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# Success of Digital Activism: Roles of Structures and Media Strategies

By

**Bowen Shi**[1]

**ABSTRACT**. This research explored how the structures of digital activist movements (movement causes, target audience, and duration) and the strategic use of media applications affected their final outcomes. Survey data from the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set (Digital Activism Research Project) were supplemented with insights from four professional interviewees who had experience and knowledge about activism in both offline and digital fora as well as several case studies of successful and unsuccessful digital movements. The mixed methods analyses offered three insights. Digital activism about human right and political issues was less likely to succeed than ones about civic development concerns. Activism that targeted governments was also less likely to succeed than if the targets were informal groups/individuals or institutions/organizations. These findings were supported by the structural inequality axiom. In addition, as predicted by the value-added proposition in social movement theory, the strategic use of media applications (using public media applications for collaboration purposes) as well as multiple fora (combining online and offline) increased the possibility of activism's success. Sample case studies were used to illustrate the broad contours of the survey findings.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of activism is to bring about social transformations. Activism empowers individuals and groups to speak out about, and if possible change, the unfairness of governments and other organizations on issues of social, political, economic, or environmental importance. Traditional activism, by organizing demonstrations, strikes, parades, etc., engaged in physical practices to pressure the authority. But, in a world infused with the internet and information technology, new channels for activism have opened up.

Digital activists have capitalized on a variety of digital media to develop and carry on the work of their social movements. Different from the conventional methods of parades, sit-ins, or strikes,

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digital activities, by accelerating the expansion and spread of activist information, upgraded the scale and influence of social movements. Within a few hours, even minutes, activists can reach every corner of this world. Therefore, this study of digital activism is timely so that scholars and activists can identify the ideal combination of digital and traditional tools to maximize the impact of movements and enhance their chances of success.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The Black power historian Judson Jeffries (2006:10) noted that "The use of the written word, art and culture heightened the consciousness of the Black community" as he proceeded to highlight the crucial role of material objects in the development of the Black Panther Movement in the 60's in the United States. Mislan (2014:212) added, "It was through print media that the Panthers communicated global activism, calling for solidarity among oppressed communities throughout the world." Literature and other information that predated the internet required more physical or material coordination. Newspapers readership created the space for the offline conversational interactions among people. But, now that the location of movement activities can be transferred to the digital world, it is worthwhile asking: how have movement activities and their success potential changed?

In recent times, there have been a good number of studies on digital activism. Some provided additional information and knowledge about issues while others demonstrated different aspects unique to digital activism. Three prominent themes can be seen in the digital activist literature: *Breaking the Cage of Authority Control*, *the Movement of Many*, and *A Physical and Digital Combination.* Digital activism, unlike traditional activism, has been able to break through the monopoly that authorities had over information dissemination. Also, it has democratized control and access to heretofore unavailable information. However, even though digital activism has enabled ordinary citizens to organize and participate in social movements, digital media by themselves are not effective. Blending traditional activism with digital methods is often necessary to enhance the potential success of activism.

### Breaking the Cage of Authority Control

Traditional activism often required a leader to lead the movements and a long lead time to prepare and implement the actions. Indeed, authorities could pressure the leader to stop the movements or intervene in the preparation such that the movement would be stopped even before it started. Fortunately, digital technology enabled activists to "fight" against authority when the authority tried to intervene. In other words, digital activism could break the cage of authority control. For example, in countries that had strong censorship on traditional activist activities like parades and boycotts, it was hard for activists to even initiate an activist movement, let alone see it through completion. Often the activism was quickly shut down by police or security personnel. In the words of Howard, Browne, Murphy, Skre, Schmidt, and Tharoor (2013:10), "the powerful political elites could tax newsprint, shut off the power to broadcasters and censor the news." In contrast to the traditional methods, digital activism challenged government censorship. Howard et al. (2013) concurred that the same degree of traditional censorship could hardly be applied to the Internet or mobile applications.

Deibert and Rohozinski (2010:43) articulated the power of digital media thusly: "No other mode of communication in human history has facilitated the democratization of communication to the same degree." Digital activism created a much larger space for social activism so that activism

could start, survive, and take the time needed to develop and mature. Thus, by breaking the cage of authority, it was possible for digital activism to grow into a movement of many.

## The Movement of Many

How has digital activism become a "movement of many"? The digital world created a platform for providing emergent just-in-time information (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). For example, in their *Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States*, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) discussed the significant role of digital activism in the 2014 shooting case at Ferguson, Missouri (#Ferguson): "within the first week of protests, over 3.6 million Twitter posts documented and reflected on the emerging details about Michael Brown's death. '#Ferguson' was used more than eight million times on Twitter by the end of the month." Hashtags, in this case #Ferguson, allowed people to learn more about this event quickly as it created a straightforward retrieval system to look for updated news on the unfolding events. By using digital tools, not only did activism spread across the globe but it also gave people a sense of participation, even if they were thousands of miles away from where the events physically took place.

Yet, despite the large number of participants involved, digital activism has its limits. As Bonilla and Rosa (2015) cautioned, there was concern that messages in the social network were often re-contextualized into irrelevant topics or used for self-promotion. Velasquez and Larose (2015) added that activists had to be skilled in the effective use of media tools. Lim (2013) captured the potential limits of digital media with the phrase, "many clicks, little sticks": many people viewed or commented on the social problem at the moment, but only a few stuck with and followed the case. She also worried that while a lot of information commuted fast in real time, the contents were too thin. Therefore, the physical "thick and striking moments" in social movements were necessary in activism to keep people interested in and committed to the issue. The ideal movement strategy seemed to be to combine the digital with the physical.

## A Physical and Digital Combination

Even though digital activism has become common in the contemporary technology driven society, digital activists have continued to encounter issues such as "many clicks, little stick." In fact, many activists, while promoting digital activism, also acknowledged that traditional physical activism was still needed. Often, a combination of the two enhanced the effectiveness of the activism as a whole. For example, in #Ferguson, thousands of activists protested police's brutality on the Internet, but they did not attain the result they wanted from the jury, namely an indictment of the police officer. As a consequence, protestors walked onto the street that evening. In other words, when digital activism failed to bring about the desired changes, activists had to resort to physical methods that were more difficult for authorities to ignore.

Sometimes, online and offline activists collaborated spontaneously. Zhang and Nyiri (2014) studied the digital tools used to announce the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, a non-violent demonstration for pro-democracy in the major cities of China. The announcement about the Jasmine Revolution on Twitter, immediately made the Chinese authorities nervous resulting in the Chinese government employing Internet censors and erasing any information online about the Jasmine Revolution. Consequently, all on-line discussion about the Jasmine Revolution in China ceased. However, even under such extremely difficult government control, demonstrations still took place in many Chinese cities, albeit for a short period of time.

On the other hand, when the activism was supported by the government, collaboration between online and offline activism could make an extraordinary impact. During the 2008 Beijing Olympic Torch Relay (BOTR), many activists, who were concerned human right violations in Tibet and environmental problems in Beijing, demonstrated at the relay routes in order to stop the relay. In response, to ensure the planned opening of Beijing Olympics, the government-controlled media denounced the anti-China movements as well as recruited oversea volunteers to assist with the security provided by the People's Armed Police that "were selected to accompany the worldwide Olympic torch relay" (Brady 2012:23). In short, the strategic combination of online propaganda with offline volunteering by the Chinese government successfully helped the delivery of the Olympic torch. Zhang and Nyiri's (2014) also noted that the political authorization in BOTR was an essential determinant in the development and success of digital activism. Without the support of the government, activism in China, as with the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, would have had dramatically different outcomes. Hence, it was necessary to consider how the structure, media strategies, and other parameters of digital activism would impact movement outcomes.

In sum, scholars have studied the advantages and disadvantages of offline and online social activist movements. Yet, few have parameterized the specific movement components that led to the success or failure of digital activism. The research presented in this paper attempted to identify some critical parameters that have affected the outcomes of digital activism.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

This research explored how the success of digital activism has been affected by the structural scope of movements as well as the media strategies used. The Structural Scope or components included the following elements. The first component was the Issues - human rights, political rights, or and civic development rights - on which the movement focused. The Target Audiences of the movement, the second structural component, could be individual/informal group(s), institution/organization(s), or the government. The Duration of the activist events was the third structural component. The Media Strategies used in the digital movement work indicated whether public media applications were used for collaboration purposes and whether multiple fora, such as online and offline, were used simultaneously or independently. The extent to which these elements enhanced the success of digital activism was the primary focus in this analysis.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND HYPOTHESES

This study of digital social movements was broadly framed within the traditional and new social movement theories as well as the structural inequalities that the movements attempted to address. Structural inequality was a fundamental cause (Link and Pheland 1995) that has endured for many generations. All societies, even the democratically organized ones, had groups with varying degrees of privilege and disadvantages. Besides, these unequal privileges and disadvantages in economic resources and associated capital (like education, cultural capital and other related opportunities), were systemic or built into organizational structures. To follow the elaboration offered by the realistic group conflict theorists (Baumeister and Vohs 2007), structural inequality often led to intergroup hostility as groups compete over limited resources (when seen from a zero-sum perspective) to get a bigger share of the limited resources or even to correct the inequalities.

Despite the enduring nature of systemic inequalities, the grievances built up within disadvantaged communities have often resulted in attempts, often voluntary, to work collectively to enact (or even block) change on behalf of the disadvantaged groups (rather than individual). The goal was to correct the imbalance or at least attempt to gain more of a piece of the limited resources by targeting organizations in the centers of authority, be they the polity, economy, law, religion, and education (Snow and Soule 2010; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 1998; Turner and Killian 1987). On balance, systemic inequalities, if they were to be redressed, required collective action and broad social movements.

Smelser (1962) and other traditional social movement theorists (Knottnerus 1983) outlined the following critical components in a social movement. They were: a social situation where there was some type of collective deprivation ("structural strain"); "structured conduciveness" or a social situation that permitted or encouraged some types of collective action as in a democratic society where social mobility and change were accepted; "generalized understanding" of the possible sources of the strain, characteristics of the sources of strain, and possible solutions to address the imbalance and resulting strain. Under these conditions, social movements were typically initiated and participants mobilized, particularly when there was a set of "precipitating event(s)" that further confirmed the generalized belief or even exaggerated the strains. No doubt, social movements, particularly those that tried to correct entrenched inequalities, would encounter counter-controls that inhibited, prevented, and perhaps even deflected the movements from their original mission.

Further, even after a movement was initiated, its success was theorized to be contingent on a set of value-added resources (Weeber & Rodeheaver, 2003). Movements needed the following sequential resources: Clear set of values or the goals/ends of social action; a set of norms or rules governing the actions of movement participants; actions (roles) appropriates to the goals; and requisite resources that needed to be mobilized. In the value-added scheme, values were the foundational resource for the social movement.

Recently, in the new internet and knowledge based environment, scholars (Fuchs 2006) have redefined the broad contours of social movement theory. While many traditional social movements (like the labor movements that were engaged in class conflict) attempted, even if unsuccessfully, to dismantle existing political and economic structures, the new social movements and related theories have focused on enacting structural reform within the existing system by capitalizing on the new technologies. New social reform movements, such as environmental, anti-war, or civil rights movements, were loosely organized networks of supporters (rather than traditional movement members), mostly middle-class, who through life style changes attempted to bring about change on a mass or even global scale. Scholars in the new tradition focused on how groups used digital resources to manipulate information, identities, and the structures to achieve movement goals.

Applying ideas from the traditional and new social movement theories to an evaluation of factors that contributed to the success or failure of digital movements, the following set of three hypotheses were tested.

> **Hypothesis 1:** Digital movements that attempted to target the government and address political right or human right issues will be less likely to succeed than movements driven by civic development concerns (Baumeister and Vohs's realistic group conflict theory).
>
> **Hypothesis 2a:** Digital movements that combined and tailored their resources (public media applications versus individualized media applications) to the movement purpose

(collaboration, resources mobilization, or technological challenges) will be more successful than others (Smelser's value-added principle in social movement theory).

**Hypothesis 2b:** Digital movements that were of longer duration would be able to amass more resources and adapt/tailor their message and strategies to changing circumstances resulting in a higher success rate for digital activism (Smelser's value-added principle in social movement theory).

**Hypothesis 3:** Digital movements that employed both online and offline strategies, in contrast with the digital movements that only used online media, will be more likely to succeed. Online-only movements would encounter "many clicks and little sticks". But, robust combinations of offline movements and the media power of online movements would empower the activism to success.

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

A mixed-method approach was used in this research to capitalize on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods. The secondary survey source, the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set, was from the Digital Activism Research Project. Four qualitative interviews with professionals who have participated in or were knowledgeable about digital activism supplemented the survey findings. In addition to interviews, sample case studies of digital activism were investigated in order to illustrate the broad contours of the survey findings.

### Secondary Data[2]

The secondary data used in this research, from the 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set offered by the Digital Activism Research Project, was conducted at the University of Washington in Seattle. The principal investigators for the project were Mary Joyce, Antonio Rosas, and Philip Howard. In this research, I used the Coded Cases from the Digital Activism Research Project. The Coded Cases dataset contained 1179 coded cases of digital activism from 1982 through 2012 from 151 countries and dependent territories.

### Primary Qualitative Data: Interviews and Case Studies

In addition to the secondary Digital Activism survey data, narrative interviews and movement case studies were used. Four interviews were conducted to expand on the quantitative findings. Two interviews were conducted in person. The first in-person interviewee, a Sociology Professor, (Interviewee #1) taught at a private university in Northern California. The second interviewee, a College Activist (Interviewee #2), held a leadership position in the activist organization, U4. She has been organizing and participating in activism about college racial issues for more than four years. The other two interviews were conducted via E-mail. Interviewee #3, the Digital Program Director, and Interviewee #4, the National Online Campaign Manager, both worked in a nonprofit organization concerned about environment and food safety for more than four years. The consent form and interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.

[2] The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

Six different sample case studies of digital activist movements were also reviewed for this research. They were *Beijing Olympic Torch Relay (BOTR)*, *Coins for Prita, Jasmine Revolution in China, #Ferguson, Hong Kong Umbrella Movement (HKUM)*, and *Syrian Refugee*. They not only supplemented the quantitative analysis and interviewees' perspectives, but also introduced additional dimensions that might affect the outcome of digital activism.

## DATA ANALYSES: SURVEY AND QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS FROM CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS

### Outcome of Digital Activism

Outcome of digital activism, whether successful or not, the primary focus of this study, was judged by the initiators of digital activism movements who responded to the Digital Activism survey[3]. If the goals of the digital activism movement had been achieved, they acknowledged it as a success and vice versa. Success or failure was measured by a simple binary measure; success was numerically coded as 1 and failure was assigned a 0.

Of the 935 cases[4] of digital activism covered in the Digital Activism survey, the ratio of success to failure was 2:1 (Table 1.A). The activists claimed that the majority of digital activism was successful (67.3 percent). Only 32.7 percent of cases were deemed to have failed.

**Table 1.A Outcome of Digital Activism (n = 935)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concepts | Indicator | Values and Responses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outcome of Digital Activism | Outcome | 0 = Failure<br>1 = Success | 32.7%<br>67.3 |

### Structural Profiles of Digital Movements

From both theoretical and practical stand points, the structural features of digital movements were conceptualized to be important predictors of success probability. The structural characteristics considered in this analysis were the Issues, Target Audience, and Duration of Digital movements.

*Movement Issues and Locus of Redress*

The movements in the Digital Activism survey addressed three types of digital activism causes which reflected the scope of the movement events. They were Human rights, Political rights, and Civic Development rights. The theoretical prediction was that of the three concerns, activism aimed at redressing human right or political right issues would be less likely to succeed than activism about civic development right issues. Human right or political right issues based

[3] Digital Activism Research Project Survey.
[4] Of the 1179 cases of activist movements, only 935 cases were determined successful or failed by the initiators. The remaining 244 cases had either no information or had unclear information about the result and were therefore omitted from the current analyses.

activism often directly questioned the interests of those in power. On the other hand, civic development rights, which were more about economics and technology, were less likely to directly question the interests of those in power. Rather, such activism sometimes even benefited the power elites.

In any digital movement, an issue besides being its primary focus could also be considered a secondary or ternary cause as well. As indicated in Table 1.B, civic development right was the most common thrust (44%) of the digital activist movements in the Digital Activism survey; 42% of digital movements primarily addressed civic development rights and roughly 2% had civic development rights as the secondary or ternary cause. The next common issue was political rights with 36 percent (33.8% primary and 2.2% combined of secondary and ternary). The least common cause of social movement was human rights; only 29% of all Activism cases (27% primary and 2% combined of secondary and ternary) had human rights as their focus.

**Table 1.B Issues of Digital Activism (n = 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicators | Values and Responses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Activism Issues[1,2] | Human Rights Issues[3] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 71.0%<br>29.0 |
| | Political Right Issue[4] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 63.9%<br>36.1 |
| | Civic Development Right Issues[5] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 55.9%<br>44.1 |

1. Recoded into dummy interval.
2. Activism primarily had one cause, but sometimes it also had secondary or ternary causes.
3. Human Right Issues = Human Rights, Women's Rights, Age-Specific Rights, Contested Citizenship Rights, Ethnic Identity, LGBT, Workers' Rights, Religious Rights, and Anti-Violence.
4. Political Issues = Intolerance, Anti–Corruption, Against Unlawful Detention, Government or Regime Change, Democratic Rights and Freedoms, National Identity, Cyber War, and Crisis Response.
5. Civic Development Issues = Freedom of Information, Media, Technology, Economics, Health, Legal, Education, Nature and Environment, Private Sector.

The Case Studies of digital movements reviewed for this study offered more "thick" narrative details about the different issues covered by the movements. The individual was the locus of human right movements. Some examples of human rights movements have been the Ferguson Unrest and the Black Lives Matter movement. These two movements originated in 2014 after unarmed Michael Brown was shot to death by a local police officer. Other human rights movements have been about women's rights, age-specific rights, contested citizenship rights, ethnic identity, LGBT rights, workers' rights, religious rights, or anti-violence.

When civic development was the primary concerns of activists the locus of action was the community (not the individual). For instance, promoting freedom of information, media freedom, technology, economic, health care, legal issues, education, nature and environment, and private sectors represented the civic development issues. The locus broadened even further in political movements which had a national focus, and addressed issues such societal intolerance, anti-

corruption, unlawful detention by authorities, government or regime change, democratic rights and freedoms, national identity, cyber war, and crisis response. It was posited that movement loci, whether human rights, civic development, or political would differentially affect the probability of success.

Movements also varied in whether they focused on a single-issue or multiple issues. Recently, there have been a few well known cases of single issue movements, where the movements were initiated to call attention to one particular problem. The 2015 Syrian refugee crisis that blew up primarily across Europe was a useful illustration. Moved by the photograph of a dead three-year-old boy's body lying on the beach, the general public grew concerned about the inaction of the governments. Soon, hashtags, "#SyrianRefugees" and "#KiyiyaVuranInsanlik" (humanity washed up ashore), were forwarded and frequently used on Twitter seeking to protect the refugees' human rights (Mackey 2015; Moyer 2015). In the end, on 4 September 2015 (3 days after the photo was posted and went viral), Germany and Austria agreed to accept immigrants that had been detained in Hungary (Neuman 2015).

Other movements were initiated to protest and redress more than one grievance. A case in point is the protests about the 2008 Beijing Olympics torch relay. The human rights activists who were concerned about violations of civic development rights (pollution and censorship) and human rights (riots in Tibet) in China, tried to stop the relay ("Torch Relay" 2008; "Protesters Interrupt" 2008). Soon, a non-violent battle took place between the human right activists and Chinese patriots (Chinese who were working or living in Europe or the United States and supported the Beijing Olympics). The Chinese patriots considered the Beijing Olympics to be an opportunity to showcase China's development; they feared that the failure of relay would diminish China's political reputation. With the assistance and support from the patriots, the government officials were eventually able to bring the torch to Beijing. But, human right activists were also somewhat successful; the Olympic organizers and runners had to change the original routes a few times (Brady 2012).

*Target Audiences*

The second important structural aspect of digital activist movements was the target audience at whom the protests were directed. The target audiences are critical to the success or failure of a movement because of the sheer variability in the power and resources that different audiences could muster, either to assist or thwart a movement. For example, activist movements targeted at the government would certainly be expected to be out-powered by the vast reach of governments. That is, activism directed at the government, whether local or national, would face different scales of obstacles than activism directed at a community or local institutions.

Once again, three illustrative case studies. The HKUM (the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement) during the fourth quarter of 2014 demonstrated the power of the government to stifle and even shut down activism. On 26 September 2014, HKUM was initiated to protest the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress's decision (the Chinese government) about the process for the election of Hong Kong's governor, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong (Tilly and Tarrow 2015). The Chinese government decided that the Chief Executive of Hong Kong shall be elected from a nominated committee instead of through universal suffrage ("Ren Da" 2014). After two more days, on 28 September 2014, Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP), the main movement event, was initiated by an Assistant Professor of Law, an Assistant Professor of Sociology, and a Minister of the Chai Wan Baptist Church in Hong Kong. The protestors started by occupying the Central Government Office in the Central area of Hong Kong. Even though the

movement was supposed to be non-violent, conflict erupted between the protesters and the police and security officials who tried to shut down the occupations. Tear gas was frequently used by police and in response the protestors used “umbrellas” as shields (“Xiang Gang” 2014). Then on December 3, the three initiators surrendered to police and by December 15, the Umbrella Movement ended. In fact, even though the occupation in Hong Kong did not officially stop until the middle of December, the peak of the event lasted only for about a week. HKUM targeted the government, resulting in violent resistance by the police, an arm of the government, and ended as soon as it started. Similarly, the success of the 2011 Jasmine Revolution in China was tempered by the fact that the activists had to confront the power and authority of government officials.

*Coins for Prita* in Indonesia, a digital movement in Indonesia, offered a contrast in locus. *Coins for Prita* was successful in taking on a local institution. In 2009, Prita Mulyasari, a mother of two, was accused by the Omni International Hospital of defamation due to her complaints about the hospital to her friends and relatives in private E-mails. Not only was she arrested and detained for three weeks, she was also fined Rp 204 million (about $22,000 US dollars) and sentenced to six months in jail by the Tangerang High Court. Soon, news about her case was spread by activists on commercial television, Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs. Besides discussing the incidents on the social media, the activists also founded the “Coins for Prita” Facebook page to fundraise on behalf of the mother. Two months later, on 29 December 2009, the Indonesian court reopened the case, rescinded their previous decision, and proclaimed Prita’s innocence (Lim 2013). Even though the court system mediated this case, the hospital (non-governmental institution) was the main target audience. And unlike the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, no force was used to physically stop the demonstrations or to censor the activist information online.

**Table 1.C Target Audience of Digital Activism (n = 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicators | Values and Reponses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Target Audience[1] of Digital Activism | Individual/Informal Group[2] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 60.9%<br>39.1 |
| | Institution/Organization[3] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 87.4%<br>12.6 |
| | Government | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 48.9%<br>51.1 |

1. All target audiences were recoded into dummy interval.
2. Individual/Informal Group = Informal Interest Group(s) and Private Citizen.
3. Institution/Organization = Regional or International Intergovernmental Organizations, Private Institution(s) (For-Profit), Private Institution(s) (Non-Profit).

Despite the enormous challenges in taking on the government, revealed in the Case Studies, the Digital Survey data indicated that the government was the most common target audience of digital movements (Table 1.C). More than half of the activism was directed towards governments. The China Jasmine Revolution and Hong Kong Umbrella Revolution were movements aimed at the national governments. On the other hand, individuals/informal groups were the targets of only one third of digital activist movements. Activism about sex education in college or high school was an example of individuals/informal groups as target audience. Institutions/organizations (12.6%) were the least common target audience of digital movements;

*Coins for Prita* was a story about activists fighting against a hospital institution and the justice system in Indonesia.

*Movement Duration*

Duration of activism was another structural element of movements considered in this analyses; the success or failure of activism could be affected by the length time the movement has been in place. On the one hand, a successful movement might last longer than the unsuccessful ones. Movements that last longer had time to refine and adjust their messages to reflect shifts in resources and pressures. On the other hand, a case could be made that the longer the duration, the less successful the movement would be. As movements continue for many months and even years, there would be corresponding increases in the need for resources that required to keep the message alive, the members excited, audience's interest focused, and movement energy strong.

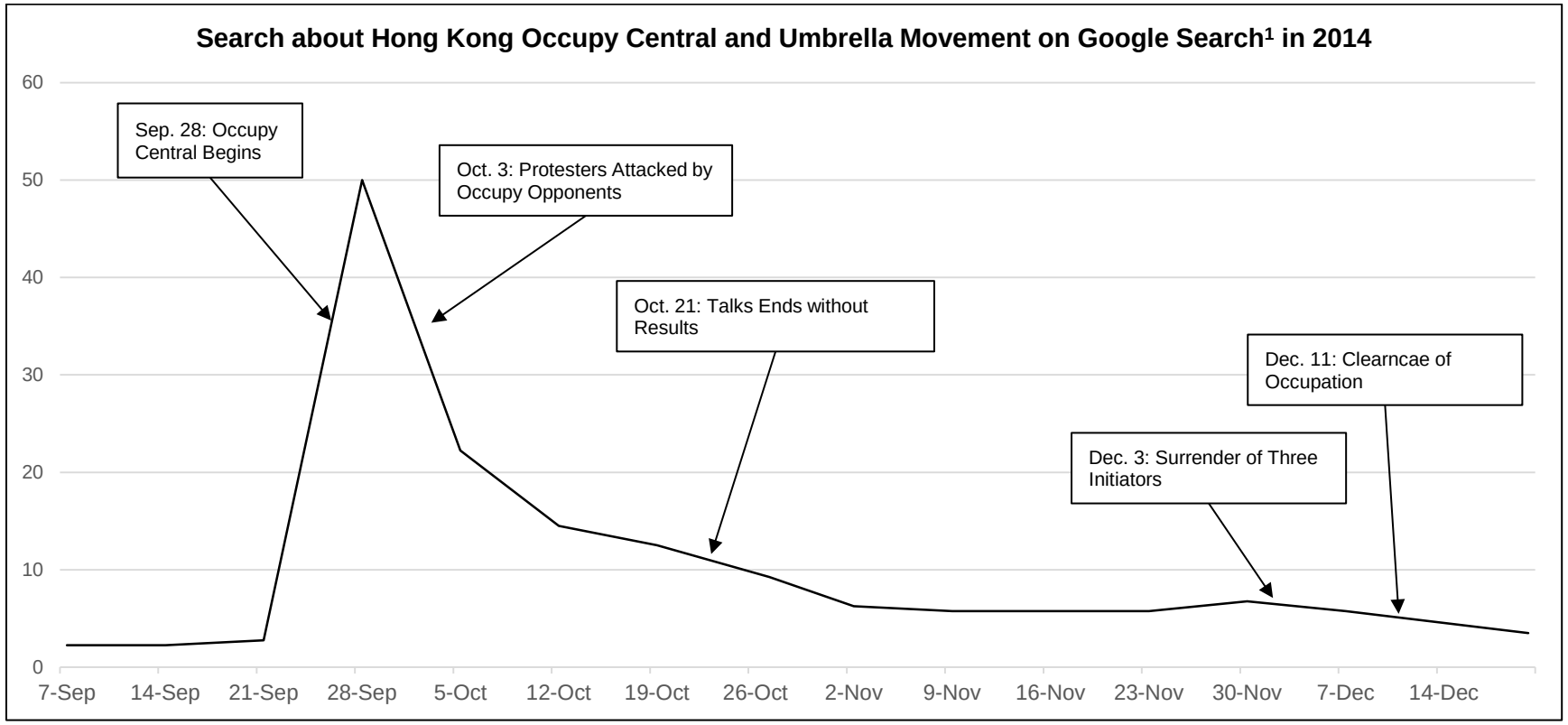
As seen in Table 1.D, most movements (n = 1179), at the time of the Digital Activism survey, were on-going (31.1%) or had been going on more than a year (13.9%). Only about a third of the movements were of short duration: 19.6% lasted less than a week and another 15.5% lasted than a month.

**Table 1.D Approximate Duration of Digital Activism (n = 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicator | Values and Responses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Duration | Approximate Duration Time of Digital Action | 1 = Less than One Week | 19.6% |
| | | 2 = Less than One Month | 15.5 |
| | | 3 = Less than One Year | 19.9 |
| | | 4 = More than One Year | 13.9 |
| | | 5 = On Going | 31.1 |

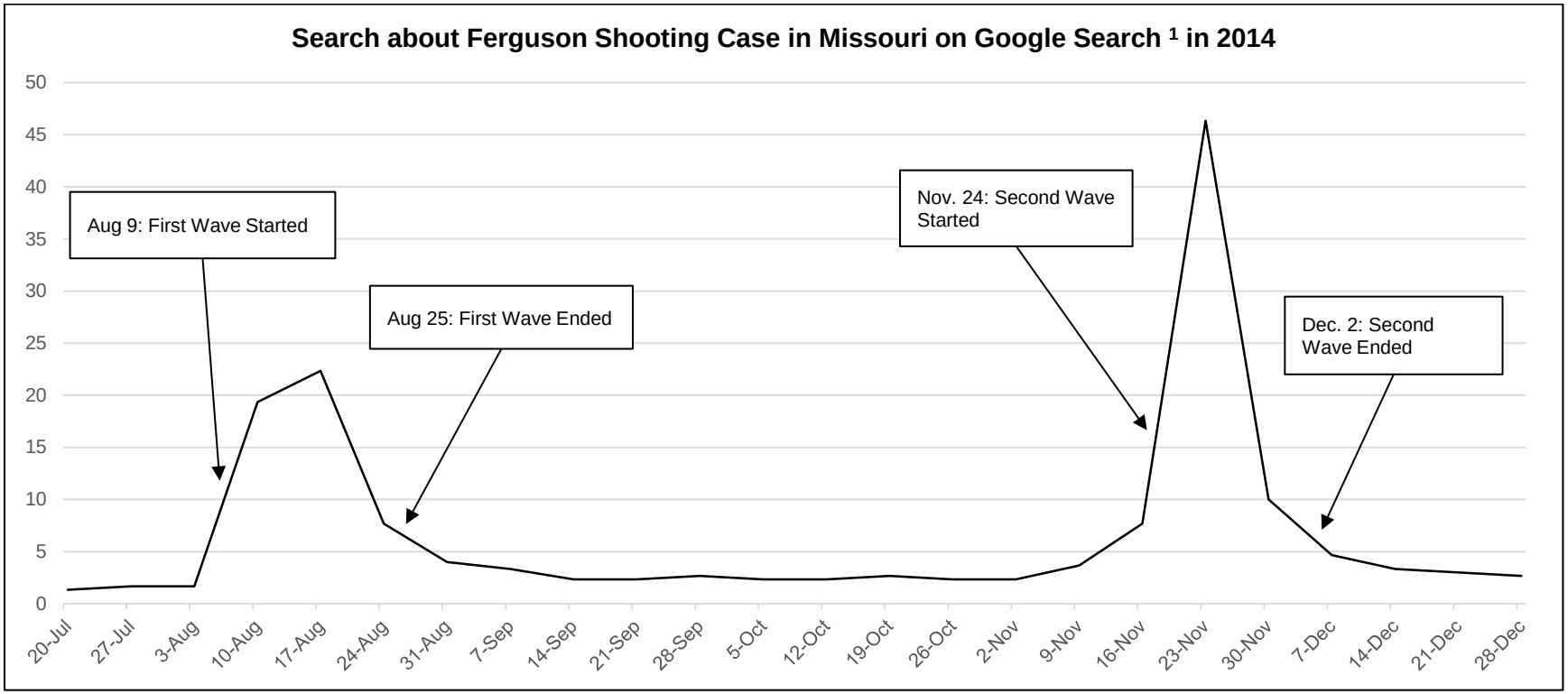
All movements, irrespective of their duration, have undulating peaks and valleys. To get a visual portrait of peaks and dips in interest in the movement and their activities, the varied time spans of three major activist movements during the last two years were mapped in Figures 1 – 3. The timeline of the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement is presented in Figure 1; this movement was a protest against the Chinese National People's Congress Standing Committee's decision about the process of Hong Kong governor's election (political right issue). This movement lasted roughly three months with the streets being cleared of protestors and three movement initiators surrendering. In contrast, even though the #Ferguson movement made a huge impact on raising the awareness of police brutality, especially against minorities in the U.S., the #Ferguson duration was episodic. The "many clicks, little sticks" in the #Ferguson movement lasted about half of a month (Figure 2). On the other hand, although the 24/7 attention around the Syrian refugees' movement cooled down after three months (from September to December 2016), "Syria" and "Refugee" continue to hold the attention of the digital world, albeit in peaks and valleys (Figure 3). The beginning, development, peak, and end of the three movements were completely different. The duration of these events varied as well.

**Figure 1. Search about Hong Kong Occupy Central and Umbrella Movement on Google Search in 2014**



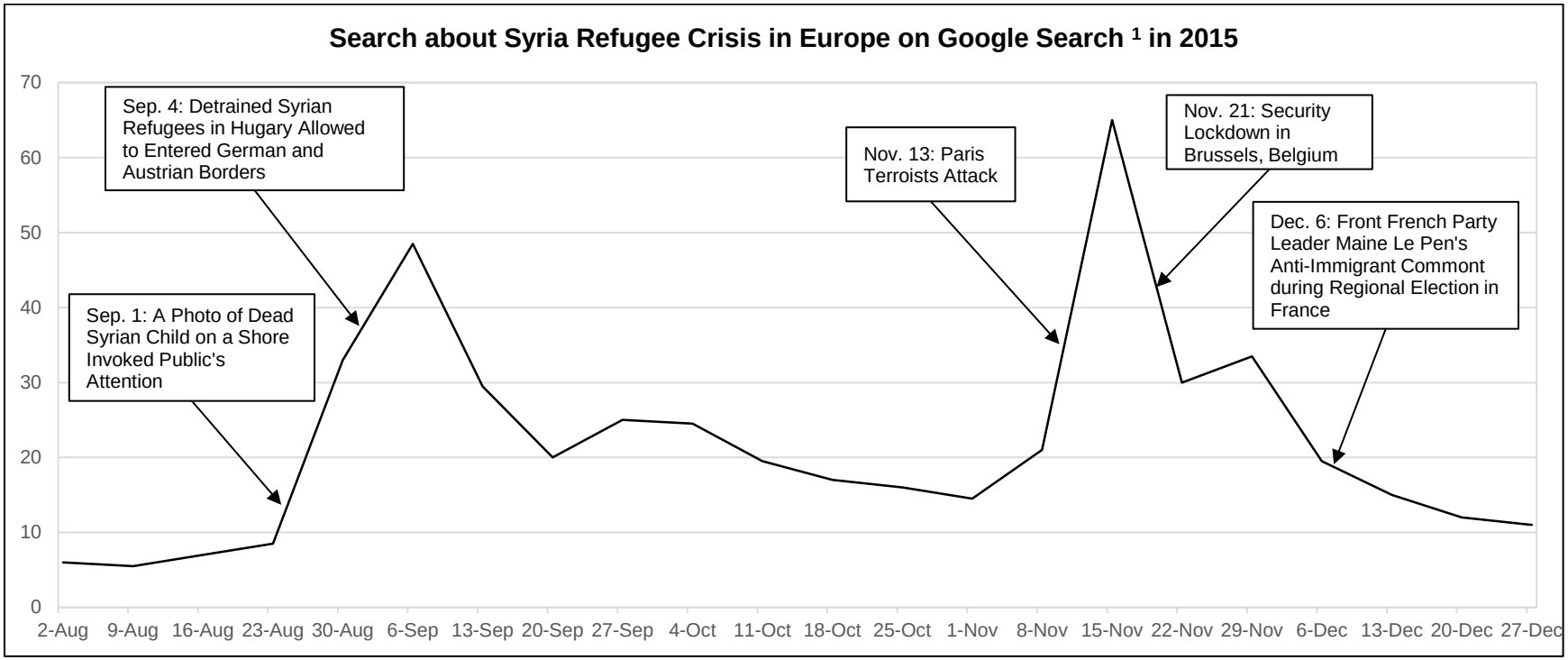

1. Search about Hong Kong Occupy and Umbrella Movement on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by four key words: Umbrella Movement, Occupy Central, [illegible] ("Occupy Central" in Simplified/Traditional Chinese), H

**Figure 2. Search about Ferguson Shooting Case in Missouri on Google Search in 2014**




1. Search about Ferguson Shooting Case in Missouri on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by three key words: Ferguson, Michael Brown, and Darren Wilson.

**Figure 3. Search about Syria Refugee Crisis in Europe on Google Search in 2015**




1. Search about Syria Refugee Crisis in Europe on Google Search was based on the average values of data that Google Trend provided by two key words: Refugee and Syria.

*Structural Dimensions of Digital Movements: A Summary*

On balance, civic development issues were the most common thrust of digital activist movements in the Digital Survey, followed by political and human right issues. More often than not the government was the target; individual/informal groups and organizations/institutions were less frequent target audiences of digital movements. The most common movements were either on-going or lasted more than a year. Case studies of BOTR, Coins for Prita, #Ferguson, HKUM, and Syrian Refugee helped illustrate these statistical characterizations.

## Movement Strategies and Digital Resources

In addition to the structure of digital movements, the success or failure of movements, as per the social movement literature, was also contingent on the availability and allocation of resources and other strategies. An important element of digital movements was the types of digital resources and media strategies used to disseminate activist information and rally supporters. To maximize the efficiency of communication and promotion of messages, movements often tailored specific media applications to specific purposes.

*Media Applications Used: Public or Individualized*

In the face of limited time and resources, movement organizers had to use media applications strategically to efficiently promote digital activism. On the one hand, even though movement organizers had a wide range of online media applications from which to choose they had to make decisions about selecting the right set of media applications. Typically, public media platforms and individualized media applications were two categories of platforms that activists have used. Public media applications range from Facebook, Twitter, blogs, mobile-and internet-based social networks to digital videos and digital photos; these public media applications allowed activists to reach broad audiences easily and quickly. However, public media applications were not suitable for transmitting personalized or confidential information. Individualized media applications were better suited to connect activists with each other and to transmit sensitive materials such resource allocation strategies or technology resources. Some common examples of individualized apps are: emails, websites, e-mail, internet forum, chat or instant messaging, mobile application, digital map, wiki, digital voice application, and circumvention tools.

As for the digital movements surveyed by 2013 Global Digital Activism Data Set, public media applications were more frequently used (85.8%) than individual media applications (75.1%). However, as seen in Table 1.E. (on next page), for every two cases of digital activism, at least one would use both media applications ($\mu = 1.61$). Public media applications were used to provide information to movement outsiders. But, individualized applications were also widely used in digital activism.

In the digital activism Case Studies reviewed earlier, hash-tagging on Twitter was a common method used to promote their causes. Activists have used #Ferguson, #SyrianRefugees and #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik to raise the public's attention and awareness. Yet their digital activism was not limited to only Twitter. In fact, Facebook page was the fundamental tool for Coins for Prita, even though Indonesia was a Twitter-addicted nation (Radwanick 2010; Lim 2013).

**Table 1.E Media Application Used (n = 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicators | Values and Reponses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Application Used[1] | Public Media Application[2] | 0 = Not Used<br>1 = Used | 14.2%<br>85.8 |
| | Individualized Media Application[3] | 0 = Not Used<br>1 = Used | 24.9%<br>75.1 |
| | Index of Media Application Used[4] | μ/σ<br>Range | 1.61(.51)<br>0 – 2 |

1. Both media applications were recoded into dummy interval.
2. Public Media Used = Blog Used, Mobile-Based Social Network Used, Internet-Based Social Network Used, Digital Video Used, and Digital Photo Used.
3. Individualized Used = Website Used, E-mail Used, Internet Forum Used, Chat or Instant Messaging Used, Mobile Application Used, Digital Map Used, Wiki Used, Digital Voice Application Used, and Circumvention Tool Used.
4. Index of Media Application Used = Public Media Application + Individualized Media Application.

*Purpose of Using Media Applications*

Every digital message from social movements was sent out for a specific set of purposes. Recruitment was at the heart of digital activism. It was axiomatic that without the base of massive audience and public activists, who needed to be recruited, no goals of digital activism would be successfully achieved. Once recruited, movement organizers had to make it possible for activists to connect with other movement participants to build networks and create the special bonds needed for digital movements to survive and effectively function. Through collaborations activists could synthesize, co-create, and keep the movement energy alive.

Other digital movements were started to confront and redress technical challenges such as Internet censorship and to restore more fluid flow of information exchange. Technological solutions to bypass government restrictions had sometimes included technical sabotage or violence. In addition, digital movements had to mobilize and reallocate human and other capital resources as needed. For movements to remain healthy and robust activists might adjust the combination of online and offline platforms used, reallocate or transfer money, material, or human resources as needs arise.

The most common purpose cited in the Digital Movement Survey was resource mobilization (63.7%, Table 1.F), followed by collaboration (53.3%). Media used for technological purposes was the least frequent (13.3%). In other words, in most occasions, activists were concerned about resource mobilization and collaboration than confronting technological obstacles.

**Table 1.F Purposes for Using Media Applications (n= 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicators | Values and Responses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Purposes for Digital Media Use[1] | Collaboration[2] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 46.7%<br>53.3 |
| | Technology[3] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 86.7%<br>13.3 |
| | Resource Mobilization[4] | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes | 36.3%<br>63.7 |

1. All purposes were recoded into dummy interval.
2. Collaboration = Synthesis, Co-Creation, and Network-Building.
3. Technology = Bypass and Technical Violence.
4. Resource Mobilization = Mobilization and Resource Transfer.

The digital movement Case Studies reviewed above offered examples of digital media being used to mobilize the public and to facilitate collaboration. The respective human rights violations were broadcasted on Twitter with the purpose of inviting the public to collaborate in finding appropriate solutions. For example, Hashtags on Twitter, such as #Ferguson, #SyrianRefugees, and #KiyiyaVuranInsanlik, offered the public who were angered by the police brutality and government's indifference to human rights violations, respectively, a digital platform to collaborate. Similarly, the Facebook page "Coins for Prita" became a shared platform on which those who sympathized with Mulyasari's experience could mobilize and collaborate to help her.

*Purpose Driven Media Usage*

Following the value-added principle of social movement theories about maximizing limited time and resources, professional activists had tended to choose appropriate media applications and combine them to achieve their purposes. Once again, the Case Studies of digital movements offered thick descriptions of how the synthesis of media and purpose has happened in digital social movements. Twitter hashtags, #Ferguson and #SyrianRefugees, and the Facebook page for "Coins for Prita" offered the public, both internal and global, information about the respective human rights crisis, in order to recruit the general publics and to call them to action on the open digital platforms. As a result, more than 8 million individuals had used the #Ferguson Twitter handle by the end of August 2014 (Bonilla and Rosa 2015).

To demonstrate how movements combined multiple media applications to promote specific purposes in the Digital Movement survey, types of media used were synthesized with their stated purposes. Public or individualized media applications were combined with whether the purpose was collaboration, technology, and resource. As shown in Table 1.G, when the movement purpose was collaboration, multiple public (39.8%) and individualized (35.1%) media applications use was common. However, when digital movements wanted to mobilize resources, they were more prone to combine multiple public (43.1%) than individualized (33.5%) media. It was interesting to note that when only one type of media was used, it was most likely to be individualized media for resource mobilization (17.1%).

**Table 1.G Media Strategy (n = 1174)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicators | Values and Reponses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Media Used and Specific Purposes[1] | Public Media Application Used for Collaboration Purposes | 0 = Not Applied | 54.9% |
| | | 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose | 5.3 |
| | | 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes | 39.8 |
| | Individualized Media Application Used for Collaboration Purposes | 0 = Not Applied | 55.1% |
| | | 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose | 9.8 |
| | | 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes | 35.1 |
| | Public Media Application Used for Resource Purposes | 0 = Not Applied | 45.5% |
| | | 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose | 11.4 |
| | | 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes | 43.1 |
| | Individualized Media Application Used for Resource Purposes | 0 = Not Applied | 49.4% |
| | | 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose | 17.1 |
| | | 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes | 33.5 |
| | Public Media Application Used for Technology Purposes[2] | 0 = Not Applied | 91.0% |
| | | 1 = One Media Application was Used for One Purpose | 3.7 |
| | | 2 ≤ One or Multiple Media Applications Were Used for One or Multiple Purposes | 5.3 |

1. Public/Individual Media Application Used * Synthesis/Technology/Resource Mobilization Purposes.
2. Individualized Media Application Used for Technology Purposes was not counted because of the insignificance of correlation between Individualized Media Application Used and Technology Purposes.
3. Correlations among the variables ranged from -0.1*** to .68*** (***p ≤ .001, **p ≤ .05, *p ≤ .1).

*Online/Offline Strategies*

Finally, in the digital world, social movements had the luxury, in a value-added way, of combining online with offline platforms. A strategy of adopting both online-only method and online-offline methods would affect the scale and robustness of digital activism. Due to resource and time restrictions, using both digital and physical forms of activism would increase the scale of influence and decrease the cost to sustain.

Perhaps because digital tools were relatively new to social movements, the strategy of combining digital with off-line tools was not widespread among the movements in the Digital

Survey. As indicated in Table 1.H, movements were equally likely to rely only on on-line strategies (49.0%) as they were to combine the use of online and online-offline methods (51%).

**Table 1.H Online-Offline Status (n = 1179)**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| Concept | Indicator | Values and Responses | Statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Online-Offline Strategies | Online Only or Offline Plus Online | 0 = Only Online<br>1 = Online and Offline | 49.0%<br>51.0 |

The Case Studies offered some insights into the progressive transitions that movements had made in operationalizing value-added principle. No doubt, activists valued both online and offline methods. Yet, offline strategies were often turned to after a series of on-line operations. Digital tools were used to open a broader window for activism to continue offline. For example, in #Ferguson, an off-line peaceful memorial was set up in the evening of August 9, 2014. On the following day, the movement gathered steam when the local people voluntarily gathered to physically register their protest (Williams 2014). Yet, the discussion of Michael Brown's death heated up substantially once it moved to the Twitter sphere. Within the first week, there were more than 3.6 million Twitter posts about Michael Brown's death. At the end of the month, the keyword "#Ferguson" was used over 8 million times. Unfortunately, because the protestors did not receive the expected result from the court, they returned to the street demonstrations (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). Use of digital activism upgraded a local event into a national topic and enlarged the scope of the activism. The 2011 Jasmine Revolution in China had a different starting trajectory, even though Twitter has been blocked in China since 2009 (Wauters 2009). The Jasmine movement initiators broadcasted the start and operation of Jasmine Revolution on Twitter in order to recruit movement participants. The physical demonstrations then followed.

*Summary of Resources and Strategies*

In the movements surveyed in the Digital Survey, activists used both public and individualized media applications; no doubt, public media was slightly more popular than individualized media. In fact, for every two activist cases, at least one used both public and individualized media in their work. When collaboration and resource mobilization were at the heart of movement concerns, activists used different media applications to achieve their goals. For example, when movements had multiple purposes, collaboration and resource mobilization possibilities were repeatedly discussed on both public and individualized platforms. Technology was the least talked about topic in digital movements. As for the singular use of individualized media, resource mobilization was the most desired topic. The case studies of Coins for Prita, 2011 Jasmine Revolution, #Ferguson, and Syrian Refugee also illustrated these strategies.

## Bivariate Analyses

Bivariate analyses, the second step in the analytic process, explored the potential influences of the structures and media strategies on the success of digital activism (Appendix II: Table 2). Some highlights: movements for civic development issues ($r = 0.10^{***}$) had a better chance of achieving their goals than activist movements concerned with human right issues ($r = -0.11^{***}$) or

political issues. A similar contrast was evident in the connection between target audience and outcomes of digital activism: when the government was the target audience, the movement outcome did not meet activists' expectation ($r = -0.17^{***}$). On the other hand, targeting individual/informal groups enhanced the possibility of accomplishing activists' goals ($r = 0.12^{***}$). Duration of a social movement was irrelevant to its success or failure.

Media strategies were also relevant to the success of collaborative digital activism, especially when public media applications ($r = 0.08^{*}$) and individualized media applications ($r = 0.09^{*}$) were used. Media applications used for either technology or resource mobilization purposes were not determinant of the digital activism outcomes. Movements that used both online and offline for a most benefited the activists ($r = 0.10^{*}$).

## Binary Logistic Regression Analyses and Qualitative Insights

Finally, the robustness of the bivariate associations of outcomes of digital activism with the structures and media strategies used was tested using binary logistic regression analysis. Starting with the simple odds of success at 3:1 (Constant = 3.4), the multivariate analyses clarified the contributions that structural and strategic dimensions of digital activism made to enhancing the success of movements.

Which of the structural dimensions and strategies made the biggest difference for movement success? As seen in Table 3, when the digital activism was used to protest against human rights ($\beta = 0.47^{***}$) and, to a less extent political issues ($\beta = 0.70^{*}$), the probability of success was reduced more than half or a quarter, respectively, than when protesting against civic development issues. Additional structural barriers to progress in social movements were noted in the audiences targeted by the movements as well. As predicted by realistic group conflict theory, having governments as the target audience increased the chance of failure by almost 50% ($\beta = 0.43^{***}$) more than when institutions/organizations and informal groups/individuals were the target audience. In other words, when changes were sought on a macro scale, as with redressing human right or political right violations, activists were inevitably confronted by governmental authorities and their structural inveteracy or structurally unequal playing fields.

For example, when the Jasmine Revolution in China was announced on Twitter, the Chinese government immediately became nervous because the digital revolution sought transformations in the Chinese political system. The government immediately stepped in to control both cyberspaces and public spaces (Zheng, 2012). More than fifty Chinese activists who complained about political and human right violations were arrested and over two hundred activists were placed under strict supervision or house arrests in 2011 (Zhang and Nyiri, 2014). The Hong Kong Umbrella activists who protested for political rights were similarly treated. These movements about political and human right issues were not successful because they threatened those in power. Yet, in Coins for Prita, Mulysari and her supporters successfully got the court to revoke its original decision. Even though the court was a governmental institution, the hospital, a non-profit organization, was the primary target audience. The powerful government authority compromised with the activists because the former's essential interests were not threatened or harmed.

**Table 3. Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of Digital Activism's Outcome on Structures and Media Strategy**
**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| | Outcome of Digital Activism Exp (β) |
|---|---|
| *Structural Dimensions:* | |
| Human Rights Issues[1] | 0.47*** |
| Political Issues[2] | 0.70* |
| Government Target Audience[3] | 0.43*** |
| Institution/Organization Target Audience[4] | 0.81 |
| Duration[5] | 1.0 |
| *Strategic Dimensions:* | |
| Collaboration Purposes with Public Media Used[6] | 1.05* |
| Online-Offline Practices[7] (vs. Online Only) | 1.55** |
| Constant | 3.4 |

1. Human Right Issues = Women's Rights, Age-Specific Rights, Contested Citizenship Rights, Ethnic Identity, LGBT, Workers' Rights, Religious Rights, Anti-Violence, and other human right issues. Reference category = Political Issues and Civic Development Issues.
2. Political Issues = Intolerance, Anti–Corruption, Against Unlawful Detention, Government or Regime Change, Democratic Rights and Freedoms, National Identity, Cyber War, and Crisis Response. Reference category = Human Rights and civic development.
3. Government = a government, government body, state, public institution or an individual or individuals representing a government body or a public institution (i.e. United States, Barack Obama, etc.). Reference Category = Individual/Informal Group and Institution/ Organization.
4. Institution/Organization = Regional or International Intergovernmental Organizations, Private Institution(s) (For-Profit), Private Institution(s) (Non-Profit). Reference Category = Individual/Informal Group and Government.
5. Duration: Less than One Week = 1; Less than One Month = 2; Less than One Year = 3; More than One Year = 4; On Going = 5.
6. Public/Individualized Media Application Used * Synthesis/Technology/Resource Mobilization Purposes. Other strategic combinations did not significantly increase the success odds.
7. Online Only = 0; Online-Offline = 1.

Furthermore, strategic use of media applications also benefited and ensured the success of digital activism as predicted by value-added theory: media applications used for collaboration purposes (β = 1.05***) positively contributed to the success. In the experience of the College Activist (Interviewee #2), because different digital movements had distinctive audiences, they used media applications selectively. The Digital Program Director (Interviewee #3) added: "campaigners have limited time and resources, so using the right handful of tools strategically is usually more effective than trying to blanket all digital channels." Yet, the Activist Campaign Manager (Interview #4) pointed to the importance of repetition across different media outlets in digital activism, "the more times (we post on digital media), someone sees something." Her idea of repetition echoed the "many clicks, little sticks" idea, "if they hear from their constituents one

time on an issue, they aren't that likely to do anything about it; but if they are hearing every day and from different directions, then they are more likely to act" (Interviewee #4).

The media strategies used in the Beijing Olympic Relay movement also fit the strategic usage of media model. Once the protest of the government relay program by human right activists started, mass dissemination of information about the actions over multi-media platforms, made the public, both internal and abroad, aware of the movement. As more and more people followed the movement's progress, the torch relay turned into a national pride movement and recruited Chinese patriot volunteers. Nevertheless, despite the passion generated in the general public, few had access to the confidential information about when, where, and how to stop the human right activists unless they were physically present on the relay routes (offline).

Using a combination of online and offline platforms ($\beta = 1.55^{***}$) also significantly increased the success of digital activism by 50 percent in contrast with the movements that did their work only on online platforms. This finding was underscored in the experiences of the National Online Campaign Manager's (Interviewee #4). She learned the importance of on-the-ground field operations, because "it's more difficult to do enough online to actually move a target." She continued,

> "The decision maker (target audience) can be anywhere from a key state legislator that has a swing vote on an important bill to a corporate CEO that could create a policy that would make a huge impact. In order to move a decision maker, we have to bring people together to build enough people power to win against special interests with money power. Online organizing is a tactic and must fit within a strategy to move a target to create real change. Online organizing works best when paired with other tactics, in particular tactics carried out through field organizing. Many organizations only use digital activism, but online organizing by itself has far less of an impact when it's divorced from field organizing. One exception! I think online organizing can play a proportionally greater role in campaigns that target corporations. Usually the goal is to threaten a company's positive image enough that the corporation does what you want. This is easier to do online, because the target can be the general public instead of a single decision maker. Greenpeace has run a lot of successful corporate campaigns."

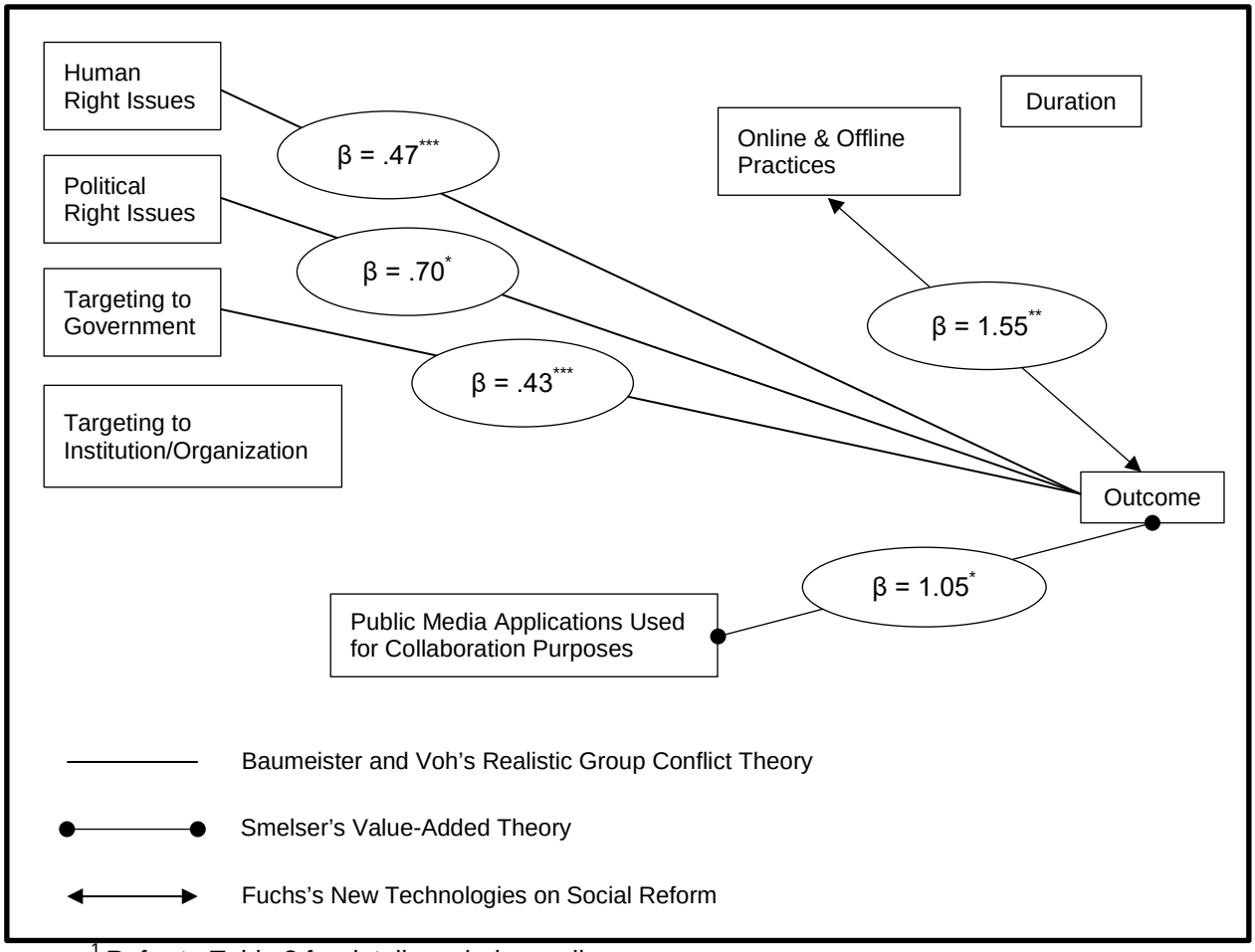
## CONCLUDING REMARKS

### Theoretical and Empirical Implications

By exploring the structures of digital activism, this study identified some of the barriers that digital movements faced. Political systems were major hurdles that activists, who question and seek to address human and political right violations, faced. Specifically, movements that challenged the political or structural hierarchy were less likely to be successful than when they sought to redress civic development issues (Baumeister and Vohs's realistic group conflict theory). Similarly, when activists challenged the representatives of governments, they were more likely to fail than when they challenged individual/informal group or institution/organizations. At the same time, the necessity to strategically use media applications in order to enhance the chance of movements' success was also evident (Smelser's value-added theory). Using public media for collaboration purposes best benefited digital activism. Combining online and offline methods for activism also enhanced the success rate of digital

activism (Fuchs's new technologies on social reform). These theoretical findings are mapped in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Empirical Model of the Effects of Issues, Target Audience, Duration, and Media Strategies on Digital Activism's Success**




[1] Refer to Table 3 for details on index coding.

## Limitation and Future Directions

This research provided a general overview of contemporary digital activist movements. Using survey data on digital activist movements, supplemented by interviews with the activists and case studies, the broad contours of factors that enhanced or hindered the success of digital movements were outlined. As societies become more digitalized, offline activism will inevitably be intertwined with online methods.

However, capturing the full complexity of activist movements were beyond the scope of this research. For example, in the case studies reviewed for this analysis, it quickly became clear that movements cannot be singularly categorized by issues, target audience, duration, or media strategies, because people's needs are intertwined. For example, the HKUM activism is about both human rights and political rights. Or a movement whose original target was a local

institution can take on a political perspective when the government steps in. In other words, cleanly distinguishing movement boundaries will be harder and harder. In addition, historicity, very specific historic events, is another confounding factor. For example, the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong was started on the National Day (the date of founding) of China to gain more political and public attention. Ironically, because of the historical nature of the start date, the movement not only attracted masses but also stepped on Chinese government's nerve, resulting in the intense suppression on the activism. If the movement had not taken place during the special historical period, would the outcome have been different?

Another issue raised by the Sociology Professor (Interviewee #1) and the College Activist (Interviewee #2) was the need to distinguish between subjective and systemic success. Success in the Digital Survey was defined from the subjective perspective of the activists. However, systemic success pursues the success on structural change or social reform. For example, the College Activist thought her digital campaign was successful personally (subjective success) although it had little influence in changing the institutional structures --- it did not achieve systemic success. Future research will have to define success more broadly both in their subjective and structural dimensions in order to capture these intersecting dimensions of change.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix I
## Consent Form and Interview Protocol

### *Consent Form*

Dear Interviewee: I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on *Digital Activism Research: Study of Cause of Activism, Media Usage, and Success*. You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working in the area of new media digital technologies.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve responding to questions about different parameters that affect the outcome of digital activism and will last about 20 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. The results of the research study may be presented at SCU's Annual Anthropology/Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference and published (in a Sociology department publication). Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (408)643-9973 or bshi@scu.edu or Dr. Fernandez at (408)554-4432 or mfernandez@scu.edu.

Sincerely,

Randy Shi

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the above study.

**Signature:** **Date:**

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

### *Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews, Fall 2015-Winter 2016*

Interview Date and Time: _____

Respondent ID#: __ (1, 2, 3….)

1. What is the type of agency/organization/association/institution where you have been studying digital activist movements?
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. Based on what you know of digital activism, how common are digital activist movements? Have they

increased over time and why?
5. In your opinion, what are some reasons for the growth in digital movements? Could you expand a bit more?
6. Have digital activist movements been more successful than traditional social movements? If so, why?
7. Questions regarding independent concepts as potential causes:
    a. How about the causes of digital activism? Are some causes more successful than others?
    b. How about the variety of media used in digital activism? Are more tools used better than few?
    c. How about duration of movements? Are movements of shorter duration more successful than longer duration or the reverse? If so, why?
8. Is there anything else about this issue/topic that you want to share with me?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at bshi@scu.edu. Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu.

## Appendix II. Table 2

Bivariate Correlation Matrix[1]

**2013 Digital Activism Research Project Survey**

| | Outcome of Digital Activism | Human Right Issues | Political Issues | Civic Development Issues | Individual/Informal Group Target Audience | Institution/Organization Target Audience | Government Target Audience | Collaboration Purpose with Public Media Used | Collaboration Purpose with Individualized Media Used | Technology Purpose with Individualized Media Used | Resource Mobilization Purpose with Public Media Used | Resource Mobilization Purpose with Individualized Media Used | Online Status | Approximate Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Outcome of Digital Activism | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Human Right Issues | -.11*** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Political Issues | -.05 | -.2*** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Civic Development Issues | .1** | -.41*** | -.36*** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Individual/Informal Group Target Audience | .12*** | .07* | -.1*** | -.07* | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Institution/Organization Target Audience | .02 | -.04 | -.12*** | .1*** | -.26*** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Government Target Audience | -.17*** | .07* | .2*** | 0 | -.55*** | -.27*** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Collaboration Purpose with Public Media Used | .08* | -.02 | .05 | -.05 | .05 | -.03 | -.05 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Collaboration Purpose with Individualized Media Used | .09** | -.06 | .05 | -.04 | .08** | .02 | -.1*** | .68*** | 1 | | | | | |
| Technology Purpose with Individualized Media Used | 0 | -.07* | .18*** | -.02 | -.08** | -.01 | .09** | .1*** | .19*** | 1 | | | | |
| Resource Mobilization Purpose with Public Media Used | .02 | .06* | .02 | -.05 | -.05 | .01 | .04 | .47*** | .27*** | .02 | 1 | | | |
| Resource Mobilization Purpose with Individualized Media Used | .03 | 0 | -.01 | -.03 | -.07* | .06* | .01 | .35** | .57*** | .15*** | .63*** | 1 | | |
| Online Status | .1** | .01 | .06 | -.01 | -.06* | .01 | .03 | .17*** | .18*** | .04 | .34*** | .29*** | 1 | |
| Approximate Duration | -.02 | .02 | -.07* | .02 | .1*** | -.04 | -.09** | .13*** | .12*** | -.01 | .09** | .08** | -.04 | 1 |

1. Refer to Table 3 for details on indices

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Interviewee #4. February 2015. National Online Campaign Manager. E-mail Interview.

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