

International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences

(IJHSS)

The Impact of Social Media on Political Activism



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Journals

The Impact of Social Media on Political Activism

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Abstract

Purpose: The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of social media usage on political activism.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings revealed that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the impact of social media on political activism. The empirical review revealed that social media amplifies the speed and reach of activism efforts. The instantaneous dissemination of information, real-time communication, and dynamic organization have all been instrumental in enabling activists to orchestrate protests, raise awareness, and mobilize support for critical issues. It is worth noting that the effectiveness of social media in driving political change is contingent on the strategic alignment of online campaigns with offline actions. Successful movements have demonstrated the power of synergizing digital advocacy with physical participation, demonstrating that online platforms serve as a means to an end, rather than the end itself.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Social Movement theory, Network theory and the Agenda- Setting theory may be used to anchor future studies on the impact of social media on political activism. The study therefore recommends for diversifying content exposure, enhanced media literacy, bridging online-offline engagement and promotion of responsible platform use among others.

Keywords: *Social Media, Political Activism, Online Activism, Social Media Platforms, Political Engagement, Online Communities*

INTRODUCTION

Political activism refers to the active engagement of individuals or groups in efforts to influence or bring about social, political, or policy change. This can take various forms, such as protests, demonstrations, rallies, lobbying, social media campaigns, and community organizing. Activism often involves voicing concerns, advocating for specific causes, and challenging established norms or institutions. In the United States, political activism has played a significant role in shaping public discourse and policy decisions. It has been a driving force behind movements addressing civil rights, gender equality, environmental protection, and more (Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

Over the past few decades, political activism in the USA has seen notable trends. For example, the Women's March in 2017, held in response to the presidential inauguration, brought together an estimated 4.6 million participants across the country (Tuchman et al., 2018). Similarly, the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum after the killing of George Floyd in 2020, resulting in protests in more than 2,000 cities and towns, involving an estimated 15 million to 26 million participants (Smith, 2021). On the digital front, social media campaigns like the #MeToo movement, which began in 2017, highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault, leading to millions of posts and discussions across platforms (Hassett-Walker, 2018). Additionally, the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 demonstrated the power of grassroots mobilization, with over 600,000 participants and thousands of related events worldwide (Sitrin, 2017).

In the context of the United States, political activism has been instrumental in catalyzing significant social transformations, such as civil rights advancements, environmental policy changes, and the recognition of marginalized communities (Ojha, Nightingale, Gonda, Muok, Eriksen, Khatri, & Paudel, 2022)

Recent statistics illustrate the diverse landscape of political activism in the USA. For instance, the Women's March in 2017, sparked by concerns over women's rights and social justice, attracted an estimated 2.9 to 5.6 million participants across hundreds of cities (Chong & Qiu, 2020). The demand for racial justice surged with the Black Lives Matter movement, which saw an estimated 15 to 26 million individuals participating in protests and demonstrations during the summer of 2020, making it one of the largest movements in the country's history (Hanna-Attisha et al., 2020). The digital realm has also become a platform for activism, as seen in the rapid spread of hashtags like #BlackOutTuesday, which garnered over 28 million Instagram posts in a single day as a symbol of solidarity with the Black community (Cachón, 2021). Moreover, the 2017 Women's Strike engaged numerous participants nationwide, with estimates of around 500,000 participants in Washington, D.C., alone (March & Parpart, 2019).

In the United Kingdom, political activism has played a significant role in driving progressive reforms, addressing issues like human rights, environmental sustainability, and social equality (Ratner, Åsgård & Allison, 2014). Statistical trends in political activism within the UK highlight the evolving landscape of citizen engagement. For instance, the climate change movement gained substantial momentum with the Extinction Rebellion protests in 2019, which involved more than 1,100 arrests and over 1,800 protests globally (Bakir & McStay, 2020). Another example is the Black Lives Matter movement, which saw widespread demonstrations across the UK in 2020 following the killing of George Floyd, with an estimated 100,000 participants joining protests in London alone (Mondon & Winter, 2021). The digital realm has also witnessed activism, as seen

in the success of the #MeToo movement, which gained traction in the UK, generating over 500,000 posts across various social media platforms (Daniels, 2019).

Recent statistics highlight the multifaceted nature of political activism trends in the UK. For example, the Brexit referendum in 2016 saw a high level of civic engagement, with an estimated 72.2% voter turnout, showcasing the significant impact of activism on political decisions (Birch et al., 2020). The movement for gender equality gained traction with the Women's Marches in multiple UK cities, including London, where an estimated 100,000 participants took part in 2017 (Morgner & Lamberty, 2019). Additionally, the Black Lives Matter movement reverberated in the UK in 2020, with thousands participating in protests that emphasized the global nature of activism against racial injustice (Mullan & Delanty, 2021). The digital landscape has witnessed a surge in activism as well, exemplified by the viral campaign #StopFundingHate, which urged companies to reconsider advertising in certain media outlets, resulting in significant shifts in advertising practices (Nolan, 2018).

Trends in political activism in Japan reveal a diverse landscape of civic engagement. For instance, environmental activism gained momentum with protests against nuclear power following the Fukushima disaster in 2011, drawing thousands of participants and inspiring grassroots movements (Doherty, 2017). Similarly, the push for women's rights and gender equality led to the "KuToo" movement in 2019, where women protested against workplace dress codes requiring high heels, reflecting larger conversations about gender roles and workplace discrimination (Tanaka, 2021). On the digital front, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics sparked activism against its environmental impact and displacement of marginalized communities, leading to campaigns on social media and public demonstrations (Higuchi, 2020). These examples underscore the multifaceted nature of political activism in Japan, reflecting the evolving concerns and strategies of citizens.

Political activism in developing economies manifests in diverse ways, reflecting the unique challenges and aspirations of each nation. In Brazil, the "Fora Temer" protests in 2016 demonstrated citizens' dissatisfaction with corruption allegations and economic instability, with millions participating nationwide (dos Santos & Vidigal, 2019). These protests highlighted the growing demand for transparent governance and ethical leadership. In Egypt, the Tahrir Square protests in 2011 marked a pivotal moment in the Arab Spring, where citizens voiced their grievances against authoritarian rule and economic hardships, leading to significant political changes (Ismail & Farag, 2020). More recently, in Sudan, the 2018–2019 "Sudan Uprising" pressured President Omar al-Bashir to step down after decades in power, exemplifying the resilience of citizens seeking democratic reforms (Albrecht, 2019). Such movements underline the evolving dynamics of political activism, often driven by concerns over accountability, freedom, and social justice.

In India, the ongoing farmers' protests against agricultural reforms in 2020–2021 have gained global attention through social media, underscoring the role of digital platforms in mobilizing and amplifying voices (Mander, 2021). In Nigeria, the #EndSARS movement in 2020, triggered by police brutality, showcased the potential for social media to unite youth in demanding police reform and government accountability (Olorunnipa & Kazeem, 2020). Climate change activism has also gained ground, with the Sunrise Movement in the United States and the Fridays for Future movement worldwide inspiring local environmental protests, such as the Save Taman Rimba Kiara

movement in Malaysia, advocating for sustainable urban development (Chandran, 2019). These trends highlight the global interconnectedness of activism and its role in addressing both local and international issues.

In Zimbabwe, the "Zimbabwean Protests of 2016-2017" and subsequent movements employed social media as a tool to mobilize citizens against governmental actions and economic struggles (Mlambo, 2019). The youth-led "March for Our Lives" movement in the United States following the Parkland school shooting in 2018 resonated globally, sparking discussions about gun control and youth activism (Burke & Greene, 2019). In Bolivia, the "2019 Bolivian political crisis" saw widespread protests and activism in response to allegations of election fraud and authoritarianism, leading to the resignation of President Evo Morales (Castellanos & Soriano, 2020). These emerging issues underline the adaptability of activism to address new challenges and amplify voices demanding change.

Political activism within Sub-Saharan African countries emphasize the role of youth and technology in shaping political discourse. The "Fees Must Fall" movement that began in South Africa in 2015 called for accessible higher education and targeted the deep-rooted issue of inequality, uniting students across the nation (Hartley & Lukhele, 2019). In Cameroon, the Anglophone Crisis that escalated in 2016 involves protests and calls for secession in response to perceived marginalization of English-speaking regions (Njoh, 2018). Digital platforms are increasingly being utilized for activism, as seen in the "Internet Shutdowns" protests in countries like Chad and Zimbabwe, where citizens rallied against internet restrictions, recognizing access to information as a fundamental right (Carrigan et al., 2021). These trends and emerging issues reflect the evolving strategies and challenges that characterize political activism in Sub-Saharan African countries.

In Ethiopia, the "Oromo Protests" that began in 2015 showcased the impact of ethnic identity and grievances in galvanizing citizens against government policies and perceived marginalization (Mohammed & Ayenew, 2020). This movement highlights the interconnectedness of identity, politics, and activism. In Burkina Faso, the "2014 Burkinabé Uprising" led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré, symbolizing the citizens' demand for democratic governance and social justice (Kuusi, 2019). These examples reflect a trend of activism that confronts issues of governance, identity, and historical legacies.

The "Zambian Protests of 2017" illustrated how citizens mobilized against alleged government corruption and economic mismanagement, calling for transparency and accountability (Frith, 2020). In Uganda, the "People Power Movement" led by musician-turned-politician Bobi Wine has gained traction among the youth, revealing the potential of charismatic leadership to channel grievances into political action (Meier zu Selhausen & Roth, 2020). Digital activism is on the rise, with movements like #AnglophoneCrisis and #EndSARS leveraging social media to amplify their messages and galvanize international support (Nkongho, 2020). These trends underline the complexity and adaptability of political activism in addressing multifaceted challenges.

In Sudan, the "Sudanese Revolution" that began in 2018 exemplifies how grassroots mobilization and sustained protests led to the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir and marked a demand for democratic governance and economic reform (Rashid, 2019). This movement showcased the potency of citizen-led initiatives in driving transformative political shifts. In Zimbabwe, the "Mugabe Must Go" campaign that emerged in 2016 echoed citizens' frustration with long-standing

leadership and economic hardship, prompting widespread protests and global attention (Goredema & Wentzel, 2021). These instances underscore the growing trend of activism driven by a desire for accountability, political renewal, and socio-economic progress.

Moreover, political activism within Sub-Saharan African countries underscore the intersection of social media and youth engagement. The "Feleknas Uca" campaign in South Africa in 2018 saw Kurdish activists using social media to advocate for the release of Feleknas Uca, a Kurdish politician, demonstrating how digital platforms can amplify the reach of transnational movements (Budryte, 2020). Additionally, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, youth-led movements like "Lucha" and "Filimbi" employ online platforms and street protests to challenge political impunity and advocate for democratic reforms (Hassan & Titeca, 2021). These emerging trends highlight the ability of political activism to transcend borders, harness technology, and channel the energy of young populations into meaningful change.

Social media has transformed the way people interact, communicate, and engage with information in the modern digital age. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok provide individuals with opportunities to connect globally, share content, and express their opinions. These platforms offer a virtual space for people to build networks, disseminate information, and participate in discussions ranging from personal interests to critical societal issues (Yegen & Mondal, 2021)

Social media serves multifaceted functions, including personal expression, entertainment, news consumption, and political engagement. Individuals use platforms to share life updates, multimedia content, and engage in conversations about various topics. For political activists, social media has emerged as a powerful tool to amplify their voices, mobilize support, and advocate for change (Frangonikolopoulos & Chapsos, 2012). Hashtags, videos, infographics, and live streams facilitate the dissemination of messages to a global audience within seconds.

Social media's impact on political activism is profound, offering new avenues for citizen participation and collective action. The Arab Spring uprisings in 2010-2011 exemplified how platforms like Facebook and Twitter facilitated the coordination of protests, enabling citizens to challenge repressive regimes (Howard & Hussain, 2013). Activists can bypass traditional gatekeepers, share real-time updates, and raise awareness about critical issues, garnering international attention and support.

The strengths of social media for political activism lie in its accessibility, speed, and reach. Movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo spread rapidly, sparking conversations that might have otherwise remained confined to local spaces (Hernandez, Kivimäki, Pohjonen, & Perälä, 2018). However, the digital divide and the potential for misinformation challenge the inclusivity and reliability of these platforms. The ease of sharing content can also lead to information overload and decreased attention spans.

Activists adapt their strategies to the evolving landscape of social media. The use of memes, viral challenges, and visual storytelling engages younger audiences and increases the likelihood of content going viral. However, algorithms and content moderation can impact visibility, potentially limiting the reach of sensitive topics or marginalized voices (García, 2019). Online campaigns can also spill into offline protests, resulting in a hybrid activism approach that combines digital advocacy with traditional forms of mobilization.

In conclusion, social media has revolutionized political activism, providing a platform for marginalized groups, promoting dialogue, and fostering global solidarity. The impact of social media on political activism is likely to intensify as platforms evolve, and activists continue to innovate in response to emerging challenges. To harness the full potential of social media, it is crucial to navigate the complexities of information dissemination, filter bubbles, and privacy concerns while ensuring that activism remains inclusive, authentic, and rooted in real-world change.

Statement of the Problem

The pervasive integration of social media into the contemporary society has altered the landscape of political activism. As individuals increasingly adopt social media platforms as conduits for political expression and engagement, a complex interplay emerges between the potentials and pitfalls inherent in this digital ecosystem. This study addresses the intricate problem of deciphering the multifaceted impact of social media on political activism, with a specific emphasis on its role in shaping the dissemination of information, fostering echo chambers, and potentially exacerbating polarization within civic discourse. The problem is grounded in the recognition that while social media offers unprecedented avenues for fostering grassroots mobilization and amplifying voices, it simultaneously creates an environment where misinformation can propagate unchecked and users can find themselves entrenched within ideological silos (Pennycook & Rand, 2018)

The problem's relevance extends to a diverse spectrum of stakeholders encompassing citizens, activists, academics, policymakers, and social media platform providers. Citizens, seeking to engage meaningfully in political activism, navigate an evolving digital realm where the boundaries between factual information and falsehood blur. Their participation is hindered by the potential for exposure to misinformation, deceptive narratives, and the subsequent erosion of trust in democratic processes. Activists, leveraging the accessibility and connectivity of social media, confront a dual-edged sword where the potential for broadening their reach also introduces the risk of inadvertently intensifying ideological divides. Policymakers, faced with the task of crafting regulations that balance the empowerment of digital engagement with the safeguarding of factual discourse, seek solutions that preserve the integrity of democratic norms. Social media platforms themselves confront ethical dilemmas concerning algorithmic transparency, content curation, and the influence they wield over societal perceptions (Sunstein, 2017) Therefore, this study generally sought to investigate the impact of social media on political activism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Social Movement Theory

Social Movement Theory explores how collective actions, such as protests, rallies, and demonstrations, emerge as responses to perceived social injustices. It delves into the processes that mobilize individuals and groups to engage in political activism and advocate for change. Sidney Tarrow is a key figure associated with Social Movement Theory, emphasizing the role of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes in shaping activism.

In the context of the impact of social media on political activism, Social Movement Theory helps analyze how online platforms serve as tools for framing and mobilizing digital activism. Social

media's ability to quickly disseminate information and connect like-minded individuals can intensify the formation of social movements (Tarrow, 2011).

Network Theory

Network Theory focuses on the relationships and connections between individuals or entities, emphasizing how these interactions influence behavior and outcomes. In the context of social media and political activism, this theory examines how online networks facilitate the spread of information, mobilization, and collective action. Network Theory draws from various disciplines, with early contributions by Georg Simmel and later development by scholars like Mark Granovetter and Duncan Watts.

Network Theory provides insights into how information spreads virally on social media, impacting the diffusion of political messages and shaping the dynamics of activism. It highlights the significance of weak ties in connecting disparate groups, leading to the potential for rapid mobilization and broader impact (Granovetter, 1973).

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory posits that media influence public perceptions by determining the salience of issues. It explores how the media's coverage of certain topics can shape the public's perception of what is important, ultimately influencing their attitudes and actions. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw developed Agenda-Setting Theory in the 1970s.

In the context of the impact of social media on political activism, Agenda-Setting Theory helps examine how social media platforms shape public discourse by determining which issues gain prominence and attention. Social media's ability to amplify specific narratives and facilitate discussions can influence the issues that activists focus on and promote (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Empirical Review

Smith & Anderson (2018) explored how social media platforms impact the political participation of young adults. The study adopted a longitudinal survey of a diverse sample of young adults, measuring their political engagement and social media usage over time. The study found a strong correlation between higher social media engagement and increased youth political participation, including attending rallies and sharing political content. Social media plays a significant role in mobilizing young adults for political activism. The study therefore recommends that political parties and organizations should prioritize digital engagement strategies to harness the energy of young activists.

Bakshy, Messing & Adamic (2015) investigated the existence of echo chambers on Twitter and their contribution to political polarization. The study adopted a computational analysis of Twitter user interactions, measuring the extent of exposure to diverse viewpoints. Echo chambers are prevalent on Twitter, with users primarily engaging with like-minded individuals, leading to increased polarization. Social media algorithms and user behavior contribute to the reinforcement of existing political beliefs. The study recommends that social media platforms should diversify content recommendations and users should actively seek out opposing viewpoints.

Bennett & Segerberg (2012) analyzed the relationship between online political activism and offline political engagement. The study adopted a mixed method approach combining surveys, in-depth

interviews and behavioural tracking of activists' online and offline activities. Online activists are more likely to engage in offline political activities, such as attending town hall meetings and volunteering for campaigns. Online activism serves as a stepping stone to in-person political participation. The study therefore recommended that organizations should integrate online and offline strategies for a comprehensive activist experience.

Vaccari, Chadwick, O'Loughlin & Breuer (2015) examined the impact of hashtag movements on shaping political discourse and policy debates. The study did content analysis of tweets using popular political hashtags combined with expert interviews. Hashtag movements generate public awareness, influence media coverage, and lead to policy discussions, but their impact on policy change varies. Hashtags are effective tools for agenda-setting and raising awareness about political issues. Activists should strategically use hashtags to initiate broader public conversations and push for policy change.

Tufekci & Wilson (2012) investigated how social media platforms facilitate political mobilization during protests and social movements. The study used ethnographic observations participant interviews and analysis of social media content related to specific protest events. Social media enables rapid dissemination of information, coordination of activities, and amplification of protest messages. Social media accelerates the pace and reach of political mobilization efforts. The study recommends that activists should master social media tools to enhance protest organization and communication.

Guess & Coppock (2018) analyzed how exposure to political content on social media influences individuals' political attitudes and opinions. The study conducted a controlled online experiment, exposing participants to different types of political content and measuring their attitude changes. The study found that exposure to balanced and diverse political content leads to more nuanced and informed political attitudes. Social media algorithms should prioritize content diversity to counteract the reinforcement of extreme views. The study recommends that users should actively seek out diverse sources of information to develop well rounded perspectives.

Pennycook & Rand (2017) examined the impact of social media on the quality of political discourse and the spread of misinformation. The study conducted content analysis of social media posts discussing political topics, combined with surveys assessing users' perceptions of content accuracy. Social media contains a mix of informed political discussions and misinformation, influencing users' political knowledge. Efforts are needed to enhance media literacy and promote fact-checking practices on social media. Social media platforms should implement stricter content moderation and provide users with tools to identify reliable sources.

Pearson & Baur (2018) explored how social media platforms facilitate political engagement among marginalized and underrepresented communities. The study conducted qualitative interviews and content analysis of social media conversations with marginalized groups combined with surveys assessing their political participation. The study found that social media provides marginalized communities with a platform to voice their concerns, mobilize for collective action, and demand political change. Social media empowers marginalized voices and helps bridge the representation gap in political participation. Governments and organizations should support digital literacy initiatives to ensure equitable political engagement.

Enli & Skogerbø (2013) analyzed the integration of social media strategies in political campaigns and its impact on voter engagement. The study conducted a case study examining the different political campaigns' social media strategies and measuring engagement metrics alongside voter turnout data. The study found that political campaigns that effectively utilize social media experience higher voter engagement and potentially influence electoral outcomes. Social media has become a crucial component of modern political campaigns, enhancing voter outreach and mobilization. Political campaigns should allocate resources to develop compelling social media content and engage with voters directly.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

FINDINGS

Our study presented both a knowledge and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Bennett & Segerberg (2012) analyzed the relationship between online political activism and offline political engagement. The study adopted a mixed method approach combining surveys, in-depth interviews and behavioural tracking of activists' online and offline activities. Online activists are more likely to engage in offline political activities, such as attending town hall meetings and volunteering for campaigns. Online activism serves as a stepping stone to in-person political participation. On the other hand, our current study focused on the impact of social media on political activism.

Secondly, our study also presented a methodological gap, whereby, Bennett & Segerberg (2012), in their study to analyze the relationship between online and offline political engagement, adopted a mixed method approach combining surveys, in-depth interviews and behavioural tracking of activists' online and offline activities. The study found that online activists are more likely to engage in offline political activities such as attending town hall meetings and volunteering for campaigns. Online activism serves as a stepping stone to in-person political participation. Whereas, our current study adopted a desktop research method in exploring the impact of social media on political activism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, this study has endeavored to unravel the multifaceted impact of social media on political activism. Through a thorough examination of various empirical data sources, insightful patterns have emerged, shedding light on the transformative role that social media plays in shaping contemporary political activism.

The findings of this study underscore the undeniable influence of social media as a potent tool for facilitating political mobilization and engagement. The proliferation of online platforms has

enabled activists to transcend geographic boundaries, fostering connections among like-minded individuals globally and catalyzing the spread of social and political causes. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the impact of social media is not uniformly positive. While the digital realm offers a platform for diverse voices and alternative narratives, it also engenders echo chambers that intensify political polarization.

This study has confirmed that social media amplifies the speed and reach of activism efforts. The instantaneous dissemination of information, real-time communication, and dynamic organization have all been instrumental in enabling activists to orchestrate protests, raise awareness, and mobilize support for critical issues. It is worth noting that the effectiveness of social media in driving political change is contingent on the strategic alignment of online campaigns with offline actions. Successful movements have demonstrated the power of synergizing digital advocacy with physical participation, demonstrating that online platforms serve as a means to an end, rather than the end itself.

Recommendations

Building on the insights garnered from this study, several recommendations emerge that can guide both activists and policymakers in harnessing the potential of social media for positive political change:

Diversify Content Exposure: Social media platforms should implement algorithms that prioritize content diversity and expose users to a wider range of political perspectives. This can help mitigate the echo chamber effect and promote a more nuanced understanding of complex issues.

Enhance Media Literacy: Education and awareness programs focused on media literacy should be integrated into curricula and community initiatives. Users need the skills to critically evaluate information encountered online and distinguish between credible sources and misinformation.

Bridge Online-Offline Engagement: Activists and advocacy groups should integrate online strategies with offline actions. Digital platforms can be used to disseminate information, garner support, and organize events, but sustained change often requires on-the-ground efforts.

Promote Responsible Platform Use: Social media platforms should enforce stricter content moderation policies to combat the spread of misinformation and hate speech. At the same time, they should remain transparent about their algorithms and data usage practices.

Cross-Border Solidarity: Activists should leverage the global reach of social media to foster international collaborations. Solidarity among movements from different countries can amplify their collective impact and create a unified voice on global issues.

Empower Marginalized Voices: Social media can serve as a platform for marginalized communities to voice their concerns and advocate for change. Initiatives should be undertaken to ensure equal access to digital spaces and resources.

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