

Social Networks Global Impact on Protest Movements and Human Rights Activism

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Abstract : In the wake of social unrest around the world, protest movements have been captured like never before. As protest movements have evolved, so too have their visibility and sources of coverage. Long gone are the days of print media as our only glimpse into the action surrounding a protest. Now, with social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, we have access to real-time video footage of protest movements and human rights activism that can reach millions of people within seconds. This research paper investigated various social media network platforms' statistical usage data in the areas of human rights activism and protest movements, paralleling with other past forms of media coverage. This research demonstrates that social networks are extremely important to protest movements and human rights activism. With over 2.9 billion users across social media networks globally, these platforms are the heart of most recent protests and human rights activism. This research shows the paradigm shift from the Selma March of 1965 to the more recent protests of Ferguson in 2014, Ni Una Menos in 2015, and End Sars in 2018. The research findings demonstrate that today, almost anyone may use their social networks to protest movement leaders and human rights activists. From a student to an 80-year-old professor, the possibility of reaching billions of people all over the world is limitless. Findings show that 82% of the world's internet population is on social networks 1 in every 5 minutes. Over 65% of Americans believe social media highlights important issues. Thus, there is no need to have a formalized group of people or even be known online. A person simply needs to be engaged on their respective social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) regarding any cause they are passionate about. Information may be exchanged in real time around the world and a successful protest can begin.

Keywords : activism, protests, human rights, networks

Conference Title : ICIHRG 2023 : International Conference on International Human Rights and Globalization

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : January 23-24, 2023