched between Chinese and American social media platforms, two distinct sets of user rights and information environments emerged and revealed to me how the architecture of digital communication is never neutral.

Revelations from these disparate experiences converged in university. I approached voting age while misinformation ran rampant in shaping public perception across multiple election cycles. I was asked to study and interrogate the political status quos under an educational administration accused of viewpoint censorship by people of all political leanings. Watching countless students protest these circumstances, my dilemma became tangible and

began centering the agency of affected community members. How can communities preserve their agency and free expression when the institutions charged with representing and protecting communities instead censor them?

This thesis is my timely, rigorous attempt to make sense of this dilemma. As state censorship of social media is increasingly normalized, platforms become an authoritarian tool to censor dissenting movements. At a time when academic and civic institutions face similar government pressure to stifle dissent, it is imperative that research documents, analyzes, and communicates an unfiltered truth about the censorship challenges associated with sustaining resistance movements. This thesis converges everything that has shaped my passion for political movement building, from a family history of living under informational control to the development of my civic identity in an era defined by polarization and contested ideology. This thesis not only intends to address research gaps, but also to serve as a grassroots digital organizing resource against state social media censorship.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring was a series of pro-democracy, anti-government protests that spread to over a dozen Arab nations in the early 2010s (Tufekci 2017). These grassroots protests are renowned not only for compelling multiple regime changes amidst rampant corruption, poverty, and police brutality, but also how they were mobilized. Early accounts by journalists, politicians, and academics centered a celebratory narrative of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook as the great equalizers for ordinary citizens to organizing across state boundaries, spreading an influential narrative that unified the masses in toppling authoritarian regimes (Comunello and Anzera 2012; Smidi and Shahin 2017; Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheaffer 2013).

Yet over time, more nuanced research repositioned social media as a contested tool that shaped the mobilization process, eroding the prevailing understanding of social media as comprehensively encapsulating the Arab Spring from motivation to methods (Lafi 2017; Steinert-Threkeld 2017; Srinivasan 2013). Posts leading up to the protests reveal how narratives from liberal youth, Marxist labor organizers, Islamist groups, and pro-authoritarian militarists competed to influence the dominant movement narrative (Aouragh 2012; Ardiç 2012; Tausch 2018). Interviews with on-the-ground Egyptian protestors revealed the prioritization of concrete economic concerns like living wages and job security, contrasting abstract ideals of democratic reform like liberty amplified via social media (Srinivasan 2013). The role of social media in the Arab Spring represents a compelling case study that interrogates whether and how diverse sub-narratives are represented by the dominant movement mobilization narrative.

Beyond debates over narrative representation, social media undeniably facilitated a movement unprecedented in scale and pace, constructing and disseminating a resonant narrative that mobilized a transnationally and warranted international solidarity (Howard et al. 2011;

Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheaffer 2013). It is for good reason that countless regimes attempted to thwart social media organizing efforts via near-total internet blackouts, platform bans, and targeted censorship (Tufekci 2017). States weaponize the same social media mechanisms to surveil, censor, and delegitimize dissent (Gohdes 2024). This unique position compels research that shifts away from an understanding of social media as a neutral organizing platform and instead toward a movement actor-centered view, interrogating how movement actors navigate and leverage the opportunities and challenges afforded by social media to sustain their cause. The critical question becomes how a coherent movement narrative is constructed and strategically deployed using social media, and how narrative power sustains movements when states suppress the very social media channels used to disseminate and act on their narrative.

This thesis interrogates a gap in understanding how movement narratives translate establish a resonant collective identity to successfully coordinate strategic action resisting state repression. Social media is the medium through which that narrative power is constructed, communicated, and contested. Because grassroots protests are driven by diverse, community-rooted grievances rather than centralized elite ideology, narrative power becomes the critical mechanism that informs how movements leverage social media to construct and mobilize toward a united cause. This understanding raises the central question this thesis intends to explore: *How do grassroots anti-government movements build and maintain narrative resonance to resist state social media censorship?* First, a literature review synthesizes background scholarship on digital activism, state censorship, and narrative theory. Informing prevailing political science research with interdisciplinary social science theories, the literature review integrates frameworks aligning state social media censorship tactics with strategic movement resistance responses. The review also identifies a gap directly addressed by this thesis in

conceptualizing narrative resonance as a movement resistance mechanism operationalized through diverse resistance tactics. Third, a mixed-methods methodology theoretically and empirically validates the proposed hypotheses. The thesis concludes by evaluating the hypotheses against findings, addressing project limitations and future research directions, and reflecting on real-world implications for how grassroots actors can leverage narrative resonance to sustain movements in increasingly adversarial censorship environments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review synthesizes studies on the dual use of social media across grassroots political mobilization and state co-optation for movement censorship, along with the capacity of movement narratives in shaping and sustaining grassroots resistance movements amidst state backlash. In exploring both the normative and empirical contours of each domain, this review surfaces three gaps that collectively motivate this thesis' mixed methods approach: in theorizing narrative as a resistance mechanism, in treating censorship as an independent analytical variable, and in integrating diverse censorship tactics within a unified framework.

To advance political science discussions of digital mobilization dynamics beyond prevailing rational-choice models, this literature review surveys existing research through complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory. Under CAS, this review advances an interdisciplinary understanding of grassroots movements as products of dynamic, networked actor interactions embedded in broader social, cultural, and economic contexts (Cairney 2012; Kok, Loeber, and Grin 2021). Where traditional political science models favor linear causality and variable isolation for clean data and research explainability, CAS emphasizes temporal dependencies and systemic complexity to more accurately capture how movement narratives and associated movement strategies emerge, adapt, and persist under repression (Alexander 2025; Lustick et al.

2012; Schmitter 2012). This intellectual reframing allows the thesis to simultaneously acknowledge the dynamic opportunities and limits of social media in political mobilization in light of the absence of a unified theoretical framework for social media's role in collective action (Jung, Dai, and Albarracín 2023). Through CAS, this review moves beyond theoretical and methodological conceptualizations of social media as a neutral site for movement-building. Synthesized literature across political science, political communications, sociology, and information studies breaks down disciplinary siloes to establish a unified working theory on the relationship between social media platforms, state-actor dynamics, and movement narrative. A CAS-based review also contextualizes relevant actors including social media platforms, movement actors, and the state within system interactions to illuminate how narrative power is constructed and contested on social media platforms. This CAS-based literature review interrogates gaps in the dynamic interactions between social media and political mobilization under different regimes and across time.

Social media and grassroots political mobilization

Social media has fundamentally transformed how grassroots political movements are both mobilized and sustained. On one hand, it lowers mobilization costs and mitigates a range of barriers to communication and capacity-building. Bypassing media gatekeepers like broadcasting executives, established media outlets, and elite civil society institutions that restrict what information is disseminated, social media facilitates a new bottom-up rapid communications approach that overrides the traditional top-down spread of information controlled by a centralized elite source (Hasan and Paul 2025; Puri 2025). This empowers any individual, institution, or group with a social media account to decide which messages to circulate, and what these messages intend to elicit from other users (Jost et al. 2018). By removing monetary, labor,

and sociocultural cost barriers required for communities to access and be accurately represented in traditional media, social media enables underrepresented minorities to raise awareness of their experiences, exposing systemic injustices that can be challenged (Malorni and Wilf 2025). These information sharing benefits are amplified by the global concentration of users on a few dominant social media platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Whatsapp, and Youtube (Yilmaz et al. 2024). Once-isolated communities, connected on a common platform, can rapidly exchange ideas across geographical, linguistic, and sociocultural divides.

By democratizing access to information, social media plays a key role in mobilizing grassroots political movement-building. With features like comments and reshares intentionally designed to promote user interaction and content-sharing. Such features expand opportunities for civic deliberation and engagement traditionally restricted to democratic contexts via limited institutional channels like voting and public comment (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, and Wollebæk 2012). The result is a wave of grassroots anti-government action, spanning diverse issues and geographic regions, that leverage social media to sustain movement visibility and momentum. From Vietnam, Egypt, and Belarus to Syria and Yemen, citizens of nondemocratic regimes have leveraged social media to capture international media attention and garner political pressure by posting real-time evidence of government corruption, human rights violations, and protest updates (“How Is Social Media Transforming Human Rights Monitoring?” 2013; Kelly et al. 2017; Van Dijke 2023). In both the 2019-2020 Hong Kong Extradition Bill Protests and 2024 Kenya Finance Bill Protests, citizens used social media to share bill details, coordinate protests, send real-time updates, and crowdfund to offset campaign costs (Liverseed 2025; Mgugua 2025). Social media’s accessibility across time and place also sustained transnational movements (Reuter and Szakonyi 2013). These range from the Arab Spring to Fridays for Future, which

used multimedia content like memes coordinate weekly climate strikes and influence issue communication by political elites (Johann et al. 2023; Schürmann 2023), and the #MeToo feminist solidarity movement amplifying millions of sexual assault stories under a unified hashtag (Mueller et al. 2021; Xiong, Cho, and Boatwright 2019).

Yet, these same social media features that enable rapid grassroots information-sharing and political mobilization are vulnerable to co-optation by political elites to spread mis/disinformation, surveillance organizing efforts, or halt the spread of information altogether (Hook and Verdeja 2022; Olaniran and Williams 2020). This creates an urgent dual-use dilemma as the very platforms and platform features used to mobilize and sustain grassroots movements are targeted by authorities. Under such circumstances, it becomes imperative for researchers and movement actors alike to not only understand how social media is co-opted to target grassroots anti-government movements, but also how this understanding can strategically inform resistance tactics to sustain movement-building.

State co-optation of social media

Through user regulations, algorithmic curation, and content moderation, states can exploit the regulatory oversight of social media companies to remove posts, suppress issue-based content, and target accounts, with little opportunity for user recourse (Bousquet 2025; Earl, Maher, and Pan 2022; Mattoni, Uldam, and Weinryb 2025). Existing scholarship situates these practices under the umbrella concept of “digital repression,” broadly defined as a set of tactics deployed by state and private actors to control information, monitor dissent, and strategically shape public understanding (Chan, Yi, and Kuznetsov 2022; Dabbagh 2025; Poetranto 2026). But, this conceptualization limits current academic understandings of state co-optation, in turn limiting how academics have studied movement actor responses. Grouping all state co-optation

methods under such a broad framework causes researchers to overlook critical variations in the application and effects of individual tactics. It has caused researchers to privilege some highly visible and institutionalized forms of repression over others (Bimber 2003; Earl and Kimport 2011).

Notably, censorship has been treated as merely a symptom of other overt digital repression tactics rather than an independent mechanism stemming from a distinct repertoire of co-opted social media techniques (Gohdes 2024; Roberts 2018). This creates a problematic gap in understanding the full extent of information control, hindering the development of effective, targeted resistance tactics. Prevailing literature reduces digital censorship to total information removal when in reality, censorship constitutes a spectrum of information control (Hakami, Feng, and Carbunar 2025). This binary understanding excludes the broader repertoire of alternative social media-based censorship tactics, such as the amplification of state-sanctioned narratives, astroturfing, or platform infrastructural interventions, that remain underresearched yet compel the innovation of diverse movement resistance strategies (Earl, Maher, and Pan 2022; Elmimouni et al. 2025). Under such a gap, researchers cannot understand the precise impact of state social media censorship mechanisms on grassroots movement-building. Moreover, censorship is tactically distinct from other state digital repression measures in disrupting movement coordination and raising collective risks to deter information sharing, as opposed to covert surveillance or harassment designed to target specific movement actors. Reframing social media censorship as a multifaceted and independent state mechanism will enable deeper insights into how actors strategically deploy resistance tactics.

The spectrum of state social media censorship

Advancing beyond binary understandings of censorship as direct institutional

suppression, this section organizes literature on state social media censorship across a spectrum of direct, algorithmic, and participatory tactics. Direct “hard” censorship encompasses explicit, identifiable suppression via post takedowns, account bans and removals, and explicit criminalization of online speech by state authority (Earl et al. 2022; Gorwa, Binns, and Katzenbach 2020). Though most frequently practiced under authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, it is increasingly documented in democratic regimes during periods of political volatility that justify government overreach (Díaz and Hecht-Felella 2021; Rød and Weidmann 2015). Direct social media tactics are the most-studied and understood form of censorship as information is easily accessible and disseminated via media coverage, civil society alerts, public records, and even transparency reports from platforms themselves (Díaz and Hecht-Felella 2021). Direct censorship tactics target specific mobilization content and users, maintaining a general illusion of free expression while still weakening political opposition by strategically suppressing dissent and revolutionary activity (Corduneanu-Huci and Hamilton 2022; Earl et al. 2022).

Algorithmic “soft” censorship is less visible to users as it operates through platform design rather than explicit state removal. Tactics include shadowbanning to reduce content reach, deprioritization of controversial topics, algorithms designed to detect and restrict specific words, fabricating the appearance of platform neutrality and minimizing evidence of state interference (Apodaca and Uzcátegui-Liggett 2024; Chen and Zaman 2024; Fowler 2022). Algorithmic censorship is particularly difficult to resist as it simultaneously targets the very platform features designed to promote mass information dissemination without generating the explicit evidence of interference associated with direct censorship. In practice, exposed algorithmic censorship decisions are almost always publicly presented as a platform governance decision by the social

media company. As highlighted by Suzor (2019), the lawless absence of transparency and public accountability associated with such digital moderation activity becomes an opportunistic loophole that state actors exploit to influence public opinion and restrict information access under a facade of neutral content management or even noninterference. This information and accountability asymmetry makes algorithmic censorship difficult to contest and study, resulting in a research gap that this thesis intends to through a two-stage mixed methods process establishing a movement theory of change validated with empirical evidence.

Equally inconspicuous, participatory censorship diffuses the responsibility of censorship to state-aligned actors. Coordinated inauthentic behavior of bots, state agents, and sometimes even other users flood social media with misleading information to divert attention from the movement, spread state-aligned narratives, or “debunk” information from movement organizers (Bradshaw & Howard, 2019; Tucker et al., 2018). Unlike direct and algorithmic censorship, participatory censorship tactics exploit the user engagement-centered architecture of social media by flooding hashtags, astroturfing counter-movements, and fabricating dissent to attack movements. All of this occurs legally amidst gaps in content moderation and free expression regulations, rendering formal institutional recourse against participatory censorship ineffective.

By conceptualizing state social media censorship tactics on a spectrum, three analytical implications emerge that directly inform how we understand strategic resistance from movement actors. First, effective resistance requires navigating a hybrid censorship landscape where multiple tactics are used. A movement that evades direct censorship through careful framing may still be algorithmically suppressed or overwhelmed by coordinated inauthentic behavior. Second, variations in the visibility of censorship tactics across the spectrum directly shape movement strategy. Whereas direct censorship can be documented for formal recourse or framed as a

movement catalyst representing tangible struggle, the more covert algorithmic and participatory censorship tactics force actors to adopt more innovative but resource-intensive responses to sustain movements, from diversifying reach across platforms and accounts to reconstructing narrative language and ideology. Lastly, it is evident that the institutional actors responsible for each censorship type warrants different redress mechanisms. Explicitly state-led hard censorship can be subject to international legal challenges and media pressure, while participatory censorship resists formal accountability through its distributed nature. Across the spectrum, diverse censorship tactics skirt accountability and exploit different legal and policy loopholes. Given the egregious institutional gaps in accountability across all modes of state censorship, developing a rigorous academic understanding of well-informed resistance tactics becomes a prerequisite for sustaining consequential movements in an increasingly contentious information environment.

Grassroots resistance methods to state social media censorship

Movement actors deliberately develop tactical responses to circumvent state social media censorship (Tufekci 2017). Existing research on these responses can be classified into three broad categories: technical, content, and organizational strategies (Dal and Nisbet 2022; Schmidt 2020). Yet, a glaring gap pervades this classification-based understanding. Though scholars have catalogued what movements do, they must systematically theorize when and why specific tactics succeed in sustaining mobilization.

First, technical resistance strategies such as migrating or disseminating information across multiple platforms, using VPNs, and creating group chats in encrypted messaging applications allow organizers to physically evade censorship. By decentralizing operations, technical resistance strategies build movement immunity to single-point information shutdowns

from authorities (Earl et al. 2022). Yet, prevailing literature frames the mere adoption of technical tactics as the determinant of resistance success, understating the mass mobilization and strategic ingenuity required to adapt such tactics without fracturing movement narrative and momentum (Johansson and Vinthagen 2020; Tilly 1978; Tufekci 2017). Moreover, movement organizers in nondemocratic regimes have documented how technical tactics attract authoritative suspicion and legal repercussions, transforming a resistance method into a risky liability (Earl, Maher, and Pan 2022; Guntrum and Reuter 2025).

Second, content-based strategies alter the linguistics and visuals of political messaging to circumvent content moderators and algorithmic filtering. Researchers have documented how social media-organized movements generate an abundant repertoire of coded language, visual symbols, and specific cultural references that can carry political messages accessible to a broader target population, but remain undetectable by narrow content moderation algorithms (Al Zidjaly 2017; DeCook 2018; Steen, Yurechko, and Klug 2023; Zhang and Kang 2022). From the 河蟹 (héxiè) river crab symbol critiquing state-enforced ideological conformity via Chinese wordplay, to the satirical North Atlantic Fella Organization utilizing Shiba Inu dog avatars to ridicule Russian disinformation efforts, grassroots movements transmit political meaning in content that leverages the gap between discreet sociocultural resonance and narrow algorithmic detection capabilities (Kasianenko and Boichak 2024; Zhang, Gearhart, and Perlmutter 2022). Similarly, intentional misspellings, alphanumeric substitutions, and euphemisms exploit a linguistic gap between formal political language and broader political commentary by the masses to evade keyword detection (Ji and Knight 2018; Xu and Liang 2024; Ye and Zhao 2023). These tactics require not only creative ingenuity from the political mobilizers, but a deep understanding of the cultural pulse within the targeted demographic and an ability to create content with political and

social resonance that cannot be co-opted by state actors (Bennett and Segerberg 2013).

Censoring content that appears cultural, humorous, or apolitical puts states at risk of authoritative accusations, carrying different legal, political, and reputational risks that takedown of explicitly political speech does not, representing an opportunity that political organizers can deliberately exploit (Hobbs and Roberts 2018; Kozyreva et al. 2023).

Third, organizational resistance strategies leverage institutional anchoring to simultaneously decentralize, disseminate, and legitimize the movement's information network. Drawing on the well-established boomerang model of transcalar advocacy, through coverage from established institutional actors like legacy media outlets, global NGOs, and other major organizing groups on and off social media, movements increase the visibility of their cause and thus raise the political, reputational, and resource costs of state censorship (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This is particularly consequential under non-democratic and hybrid regimes where international media attention and foreign governmental scrutiny become external accountability mechanisms that domestic institutions cannot provide (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Hendrix and Salehyan 2012). Across these three categories, the literature converges on a shared limitation: these tactics have been studied in isolation rather than as components of an integrated resistance framework that help the movement responsively adapt to state censorship mechanisms. It is this undertheorized systemic dimension that this thesis directly aims to address.

Narrative as censorship resistance

At its core, censorship's attack on information sharing aims to restrict and reshape the movement narrative, prioritizing certain viewpoints over others. Movement narrative, as communicated and understood through narrative frames, sustain the three types of resistance

outlined above by mobilizing communities around shared experiences, facilitating the creation of collective identities, and influencing public understanding over how communities should prioritize and respond to pressing political issues (Hochmann and Spector-Mersel 2020). Through communicating narratives, grassroots organizers actively shape how users perceive a mobilizing issue and how they can become involved (Jovanovic and Stankovic 2024; Olaniran and Williams 2020). While technical, content, and organizational tactics are understood in resisting top-down censorship, it is also critical to understand how these tactics influence and are influenced by the movement narrative. This intersection between tactic and strategy illuminates how narratives shape underlying sociocultural assumptions that legitimize political perspectives, reframing our understanding of censorship as a process of shaping the narrative that sustains a movement. Conversely, all censorship resistance strategies also reshape the narrative to circumvent state censorship, influencing how the refined narrative is understood and acted upon. Understanding movement narrative and the relationship between narrative framing and censorship resistance means understanding movement resilience more substantively beyond purely operational dimensions.

Supporting mobilizing narratives are frames which assign meaning to movement circumstances, events, and actions to legitimize and mobilize users to engage with the movement (Benford and Snow 2000). According to Benford and Snow (2000), resonant movement narratives utilize three coreframes. First, diagnostic framing identifies a problem within the status quo and pins responsibility to an identified adversary. Next, prognostic framing proposes a solution and associated action plan that prospective participants engage in by joining their movement. Lastly, motivational framing creates a sense of urgency by articulating the political and moral imperative to participate in the movement at this time, supporting the movement's call

to action. The presence of all three frames is critical. Narratives that only contain diagnostic and prognostic framing may properly legitimize their movement but fail at mobilizing prospective participants, whilst movement narratives with motivational frames may incite engagement without a clear action plan or political stance that would have been generated via a coherent diagnostic frame.

But what makes some narrative frames successful and others not? This thesis explores whether narrative resonance is the primary determinant of a movement's ability to resist state censorship. Resonance is best understood as the alignment between the narrative frame and the culture, values, and knowledge of the intended audience, allowing the narrative to be perceived timely, compelling, and believable (Benford and Snow 2000). When narratives resonate deeply, they become difficult to censor because they are rooted in and communicated via the personal experiences and perspectives of community-members. Linking individual narratives with broader structural ideologies and broader organizational alliances legitimizes the cause to the movement actors themselves, while the solidarity fostered builds trust and the necessity for collective action. Thus, it can be argued that narrative resonance capacity is directly tied to movement resistance capacity in the face of state censorship pressures.

In this way, narrative framing operates as a mobilization tactic, censorship resistance strategy, and agenda-setting technique (Susánszky, Kopper, and Zsigó 2022; Wen 2024; Zhou and Yang 2018). Movements transform technical, content, and organizational tactics into coherent, sustained collective action through mechanisms of personal and collective interpretation, representing an undertheorized mechanism central to the analytical narrative framework of this thesis. Where traditional movements require centralized organizational structures to construct and disseminate a narrative frame, social media enables bottom-up

narrative authorship through what Bennett and Segerberg (2013) term connective action that allows participants to personalize, re-author, and communicate narrative frames through their own networks without a formal coordinating organization or robust collective identity. Social media's focus on short-form content further distills political messages into portable formats like videos, memes, symbols, and hashtags that transcend linguistic, state, and platform boundaries while maintaining interpretability and resonance. The transnational spread of Black Lives Matter movement narratives precisely illustrates this: a shared diagnostic frame of police brutality rooted in racism traveled globally via social media to generate locally-inflected prognostic and motivational frames. Stemming from a common narrative, protests in the United Kingdom centered institutional racism, and those in Denmark and Italy reframing the movement around migrant and refugee rights (Barwick and Nayak 2024; della Porta et al. 2023; Hakak 2025). Social media diffuses movement narrative frames that directly lead to narrative personalization, collective identity formation, and sustained action.

Narrative framing is more than an information communication strategy for a movement. By encouraging participants to join in the collective identity, to engage in shaping and distributing the messages, narratives framing shape how social media is leveraged to movement resilience, encouraging the development of digitally imagined communities where movement members are equal contributors to and consumers of movement resilience (Anderson 1983; Kianpour et al. 2025; Lim 2024). Central to the analytical framework of this thesis is the exploration of narrative frames as necessary interpretive infrastructure of mobilized grassroots movements.

Research gaps

The literature surveyed reveals three gaps pursued by the research question. First,

existing resistance strategies have been studied in isolation rather than as components of an integrated resistance architecture. No existing framework accounts for how movements must navigate hybrid censorship landscapes, nor how tactical choices interact and reinforce one another. This undertheorized systemic dimension motivates the categorical framework put forth by this literature review section.

Second, scholars have inadequately theorized narrative resonance as a resistance mechanism in its own right. Existing scholarship treats narrative framing primarily as a mobilization tool for recruiting participants and framing grievances without examining how narrative power enables movements to withstand, adapt to, and reframe censorship itself. Fully understanding censorship resistance requires realizing how movement resilience relies on and deploys narrative framing to build the collective identity, legitimacy, and solidarity. Addressing this gap, this thesis proposes two complementary hypotheses exploring how movement operations and narrative interact to build movement resilience against state social media censorship.

This thesis argues that narrative resonance capacity is directly tied to censorship resistance capacity. When movement narratives successfully link individual grievances to broader structural ideologies and organizational alliances, they simultaneously legitimize the cause to participants, build the trust necessary for collective action, and distribute movement meaning across networks in ways that no single censorship event can suppress. Are successful narrative frames a prerequisite for resistance strategies? Or, can they substitute another unsuccessful strategy, or should it be treated as an independent fourth mechanism of censorship resistance? These unanswered questions directly inform the process-driven inquiry of this thesis, attempting to explain the interplay between empirical movement operations and the interpretive

theory underpinning them.

Finally, social media censorship itself has been underanalyzed as an independent mechanism of state repression. Existing literature frames censorship as a background condition or byproduct of digital repression rather than examining its specific capabilities, combinations, and limitations as they directly shape what resistance strategies are viable, especially within the boundaries of social media. Without this specificity, we cannot fully understand how social media censorship functions as an active “information-channeling” tool that directly imposes costs on and shapes the tactics of political mobilization. Collectively, these gaps directly motivate this thesis's contributions: an integrated framework centered on narrative power that connects censorship type to resistance strategy, and operational tactics to the substantive movement-building dimensions that determine whether grassroots mobilization can be sustained under state suppression.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISMS

This theoretical framework illustrates the relationships and mechanisms through which grassroots movement actors produce and deploy narrative power to resist social media censorship by the state. This illustrative framework theorizes two core understandings to inform the hypotheses. First, it positions movement narrative resonance as a prerequisite for durable censorship resistance. Second, it illustrates that movement actors must combine different types of resistance tactics to sustain movements against state censorship, rather than investing all resources into one tactic. The theoretical framework demonstrates how movement resistance is supported by a strong operational strategy and a resonant narrative to foster collective identity amongst movement actors:

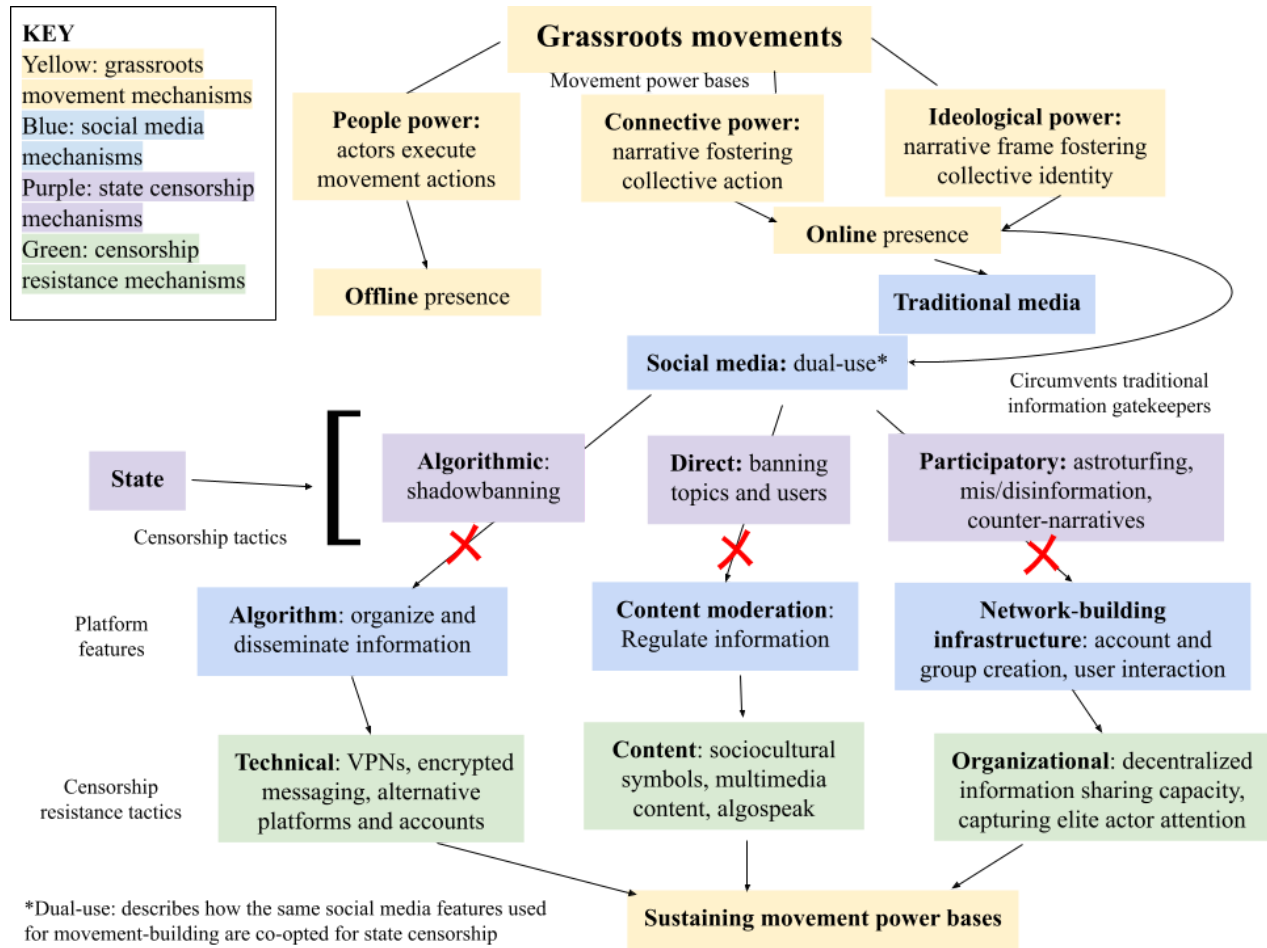


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of social media censorship and censorship resistance tactics to illustrate interactions between the state (censor), movement (censorship subject), and social media platforms (censorship *and* resistance mechanism).

This framework demonstrates how state censorship and resistance tactics are not static, one-size-fits-all mechanisms. Movement organizers and state institutions adapt movement strategy based on mutual interactions and an understanding of social media platform features. This has three analytical implications for the research question and hypotheses. First, state censorship is a hybrid, evolving landscape rather than a discrete event. States do not deploy a single censorship mechanism. They combine hard, algorithmic, and participatory suppression mechanisms that respond to movement resistance. Second, movement resistance is most accurately theorized not as a reactive response to individual censorship events, but as a system of

technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics supported by movement narrative. Third, the interaction between censorship and resistance is dynamic across time, meaning the sequencing of narrative construction relative to censorship onset and resistance is an independent, theoretically significant variable. This beckons understanding the processes connecting the formulation and internalization of a resonant narrative, state censorship measures, and the associated movement resistance tactics.

Social media is a structurally interesting environment to study movement censorship and resistance because the same platform features that enable movement narrative construction through participatory content creation, information sharing, and network building are simultaneously co-opted by states for censorship purposes through content moderation, algorithmic influence, and coordinated inauthentic behavior. The dual-use nature of social media is why movement narrative and resistance tactics cannot be studied as independent mechanisms. Therefore, movement actors must ensure a unified movement narrative and strategy that can be sustained even if their communication channels are censored by the state.

IV. HYPOTHESES

How do grassroots anti-government movements deploy narrative power to resist state social media censorship? This thesis poses a two-stage sequential model to understand whether and how grassroots anti-government movements bridge the gap between theoretical narrative and tactical response to better resist state social media censorship:

Hypothesis 1. H_1 - Narrative Resonance Hypothesis: *Grassroots anti-government movements establish a resonant narrative with diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to establish collective identity and build resistance capacity against state censorship.*

The Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H_1) is supported by established theories on collective action, positing that successful, sustained mobilization requires a foundational shared political meaning (Tilly 1978; Myrsiades 1993). People do not become involved in grassroots movements simply that demonstrate a sophisticated movement strategy or strong support base. People become involved because they believe in the timeliness of movement asks, resonate with the perspectives of involved actors, view movement participation as an effective mechanism of change, and perceive that the benefits of movement participation are worthwhile (Quigley 2009; van Stekelenburg and Gaidytė 2023). A resonant narrative frame produces these precise conditions: diagnostic framing clarifies an existing grievance and names an adversary; prognostic framing proposes a solution rooted in collective action; and motivational framing establishes the moral and political urgency to act. Together, these three frames organize abstract, individual political discontent into the rationale behind collective movement participation.

Expanding upon this understanding, this hypothesis questions the undertheorized importance of alignment between a resonant movement narrative and tactics for censorship resistance. A grassroots movement without a resonant narrative frame is ideologically, and in turn structurally, vulnerable to fracture: resistance tactics, however sophisticated, cannot compensate for the absence of the shared meaning that sustains collective identity when communication channels are disrupted (Atkinson and Cooley 2010; Yabanci 2024). Without a clear, resonant narrative that guides movement actors under a unified understanding of why they are mobilizing and who they are mobilizing against, movements cannot quickly adapt movement strategy and goals in the face of external threats like state censorship (Yabanci 2024). Conversely, movements with high narrative resonance distribute narrative agency amongst the individual movement actors, who feel a personal connection with the movement's purpose. This

empowers the movement actors to function as agents who reframe and disseminate the core message within their own networks on their own accord.

By enabling this decentralized communication and mobilization, narrative resonance ensures movements remain structurally resilient in the face of state censorship tactics. State censorship operates most effectively against concentrated, identifiable targets like specific account users, keywords, hashtags, or symbols, but is fundamentally ill-equipped to suppress meaning that is understood and communicated by numerous participants via personalized narrative frames. This understanding exploits a fundamental feature of movement organizing using social media that separates physical and digital movement elements. Digital censorship tactics like account suspension and content removal effectively remove the movement content, but cannot censor personally internalized narratives that constitute collective identity, and the associated agency of individuals to strategize and react in accordance with the unified narrative. This decoupling of movement meaning and movement tactics, coupled with resilience of a collective identity rooted in narrative resonance, positions resonant narrative frames as a feature of movement resilience against state-initiated social media censorship. Building on this logic, H_1 reimagines narrative resonance beyond just another censorship resistance tactic; it represents a foundational movement prerequisite whose presence indicates movement resistance capacity.

Hypothesis 2. H_2 - Tactic Diversity Hypothesis: Grassroots anti-government movements deploy technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics to maintain narrative frame continuity and maintain movement continuity against state censorship.

Operationalizing the ideological dimension of movement-building put forth by H_1 , the Tactical Resistance Hypothesis (H_2) encourages the study of individual censorship tactics under a cohesive framework. This approach aligns the different methods of resistance to directly address

state censorship tactics clarified by researchers, while enabling the investigation of potential interactions between them. Technical strategies like communicating the movement across multiple different platforms establish new communication channels when old channels are targeted and shutdown. Content-based strategies like sharing multimedia content or using creative acronyms and spellings avoids content moderation algorithms and platform policy violations that compel content and account bans. Organizational-based strategies centered around expanding networks to decentralizing information sharing and agenda-setting to other established organizations not only innovates new channels of information in the case of targeted shutdowns, but also raises state censorship costs politically and reputation-wise.

This tactical organization framework is supported by the well-established fear-friction-flooding state censorship typology. Using China as a case study, Roberts (2018) explains how states raise the cost of accessing and spreading information online by creating structural vulnerabilities in how grassroots movements leverage social media by raising the cost of political engagement to encourage self-censorship (fear), creating infrastructural vulnerabilities by disrupting communication channels that mobilization requires (friction), and spreading counternarratives that create vulnerabilities in movement legitimacy (flooding). This typology informs a systematic, empirical understanding of how censorship modality influences the efficacy of resistance strategy. Roberts (2018) finds that fear-based tactics are most effective at censoring high-risk content encouraging collective action or sharing sensitive political information; less affected is movement-related content that is shared anonymously or implies political messages through local cultural and linguistic trends. On the other hand, flooding-based censorship tactics to divert community attention are most effective toward movements that lack strong narrative coherence or institutional credibility.

In practice, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) find tactical diversity as a significant predictor of on-the-ground nonviolent campaign sustainability. Treating social media as a digital site for movement organizing, this logic suggests that combining technical, content, and organizational strategies enhances the resistance of grassroots movements against state censorship. This understanding indicates that no standalone resistance strategy can comprehensively resist all state censorship measures. More important than the sophistication and resource-intensity of movement resistance tactics is the strategic alignment of movement resistance responses to the state censorship tactic. Based on the spectrum of censorship tactics outlined in extant literature, H₂ positions technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics to protect the three foundational bases of movement power: ideological legitimacy, communication and mobilization infrastructure, and participant mobilization respectively. H₂ advances beyond examining resistance tactics in isolation, instead theorizing how interaction between all three tactics produces durable resistance capacity.

Temporally, this relationship becomes mutually reinforcing: successful tactical resistance maintains narrative frame continuity and thus further disseminates narrative resonance. When grassroots movements visibly survive amidst state censorship, the act of resistance itself legitimizes the movement's cause and capacity to become diagnostic evidence of the movement's legitimacy and prognostic evidence of its capacity to overcome state suppression. In this way, censorship that fails to suppress a narratively resonant, tactically integrated movement actively strengthens the movement by providing experiential evidence to strengthen and further diffuse narrative resonance amongst the mobilizing community.

These complementary hypotheses address the three interconnected research gaps identified in the literature review: integrating diverse censorship resistance tactics under a unified

framework, theorizing narrative as a movement censorship resistance mechanism, and treating censorship as a dynamic independent variable in research design. The framework supported by the hypotheses reveal the importance of aligning movement motivation and strategy to sustain politically contentious movements against state censorship attacks. Rooted in Snow and Benford's (2000) framing theory and Bennett and Segerberg (2013)'s connective action theory, this theoretical framework illustrates the relationships and mechanisms through which grassroots movement actors produce and deploy narrative power to resist social media censorship by the state. This illustrative framework theorizes two core understandings to inform the hypotheses:

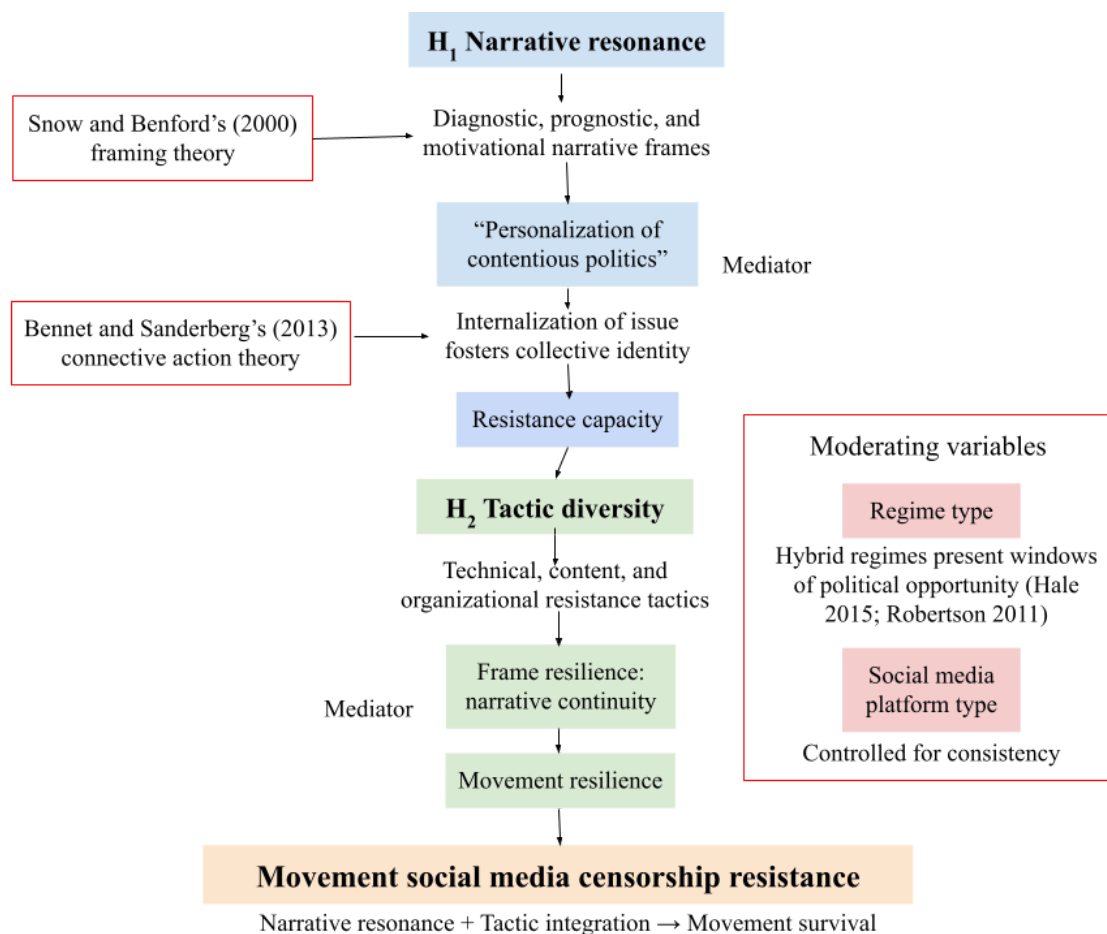


Figure 2. Two-stage sequential hypothesis model demonstrating the interaction between narrative resonance (H_1) and tactic diversity (H_2) to produce grassroots movement resilience against state social media censorship.

V. CONCEPT SPECIFICATION

This section operationalizes the two hypotheses by defining core concepts, each concept's scoping boundaries, and how they will be empirically measured:

<i>Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H₁):</i> <i>Grassroots anti-government movements establish a resonant narrative with diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to establish collective identity and build resistance capacity against state censorship.</i>			
Concept	Theoretical Definition	Operationalization	Measurement
Narrative frame presence (independent variable)	Narrative structure that allows for alignment between movement ideology and participant lived experience, cultural values, and collective identity.	Presence of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to measure capacity for narrative resonance.	Case study process tracing to identify presence of narrative frames. Qualitative analysis of theme, structure, and function of catalyzing dominant movement narrative.
Narrative resonance (dependent variable)	Ability to maintain narrative coherence and participant engagement.	Narrative frame presence and participant network stability.	Temporal and network analysis of content engagement metrics (Harvard Dataverse).

<i>Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H₂):</i> <i>Grassroots anti-government movements deploy technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics to maintain narrative frame continuity and maintain movement continuity against state censorship.</i>			
Concept	Theoretical Definition	Operationalization	Measurement
Tactic diversity (independent variable)	Deployment of technical, content, and organizational resistance tactics in response to state censorship.	Simultaneous presence of all three tactical resistance measures within a defined censorship response window.	Technical: 1) Increase in VPN usage (Proton VPN Observatory Dataset). 2) Increased volume of posts, hashtags, and content across social media platforms (Harvard Dataverse). Content: Consistent or relative increase in algospeak

			(linguistically altered expressions to evade content moderation), multimedia content, hashtags, symbols compared to before censorship. Organizational: 1) Consistent or expanded reach to number of unique accounts. 2) Number of external organization and media mentions (The GDELT Project Database).
Movement continuity (dependent variable)	Sustained capacity of a movement to coordinate collective action and maintain organizational infrastructure across censorship events.	Cross-platform activity persistence, narrative frame survival, and organizational network expansion following censorship intervention.	Cross-platform posting activity; frame persistence via topic modeling; dynamic network visualizations tracking new institutional and participant nodes (Harvard Dataverse). Case study temporal process tracing.

Observable Implications		
Hypothesis	Confirming Evidence	Disconfirming Evidence
Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H₁)	Movements with higher pre-censorship narrative resonance demonstrate measurably greater posting frequency retention, network cohesion, and sentiment stability after censorship than movements with lower or no narrative resonance.	Movements with high pre-censorship narrative resonance demonstrate equivalent or lower resistance capacity compared to low-resonance movements under similar censorship conditions.
Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H₂)	Movements deploying all three tactical categories simultaneously demonstrate greater cross-platform activity, frame persistence, and network expansion than movements relying on one or two	Movements deploying single-category tactics demonstrate equivalent or greater mobilization continuity compared to movements deploying integrated tactics under equivalent

	categories under censorship.	censorship conditions.
--	------------------------------	------------------------

Moderating Variables			
Moderator	Theoretical Definition	Effect Direction	Measurement
Regime Type	Degree of political openness, institutional space for dissent, and state repressive capacity characterizing the movement's operating environment.	H ₁ and H ₂ hold under hybrid regimes due to higher likelihood of windows of opportunity and multiple strengthen H ₁ and H ₂ relationships; consolidated authoritarian regimes weaken both by raising participation costs and closing narrative opportunity space.	Validated via the V-DEM Liberal Democracy Index (v2x_libdem) and Freedom of Expression Index (v2x_freexp_altnf), complemented by Freedom House Freedom on the Net scores.
Social Media Platform Type	The degree to which the movement's primary social media platforms structurally enable participatory, bottom-up content creation and network formation.	The user participation-centered features on social media platforms strengthen both H ₁ and H ₂ by enabling connective action and narrative decentralization.	To ensure consistency, content datasets will be derived across the top 4 most popular public social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, X, Reddit, and Youtube.

Below are additional scoping definitions to guide data selection and methodology:

1. **Grassroot movement:** For this thesis, the criteria for select grassroots movements are movements that 1) mobilized bottom-up outside of formal institutional channels and centralized leadership, 2) utilized social media as its primary coordination mechanism, and were 3) sustained via collective action, driven by shared grievances or desire to bring about or resist social, political, or economic change (Tarrow 1996; Van Til, Hegyesi, and Eschweiler 2008). Since this thesis specifically explores how movements react to state censorship, the selected movements mobilize to change formal political institutions, such as protesting government corruption, attempting to influence political procedures or

policies, or encouraging institutional reform.

2. **Social media:** Emphasizing user capabilities afforded through platform features, social media is defined as digital platforms that allow users to create identifiable profiles, share content, and interact with others via likes, shares, comments, and follows, facilitating networked political discourse based on user activity mediated by platform algorithms. To ensure consistency in content moderation policies and user interaction features across selected case studies, this thesis utilizes social media data from the four most popular social networking platforms globally: X, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok (Olaniran and Williams 2020; Schuessler, Maric, and Dobusch 2026).
3. **State social media censorship:** State social media censorship is defined by any state-attributed actions to intentionally undermine a grassroots' movement communications and coordination capacity via social media. Per the literature review, state censorship measures can be understood across the three measures: direct "hard" censorship eliminating content and users, algorithmic censorship undermining information visibility and reach, and participatory censorship through coordinated inauthentic behavior or strategic mis/disinformation from state-affiliated actors. This thesis only evaluates acts of state censorship that target movement content and actors rather than enforcing a total internet or platform shutdown. Since H₂ studies how movement actors leverage social media capabilities to overcome censorship and sustain their movement, it would not make sense to study movements operating without any social media access.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs a multi-stage methodology to validate the theses. First, process

tracing is conducted on the cases to establish context and a plausible theory of change. Second, process tracing is followed by quantitative data analyses and visualizations to empirically validate or invalidate the established theory of change. Comparative analyses are conducted across all cases to identify patterns, deviations, and unexpected findings related to the hypotheses. Lastly, analyses are synthesized to validate or refine the case theories of change.

PROCESS TRACING

First, process tracing is conducted on the selected cases to contextualize and theoretically establish a plausible theory of change. More than a comprehensive documentation of events, process tracing emphasizes examining the “intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest” (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p. 6). To this end, process tracing aims to identify the causal chain and mechanisms between the independent and dependent variable (p. 206). Social science scholars have outlined the following elements to achieve this goal:

1. *Descriptive inference* (Collier 2011; Mahoney 2010): Beyond documenting a chronological sequence of events, it is important to first identify key moments in the movement that can raise patterns and construct a causal chain.
2. *Causal inference* (Collier 2011; Van Evera 1997): Widely referenced in political science research, the straw-in-the-wind, hoop, smoking gun, and doubly decisive tests establish legitimacy about the inference by weakening alternative explanations to the hypothesis. Each test weakens the alternative to a different degree: it is difficult for a social science hypothesis to completely eliminate alternative explanations, as demonstrated by passing the doubly decisive test.
3. *Narrative elements* (Crasnow 2017): Beyond the primary emphasis on inference in

traditional social science process tracing methods, Crasnow emphasizes constructing a comprehensive narrative to consider alternative hypotheses and clarify the connection between demonstrated evidence and explanation. This is accomplished by temporally identifying a narrative beginning and closure and establishing the role of process mechanisms connecting key events.

Accounting for the above characteristics, a process tracing instrument was developed to ensure consistent process tracing for each case study that is viewable in the Appendix. It can be used as a list of criteria to draft a cohesive movement case study, or completed like a worksheet.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

After a preliminary theory of change is established through process tracing, quantitative analyses will be used to empirically verify the key mechanisms. In the Narrative Prerequisite Hypothesis (H_1), narrative frame presence (IV) is identified via robust diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames in sentiment and content analysis of the social media data. To measure narrative resonance (DV), temporal content analysis will be used to track posting frequency and user engagement metrics, as well as network analysis and structural topic modeling to confirm spread of the narrative frames before, during, and after censorship. Similarly for the Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H_2), tactic diversity (IV) is established by documenting the presence of technical, content, and organizational-based resistance tactics after the documented state censorship activity, supported by plotted temporal scale and reach metrics to understand the robustness of each tactic's deployment. Technical tactics are verified through cross-platform posting volume and VPN usage spikes. Content tactics are measured through NLP detection of algospeak, symbolic content, and multimedia shifts. Organizational tactics are measured through unique account reach expansion, external media mentions. Movement continuity (DV) is

measured through temporal visualization of content volume, media mentions, and sustained user engagement activity during and after the censorship event. Google Colab is the primary analytical platform due to its cloud-based accessibility, Pro subscription access for UCLA students, and seamless ability to deploy numerous coding languages including R and Python, the core languages used in this thesis.

DATA SELECTION

Quantitative data to contextualize regime type and censorship capacity for the selected case study was sourced from The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Dataset and Freedom House Freedom on the Net Dataset. In addition to aggregate indices like a Liberal Democracy Index (v2x_libdem) and Freedom of Expression Index (v2x_freexp_altinf), the V-Dem Digital Society Project includes variables that measure regime-specific censorship capacity across 180 countries, notably online censorship, polarization and politicization of social media, and the presence of misinformation campaigns and coordinated information operations (“Digital Society Project” 2025). Aggregate internet freedom scores (0-100) from the Freedom of the Net dataset, updated annually by country, verify the relative internet freedom capacity between the selected regimes.

Quantitative data for the movement case studies is sourced from the reputable open-source Harvard Dataverse supported by the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science and The Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone (GDELT) Project. These sources house cleaned datasets organized by social movement, time frame, regime type, platform, and other categories. The GDELT Project also houses the GDELT Analysis Service, a suite of analysis tools to create cross-country comparative timelines, conduct sentiment and thematic analyses, and efficiently organize subsets of events records necessary for more granular analysis. Meanwhile, each Harvard Dataverse dataset includes a codebook, transparent data

collection methodology, and sample analysis procedures based on how published research papers utilized the data, ensuring reputability. Comprehensive social media datasets corresponding with each movement case study are pulled from the Harvard Dataverse. Data from The GDELT Project is used to understand external conditions that shape the dataset, verifying censorship and social media tactics used documented by media and external organizations, tracking changes in movement narrative and external support, and monitoring major events that correspond with movement communication shifts aligned with patterns from the Harvard Dataverse datasets. The Proton VPN Observatory dataset is used to identify technical resistance tactics during the selected movements.

Qualitative data used for case study process tracing is synthesized from verified media outlets, the Nexis Uni news media database accessible to all UCLA students, and the Columbia International Affairs Online database housed under the Columbia University Press, constituting the largest online resource aggregating documents and articles on international politics from over 300 institutions and media outlets. For guidance in navigating the plethora of available resources, peer-reviewed academic papers are also referenced for their analysis of notable media articles.

CASE STUDY SELECTION

Large case movements that mobilized at least 15 percent of the nation's population were identified from the open-source Harvard Dataverse. Movements were shortlisted based on the availability of comprehensive, codebook-verified social media datasets with sufficient granularity to support content and quantitative user engagement analyses. Date availability on data was a limiting scoping condition: only datasets with content dated before, during, and after a well-documented state censorship event were selected. Corroborating these prospective datasets with V-Dem and Freedom House data to contextualize each regime's political and digital

information environment, one primary case and two shadow cases were selected:

Primary Anchoring Case - Egypt 2011 revolution: The Egypt 2011 revolution leading to the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak is the primary analytical case selected on four mutually reinforcing grounds. First, data availability and quality: the Harvard Dataverse dataset *Launching Revolution: Social Media and the Egyptian Uprising's First Movers* constitutes a well-documented social media dataset with a transparent codebook, peer-reviewed collection methodology, and prior published analyses that the analyses performed for this thesis can be validated against. Second, the movement has well-documented and time-bound state censorship events and responses. Ahead of peak protest activity, the Mubarak regime blocked social media platforms, notably Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Google, and other mobile services from January 27 to February 2. Media reports outline that this backfired as citizens employed VPNs and proxies to bypass censorship filters and compelled citizens to mobilize offline (Alexander 2011). Third, the movement possesses theoretical centrality. The Egypt 2011 revolution was a central component of the Arab Spring phenomenon that represents the paragon movement that digital activism literature is developed upon. The pre-existing breadth and depth in movement literature provides robust theory to validate the causal mechanisms identified in process tracing, allowing for this case study to build on existing literature. Building on this idea, empirical documentation from non-social media sources including comprehensive media reports, fieldwork and interviews, and protest ethnographies, such as Professor Srinivasan's seminal book *After the Internet* that motivated this thesis' intellectual puzzle, allow for in-depth process tracing. Contextualizing Egypt's political and digital information climate, in 2010 the nation had a V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index Score of 0.15 and 49 out of 100 Freedom of the Net score ("Egypt" 2011; Timm 2016). This low V-Dem score combined with a partly free social media

environment establishes a complicated political context with odds stacked against successful movement organizing via social media.

Shadow Cases - Belarus 2010-11 Election Protests and 2019-20 Hong Kong

Extradition Bill Protests

Shadow cases were selected to enable cross-case comparisons understanding whether the preliminary findings from Egypt generalize across regime types, movement outcomes, and other censorship circumstances, without requiring the full quantitative analyses the anchoring case received due to limited data availability. These comparative movement case studies were constructed based on John Stuart Mill's [1843] (1996) Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) and Most Different Systems Design (MDSD) to compensate for the limited case sample size. Combining both systems design principles bolsters both internal validity by isolating causes between movements that occurred under political conditions validated by V-Dem and Freedom of the Net data, and external validity by verifying findings across diverse environmental variables. MSSD pairs Egypt with a movement sharing comparable movement type and regime context while varying on censorship profile and outcome in an attempt to bolster the proposed mechanisms as the primary sources of outcome variation. MDSD pairs Egypt with a case with a contrasting regime type, censorship mechanism, and regional context to test whether hypotheses hold across various political environments.

MSSD Shadow Case - Belarus 2019-20 Election Protests

The Belarus post-election protest against candidate Lukashenko's August 2020 election dispute satisfies the MSSD pairing with Egypt on three dimensions. First, both movements were grassroots anti-government protests mobilizing against consolidated authoritarian incumbents using social media as the primary coordination infrastructure. Based on media and academic

documents, both movements occurred under regimes with long histories of political repression and limited institutional channels for dissent. V-Dem classifies Belarus as similar electoral authoritarian with a Electoral Democracy Index score of 0.19 in 2020, comparable to Egypt's 2010 score. The Freedom House assigned Belarus a Freedom on the Net score of 21 out of 100 in 2020, a lower score reflecting social media restrictions yet still comparable with Egypt in constituting a pre-existing political censorship environment (“Belarus: Freedom on the Net 2020 Country Report” 2024; Tai 2022b).

Critically, what makes Belarus an ideal shadow case under MSSD is the different state hybrid censorship strategy that combined account takedowns, internet throttling, algorithmic manipulation, and coordinated state-aligned bot networks, contrasting the Egyptian government’s decision to primarily target social media technical infrastructure (Xynou and Filastò 2020). Such a contrast provides conditions to test whether the H₂ tactic diversity claim holds under diverse censorship strategies.

MDSD Shadow Case - 2019-20 Hong Kong Extradition Bill Protests

The Hong Kong 2019-20 Extradition Bill protests were selected as the MDSD shadow case as the movement poses stark contrasts across sociopolitical characteristics where Egypt and Belarus are similar. Contrasting the other two regimes, Hong Kong has some common law protections, formal civil liberties guarantees under the Basic Law, and functioning judicial institutions, leading to V-Dem assigns Hong Kong a Liberal Democracy Index score of 0.47 in 2019, much higher than Egypt or Belarus but still representing a hybrid democracy (Tai 2022a). Meanwhile, Freedom House assigned Hong Kong a Freedom on the Net score of 72 out of 100 in 2019, indicating substantially greater internet freedom than the other two cases (“Hong Kong: Freedom in the World 2019 Country Report” 2020). More than the other two movements, the

Hong Kong movement also faced internal divides that resulted in an emphasis on participatory suppression and counter-narrative tactics (Kobayashi et al. 2025). Finally, Hong Kong's democratic governance history as a former British colony, current governance under the auspices of the People's Republic of China, and common law system as opposed to civil law in Egypt and Belarus, constitute a contentious and contrasting political landscape (Butts, Shoowong, and Chen 2022; "Hong Kong's Freedoms: What China Promised and How It's Cracking Down" 2014; Zhu 2023). In this way, the Hong Kong case tests whether the H_1 resonance mechanism still holds under a political opportunity structure with more formal and informal institutional channels for dissent, comprising conditions where the urgency and deployment of narrative-driven mobilization differ from more restrictive social media environments. Together, these three cases constitute the comparative breadth necessary to assess the validity and generalizability of the hypothesized framework and theory of change.

VII. ANALYSIS

PROCESS TRACING

Case One: 2011 Egypt Revolution

I. Case Identification

Egypt's 2011 uprising unfurled under Hosni Mubarak's consolidated regime that had existed since 1981 (Ottaway 2020). It emerged from grievances over economic deprivation, police brutality, and political exclusion and was catalyzed by Tunisia's successful regime shift, also part of the broader Arab spring movement (Robinson 2020). Mobilized primarily through Facebook and Twitter via the hashtag #Jan25, the movement achieved its core objective by compelling Mubarak's abdication on February 11, 2011 before being suppressed by military consolidation. The selected censorship event were the social media restrictions from January 25

to February 2, constituting a precisely bound timeframe demarcating movement strategies used before, during, and after censorship.

II. Movement Structure and Temporal Scope

Pre-censorship: The movement's grievance infrastructure predated 2011 considerably. The April 6 Youth Movement in solidarity with striking factory workers, spent three years prior constructing a digitally networked activist base organized to protest economic injustice and state violence (Herrera 2014). Furthermore, the killing of Khaled Said by Alexandria police in June 2010 was documented and amplified through the Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said." The page accumulated over 400,000 followers, actualized individual grievances through a shared martyr narrative, and provided the diagnostic frame that would anchor the 2011 uprising—a specific adversary, a concrete injustice, and a collective identity rooted in shared vulnerability to state violence (Ghonim 2012). Tunisia's revolution on January 14, 2011 catalyzed this latent grievance infrastructure into an active movement (Salem 2011). Within two weeks, Egyptian activists circulated calls for a January 25 protest on Police Day, a date chosen for its symbolic diagnostic power, through Facebook event pages, SMS networks, and Twitter, generating an estimated 80,000 confirmed attendees before the protest occurred (Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012).

Key Moments: The movement causal chain has five stages. First, the dominant narrative consolidated around three moments between January 14 and 24. State violence under the Mubarak regime framed the diagnostic adversary responsible for poverty, repression, and corruption. Collective mobilization was framed as the prognostic solution. The Tunisian revolution, as part of the broader Arab Spring movement, represented the catalytic motivational frame that legitimized the feasibility associated with action. In the second phase, rapid social

media communications peaked in the days immediately preceding, with #Jan25 generating over 1.4 million tweets nationally in the last week of January (Papacharissi and de Fatima Oliveira 2012). Third, the onslaught of state censorship began with targeted account monitoring and content removal from January 25 to 27, followed by more severe, temporary social media shutdowns on January 28, known as the “Friday of Anger” (Cherif Bassiouni 2017). Fourth, the tactical adaptation period ran from January 28 through February 11, during which movement actors were documented utilizing technical workarounds, offline coordination, and transnational media amplification to sustain movement momentum and information sharing. Finally, post-censorship stabilization occurred with the internet restoration beginning February 2 and the continued occupation of Tahrir Square through Mubarak’s resignation (Eltantawy and Wiest 2011).

Outcome: The revolution achieved its immediate objective of forcing Mubarak to resign his role as president by February 11, 2011, representing a conditional movement success (Bakr 2016). Though a military consolidation immediately followed, this falls outside the analytical window of the protest and protest outcome.

III. Constructing the Hypotheses Causal Chain

Narrative Frame Presence (H₁). The movement’s pre-censorship narrative demonstrated strong integration across the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational narrative frames. The “We Are All Khaled Said” frame pointed to police brutality as a broader symptom of a corrupt and adversarial regime. The campaign also grounded discontent in a specific, documented injustice with a named victim, simultaneously legitimizing individual grievance and aligning it with movement credibility. Prognostically, the January 25 Tahrir Square protest date to demand Mubarak’s resignation represented a concrete, action-oriented plan. For the motivational frame,

the precedent of the Tunisian revolution provided the timely understanding that the desired change was feasible, legitimized through viral social media content comparing Egyptian and Tunisian sociopolitical conditions (Howard and Hussain 2011). Scholarly network analysis also demonstrates how narrative diffusion extended significantly beyond elite activist circles, fulfilling a straw-in-the-wind causal inference test (Clarke and Kocak 2018; Hamanaka 2020). All in all, the causal inference hoop test is also satisfied as all three narrative framing elements were coherent and established before the January 25 protest.

Causal Mechanism - Narrative Diffusion and Internalization. Evidence of narrative internalization beyond digital coordination is most compellingly seen in response to the censorship shutdown, in which the movement actually expanded rather than stopping, fulfilling the smoking gun causal inference test that the original hashtags, accounts, and campaigns were no longer necessary vehicles to sustain the movement. Srinivasan's (2013) field interviews reveal that movement participants from Cairo's working-class were motivated by economic grievances that predated and operated independently of social media exposure, revealing the personalization of movement narrative amplified by social media. The sustained occupation of Tahrir for five days before censorship tactics started being lifted fulfills the doubly decisive test of narrative internalization to establish collective identity.

State Censorship: The Mubarak regime primarily targeted technical infrastructure to censor users and content that increased in severity and scope over time. From January 25 to January 27, digital organizers faced selective content removal, activist account monitoring, and SMS service disruption.

Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H₂). Technically, increased VPN usage is documented by external media accounts and the Proton VPN Database. Content tactics maintained narrative

consistency across adapted communication channels. The core diagnostic-prognostic-motivational frame that Mubarak must go, Tahrir is the site, and Friday is the day was reproduced consistently across SMS messages, Speak2Tweet voice posts, Al Jazeera broadcasts, and physical coordination materials, demonstrating the frame persistence predicted by the H_1 narrative frame resonance mechanism (Howard and Hussain 2011). Symbols, posters, and cultural images proliferated in the face of severe state censorship of language, including the Protestor's Fist, desecrated imagery of Mubarak, and Pharaonic imagery establishing connections between the movement goal and history of Egypt's revolutionary struggle, Organizational tactics constituted the most consequential resistance category in the Egyptian case. Movement organizers transnationally tapped Al Jazeera's live coverage of Tahrir Square that raised the international reputational damage to the Mubarak regime and increasing pressure to resign (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Overall, evidence of movement continuity confirms H_2 . Cross-platform activity was sustained through Speak2Tweet and international social media accounts operated by diaspora participants outside Egypt. Organizational network expansion to further diffuse the movement narrative was documented through the rapid increase in international media mentions tracked through GDELT data: Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, and other major outlets increased Egypt coverage drastically throughout the movement timeframe.

Preliminary Hypothesis Conclusion. This process tracing case study validates H_1 as pre-censorship narrative resonance demonstrated through the presence and integration of all the narrative frames supported by network diffusion persisting during and even after censorship, demonstrating narrative resonance the hypothesis predicts. H_2 is supported with the caveat of a confounding mechanism. Integrated technical, content, and organizational tactics were deployed within the response window and directly associated with sustained movement continuity.

However, the confounding role and origins of offline mobilization cannot be fully isolated from the H₂ tactical mechanisms, demonstrating the need for cross-case comparison to strengthen the hypothesis. Overall, process tracing the Egypt 2011 revolution validates the theory of change and advanced proposed sequential hypotheses that narrative framing establishes narrative, which must precede and enables the capacity of diverse, resonant resistance tactics.

Case Two (Shadow Case): Belarus 2020-21 Election Protests

I. Case Summary

The 2020 post-election protest movement emerged in response to candidate Alexander Lukashenko's disputed claim of a 80.1% electoral victory on August 9, 2020. At its peak, up to 400,000 mobilized an estimated 200,000-400,000 participants at peak in Minsk alone under Europe's last consolidated authoritarian regime (Auseyushkin and Roth 2020). The multiplicity of censorship tactics combining internet throttling, account takedowns, and coordinated participatory counter-narratives vary from the predominantly direct "hard" censorship faced by the 2011 Egypt movement (Herasimenka 2021). The protests achieved their goal partially. International sanctions and electoral investigation mandates were called for, and the opponent candidate Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya was internationally recognized as the official leader of Belarus and able to head an alternative government in exile, the United Transitional Cabinet. However, formal domestic regime change did not occur and Lukashenko remains the president of Belarus ("5 Years of International Advocacy by the Democratic Forces of Belarus" 2025).

II. Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H₁)

Pre-censorship narrative demonstrated strong frame integration rooted in the alternative white-red-white Belarus flag, banned by the Lukashenko regime, as a narrative frame and symbol for national sovereignty (Kazharski 2021). The specific instance of alleged election fraud

allowed for the clear construction of a narrative frame. By using this alternative flag Belarusians diagnostically framed Lukashenko as a Soviet-era illegitimate leader incompatible with contemporary Belarusian identity, prognostically positioned Tsikhanouskaya as the legitimate leader, and motivationally demanded new elections and investigations under independent observation, and motivationally invoked the acute urgency of documented electoral fraud.

The narrative frame, diffused with the culturally and politically significant yet exiled symbol of national identity, gave the narrative simultaneous resonance depth and algorithmic opacity, allowing for narrative resistance against algorithmic censorship. Telegram data from NEXTA revealed how the white-red-white flag accompanied 73 percent of protest-related content between August 1 to 9 pre-censorship, validating the legitimacy of the narrative frame. When Telegram channels were suppressed, participants self-organized neighborhood solidarity networks under the white-red-white identity frame, sustaining collective action entirely amidst censorship (Navumau et al. 2025).

III. Tactical Diversity Hypothesis (H₂)

All three tactical categories were deployed simultaneously within the response window. Technical tactics are validated by demonstrated surges in migration to Telegram, an encrypted messaging app, demonstrating earnest attempts to circumvent state censorship. VPN adoption surged 274 percent between August 9 and 16, the state censorship window, and participants shared alternative DNS configurations in response to blocked channel access (Proton VPN Observatory 2020; (“Belarus Internet Shutdown” 2020). Second, content tactics expanded on the white-red-white frame’s cultural symbolism to visual communication through historical photographs, folk music references, and the flag itself when explicit opposition language was targeted, while participants adopted coded language referring to protest coordination as

"walking" to evade keyword monitoring (Codogni 2025). Third, organizational tactics resulted in consequential outcomes: GDELT documents a 340% increase in international media mentions of Belarus citing social media content between August 9 to 31.

IV. Preliminary Hypothesis Assessment

Both hypotheses are supported. The white-red-white frame symbol's cultural resonance and association with the prevailing movement narrative directly enabled content tactic effectiveness. When compared to the 2011 Egypt protest under MSSD, Belarus confirms that narrative resonance and tactical integration produce movement continuity across both hard and hybrid censorship profiles. Moreover, the white-red-white flag expands H₁ narrative framing mechanism to demonstrate how cultural relevance amplifies both narrative resonance depth and resistance effectiveness.

Case Three (Shadow Case): Hong Kong 2019-20 Extradition Bill Protests

I. Case Summary

The Hong Kong 2019-20 Extradition Bill movement crystallized to protest the Fugitive Offenders Amendment Bill, which would have permitted extradition of convicted criminals to mainland China (Cheng and Yuen 2025). At their peak on June 16, the protests mobilized an estimated 2 million participants (BBC News 2019). In 2019, Hong Kong was assigned a V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index score of 0.47 and Freedom on the Net Score of 72 out of 100, higher than the other two cases ("Hong Kong: Freedom in the World 2019 Country Report" 2020; Tai 2022a). Censorship operated primarily through algorithmic and participatory mechanisms rather than domestic infrastructure shutdown. The movement achieved its goals of rescinding the Extradition Bill (Pak 2024). Furthermore, the movement's democratic demands for separation from the mainland Chinese government, coupled with the passage of the 2020 Hong Kong

National Security Law, strengthened long-term international resonance with passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act by the United States Congress and expanded United Kingdom BN(O) visa reforms expanding immigration eligibility for Hong Kong citizens (Chung 2020). Though the 2020 National Security Law (NSL) perpetuated control by the mainland Chinese government over the Hong Kong administrative region, the NSL passage falls outside of the protest and state censorship peak timeframe and is unrelated to movement resistance capacity.

II. Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H₁)

Pre-censorship narrative framing illustrated the highest diagnostic precision of the three cases. The movement slogan of 五大訴求, 缺一不可 (“Five Demands, Not One Less”) frame explicitly integrated all three narrative frames. The slogan tangibly diagnosed the grievance as the Extradition Bill and Beijing's encroachment, prognostically demanded five concrete legislative remedies, and motivationally cited the bill as an existential threat to Hong Kong's “one country, two systems” identity (Carrico 2021). Lee et al.'s (2019) survey documents that 87 percent of participants cited the Extradition Bill specifically as their primary mobilization motivation as opposed to other political qualms associated with the government, representing direct evidence of narrative frame coherence. Evidence of narrative internalization transforming into movement tactics supporting H₁ is demonstrated by the organic emergence of “Be Water,” originating from cultural icon Bruce Lee's philosophy of fluidity and formlessness in dealing with opposition. Movement participants consistently participated in sporadically decentralized, flash mob-style protests to target and exhaust police resources with an incoherent strategy (Carrico 2021).

III. Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H₂)

Evidence shows that all three tactical categories were deployed simultaneously. Technical tactics consisted of cross-platform information diffusion and coordination across the encrypted app Telegram, LIHKG, Twitter, and even using AirDrop to circumvent state platform-specific censorship tactics ensured that disruption to a single communication channel would not disrupt movement coordination and information-sharing (Leung 2022). Content-based resistance tactics built on symbolic vocabulary from previous movements, for instance, the spread of yellow umbrella imagery harkened to the 2014 Umbrella Movement, situating the Extradition Bill protests in a lengthier history of community struggle for institutional accountability (Ho 2020). Meanwhile, the spread of a hand, with five fingers implying the Five Demands, also avoided keyword-based censorship communicated alignment through gesture (John 2018). Finally, organizational tactics produced consequential outcomes. The transnational diaspora network documented by Harvard Dataverse translated domestic protest coordination and media legitimacy into internationally recognized demands, leading to efforts like the passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in November 2019 by the U.S. Congress (Cheng et al. 2020).

IV. Preliminary Hypothesis Analysis

Compared against Egypt under MDSD, the Hong Kong Extradition Bill Protests confirm that the H_1 narrative resonance mechanism and H_2 tactical integration claim hold across a different political and censorship context, extending the framework's external validity beyond the authoritarian-leaning regime context put forth by Egypt and Belarus. Unexpected international movement outcomes from other governments encourages potential separation of domestic and transnational narrative resonance and movement continuity in the analytical framework.

Case Comparison

The cases analyzed all reveal a positive association between movement narrative resonance before the state censorship event and resistance capacity after censorship, and high-level mechanism consistency. However, as demonstrated through the Hong Kong case study, narrative resonance cannot sustain a movement amidst regulatory conditions that restrict physical mobilization altogether. The cross-case comparisons also emphasize a correlation between narrative resonance strengthened by cultural-specific symbolism, as seen through the Belarus white-red-white frame compared to Hong Kong's Five Demands and "Be Water" movement frame that were deeply significant to participants but not detectable by keyword and hashtag-specific censorship attempts.

The cases also supported H₂, but the dominant resistance tactics used corresponded directly to the regime censorship measure. Egypt's censorship environment that targeted censorship infrastructure caused the movement to rely on organizational resistance tactics, with Al Jazeera amplification and transnational media anchoring constituted as the most consequential resistance mechanism to sustain movement resonance and apply international pressure. On the other hand Hong Kong's algorithmic and participatory censorship environment led to an emphasis on content-based resistance tactics that permeated movement strategy and transnational discourse.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

This empirical quantitative analysis component of the Egypt 2011 revolution draws on the *Launching Revolution: Social Media and the Egyptian Uprising's First Movers* Harvard Dataverse dataset, which documented comments and reshares interacting with 300+ movement organizing posts. Mirroring the sequential theory of change proposed by the two hypotheses, this

quantitative analysis first establishes pre-censorship narrative frame resonance (H_1) before assessing tactical diversity and movement continuity (H_2).

Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H_1)

Establishing Frame Presence and Coherence: To empirically test narrative frame coherence, the first step utilizes content analysis to validate whether the Egyptian movement constructed an integrated collective action frame prior to the January 28 censorship event. Below, Figure 3 presents the top thirty most frequent terms across the combined social media and survey corpus, establishing the baseline vocabulary through which the movement's narrative operated.

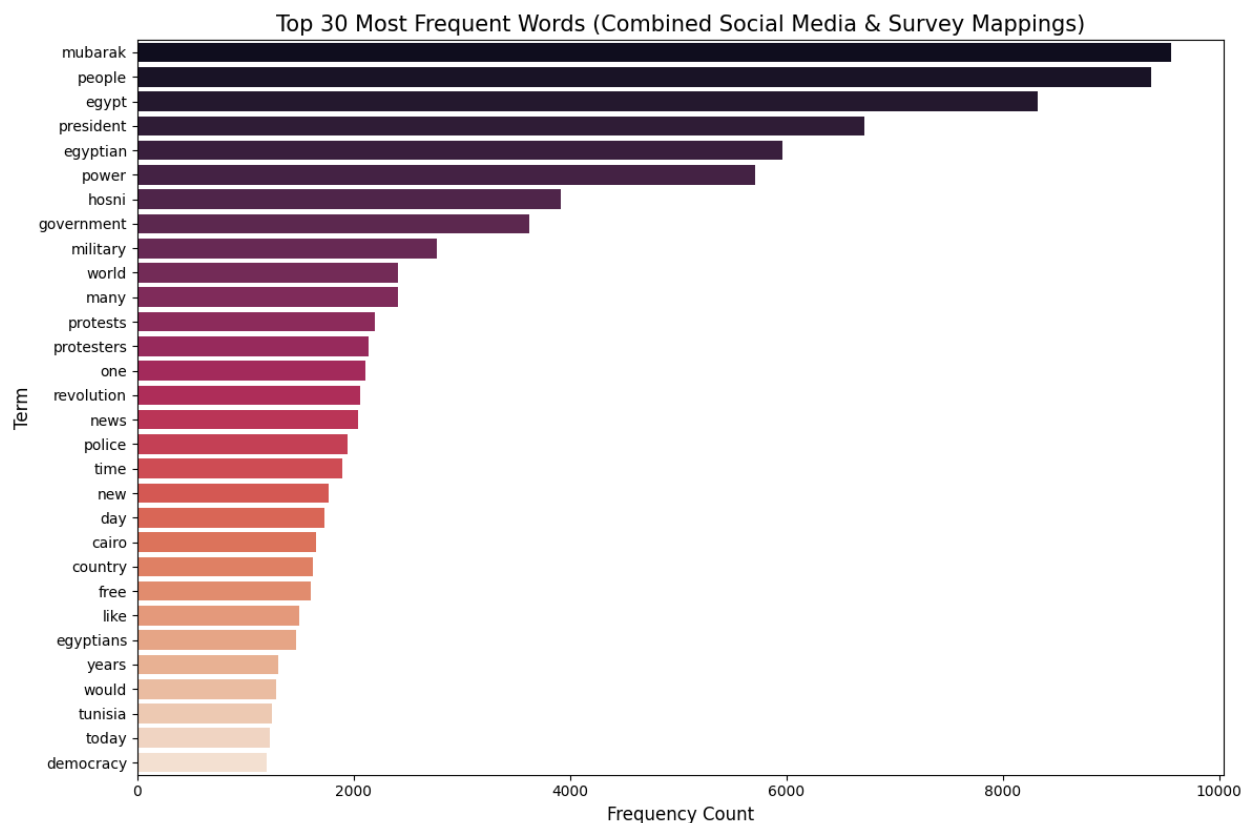


Figure 3. Bar graph of the top 30 most frequent terms across the social media data associated with the Egypt 2011 uprising before the start of the January 25 censorship period.

The frequency distribution in Figure 3 not only confirms all three collective action frame categories identified via process tracing, but also reveals which aspects of the narrative were more salient. Diagnostically, the highest frequency of the terms “Mubarak,” “president,” “government,” and “power” validate the confirmation of a specific movement adversary. Meanwhile the co-occurrence of the terms “military” and “police” alongside “protestors” illustrate a diagnosis of grievance responsibility. The prognostic frame correlates with the occurrence of the terms “revolution,” “protestors,” and “Tahrir Square,” anchoring the movement narrative to a concrete geographic and action-oriented frame that assigns an active protest role to the users. Lastly, the catalytic Tunisian revolution is also identified as the motivational frame through the presence of “Tunisia” in the top thirty terms. The presence of the terms “free,” “new,” and “democracy” also illustrate the movement’s determination to directly change their political system, representing a collective reimagining and determination toward a different reality without the Mubarak regime.

Semantic Network Analysis to Measure Narrative Coherence: However, the establishment of these key words alone is insufficient to determine the presence of the narrative frame. Thus, a semantic network is constructed of these common terms to validate the existence of a cohesive semantic structure and identify connections between the keywords and thematic concepts, shown in Figure 4 below:

H1: Semantic Network with Overlaid Centrality Scores (Narrative Resonance)

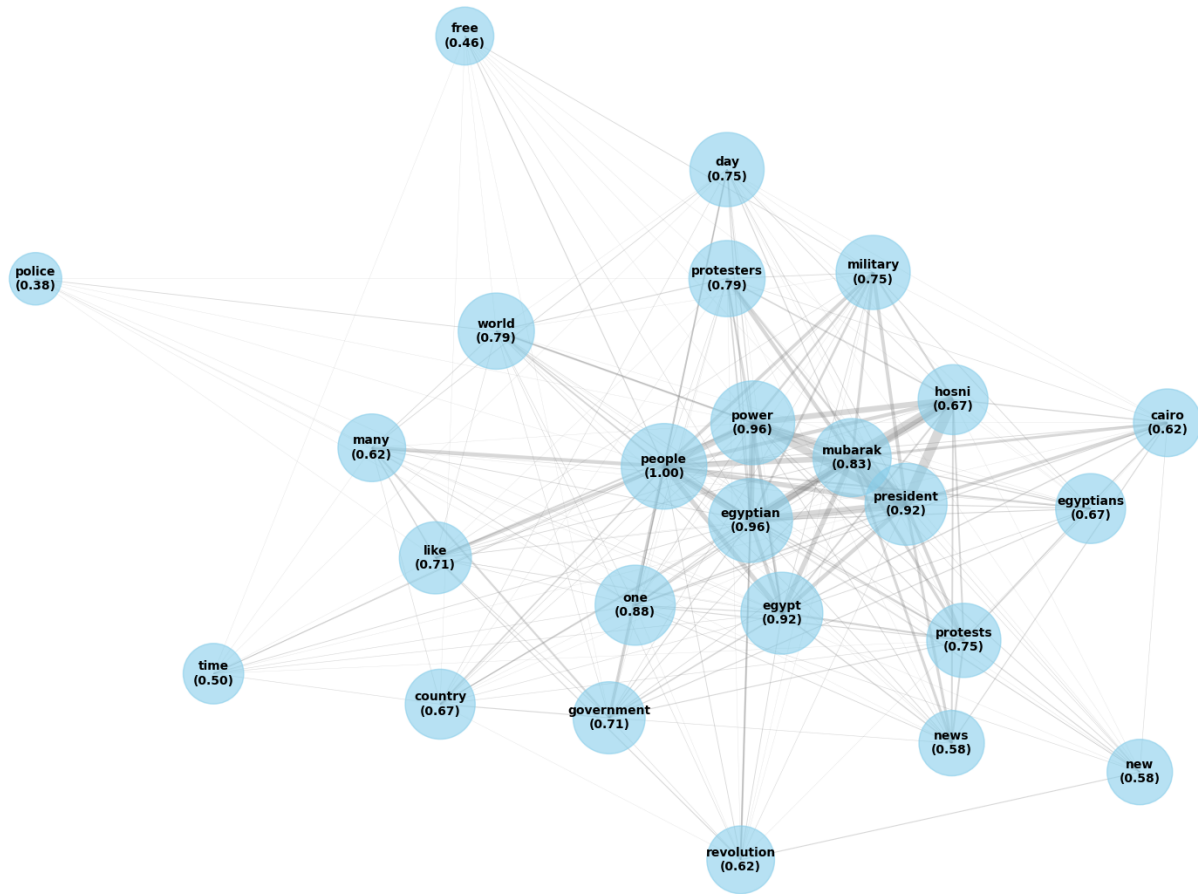


Figure 4. Semantic network mapping connections between common social media concepts, overlaid with centrality scores. Higher centrality scores (0-1) indicate greater relevance and structural importance to the overall movement narrative.

The network reveals a dense, mutually reinforcing semantic structure with “people (1.00),” “Egyptian” (0.96), “power” (0.96), and president (0.92) representing the highest centrality nodes that bridge the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational narrative frame clusters. The average clustering coefficient of 0.7894 across the semantic network indicates that if any two terms were connected to a third term, there was a 79 percent probability the two terms were also connected to each other, illustrating a tightly interconnected semantic web implicating narrative resonance rather disparate collection of concepts that co-occurred coincidentally. In

other words, the high clustering coefficient also supports the proposed claim that a coherent, resonant censorship narrative frame distributes meaning across multiple thematic keywords and concepts, contributing to a structurally resilient narrative.

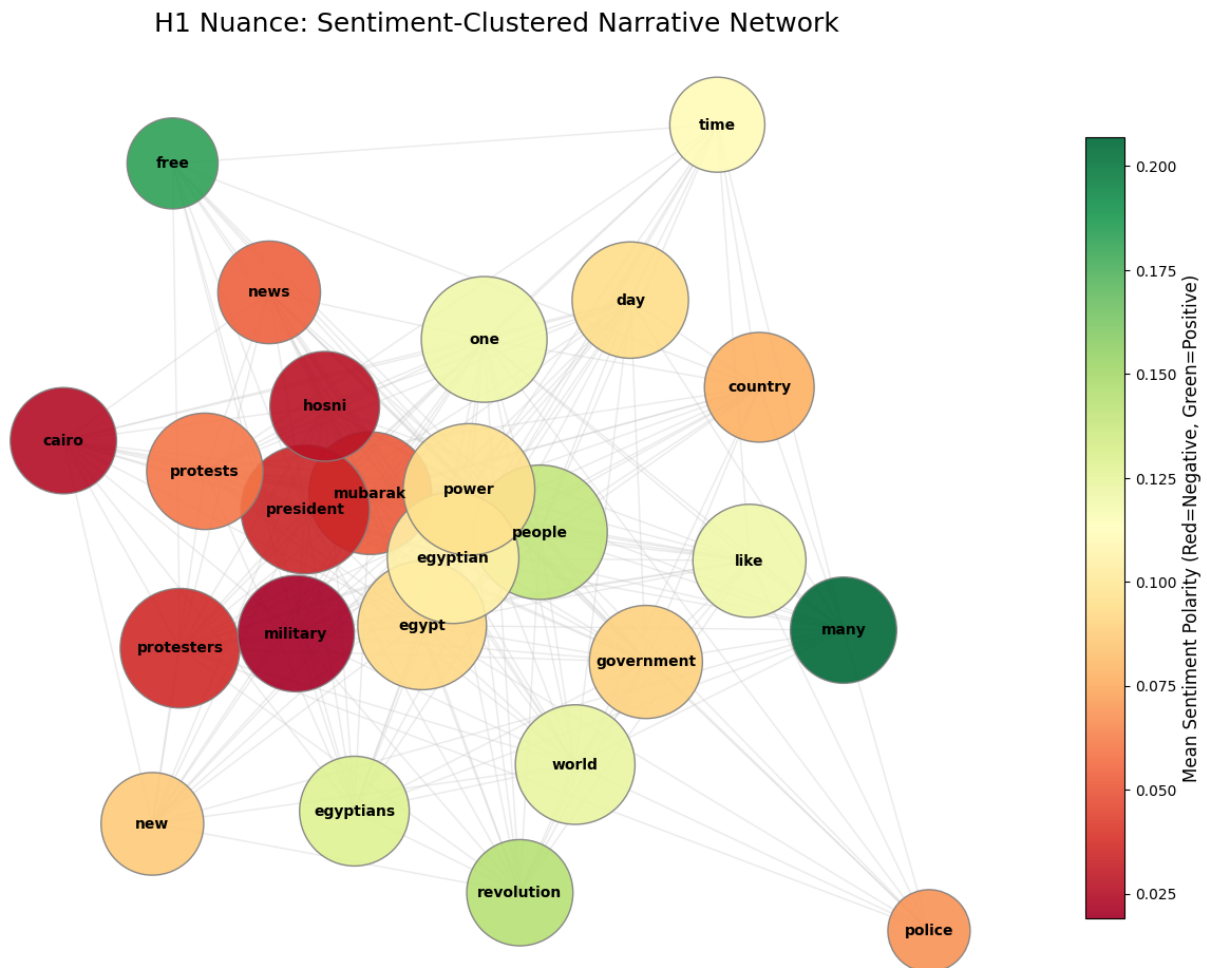


Figure 5. Semantic network mapping connections between narrative themes and associated narrative centrality of keywords, also color coded based on sentiment based on post context in which the keywords were used. Darker green terms an overall positive content sentiment, and darker reds represent a negative sentiment.

Resonance is further validated through a sentiment cluster analysis that measures the average positive and negative emotions associated with narrative keywords, as demonstrated in Figure 5 above. A clear divide between the people and the movement antagonist, the president and current administration, are demonstrated by cluster of terms such as “free,” “revolution,”

“people,” and “Egyptians” with a positive sentiment score compared to “president,” “military,” “Hosni,” “Mubarak,” and “police” documented with negative sentiment scores. Furthermore, the neutral sentiment associated with terms such as “power,” “Egypt,” and “government” signify the constructive open possibilities for positive change that motivate the movement, contrasting the oppressive reality in the moment.

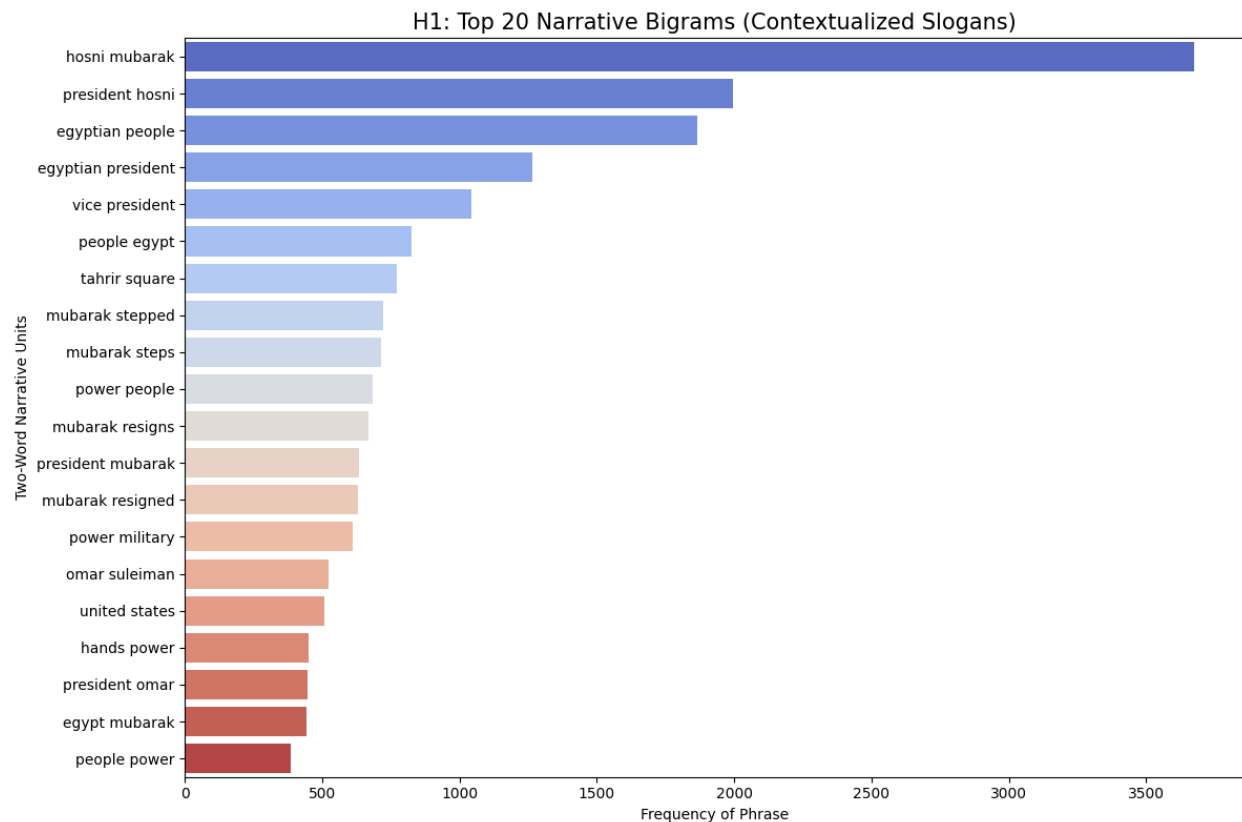


Figure 6. Bar graph displaying the frequency of the 20 most common term combinations seen through the social media dataset. Bigrams constitute two-word narrative phrases that operationalize the movement’s dominant semantic units into movement action.

Lastly, this bigram distribution (Figure 6) examines the top twenty most common narrative phrases to understand the linguistic units that translated the movement narrative into action-oriented discourse, bridging H_1 ’s resonance mechanism and H_2 ’s tactical response. The distribution below reveals an evident action orientation. “Hosni Mubarak” (3,675 occurrences) and “President Hosni” (1,996 occurrences) explicitly identify the movement adversary,

legitimizing the diagnostic frame. “Egyptian people” (1,864 occurrences) and “people Egypt” (823 occurrences) emphasize the collective identity frame: participants perceived themselves as a unified political actor against the government. Different iterations calling for Mubarak’s resignation appeared thousands of times (“Mubarak stepped” at 721 occurrences, “Mubarak steps” at 712 occurrences, and “Mubarak resigns” at 668 occurrences) to demonstrate a unified movement goal, a value that represents conversion of the movement prognostic frame into a concrete goal. This high frequency of political resignation also underscores the movement urgency that sustains participant commitment toward a specific, achievable outcome.

The abundance of resignation-oriented language in the corpus is not merely descriptive; it constitutes the motivational frame's urgency mechanism, embedding the imminent possibility of regime change into the movement's everyday vocabulary and sustaining participant commitment toward a specific, achievable outcome.

Figure 6 table: Most frequent phrase mentions	
Hosni Mubarak	3675
President Hosni	1996
Egyptian People	1864
Egyptian President	1264
Vice President	1042
People Egypt	823
Tahrir Square	771
Mubarak stepped	721
Mubarak steps	712
power people	721
Mubarak resigns	712
President Mubarak	684
Mubarak resigned	668
power military	609
Omar suleiman	522
United States	508
hands power	558
President Omar	446
Egypt Mubarak	442
people power	286

Beyond the notable separation of “Egyptian people” versus “Egyptian president” and mention of “Tahrir square” emphasizing the symbolically geographic, action and adversary-oriented nature of the movement narrative, the phrase “power people” is analytically significant, “People power” emphasizes the prognostic frame’s collective agency and diagnostic frame’s power structure, demonstrating the point in which grievance is converted into movement action. Overall, this combination of sentiment, thematic, network, and content

frequency analyses demonstrate strong empirical evidence of supporting the H_1 narrative resonance mechanism.

Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H_2)

Post Frequency Demonstrating Resistance Capacity: To establish tactical resistance, Figure 7 presents daily posting frequency across the prescribed movement timeframe before, during and after the selected censorship measure to examine and quantify movement resistance. Each post in the dataset was analyzed for content keywords and assigned a tactic category based on the movement actions implied. For instance, technical tactic-related social media posts included mentions of moving to an encrypted messaging platform like Telegram, calls to disseminate information on other social media platforms. Content or information-related tactics demonstrated the use of linguistic or cultural symbols to discretely communicate information. Organizational-related tactics demonstrated attempts to catch the attention of other organizations and media outlets to decentralize organizing efforts and encourage more legitimate organizations to help raise awareness about their movement cause. Note that the y-axis measuring tactic reach is scaled by millions of post impressions:

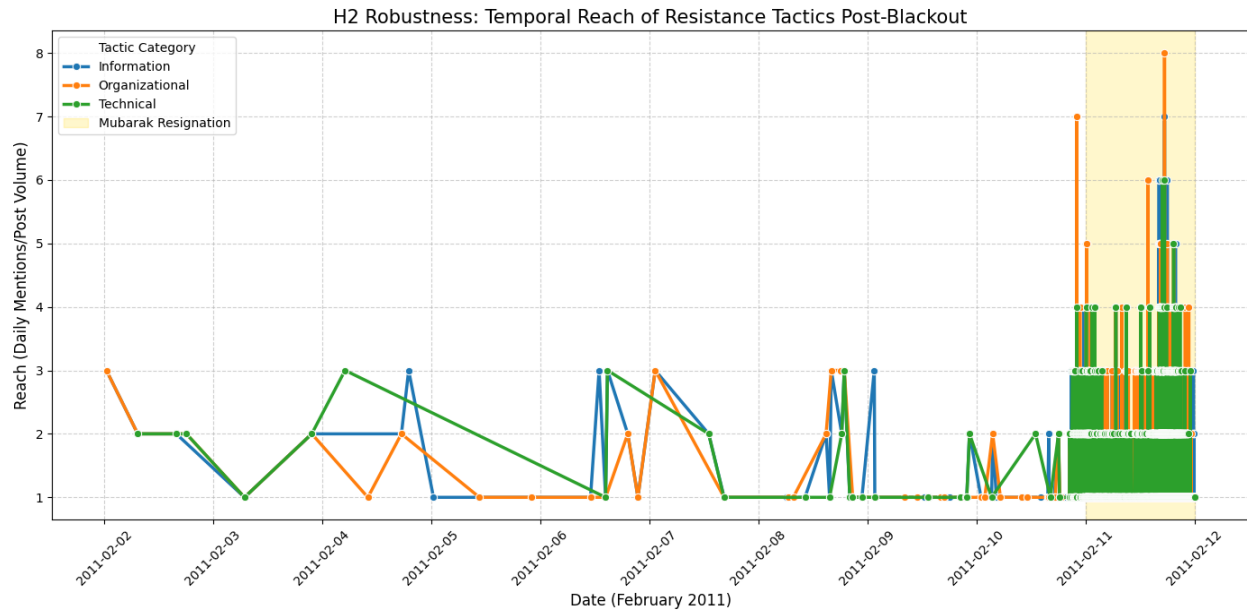


Figure 7. Temporal graph mapping the mention of different resistance tactics leading up to President Mubarak’s resignation representing the end of the movement. The tactics are color coded by category with blue representing content/information-specific resistance tactics, orange representing organizational resistance tactics, and green representing technical censorship resistance tactics. The y-axis, demonstrating tactic reach, is scaled by millions of post impressions.

Figure 7 simultaneously confirms maintenance of tactical diversity throughout the movement window, as well as tactical diversity to the state censorship measures, to validate the presence of tactical diversity demonstrated via case study process tracing. This visualization directly tests H_2 ’s tactic integration claim by testing not just the presence of, but relative presence and scope of reach of each tactic. The nearly immediate post-blackout surge in information and content tactic reach after February 2 correlates with sustained narrative frame resonance aligning with H_1 ’s claim that narrative frame resonance sustains movement and communication continuity even after facing state censorship. Technical tactic presence, while lower in total volume, maintains consistent presence throughout the post-blackout period rather than disappearing after internet restoration, indicating that the movement emphasized sustained technical resilience infrastructure in anticipation of future suppression, operationalizing the narrative’s forward-looking orientation as demonstrated through the previous content and network analyses.

The demonstrated presence of all three types of movement tactic resistance satisfies the H₂ claim that tactic diversity, supported by narrative resonance, allows movements to sustain their momentum and overcome censorship measures to achieve their final movement goals.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The qualitative process tracing and quantitative evidence across the Egypt 2011 revolution, Belarus 2020-21 post-election movement, and Hong Kong 2019-20 Extradition Bill Protests supports both hypotheses. The Narrative Resonance Hypothesis (H₁) is supported as all three movements and associated quantitative analysis demonstrate how three narrative frames established a resonant narrative that fostered collective identity and encouraged the formation of collective identity, encouraging commitment to movement-oriented action. The Tactic Diversity Hypothesis (H₂) is also supported with room for additional considerations and refinement. Though integration of technical, content, and organizational-based tactics allowed for grassroots movement continuity amidst state censorship, future research should explore correlation between dominant resistance category and the types of state censorship mechanisms deployed. Further research should also consider separating domestic mobilization and communication with the plausible transnational element of narrative resonance and mobilization as demonstrated through the Hong Kong case study, as transnational engagement constitutes a plausible resistance tactic that allows movement narrative resonance beyond the reach of state censorship.

Additionally, limitations constrain generalizability and should anchor future research. Notably the three-case design, while methodologically justified through MSSD and MDSD, requires testing across different regions, notably the Sub-Saharan African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian censorship contexts not represented here. Future large-N analyses of numerous cases is also recommended to further validate and refine the hypotheses. Above all, future studies

should include the perspectives of movement actors themselves through interviews, ethnographies, and other engaged research methods.

All in all, this thesis demonstrates that social media is neither the engine of resistance nor its obstacle. Rather, it represents the unique contested environment in which movements construct the shared meaning that makes collective action possible, *and* the mechanism that states co-opt to prevent movement-building. Movements that survive censorship are those with participants who have internalized a collective identity and need for action communicated through resonant narrative. As censorship increases globally with states weaponizing the same platforms meant to democratize information-sharing and communication, it is imperative to analytically understand how to build narrative power and deploy the power through movement strategy to ensure movement toward people-centered progress.

APPENDIX: Process Tracing Case Study Instrument

I. Case Selection

Case Name:

Country + Regime Type:

Time Frame

Brief Case Overview (3–4 sentences): Summarize the movement, its goals, size, key mobilization and censorship events over time, including the peak movement period and the censorship episode being studied.

II. Movement Structure and Temporal Scope

Beginning (Initial Mobilization Pre-Censorship): When did the movement emerge? What grievances or conditions triggered mobilization? What are the initial narrative and narrative frames that emerge?

Key Moments (Process): Identify dates and evidence of key moments that contribute to a causal chain:

1. Emergence of dominant narrative
2. Rapid diffusion/peak mobilization
3. Onset of state censorship
4. Tactical adaptation period
5. Post-censorship stabilization or decline

Closure (Outcome): Did the movement persist, adapt, or collapse? What is the final movement outcome, participation, and organizational structure?

III. Causal Chain Construction (Descriptive Inference)

Step 1: Pre-Censorship Narrative Formation (H₁ IV)

Mechanism: *Narrative resonance builds collective identity → strengthens commitment and internalization of grievance → motivates movement engagement*

Narrative Development Evidence from Social Media: Presence of diagnostic frames (defines problem), prognostic frames (identified opposition and solution), motivational frames (call to action)

Inference: Based on narrative cohesion and reach, does the movement demonstrate high or low narrative resonance?

Step 2: Diffusion and Internalization

Mechanism: *Resonant narrative spreads → increases network cohesion and shared meaning*

Evidence: Growth in posting volume and hashtag adoption, cross-platform narrative consistency, early sentiment cohesion

Inference: Was the narrative widely internalized prior to censorship?

Step 3: State Censorship Intervention

Mechanism: State attempts to disrupt communication and coordination

Timing and Evidence of Censorship Types Observed: Direct, algorithmic, and participatory censorship

Step 4: Tactical Response (H₂ IV)

Mechanism: Movements deploy tactics to preserve communication and coordination

Timing and Evidence Three Censorship Resistance Tactic Categories:

1. Technical: VPN usage spikes, cross-platform mobilization, etc.

2. Content: Use of algospeak, Symbol substitution, memes, coded language

3. Organizational: Expansion to new accounts or networks, External amplification (media, NGOs)

Conclusion: Does the movement present resistance tactics across all categories?

Step 5: Preliminary Post-Censorship Outcomes (DV)

For H₁: Resistance Capacity - Evidence of Narrative persistence, Sentiment stability, Posting frequency retention

For H₂: Movement Continuity - Evidence of cross-platform activity, network expansion or contraction, organizational resilience

IV. Causal Inference Tests: Evidence supporting the straw-in-the wind, hoop, smoking gun, or doubly decisive tests

V. Preliminary Hypothesis Evaluation

H1 Evaluation:

- Confirming evidence: High narrative resonance + strong resistance capacity
- Disconfirming evidence: High resonance + weak outcomes

Conclusion: Supported / Not Supported / Mixed

H2 Evaluation

- Confirming evidence: All tactic types + strong continuity
- Disconfirming evidence: Limited tactics + equal or better outcomes

Conclusion: Supported / Not Supported / Mixed

WORKS CITED

- “5 Years of International Advocacy by the Democratic Forces of Belarus: What Has Been Achieved?” 2025. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. August 6, 2025.
<https://tsikhanouskaya.org/en/news/5-years-of-international-advocacy-by-the-democratic-forces-of-belarus-what-has-been-achieved.html>.
- Al Zidjaly, Najma. 2017. “Memes as Reasonably Hostile Laments: A Discourse Analysis of Political Dissent in Oman.” *Discourse & Society* 28 (6): 573–94.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926517721083>.
- Alexander, Anne. 2011. “Internet Role in Egypt’s Protests.” *BBC News*, February 9, 2011.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12400319>.
- Alexander, Titus. 2025. “Social Models as Dynamic Theories: How to Improve the Impact of Social and Political Sciences.” *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (May).
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1443388>.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Aouragh, Miriyam. 2012. “Social Media, Mediation and the Arab Revolutions.” *TripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society*, May. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291393_016.
- Apodaca, Tomas, and Natasha Uzcátegui-Liggett. 2024. “How We Investigated Shadowbanning on Instagram – the Markup.” *The Markup*. February 25, 2024.
<https://themarkup.org/automated-censorship/2024/02/25/how-we-investigated-shadowbanning-on-instagram>.
- Ardıç, Nurullah. 2012. “Understanding the ‘Arab Spring’: Justice, Dignity, Religion and

- International Politics.” *Afro Eurasian Studies* 1 (1): 8–52. <https://izlik.org/JA87DG95CZ>.
- Ashwini, D. Y., Vishwanatha, and R. P. Puneeth. 2025. “Social Media as a Platform for Resistance: Examining the Language of Dissent in Indian Society.” *Frontiers in Communication* 10 (October). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1648587>.
- Atkinson, Joshua D., and Laura Cooley. 2010. “Narrative Capacity, Resistance Performance, and the ‘Shape’ of New Social Movement Networks.” *Communication Studies* 61 (3): 321–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510971003752668>.
- Auseyushkin, Yan, and Andrew Roth. 2020. “Belarus Election: Lukashenko’s Claim of Landslide Victory Sparks Widespread Protests.” *The Guardian*, August 10, 2020, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/09/belarus-election-lukashenko-landslide-victory-fixing-claims>.
- Bakr, Noha. 2016. “The Egyptian Revolution.” In *Change & Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean*, edited by Stephan Calleya and Monika Wohfeld. Msida, Malta: Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies.
- Barwick, Daniel, and Anoop Nayak. 2024. “The Transnationalism of the Black Lives Matter Movement: Decolonization and Mapping Black Geographies in Sydney, Australia.” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 114 (7): 1587–1603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2024.2363782>.
- Basha, Haytham, Shamal Mustafa, and Kawar Mohammed Mousa. 2026. “Social Media and the Democratization of Political Participation: A Global Perspective.” *Frontiers in Political Science* 8 (February). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2026.1719957>.
- Bassiouni, Mahmoud Cherif. 2017. *Chronicles of the Egyptian Revolution and Its Aftermath*:

- 2011-2016. Cambridge University Press.
- BBC News*. 2019. "Hong Kong Protest: 'Nearly Two Million' Join Demonstration," June 17, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-48656471>.
- "Belarus Internet Shutdown Forces Reliance on Telegram and VPNs." 2020. Privacy International. August 11, 2020. <http://privacyinternational.org/examples/4571/belarus-internet-shutdown-forces-reliance-telegram-and-vpns>.
- "Belarus: Freedom on the Net 2020 Country Report." 2024. Freedom House. 2024. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/belarus/freedom-net/2020>.
- Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (1): 611–39.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2014. "Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices." *Process Tracing*, 3–38. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139858472.003>.
- Bennett, W. Lance, and Alexandra Segerberg. 2023. "The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics." *Edward Elgar Publishing EBooks*, November, 287–338. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377585.00030>.
- Blackington, Courtney, and Frances Cayton. 2024. "How to Stay Popular: Threat, Framing, and Conspiracy Theory Longevity." *Perspectives on Politics*, March, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592723003006>.
- Bousquet, Chris. 2025. "Limiting the Right to Moderate: Political Equality, Social Media, and Viewpoint-Based Moderation." *Ethics and Information Technology* 27 (4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-025-09875-w>.
- Butts, Dylan, Molpasorn Shoowong, and Meredith Chen. 2022. "Hong Kong's Timeline since

- the 1997 British Handover to China.” NBC News. July 1, 2022.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/hong-kongs-25-years-china-protests-politics-tightening-laws-rcna36284>.
- Cairney, Paul. 2012. “Complexity Theory in Political Science and Public Policy.” *Political Studies Review* 10 (3): 346–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-9302.2012.00270.x>.
- Chan, Michael, Jingjing Yi, and Dmitry Kuznetsov. 2022. “Government Digital Repression and Political Engagement: A Cross-National Multilevel Analysis Examining the Roles of Online Surveillance and Censorship.” *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 29 (2): 194016122211171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221117106>.
- Chen, Yan, Kate Sherren, Kyung Young Lee, Lori McCay-Peet, Shan Xue, and Michael Smit. 2024. “From Theory to Practice: Insights and Hurdles in Collecting Social Media Data for Social Science Research.” *Frontiers in Big Data* 7 (May).
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fdata.2024.1379921>.
- Chen, Yen-Shao, and Tauhid Zaman. 2024. “Shaping Opinions in Social Networks with Shadow Banning.” *PloS One* 19 (3): e0299977. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0299977>.
- Cheng, Edmund W., and Samson Yuen. 2025. “Hong Kong: From Anti-Extradition to Anti-Authoritarian Movement.” *Contemporary Social Movements*, December 28–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394300365.ch04>.
- Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chung, Hiu Fung. 2020. “Changing Repertoires of Contention in Hong Kong: A Case Study on the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement.” *China Perspectives* 2020 (3): 57–63.
<https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.10476>.

- Clarke, Kevin A., and David M. Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach." *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (04). <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592707072192>.
- Clarke, Killian, and Korhan Kocak. 2018. "Launching Revolution: Social Media and the Egyptian Uprising's First Movers." *British Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123418000194>.
- Codogni, Paulina. 2025. "Symbols of the Belarusian Resistance after the 2020 Presidential Election." *Studia Z Dziejów Rosji I Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 59 (3): 113–40. <https://doi.org/10.12775/sdr.2024.en8.06>.
- Comunello, Francesca, and Giuseppe Anzera. 2012. "Will the Revolution Be Tweeted? A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Social Media and the Arab Spring." *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 23 (4): 453–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2012.712435>.
- Corduneanu-Huci, Cristina, and Alexander Hamilton. 2022. "Selective Control: The Political Economy of Censorship." *Political Communication* 39 (4): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2022.2074587>.
- Crasnow, Sharon. 2017. "Process Tracing in Political Science: What's the Story?" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 62 (April): 6–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2017.03.002>.
- Dabbagh, Hossein. 2025. "Repression in the Digital Age: Surveillance, Censorship, and the Dynamics of State Violence." *Ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org*. 2025. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/journal/repression-in-the-digital-age-surveillance-censorship-and-the-dynamics-of-state-violence>.
- Dal, Aysenur, and Erik C. Nisbet. 2022. "Walking through Firewalls: Circumventing Censorship

- of Social Media and Online Content in a Networked Authoritarian Context.” *Social Media + Society* 8 (4): 205630512211377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221137738>.
- DeCook, Julia R. 2018. “Memes and Symbolic Violence: #Proudboys and the Use of Memes for Propaganda and the Construction of Collective Identity.” *Learning, Media and Technology* 43 (4): 485–504. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2018.1544149>.
- Díaz, Ángel, and Laura Hecht-Felella. 2021. “Double Standards in Social Media Content Moderation.” *Brennan Center for Justice*. New York, New York: New York University School of Law.
<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/double-standards-social-media-content-moderation>.
- “Digital Society Project – V-Dem.” 2025. V-Dem.net. V-Dem. 2025.
<https://www.v-dem.net/our-work/collaborations/digital-society-project/>.
- Donatella della Porta, Anna Lavizzari, Herbert Reiter, Moritz Sommer, Elias Steinhilper, and Folashade Ajayi. 2023. “Patterns of Adaptation and Recontextualisation: The Transnational Diffusion of Black Lives Matter to Italy and Germany.” *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 10 (4): 653–77.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2023.2239324>.
- Earl, Jennifer, Thomas V. Maher, and Jennifer Pan. 2022. “The Digital Repression of Social Movements, Protest, and Activism: A Synthetic Review.” *Science Advances* 8 (10): 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abl8198>.
- “Egypt.” 2011. *Freedom House*.
https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Egypt_FOTN2011.pdf.
- Elmimouni, Houda, Sarah Rüller, Konstantin Aal, Yarden Skop, Norah Abokhodair, Volker

- Wulf, and Peter Tolmie. 2025. "Exploring Algorithmic Resistance: Responses to Social Media Censorship in Activism." *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 9 (2): 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3710970>.
- Eltantawy, Nahed, and Julie Wiest. 2011. "Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory." *International Journal of Communication* 5. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/1242/597>.
- Enjolras, Bernard, Kari Steen-Johnsen, and Dag Wollebæk. 2012. "Social Media and Mobilization to Offline Demonstrations: Transcending Participatory Divides?" *New Media & Society* 15 (6): 890–908. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812462844>.
- Fowler, Geoffrey. 2022. "Shadowbanning Is Real: Here's How You End up Muted by Social Media." Washington Post. December 27, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/12/27/shadowban/>.
- George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: MIT Press.
- Giugni, Marco, and Maria Grasso. 2025. *The Transformation of Protest Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gohdes, Anita. 2024. *Repression in the Digital Age*. Oxford University Press. <https://academic.oup.com/book/55234>.
- Gokmenoglu, Birgan. 2022. "Temporality in the Social Sciences: New Directions for a Political Sociology of Time." *The British Journal of Sociology* 73 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12938>.
- Gorwa, Robert, Reuben Binns, and Christian Katzenbach. 2020. "Algorithmic Content Moderation: Technical and Political Challenges in the Automation of Platform

- Governance.” *Big Data & Society* 7 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951719897945>.
- Guntrum, Laura Gianna, and Christian Reuter. 2025. “Activists’ Strategies for Coping with Technology-Facilitated Violence in the Global South.” *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction* 32 (6). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3762811>.
- Hakak, Netta. 2025. “Silencing Dissent: Government Measures and Moral Panic in the Aftermath of the Black Lives Matter Resurgence.” *Equity in Education & Society*, March. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461251320115>.
- Hakami, Zaid, Yuzhou Feng, and Bogdan Carbunar. 2025. “Cooperative Dynamics of Censorship, Misinformation, and Influence Operations: Insights from the Global South and U.S.” Arxiv.org. 2025. <https://arxiv.org/html/2509.17933v1>.
- Hamanaka, Shingo. 2020. “The Role of Digital Media in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.” *Democratization* 27 (5): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2020.1737676>.
- Haperen, Sander van, Justus Uitermark, and Walter Nicholls. 2022. “The Swarm versus the Grassroots: Places and Networks of Supporters and Opponents of Black Lives Matter on Twitter.” *Social Movement Studies* 22 (2): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2031954>.
- Hasan, Mahmud, and Anuradha Paul. 2025. “The Role of Social Media in Political Mobilization: A Systematic Review.” *Business & Social Sciences* 3 (1): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.25163/business.3110221>.
- Herasimenka, Aliaksandr. 2021. “Belarus.” Oxford, United Kingdom: Programme on Democracy & Technology. <https://demtech.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2021/01/Cyber-Troop-Belarus-2020.pdf>.

- Herrera, Linda. 2014. *Revolution in the Age of Social Media : The Egyptian Popular Insurrection and the Internet*. London ; New York: Verso.
- Ho, Ming-sho. 2020. "HOW PROTESTS EVOLVE: HONG KONG'S ANTI-EXTRADITION MOVEMENT and LESSONS LEARNED from the UMBRELLA MOVEMENT." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*. October 28, 2020.
<https://mobilization.kglmeridian.com/view/journals/maiq/25/SI/article-p711.xml>.
- Hobbs, William R., and Margaret E. Roberts. 2018. "How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information." *American Political Science Review* 112 (3): 621–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055418000084>.
- Hochman, Yael, and Gabriela Spector-Mersel. 2020. "Three Strategies for Doing Narrative Resistance: Navigating between Master Narratives." *British Journal of Social Psychology*, March. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12376>.
- "Hong Kong: Freedom in the World 2019 Country Report." 2020. Freedom House. 2020.
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/hong-kong/freedom-world/2019>.
- "Hong Kong's Freedoms: What China Promised and How It's Cracking Down." 2014. Council on Foreign Relations. December 3, 2014.
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/hong-kong-freedoms-democracy-protests-china-crack-down>.
- Hook, Kristina, and Ernesto Verdeja. 2022. "Social Media Misinformation and the Prevention of Political Instability and Mass Atrocities." Stimson Center. July 7, 2022.
<https://www.stimson.org/2022/social-media-misinformation-and-the-prevention-of-political-instability-and-mass-atrocities/>.
- "How Is Social Media Transforming Human Rights Monitoring?" 2013. Amnesty International

- USA. February 20, 2013.
- <https://www.amnestyusa.org/blog/twitter-to-the-rescue-how-social-media-is-transforming-human-rights-monitoring/>.
- Howard, Philip N., Aiden Duffy, Deen Freelon, M. M. Hussain, Will Mari, and Marwa Maziad. 2011. "Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media during the Arab Spring?" Social Science Research Network. Rochester, NY: Elsevier Inc. 2011.
- https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2595096.
- Jacquelien van Stekelenburg, and Teodora Gaidytė. 2023. "Social Movements and the Dynamics of Collective Action." *Oxford University Press EBooks*, September, 945–86.
- <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197541302.013.25>.
- Ji, Heng, and Kevin Knight. 2018. "Creative Language Encoding under Censorship." ACLWeb. Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA: Association for Computational Linguistics. August 1, 2018. <https://aclanthology.org/W18-4203/>.
- Johansson, Anna, and Stellan Vinthagen. 2020. *Conceptualizing Everyday Resistance: A Transdisciplinary Approach*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Stellan-Vinthagen/publication/336612613_Conceptualizing_'Everyday_Resistance'/links/6070d9ad92851c8a7bb708b9/Conceptualizing-Everyday-Resistance.pdf.
- John Stuart Mill. (1843) 1996. *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive / [1] Collected Works of John Stuart Mill / Ed. By John M. Robson ... 7, Books 1-3*. London: Routledge.
- John, Tara. 2019. "Why Hong Kong Is Protesting: Their Five Demands Listed." CNN. August 13, 2019.
- <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/13/asia/hong-kong-airport-protest-explained-hnk-intl>.

- Jost, John T., Pablo Barberá, Richard Bonneau, Melanie Langer, Megan Metzger, Jonathan Nagler, Joanna Sterling, and Joshua A. Tucker. 2018. "How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks." *Political Psychology* 39 (39): 85–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12478>.
- Jovanovic, Milena, and Ivana Stankovic. 2024. "Social Media and Political Activism: How Digital Platforms Shape Civic Engagement." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Reviews* 1 (1): 12–16. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijhs.v1i1.134>.
- Jung, Haesung, Wenhao Dai, and Dolores Albarracín. 2023. "How Social Media Algorithms Shape Offline Civic Participation: A Framework of Social-Psychological Processes." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 19 (5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916231198471>.
- Kasianenko, Kateryna, and Olga Boichak. 2024. "Canonizing Online Activism: Memetic Iconography in the North Atlantic Fella Organization." *Media, War & Conflict*, October. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352241279957>.
- Kavada, Anastasia, Tina Askanus, Anne Kaun, Alice Mattoni, and Julie Uldam. 2023. "Tying up Goliath Activist Strategies for Confronting and Harnessing Digital Power." Transnational Institute. <https://www.tni.org/files/2023-04/Tying%20up%20Goliath.pdf>.
- Kazharski, Aliaksei. 2021. "Belarus' New Political Nation? 2020 Anti-Authoritarian Protests as Identity Building." *New Perspectives* 29 (1): 2336825X2098434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2336825x20984340>.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. "Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics." *Foreign Affairs* 77 (4): 123. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20048985>.
- Kelly, Sanja, Mai Truong, Adrian Shahbaz, Madeline Earp, and Jessica White. 2017.

- “Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy.” *Freedom House*.
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2017/manipulating-social-media-undermine-democracy>.
- Khondker, Habibul Haque. 2011. “Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring.” *Globalizations* 8 (5): 675–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2011.621287>.
- Kianpour, Masoud, Anna Triandafyllidou, Thomas Allen, Shiva Mazrouei, and Morteza Shams. 2025. “Social Media Narratives, Diasporic Identity and Collective Memory: A Critical Synthesis of the Literature.” *Ethnicities* 26 (1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/14687968251386072>.
- Kobayashi, Tetsuro, Fujio Toriumi, Mitsuo Yoshida, and Takeshi Sakaki. 2025. “Cross-Ideological Acceptance of the Illiberal Narrative of the 2019 Hong Kong Protests in Japan: Aversion to Protests as a Key Facilitator.” *Chinese Journal of Communication*, March, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2025.2480060>.
- Kok, Kristiaan P.W., Anne M.C. Loeber, and John Grin. 2021. “Politics of Complexity: Conceptualizing Agency, Power and Powering in the Transitional Dynamics of Complex Adaptive Systems.” *Research Policy* 50 (3): 104183.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104183>.
- Kozyreva, Anastasia, Stefan M. Herzog, Stephan Lewandowsky, Ralph Hertwig, Philipp Lorenz-Spreen, Mark Leiser, and Jason Reifler. 2023. “Resolving Content Moderation Dilemmas between Free Speech and Harmful Misinformation.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120 (7): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2210666120>.
- Lafi, Nora. 2017. “The ‘Arab Spring’ in Global Perspective: Social Movements, Changing Contexts and Political Transitions in the Arab World (2010–2014).” *The History of Social*

- Movements in Global Perspective*, 677–702.
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-30427-8_23.
- Leung, Brian, Yuan Hsiao, and Kiran Garimella. 2022. “Decentralized yet Unifying: Digital Media, Normative Crowding Out, and Solidarity in Hong Kong’s Anti-Extradition Movement.” *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media* 2 (August).
<https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2022.017>.
- Li, Hang. 2025. “Explaining Tactical Shift: Interpretive Changes of Political Opportunity and Strategic Interaction in Hong Kong’s Pro-Democracy Movement, 2010 to 2019.” *Chinese Sociological Review*, November, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2025.2582516>.
- Lim, Merlyna. 2024. “Social Media and Politics in Southeast Asia.” *Elements in Politics and Society in Southeast Asia*, November. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108750745>.
- Liverseed, Claudia . 2025. “Kenya Finance Bill Protests.” The Nonviolence Project. April 29, 2025. <https://thenonviolenceproject.wisc.edu/2025/04/29/kenya-finance-bill-protests/>.
- Lustick, Ian S., Brandon Alcorn, Miguel Garces, and Alicia Ruvinsky. 2012. “From Theory to Simulation: The Dynamic Political Hierarchy in Country Virtualisation Models.” *Journal of Experimental & Theoretical Artificial Intelligence* 24 (3): 279–99.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0952813x.2012.693841>.
- Maher, Thomas V., Andrew Martin, John D. McCarthy, and Lisa Moorhead. 2019. “Assessing the Explanatory Power of Social Movement Theories across the Life Course of the Civil Rights Movement.” *Social Currents* 6 (5): 399–421.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2329496519850846>.
- Mahoney, James. 2015. “Process Tracing and Historical Explanation.” *Security Studies* 24 (2): 200–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2015.1036610>.

- Malorni, Angie, and Sara Wilf. 2025. "Unpacking Social Media's Role in Sociopolitical Development amidst the Dual Pandemics: Perspectives of Marginalized Adolescent Organizers." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 35 (3).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.70048>.
- Marks, Gary, and Doug McAdam. 1999. "On the Relationship of Political Opportunities to the Form of Collective Action: The Case of the European Union." *Palgrave Macmillan UK EBooks*, January, 97–111. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27319-5_6.
- Mattoni, Alice, Julie Uldam, and Noomi Weinryb. 2025. "Platforms as Partners? Dissecting the Interplay between Civil Society Organizing and Social Media Platforms." *Social Media + Society* 11 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251343865>.
- Mbugua, Judy. 2025. "Why Kenya's GEN Z Has Taken to the Streets | Journal of Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*. 2025.
<https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/online-exclusive/why-kenyas-gen-z-has-taken-to-the-streets/>.
- McAdam, Doug. 1982. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald. 1977. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (6): 1212–41.
- Mete Sefa Uysal, John Drury, and Yasemin Gülsüm Acar. 2025. "'Nothing to Lose or a World to Win': Reconsidering Efficacy, Legitimacy, Political Trust and Repression in Confrontational Collective Action." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 64 (3).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12891>.
- Meyer, D. S., and D. C. Minkoff. 2004. "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity." *Social Forces*

- 82 (4): 1457–92. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0082>.
- Mueller, Aaron, Zach Wood-Doughty, Silvio Amir, Mark Dredze, and Alicia Lynn Nobles. 2021. “Demographic Representation and Collective Storytelling in the Me Too Twitter Hashtag Activism Movement.” *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 5 (CSCW1): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3449181>.
- Myrsiades, Linda. 1993. “Constituting Resistance: Narrative Construction and the Social Theory of Resistance.” *Symplokē* 1 (2): 101–20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40550324>.
- Navumau, Vasil, Olga Matveieva, Dmytro Khutkyy, Illya Sulzhytski, and Michael Cole. 2025. “VIRTUAL SPACES of FREEDOM: THE TELEGRAM-ENABLED PROTEST in BELARUS, 2020.” *Topos* 2 (55): 69–96. <https://doi.org/10.61095/815-0047-202-2-69-96>.
- Olaniran, Bolane, and Indi Williams. 2020. “Social Media Effects: Hijacking Democracy and Civility in Civic Engagement.” *Platforms, Protests, and the Challenge of Networked Democracy* 1 (1): 77–94. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-36525-7_5.
- Otmakhova, Yulia, and Lea Frermann. 2025. “Narrative Media Framing in Political Discourse.” School of Computing and Information Systems, The University of Melbourne. <https://aclanthology.org/2025.findings-acl.477.pdf>.
- Ottaway, David. 2020. “Hosni Mubarak’s Dramatic Rise and Fall from Power.” Wilson Center. February 25, 2020. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/hosni-mubaraks-dramatic-rise-and-fall-power>.
- Pak, Tin. 2024. “Internet Censorship and Digital Surveillance under Hong Kong’s National Security Law.” The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies. University of Washington. March 28, 2024. <https://jsis.washington.edu/news/internet-censorship-and-digital-surveillance-under-hong>

-kongs-national-security-law/.

- Papacharissi, Zizi, and Maria de Fatima Oliveira. 2012. "Affective News and Networked Publics: The Rhythms of News Storytelling on #Egypt." *Journal of Communication* 62 (2): 266–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01630.x>.
- Poetranto, Irene. 2026. "The Architecture of Digital Repression." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 10, 2026. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/03/the-architecture-of-digital-repression>.
- Polletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. 2001. "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 283–305. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2678623>.
- Puri, Nandini. 2025. "The Impact of Social Media in Shaping Political Discourse." *International Journal for Research Publication and Seminar* 16 (1): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.36676/jrps.v16.i1.1628>.
- Quigley, Fran. 2009. "GROWING POLITICAL WILL from the GRASSROOTS: HOW SOCIAL MOVEMENT PRINCIPLES CAN REVERSE the DISMAL LEGACY of RULE of LAW INTERVENTIONS." New York, New York: Columbia Human Rights Review. <https://mckinneylaw.iu.edu/instructors/quigley/Growing%20Political%20Will%20From%20the%20Grassroots.pdf>.
- Radford, Jason. 2019. "Collecting Social Media Data for Research." Sage Research Methods Community. April 29, 2019. <https://researchmethodscommunity.sagepub.com/blog/collecting-social-media-data-for-research>.
- Reuter, Ora John, and David Szakonyi. 2013. "Online Social Media and Political Awareness in

- Authoritarian Regimes.” *British Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 29–51.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123413000203>.
- Roberts, Margaret. 2018. *CENSORED : Distraction and Diversion inside China’s Great Firewall*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Roberts, Margaret E. 2020. “Resilience to Online Censorship.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 23 (1): 401–19. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-032837>.
- Robinson, Kali. 2020. “The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What’s the Legacy of the Uprisings?” Council on Foreign Relations. December 3, 2020.
<https://www.cfr.org/articles/arab-spring-ten-years-whats-legacy-uprisings>.
- Rød, Espen Geelmuyden, and Nils Weidmann. 2015. “Empowering Activists or Autocrats? The Internet in Authoritarian Regimes.” *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (3): 338–51.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314555782>.
- Rudnik, Alesia. 2024. “Co-Option of Technology.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 57 (4): 28–55. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2024.2125064>.
- Salem, Paul. 2011. “How Tunisia’s Revolution Transforms Politics in Egypt and the Region.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. January 29, 2011.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2011/01/how-tunisias-revolution-transforms-politics-in-egypt-and-the-region>.
- Schmidt, Fabian. 2020. “Avoiding Censorship: How to Move Anonymously on the Internet.” Deutsche Welle. February 17, 2020.
<https://www.dw.com/en/tor-psiphon-signal-and-co-how-to-move-unrecognized-on-the-internet/a-51720615>.
- Schmitter, Philippe Charles. 2012. “The Design of Social and Political Research.” In *Approaches*

- and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Schuessler, Elke, Sara Maric, and Leonhard Dobusch. 2026. “Digital Platforms and Democratic Publics: How Social Media Platforms Selectively appropriate and Strategically Subvert Institutional Logics.” *Information and Organization* 36 (1): 100612.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoandorg.2026.100612>.
- Schürmann, Lennart. 2023. “The Impact of Local Protests on Political Elite Communication: Evidence from *Fridays for Future* in Germany.” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, April, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2023.2189729>.
- Siročić, Zorica. 2024. “Temporal Repertoires in Contemporary Activism: The Cases of Fridays for Future, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and ‘It’s Thursday Again!’” *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 11 (3): 1–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2024.2335159>.
- Smidi, Adam, and Saif Shahin. 2017. “Social Media and Social Mobilisation in the Middle East: A Survey of Research on the Arab Spring.” *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 73 (2): 196–209.
- Srinivasan, Ramesh. 2013. “Bridges between Cultural and Digital Worlds in Revolutionary Egypt.” *The Information Society* 29 (1): 49–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2012.739594>.
- Steen, Ella, Kathryn Yurechko, and Daniel Klug. 2023. “You Can (Not) Say What You Want: Using Algospeak to Contest and Evade Algorithmic Content Moderation on TikTok.” *Social Media + Society* 9 (3): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231194586>.

- Steinert-Threkeld, Zachary. 2017. "Spontaneous Collective Action: Peripheral Mobilization during the Arab Spring." *American Political Science Review* 111 (2): 379–403.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055416000769>.
- Supriyanto, Teguh. 2024. "The Influence of Social Media on Political Participation in the Digital Era." *International Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 1 (1): 42–53.
<https://doi.org/10.69812/ijsp.v1i1.46>.
- Susánszky, Pál, Ákos Kopper, and Frank T. Zsigó. 2022. "Media Framing of Political Protests – Reporting Bias and the Discrediting of Political Activism." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 38 (4): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2022.2061817>.
- Suzor, Nicolas. 2019. *Lawless: The Secret Rules That Govern Our Digital Lives*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Tai, Hugo. 2022a. "Hong Kong – Toxic Levels of Polarization." V-Dem. 2022.
https://v-dem.net/weekly_graph/hong-kong-toxic-levels-of-polarization.
- . 2022b. "Equality before the Law and Individual Liberty in Belarus." V-Dem. April 5, 2022. https://v-dem.net/weekly_graph/equality-before-the-law-and-individual-liberty-in.
- Tarrow, Sidney. 1996. "Social Movements in Contentious Politics: A Review Article." *American Political Science Review* 90 (04): 874–83. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2945851>.
- Tausch, Arno. 2018. "Islamism, Arab Spring and the Future of Democracy." *Islamism, Arab Spring, and the Future of Democracy*, September, 311–45.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91077-2_11.
- Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. New York: Random House.
- Timm, Gabrielle. 2016. "A COUNTRY REPORT BASED on DATA 1900-2014."
https://www.v-dem.net/media/publications/cr009_egypt.pdf.

- Van Dijke, Hannah. 2024. "Like, Tweet, & Torment: Authoritarian Troll Farms." Human Rights Foundation. November 18, 2024.
<https://hrf.org/latest/like-tweet-torment-authoritarian-troll-farms/>.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Van Laer, Jeroen, and Peter Van Aelst. 2010. "Internet and Social Movement Action Repertoires: Opportunities and Limitations." *Information, Communication & Society* 13 (8): 1146–71.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691181003628307>.
- Van Til, Jon, Gabor Hegyesi, and Jennifer Eschweiler. 2008. "Grassroots Social Movements and the Shaping of History." *Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*, 362–77.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-32933-8_24.
- Vashchilko, Tatiana, James Agarwal, and Oleksiy Osiyevskyy. 2022. "Modeling a Country's Political Environment Using Dynamic Factor Analysis (DFA): A New Methodology for IB Research." *Journal of World Business* 57 (5): 101313.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2022.101313>.
- Wael Ghonim. 2012. *Revolution 2.0 : The Power of the People Is Greater than the People in Power : A Memoir*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Wen, Yuni. 2024. "Public Interest V.s. Special Interest: The Strategic Framing Tactics of Technologies in the Political Arena." *Research Policy* 53 (8): 105071–71.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2024.105071>.
- Winkler, Stephen. 2019. "Media's Influence on LGBTQ Support across Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 51 (2): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s000712341900019x>.
- Wolfsfeld, Gadi, Elad Segev, and Tamir Sheafer. 2013. "Social Media and the Arab Spring:

- Politics Comes First.” *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (2): 115–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161212471716>.
- Wright, Jared M. 2022. “‘The Future of the Internet Hangs in the Balance’: The Perception and Framing of Political Opportunity and Threat in the Contentious Politics of Data.” *Social Movement Studies*, September, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2123313>.
- Xiong, Ying, Moonhee Cho, and Brandon Boatwright. 2019. “Hashtag Activism and Message Frames among Social Movement Organizations: Semantic Network Analysis and Thematic Analysis of Twitter during the #MeToo Movement.” *Public Relations Review* 45 (1): 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.10.014>.
- Xu, Yiran, and Jiajun Liang. 2024. “Language Play as Resistance: Navigating Digital Censorship during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Language & Communication* 99 (November): 302–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2024.10.008>.
- Xynou, Maria, and Arturo Filastò. 2020. “Belarus Protests: From Internet Outages to Pervasive Website Censorship.” Open Observatory of Network Interference . September 15, 2020. <https://ooni.org/post/2020-belarus-internet-outages-website-censorship/>.
- Yabanci, Bilge. 2024. “Civic Opposition and Democratic Backsliding: Mobilization Dynamics and Rapport with Political Parties.” *Government and Opposition* 60 (2): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2024.9>.
- Ye, WeiMing, and Luming Zhao. 2023. “‘I Know It’s Sensitive’: Internet Censorship, Recoding, and the Sensitive Word Culture in China.” *Discourse, Context & Media* 51 (February): 100666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100666>.
- Yilmaz, Ihsan, Shahram Akbarzadeh, Namig Abbasov, and Galib Bashirov. 2024. “The Double-Edged Sword: Political Engagement on Social Media and Its Impact on

- Democracy Support in Authoritarian Regimes.” *Political Research Quarterly* 0 (0).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241305035>.
- Zhang, Bingbing, Sherice Gearhart, and David D Perlmutter. 2022. “Avoiding Online Censorship through ‘Fatty’ Memes: How Chinese Social Media Users Talk about North Korea.” *Global Media and Communication* 18 (2): 199–218.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/17427665221100596>.
- Zhang, Ruichen, and Bo Kang. 2022. “From Propaganda to Memes: Resignification of Political Discourse through Memes on the Chinese Internet.” *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction* 40 (11): 1–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2158260>.
- Zhou, Yuqiong, and Yunkang Yang. 2018. “Mapping Contentious Discourse in China: Activists’ Discursive Strategies and Their Coordination with Media.” *Asian Journal of Communication* 28 (4): 416–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2018.1434803>.
- Zhu, Han. 2023. “A Chinese Law Wedge into the Hong Kong Common Law System: A Legal Appraisal of the Hong Kong National Security Law.” Northwestern Pritzker School of Law Scholarly Commons. 2023.
<https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njihr/vol21/iss1/2/>.