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MEDIA & MOVEMENTS

The Impact of Social Media and Mediatization on Social Movements

Media & Movements: The Impact of Social Media and Mediatization on Social Movements

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ABSTRACT

This thesis enquires into the processes of communicative action of social movements in a media system dominated by corporate social media platform and mainstream news media. Using existing research in the field, this thesis examines the recent social media driven movements, Black Lives Matter, Me Too and Occupy Wall Street. In its analysis, this study demonstrates that there are processes of mediatization relating to media logic as well as social media logic when it comes to the movements' formation and communication on social media platforms. It concludes that online activism on social media has limited impact on traditional news media that still are enjoys curating power and gatekeeper of access to the public sphere. On the contrary, news media still relies on media logics that inherently reproduces dominant discourses about the struggles of the movements. These dominant discourses are counter-productive and in some cases harmful in the movements quest to gain support in the public sphere.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary media system, a mediatization of politics, as well as affordances of social media, has rendered new possibilities for social movements to organize, communicate, and put political pressure on governments. "The digital network permits users to interact with, participate in the production of and share online content, including of course the politically significant content which is the stuff of the *traditional public sphere*" (McNair, 2018: 22, my emphasis). Historically, the press has played an important role as an arena for the public sphere and such formations to access the broader public, voice their demands, gain support and political momentum. "A critical organ of the public engaged in critical political debate: as the fourth estate" (Habermas, 1989: 60). In the 21st century, the role of the press as an arena for the public sphere still holds: It is "the media system, which comprises the public sphere" (McNair 2018: 22). Perhaps even more so, as new media technological inventions have resulted in a mediatization of societal life – a dependence on and influence of the media regarding the general communication flows in the public sphere. The more recent technological media invention is social media which can be read as both a dimension of mediatization (as social interaction and other real-life activities increasingly happen through media an so, social media) as well as, according to some, a challenge to the power status of traditional news media regarding its monopoly of communication in the public sphere. Some see social media as a new arena of the public sphere – one that is free from traditional news

media's editorial power and gatekeeping – a public sphere for 'the people' as opposed to traditional news media. I wish to critically investigate how these forces of both traditional media and social media, as arenas of the public sphere, influence the communications that happen on these channels. In other words, how the medium influences communication as well as the power status of media (news media and social media) in a mediatized society.

1.1 SUBJECT AREA

News media has historically had the monopoly of the public sphere and public opinions formation, where social media is a relative newcomer in the media system of the public sphere. However, it does affect "the whole political communication system including the distribution of media power." (Schulz in Esser & Strömbäck, 2014: 74) as it renders users the ability to "design and publish on the Internet, especially on social media platforms, complex messages that compete with professional journalistic and entertainments media (…) the news media's influence on public opinion – especially agenda-setting function – might be dwindling" (Ibid: 74). However, there may be talk of a convergence of "new" and "old" media as "journalists [of traditional news media] regularly draw on the Internet as an information resource, even directly take up and redistribute material from web pages and social networking sites." (Ibid: 75). The main difference between social media and news media is the one-to-many vs. the many-to-many communication flow as well as the interactive affordances. The Web 2.0's "build-in capacity for two-way communication supposedly rendered online media infinitely more democratic than the old (one-way) media. Words like "interactivity" and "participatory" described Web 2.0's potential to "talk back" and send messages instantly, whereas previous media has wielded power over their one-way publishing or broadcasting channels" (Van Dijck, 2013: 8). The two-way communication along with "the help of easy-to-handle software anybody can engage in processing, editing, amplifying, storing and distributing media content. (…) Digital technologies [of the Internet] give the users the ability to easily *replicate, redistribute* and *share* political messages with

others." (Schulz in Esser & Strömbäck, 2014: 72, emphasis in original). There is general positive position towards social media as a democratic communicative platform where users "can bypass the filtering and gatekeeping of mass media, thus evading media powers (…) even though up to now only a minority of citizens have exploited these opportunities, they may in the long run diminish the mass media's institutional autonomy and interventionist potential" (Ibid: 76).

This thesis is an explorative enquire into the communicative processes of how expressions of the periphery of the public sphere, such as social movements, are influenced by the affordances of social media in bringing such discourses from the periphery to the centre of the public sphere: the news media.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on mediatization of politics generally agree that the mass media system is governed by competition between channels, politics is personalised and the public are passive consumers (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001). Politics in the media has become sensationalist, lost meaning and too much emphasis on spin, power struggles rather than real-politics resulting in the public expressing a lack of confidence in the news media (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Cook, 2006: 160). An institutionalist approach to mediatization argues that news media has become a political institution or actor in itself (Cook, 2006; Sparrow 1999). Sparrow bases his definition on news media as an institution on *economic efficiency,* which *structure national politics* and rely on a set of *standard practices* to produce political news (Sparrow, 1999: 10). Another theme points to news media and politics being more and more intertwined, where difference between news workers and governmental officials flood together under the term "professional communicators" (Page, 1996 in Cook, 2006: 160). What they agree on is the power that the news media has over public opinion, as a political actor with power over politicians or as intertwined with politicians.

With a media system driven by economic efficiency and politics, the emergence of new media spurred hope for its democratic potential (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001). The emancipatory, interactive potential of 'new media' gave hope of enhancing public

communication and participatory democracy, especially in earlier studies (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Mazzolini & Schulz, 1999). The democratic potential of expanding the public sphere of social media in western democracies as a way to challenge the discursive monopoly of the mass media (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Chadwick, 2011). There are different themes of how new media has influenced the prevailing media system as well as public opinion formation. Chadwick (2013) argues for a *hybrid media system* that is based on conflict and competition between the new and old media logics as well as interdependence which "exhibits a balance between older logics of transmission and reception and new logics of circulation, recirculation and negotiation" (Ibid: 2). Traditional media has in general responded by co-opting new media logics as well as renewed their own logics that has ensured their dominance in the 20th century. Chadwick writes that the emergence of grassroot activism has been fueled by newer media. However, it must be set in context of the continuing power of political and media elites that still control "what are still the main vehicles of liberal democracy: organized parties, candidates' campaigns, and of course the extremely powerful, and increasingly renewed, mass medium of television" (Chadwick, 2913: 3). Thus, the hybrid media system of old and new media logics, may still have a limited impact on the existing power structure of the media system dominated by traditional media.

More recent studies of social media's democratic implications demonstrate a number of critiques to the effects of such media on the public sphere and opinion formation. Risks such as echo champers, deliberative enclaves, inequality of access, corporate domination and state surveillance (Wheeler, 2015; Fenton, 2016; Dahlberg, 2007; Mosca, 2010; Zuboff, 2018). Online, opposing positions can easily be avoided and can lead to a *fragmented public sphere* where groups positions are just reinforced in echo chambers and deliberative enclaves (Wheeler 2015; Dahlberg, 2007). This can even lead to polarization and creating extreme positions within such enclaves and even increase the likelihood of hostility and violence, posing a threat to the public sphere and social stability (Graham, 1999; Sunstein 2001, 2003 in Dahlberg 2007: 830). Another position in the fragmentation debate argues that users encounter many people online that they would not normally meet in everyday life and are thus exposed to more political arguments than non-users (Horrigan et al, 2004 in Dahlberg, 2007: 830). Stromer-Halley's study (2003) even found "that rather than avoid difference online, interview participants sought encounters with opposing perspectives" (in Dahlberg 2007: 831). But who even has access to deliberate their views on social media?

The democratising potential of social media is sharply contested in Fenton (2016) who writes that political activists on social media come from highly educated backgrounds. Thus, the stance that social media can challenge dominant discourse, according to Fenton, the 'challengers' are still based in a certain privileged group which is the global middle class (Fenton, 2016c: 251). In addition to this, only 42% of the world's population is using the internet, and among those, the middle and upper classes of richest nations (Ibid: 251). Fenton thus challenges this general notion of the democratising capabilities to social media by demonstrating how structures of power and inequality are then reproduced online. Additionally, Mosca (2010) writes that Internet users are mostly male, young, white and educated.

In an interesting aspect to this debate, Dahlberg (2007) argues that providing universal internet access would actually be counter-productive, as it would obscure the inherent capitalist structuring of said online spaces, their asymmetries of power as well as their lack of any significant institutional change (Dahlberg, 2007: 838). He even argues that call for overcoming the digital divide "are often part of a dominant discourse of capitalist consumer relations and liberal-individualist politics: The internet is promoted as providing for individual need satisfaction" (Dahlberg, 2007: 838). This is because major media corporations' structuring of 'publicly performed' online environments that are based in western English-speaking dominant structures of wealth and power which is then reproduced online (Fenton, 2016; Dahlberg, 2007). This is a risk because these online spaces are structured around dominant discourse (Dahlberg, 2007), so overcoming the digital divide would only ensure the entire population would be subjected to such performed spaces of dominance. This goes back to Blumler & Gurevitch' (2001) warning of the risk of interactive media to be submerged and marginalized, as powerful interests are trying to bend it to their own ends (Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001: 8). Furthermore, Zuboff's (2018) extensive work warns against the exploitative business-model of social media such as datamining and surveillance of internet users as she coined 'Surveillance Capitalism'. Overcoming the digital divide, would mean that the data trails of entire populations would be at the disposal of powerful corporate interest as targeted advertising in consumer context as well as state surveillance of citizens (Dahlberg, 2007; Zuboff, 2018).

Dahlberg asks: "To what extent is the Internet facilitating the development and expansion of counter-discourses and the contestation between discourses?" (Dahlberg, 2007: 838). This thesis applies an institutional approach to not only news media but also social media in order to shed light upon the inherent functions of social media as a media institution rather than a neutral tool. This calls for an analysis of the logics of social media as well as the logics of news media – an understanding of both as media institutions. Furthermore, identifying how these logics intersect and differ is helpful in shedding light upon how the contemporary media system, as a public sphere, functions in relation to social movements. The idea of the democratic potential of social media (especially in earlier studies) must be contested. Dahlberg's question of how useful and capable social media actually is in putting counter-discourses from the periphery of the public sphere as seriously challenging dominant discourses of the dominant news media is the point of departure of this enquiry.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

How does Mediatization and Social Media impact Social Movements in

A Western Democratic context?

- What characterises the relative success of social media driven movements such as Black Lives Matter, MeToo and Occupy Wall Street?
- How does these movements relate to news media logic and social media logic?
- How can we establish a conceptualization of mediatization of social movements?

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1.4 LIMITATIONS

In this thesis, the terms new media, ICT, the Internet and social media will be dealt with in as covering the same concept in its relation to news media and social movement. News media, mass media, old/traditional media and 'the press' will also cover the same concept of the dominant media institutions of broadcasting and a one-to-many, monological nature of newspapers and TV. The concept of mediatization is understood in two senses: the increasing power of the news media over other societal institutions and it role as a political actor as well as general dependence of social activities on media, in this case social media. News media logics and social media logics are understood as inherent functions of both as communication institutions based on economic efficiency and a market logic. These inherent functions frame, restrict and facilitate information flows going to and from the institution.

Furthermore, my understanding of social movements as expressions coming from the periphery of the public sphere has the objective to influence dominant discourses in the mass media in order to change public opinion and create political change. My understanding of the public sphere also relies on different uses of the concept in the literature. The public sphere is both understood as the news media as well as comprising the thoughts and ideas circulating in the life world which. Thus, the news media is in this thesis understood as an arena of the public sphere but also as a producer of public opinion.

In my choice of theories I had an institutional approach as it takes a broader perspective an focus on the entire process of political communication rather than looking at the separate political institution of the news media (Cook, 2006: 161). Habermas' theory of communicative action would support my inquiry into how social movements as expressions of the public sphere use communicative action as well as how that clashes with the logics of news media. Hjarvard's (2009) institutional approach to mediatization is the mediatization of *society* and not only *politics,* which is the general focus in much of the literature. Schulz' model of mediatization supplemented Hjarvard's theory with more detail. Asp's (2014) institutional model of media logic was helpful in order to make Hjarvard's mediatization theory operational in analysing the media framing of the social movements. The choice of Van Dijck & Poell's model of social media logic was the most extensive and operational in regard to the ever-changing (and quite obscure) social media logics. Fuchs's critical approach

to social media made earlier theoretical perspectives relevant to the relatively new public sphere 'role' of social media.

I chose to focus on three cases, Black Lives Matter, Me Too and Occupy Wall Street as they are recent and have been quite extensive on both social media as well as traditional media. I chose to analyse existing empirical sources for my analysis, as I would not have the time to make as extensive enquiries into each movement. In this way I was able to broaden the scope of my enquiry as I was able to analyse studies conducted in both news media framing as well as the movements' use of social media. Finally, part of my enquiry is also to critically analyse how scholars accept or criticise social media as a tool for political change, which I was able to analyse in existing data as well.

I chose to focus on the communication flows between the media system and the public and therefore have not included related issues such as the digital divide, literacy, uses and gratification theories and generally chose not to focus on the individual level in the subject area. Finally, this thesis enquires into social movements in Western democracies, however I am aware that my empirical data has a quite national specific context of the United States. This thesis could have included deeper enquiry into the national real-political issues of the chosen movements as well as a deeper analysis of the national specific media systems and traditions on order to open up this study further.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will present my epistemological point of departure which is grounded in hermeneutics and critical theory. Following that, I will outline the theoretical perspectives that I intend to draw on in my analysis. That includes theories on mediatization of society in Hjarvard and Schulz' perspective, media logic by Asp, Fuchs' critical perspective on social media and social media logic by Van Dijck and Poells and Habermas' communicative action. A brief account of Castells' perspective on social movements in the Information Age will also be accounted for.

2.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

This research study relies on a prior understanding of the subject area and the problem formulation is based on pre-existing assumptions. I do have a prior understanding/interpretation of the phenomenon based on a previous research project I have done on MeToo as well as following Black Lives Matter news media and on social media. However, rather than characterising this as pre-existing knowledge, I will rather describe it as pre-existing interpretations of the subject area. The hermeneutic scientific approach argues that all scientific knowledge is about interpretations and seeks interpretations of meaning. Meaning in the sense of interpersonal, human phenomena, their actions and products of such activities (Collin & Koller, 2014: 225). Interpretation and meaning are thus the two most central concepts to the hermeneutic approach. Furthermore, hermeneuticians believe that "any utterance of life, any thought and feeling, every action and every product of an action is wrapped up in, and dependent on something supra-individual, a number of forms, "within which that between individuals existing community, have objectivised in the sensory world"" (Dilthey in Collins & Køppe, 2014: 230). This objectivised supra-individual phenomenon is how I will read the interplay of concepts of mediatization, social media and social movements. They are all expressions of an objectivization of some supra-individual form, of which the communication of which, for example news media, is an expression. In order to grasp these phenomena, one must analyse the utterances of life that is wrapped up in them – the communication. But what is most important is that, as researchers, we have a pre-existing interpretations/understanding of phenomena that informs and steers the process of interpretation because each 'level' is informed by a former 'level' of interpretation. It is therefore critical to reflect upon one's own pre-existing interpretations. Even my choice of the subject area is informed by my presumptions of it. "We are talking about a preunderstanding, because one understands from a certain project, that also is expressed in a certain form of anticipation and prediction." (Collin & Køppe, 2014: 237, my own translation). This is why it is important to be aware of one's own presumptions that shape the research. This emphasises the notion that a researcher is never objective and that she or he from the beginning has certain anticipations and predictions about the outcome that will steer

and influence the work. The interpretation of a text is always informed by a subjective preunderstanding. In this subject area, which is arguably of a political nature, I subscribe to a critical theoretical approach in my reflexion of my own position and subjective preunderstanding.

Furthermore, I also subscribe to Habermas' critique of hermeneutics which demands that that hermeneutic sciences must be critical in the way that all understanding must be exercised with the societal context in mind. (Ibid: 205). My hermeneutical approach is thus steered by pre-interpretations, the interaction between theory and empirical observations as well as ongoing interpretative work, between particular parts and the understanding of the whole and back again (Ibid: 232). This circular process, the hermeneutical spiral, then changes my meaning-making and interpretation of observed phenomena as the work progresses. It is then important to be open to new interpretations to change my understanding of the subject area. Any new interpretations build on older ones. Furthermore, due to the explorative nature of this thesis my goal is not to draw definite conclusions nor is it possible in my approach. There is virtually no ending to the hermeneutic spiral, so I will not reach an 'end' of my interpretation and understanding of these processes: "the recognition of the prior understanding means that the interpretation never can be considered complete (…) however, it does approach objectivity more and more" (Ibis: 247). The objective is rather to reach the *best* interpretation of how mediatization and social media influences social movements in Western democracies. Thus, the conclusions drawn will rely on interpretations of the interactions between prior understanding, theory and empirical observations and will then be open for further interpretations and discussions.

Critical theory takes it point of departure in Marxism and is concerned with freeing people from capitalist class-based forms of domination. Its objective is to critically examine 'hidden' forms of societal dominations, to emancipate people and in that way create a more just society. "The goal of critical theory is the transformation of society as a whole so that a 'society without injustice' emerges that is shaped by 'reasonableness, and striving for peace, freedom, and happiness' , 'in which man's actions no longer flow from a mechanism but from his own decision', and that is 'a state of affairs in which there will be no exploitation or oppression'." (Horkheimer, 2002 in Fuchs, 2016: 7). Critical theory is thus normative since it has pre-existing ideas of right and wrong, good and bad especially in relation to societal structures and the 'good' life for citizens.

In this thesis I wish to argue that news media logic and social media logic as institutions are partly based on a logic of commodification. I wish to understand how such logics influences social movements that wants to overcome systemic domination in different forms (racial, sexual and economic suppression). I do strive for creating this thesis from a non-normative point of view; however, I must also understand my own pre-existing subjectivity as in the hermeneutic notion of the concept. My own subjective point of view of the subject area is inherently normative and even my interest in the subject area and my choice of thesis is informed by my pre-existing assumptions and a certain expectation of findings and outcome. "Critical theory rejects the argument that academia and science should and can be value-free. It rather argues that all thought, and theories are shaped by political worldviews. The reason why a person is interested in a certain topic align himself/herself with a certain school of thought, develops a particular theory and not another one, refers to certain authors and not others, are deeply political because modern society is shaped by conflicts of interests and therefore for surviving and asserting themselves, scholars have to make choices, enter strategic alliances and defend their position against others." (Fuchs, 2016: 14). While using the hermeneutic circle as a method, where my pre-existing assumptions inform certain choices of theory and observation, which in turn informs my interpretations, it is certain to say that my own political standpoint as well as general worldview will influence the outcome; my *best* interpretation of these processes. This is an important point to keep in mind when evaluating the validity of any conclusions drawn from the analysis. My findings will not just be discovery or knowledge construction but "also a production and communication of knowledge about knowledge – the political standpoints of the scholars themselves. Critical theory holds not only that theory is always political, but also that it should develop analysis of society and concepts that assist struggles against interests and ideas that justify domination and exploitation." (Fuchs, 2016: 14)

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2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the following I will outline the aspects of chosen theory and concepts that I find relevant for my analysis. First I will present Mediatizatoon

2.2.1 MEDIATIZATION

The premise of this thesis and problem-formulation is that media has become so omnipresent in society that it influences culture and society in profound ways. Hjarvard (2009) defines this omnipresent as a mediatization of society. He argues that mediatization is expressed in two ways: on the one hand the media has become an autonomous institution in itself that forces other institutions to submit to its logic while at the same time being an integral part of other institutions' operations (Hjarvard, 2009: 106). It is this integration of media in society and culture which is the basis of the concept of mediatization. I will in the following present the conceptualization of mediatization that I will apply in this thesis.

Mediatization thus relates to both consumer culture, science and politics and most importantly in shaping public opinion and belief. Hjarvard's objective is to "use the concept to characterize *a given phase or situation* in the overall development of society and culture in which the logic of the media exerts a particularly predominant influence on other social institutions." (Ibid: 110 emphasis in original). This phase or situation of mediatization refers not to all cultures and nations but is rather "primarily a development that has accelerated particularly in the *last years of the twentieth century* in *modern, highly industrialized, and chiefly western societies,* i.e., Europe, USA, Japan, Australia and so forth." (Hjarvard 2009: 133, emphasis in original). It is this definition and time and space contextualization which is the frame of reference of this thesis.

One of the more profound impacts of mediatization, the political sphere, is also what coined the concept at first with 1986 Asp's description: "a political system [which is] to a high degree influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of

politics" (Asp, 1986: 359 in Hjarvard, 2009: 106). Hjarvard gives a more specific explanation of this process: "One form this adaptation takes is when politicians phrase their public statements in terms that personalize and polarize the issue to that the messages will have a better chance of gaining media coverage" (Hjarvard, 2009: 106). This relates to the growing control that media, as an institution, have over media content. Esser & Strömbäck (2014) even states that "due to the fact that the media hold the key to the public sphere and can have a major influence on public opinion formation, no political actor or institution can afford not to take the media into consideration" (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014: 15). In other words, political actors and institutions do not have a choice but to adapt to media logic if they are to assert themselves in the public arena which is the media.

In a political context, the media functions both as a source of information for the citizenry, as well as a channel between policy makers and citizenry (Ibid: 15). Castells (2010) conquers: "In a society that is organized around mass media, the existence of messages that are outside the media is restricted to interpersonal networks, thus disappearing from the collective mind." (Castells, 2010: 365). This emphasises the role of media in a democratic society as both arena for, and production of, the public sphere as the collective mind. In this sense, the media *is* the public sphere because everything that goes on outside of it is restricted to interpersonal networks. It is in fact the development into an information society that has rendered the media to have such power and autonomy as it has. As citizens consume media and to some extent base their worldview and opinion on the information consumed through media.

Mediatization as a Process of Social Change

Esser & Strömbäck (2014) define mediatization's impact on society as a process of social change. Schulz (2004) conceptualises this process in four dimensions: Extension, Substitution, Amalgamation and Accommodation (Schulz, 2004: 88). Schulz' dimensions are referring to media as news media in some cases and the more technical function of mediated communication (such as TV, radio, SMS, e-mail) in other cases. Mediatization refer to both: The increasing power of news media institutions as well as an increase in the social interactive reliance on communication media (such as social media).

Extension refer to the way media is used to extend the capabilities of human communication to go beyond the time-space restriction of natural human interaction. This bridging and extension of temporal and spacious limitations is inherently what the continuous effort of any media. In the words of McLuhan: "This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology." (McLuhan, 1964: 1). Any advance of media is thus an effort to improve, refine and enhance the mediated extension of the natural communication capabilities of human beings.

Substitution refers to the way in which media substitute or change the character of social activities and social institutions. Media substitutes communication and can also enhance the social interaction - however mediated it is – giving the example of enhancing communication since it is possible to interact despite physical distance. "Media events often enhance the symbolic relevance of ceremonies; phoning and emailing accelerate private communication; television provides topics and stimulates family-talk" (ibid: 84). Thus, mediatization does not only substitute real life interaction but actually enhances it which in turn creates a dependency on communication systems in the modern world – how could we ever go back to our limited human-sensory communication abilities?

Amalgamation describes how mediatization does not only extend, enhance and substitute non-media activities but also *merge* media activities with non-media activities. This refer to how media is 'woven into the fabric of everyday life' which can be argued is the essence of mediatization of society as applied in this thesis. "As media use becomes an integral part of private and social life, the media's definition of reality amalgamates with the social definition of reality." (Schulz, 2004: 89). This notion of social reality and media reality merging is quite profound when looking at these processes in relation to the political public sphere. Exactly because 'the media's definition of reality' is constructed with a multitude of interests and standpoints from, not only journalists and media institutions, but also other political actors adapting to media logic. There is thus an amalgamation of social reality (our real-life experience) and media representation of reality.

Accommodation refer to what Schulz states as 'self-evident', that is the various actors such as business, politics, sports, entertainment have to accommodate to how the media operate

(the media logic). He highlights the example of how "political actors adapt to the rules of the media system trying to increase their publicity and at the same time accepting a loss of autonomy. On the other hand, the media also benefit from such transactions since they make politics more newsworthy and conveniently formatted." (Schulz, 2004: 89, 99).

The most principal consequence of mediatization in society, is the increase of media power in representing and producing reality and its "ability to shape public opinion by filtering out influential voices and assigning some expressions more weight" (Altheide & Snow 1979 in Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6). But it is not only the filtering and editorial selection of voices and opinions, rather it relates to a "meta logic" relating to an institutional approach to media. Media as an institution has an inherent logic, a logic that is at the core of editorial decisions such as filtering, assessing and selection. Hjarvardt describes it as "the constitution of a shared experiential world, a world regulated by media logic" (Hjarvard, 2009: 129). This naturally emphasizes the power of, not only content, but also form and framing that all relates to the *media logic*: The institutional rules and practices of news production.

The Logics of News Media Production

Media logic encompasses 'the rules of the game' as "constraints on action [and] is a most salient cornerstone in mediatization theory" (Asp, 2014: 256). It is the assumptions and processes that inform the construction of messages within a medium (Altheide, 2016: 1). The impact of media logic is important to include in this study because, "Media logic is central to the process of the *social construction of reality* by individuals as well as an institutional form for *guiding* organizational behaviour and social perspective about what is normal and typical" (Altheide, 2016: 1, my own emphasis). In the context of social movements, it is crucial to understand how this logic works and influences powerful social constructs in the representation and framing of events.

In line with Hjarvard, Asp also subscribes to the institutional approach to mediatization and thus characterizes media logic as an institution in itself. The distinction between the institution (media logic) that is "the rules of the game" and the organizations (the news media) that constitutes "the teams" (Asp, 2014: 259). "As an institution, news media logic

works as a constraint on action since its values and rules reduce uncertainty and provide an overall structure that shapes the behaviour of both the news organizations and individual news journalists." (Ibid: 259). Asp identifies two main groups of institutional rules of media logic: "*professional norms*, i.e. normative rules based on shared values that are taken for granted of the members of the institution, and *professional standards*, i.e. shared and taken-for-granted rules for the production of news suitable for an audience." (Asp, 2014: 261, emphasis in original). Professional norms deal with two normative rules for news media: independence and objectivity. Professional standards deal with the production side of news and have two distinctive rules to it: craft rules and form rules.

Independence refers to the democratic tradition of an independent press from not only government actors but from all actors and institutions of society. This is considered a moral obligation to members of the media institution and is characterised from a primarily *monitoring* function to a *proactive* and *scrutinizing* function (Ibid: 261). Most importantly it also has an *interpreting* function, one that emphasises the news media "as an independent societal factor; the news media have become a societal interest group amongst others" (Cook, 2006 in Asp, 2014: 261).

Objectivity relates to the practical side of news media members' professional task, such as *fairness* (unbiased practice and hearing both sides without favouring) and *informativity* (facts, accurate, relevant) (Ibid: 261).

Craft rules is about facilitation and routinization of the news production. Again, two sides; constitutive rules and regulative rules. Constitutive rules are closely linked to the more vague and varying idea of 'news criteria' and is the defining rule of news. Asp lists three: *novelty, importance* and *interest.* The regulative rules are about designing news in order to attract and hold audience (consumers), thus certain storytelling techniques are applied: *personalization, confrontation, simplification, accentuation and concretization* (Hernes, 1978 in Asp, 2014: 262, emphasis in original).

Form rules relate to production of news relying on *technology* and *grammar*. Media technology refers to the process of producing news in order to fit a certain technological medium. Grammar rules relate to the *temporal* and *special structure* of a given particular

medium; *formative rules* (article length); *narrative rules* and *composition* of the particular medium (Ibid: 262)

Asp's argument is that media logic is an institution in itself, a way of thinking and seeing the world (Asp, 2014: 266). Thus, it is operating on a meta-level outside of the news media organizations as a taken-for-granted logic of news production, framing and arrangement. This very much underpins the increasing power position that media logic as an institution has enjoyed with increased mediatization of society. A position that is backed by the role of the press as one of the pillars of western democracy, something that according to Asp shields the press from much criticism from politicians. Because to question the independence and objectivity of the free press would be "to question citizens' right to fair and unbiased information" (Ibid: 266). As Asp and Hjarvard argues, the news media has become a societal institution in itself and, as an interpreting entity, a political actor in itself. But, unlike politicians, "journalists can, to a great extent, exercise their professional power without any counterweight that scrutinize their actions." (Ibid: 266). This position gives a mandate to the media (however of an imprecise kind) to speak for the people and undoubtedly have the upper hand in the public debate (Ibid: 266).

2.2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media in a Critical Perspective

Fuchs (2016) writes that "capitalist media are necessarily means of advertising and commodification and spaces of ideology." (Ibid: 10). Media (news-based mass media) in a critical theoretical approach is believed to be a space for creating and recreating a certain ideology of capitalist domination, that there is no alternative to a capitalist society. Furthermore, "communication is not pure and left untouched by structures of domination, it is

antagonistically entangled into them" (Ibid: 31). It is in fact these processes I wish to gain insight into. "For Habermas critical theory questions, the fact that steering media (money, power) attack the 'communicative infrastructure of largely rationalized life-worlds'." (Habermas, 1987: 375 in Fuchs, 2016: 29). In this thesis I argue that social movements have their origin in the lifeworld, and that that the media and social media may in different way impact the communicative infrastructure of the social movements.

My idea of social media as an application of the Internet is subscribes to the Fuchs' critical theoretical approach: "The Internet's power structures are not profoundly different from those of traditional mass media, yet it has new potentials and limits that interact with structures of accumulation in the economy, the political system and the cultural system." (Fuchs, 2016: 26). He goes on: "The concept of social media is a manifestation of class-based society. It hides its own potential and ideologically presents the reality of the exploitation of digital labour as truth, fun, democracy, wealth, revolution, rebellion, and participation. Social media as a concept however also points towards its own unrealised essence – a truly social and co-operative society that can never be attained under capitalist rule and in a class-based society. The capitalist reality of social media contradicts its own essence." (Ibid: 46) In this understanding, social media is not truly social because the user activity generates data that is then commodified and sold to advertisers in order to profit off this often quite intimate or even unaware psychological data of behavioural patterns, political opinion, fears etc. Recent events also suggest that it is not only for profit but also for political domination. Fuchs calls this the surveillance-industrial complex which operate in anti-democratic ways by using the data as a mean to control, exploit and exclude publics. (Fuchs, 2016: 172)

Fuchs' (2016) critical analysis of media (including social media) in a capitalist society stresses the 'modes of reification' in three different ways; humans are reduced to consumers of advertisement; culture is connected to commodity form where culture is bought but also where media consumer/Internet prosumers become the commodity in themselves; capitalism use media to keep the message of capitalism being the best possible system hegemonic (Fuchs, 2016: 10). Thus, capitalist media are not only spaces of advertisement and commodification but also spaces for producing and reproducing (dominant) ideology (Ibid: 10). Fuchs argues that the Internet's power structures are not profoundly different from

traditional mass media, however it has new potentials and limits "that interact with structures of accumulation in the economy, the political system and the cultural system". (Ibid: 26). Fuchs emphasizes the misconception of social media as a communication company, as it does not sell communication or access to communication but rather sell user data and targeted advert space (Ibid: 170). "SNS [social networking sites] establish new relations of production that are based on a dialectical link between exploitation and alienation: in order to be de-alienated, users must communicate and socialize: they must establish social networks, share information, talk to their friends and read their posts, follow and be followed. By thus doing they also exacerbate their exploitation" (Fisher, 2012 in Fuchs, 2016: 170). Fuchs also refer to the term digital labor in users' social media activity which generate data, thus profit, for social media companies. "On an intersubjective and objective level, alienation on Facebook means on the economic level the exploitation of user' digital labor that generates a data commodity and thereby value and the loss of control over how their [social media users'] data is used." (Ibid: 171). Furthermore, "on the cultural level, objective and intersubjective alienation means that attention and online visibility that enable meaning-making are asymmetrically distributed so that everyday users are at a disadvantage and celebrities and powerful organizations at an advantage" (Ibid: 172). What is interesting with social media is its inherent contradiction where it enables and enhances communication but at the same time these advantages come with a price that is, according to Fuchs, digital economic and cultural alienation (Ibid: 172). He writes: "Given that these forms of domination are data-mediated, they tend not to be immediately visible and experienceable by the user" (Ibid: 172). It is with these 'invisible' commodifying functions of social media that I approach my analysis of social media influence social movements. To make this objective operational, I will use Van Dijck & Poell's theory of social media logic because, like news media logic described above, social media also has inherent logics that frames and shapes the content and the utility. In other words, "the processes, principles and practices through which these platforms process information, news and communication" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). In the following I will outline the elements of these processes and principles according to Van Dijck & Poell.

The Four Dimensions of Social Media Logic

Van Dijck & Poell refer to social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2011: 60 in Van Dijk & Poell 2013: 5). Like mediatization that refer to the processes of the news media's ability to apply its logic outside of news media, "social media have the ability to transport their logic outside of the platforms that generate them, while their distinctive technological, discursive, economic and organizational strategies tend to remain implicit or appear "natural"" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). In order to identify this process, we must first understand and decipher these inherent logics as we did with news media earlier in this chapter. Van Dijck & Poell's (2013) present four elements of social media logic: Programmability, popularity, connectivity and datafication.

1. **Programmability**

Programmability refers to the practice of keeping users engaged on the platform. In media logic it is the ability of a central agency to manipulate content in order to keep a sense of flow to the audience's watching-experience (relating to the *regulative rules* under professional standards in Schulz' media logic model). In social media logic the emphasis is on code and users - instead of content and audience - and programmability - instead of the programmed flow of traditional media. "Programmability can hence be defined as the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users' creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, may in turn influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform." (Ibid: 5). This all is based on algorithms along with data, protocols and interfaces, the affordances and framing (liking, sharing, recommending etc.) that all steer the user experience, and with this, the user content. These technological mechanisms, coding techniques and algorithms are often invisible and hard to observe (and thus analyse) because they are proprietary – and because they are constantly changing and adapting to user practices (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6). Thus, in comparison with news media logic, the (human) editorial selections are still there, however processed automatically. But still differentiating from the one-to-many, one-way flow of news media, the social media many-to-many, two-way flow does have a far greater emphasis on the agency of the user. "Users retain significant agency in the process of steering

programmability not only through their own contributions but also because they may resist the coded instructions or defy protocols" (Ibid: 6). An example of this is users' organized retweeting or sharing in a massive way in order to get a topic trending or going viral. Thus, users and owners of social media platforms both have agency in steering and creating content and in this way constantly negotiate the social interaction and meaning of social media platforms.

2. Popularity

Popularity refers to the exact idea of the negotiation/struggle between administrators and users on social media platforms. Where users can like and "push" certain topics by using the affordances, administrators also push topics/persons/brands. Advertisement on social media platforms are the best example of why and how this works and also show the component of market logic upon which social media logic operate. This is why promotion and advertisement on social media platforms is a Big Business and comes with a whole set of other affordances for corporations to use such as Google Analytics and Facebook Insights where it is possible to target users based on their data. This is not only in a consumer corporate context but also used by politicians in campaigns, elections and referendums. Not only through payed adds but also just the fact that many social media platforms push or 'favorise' users or topics with high popularity that will create engagement and traffic – and in that process, devalue others. The affordances such as likes and shares only demonstrate how this process relies on quantifiable endorsement: "The Like-mechanism claims to promote a social experience, but the button simultaneously figures in an automated "like-economy""" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). This tool of not only boosting but also *measuring* trending topics is appropriated as a sort of vox-pop – an inherent part of news media. This popularity tactics and measuring through online metrics, thus demonstrates the interrelation of social media logic and news media logic:

"TV-shows increasingly define the "news of the day" or decide whom to interview on the basis of Twitter trends or by looking into Facebook discussions. Journalists from news media often treat tweets from celebrities or politicians as quotes (…) Platform metrics are increasingly accepted as legitimate standards to measure and rank people and ideas; these rankings are then amplified through mass media and in turn reinforced by users through social buttons such as following and liking" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7

Then the user knows that her or his act of "liking" could potentially propel a topic straight into the public political debate on the news media and perhaps, from there, the political agenda. This is arguably a motivation for social media users to create engagement on platforms.

3. Connectivity

The element of connection seems to be the original objective of social media application: to connect people to other people and to user-generated content. Van Dijck & Poell use the term *connectivity* to cover what they argue is more than just enabling human connection, rather it refers to "the socio-technological affordance of networked platforms to connect content to user activities and advertisers" (Ibid: 8). What Van Dijck & Poell call the "platform apparatus" is always present in this users' activities, and shapes, defines and mediates how users connect and share content – and not least how they are connected to advertisement. This is a strategic tactic of connectivity that is everything but 'organic' because it is "partly allowing formation of strategic alliances or communities through users' initiative, partly forging target audiences through tactics of automated group formation or personalized recommendations." (Ibid: 8). Furthermore, *connectivity* also refers to "networked individualism" where the connection on platforms is very specialized and users can pick and choose and create their own customized social network and community, a sociality that revolves around the person rather than the group or locality. Van Dijck & Poell connect this to contemporary protest movements and the shift from "collective" action to "connective" action, where "life in late modern societies in which formal organizations are losing their grip on individuals, and group toes are being replaced by large-scale, fluid social networks" and where "social technologies function as organizing agents" (Bennett & Segerberg in Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). Furthermore, because of the specialization and customization of consumed messages/information, the many-to-many messaging could arguably create a fragmented public. A public that received personalized news, opinion-based articles that matches the content and opinions of the users him or herself, and the users' friend network. Together with media logic already inherent in the news articles that is consumed in the social media logic context, this can have consequences for a public that must be considered. This is also where we find the notorious Fake News articles. Because the platforms do not have an (visible) editorial function, anyone can share anything. And anyone who can pay, can push a

message and even share it in an article format by appropriating the objective objective/independent signifier of the journalistic article.

4. Datafication

In order for social media platforms to apply this automated personalization and networked customization of connectivity they would need information about users to know who and/or what (product or message) they should connect who to or would make the user engage (comment, share, like) which create *traffic* which generate profit for the platform. This is where datafication comes in, which can also be read as a kind of extension of media logic. It is the predictability of users' (audiences') needs based on the users' data (information). Social media platforms have with time "turned more into data firms, deriving their business models from their ability to harvest and repurpose data rather than from monetizing user activity proper" (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9). All of the abovementioned elements to social media logic is based on datafication because this function is built into the structure. This furthermore affords the platforms with the ability to "mine online social traffic for indicators of trending topics, keywords, sentiments, public viewpoints (…) Twitter, more than any other platform, promotes itself as an echo chamber of people's opinions, even positioning itself as a replacement of offline opinion polls" (Ibid: 9). This connects back to the idea that social media platforms are "neutral" channels, able to measure "informal sentiments, feelings, or underbellies of "the people" at a stage where they are still becoming "official" public opinion" (Ibid: 9). This point is incredibly important in understanding the position of social media platforms in the mediatized society. It also demonstrates how social media logic work together with media logic in providing the "raw" material of public opinion to the news media.

Social Media as Indicator of Public Opinion

As Van Dijck & Poell demonstrate in the above elements of social media logic, social media is not neutral and also has inherent framing that restricts and even pushed the content and connection. The power lies in the supposed neutrality of the data and of the platforms as arenas for communication because,

"in processing data, a platform does not merely "measure" certain expressions or opinions, but also helps *mold* them (…) In opening up "spontaneous" sentiments and opinions to the public eye, platforms have rendered them formalized and preformatted expressions (…) The idea that you can tap into people's unconsciousness or "idea formation" is a basic misconception, which goes back to classic observer effect." (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013: 10, my own emphasis)

Furthermore, the meaning and interpretations that is then prescribed to the data is quite subjective since it is based on analysis and harvested and processed within a human-designed framework. In addition to this, these methods and systems are proprietary which means that they are quite inaccessible for scrutiny. The invisibility and naturalness of these mechanisms is its inherent power, particularly because it is perceived as a source of "facts" about public sentiments and then adapted to the news media as "facts". This is the most important difference between news media logic and social media logic.

Social Movements in the Information Age

Castells (2001) characterizes social movements in the contemporary Western society as fundamentally oriented towards cultural values and are aimed at defending or proposing specific ways of life and meanings. In this sense they are movements to seize power of the mind as opposed to state power (Castells, 2001: 140, 141). That is why public opinion is essential to these movements since it is both where they gain supporters and followers but also because they can act upon institutions and organizations (for example business or government) by the repercussions of their impact on public opinion (Castells, 2001: 141). These movements need support of public opinion in order to get their message across in the media, in order to have a broader impact on the public as well as the parliamentary complex. As we have already established the communicative action of the public sphere, Castells characterization of these movements as "built around communicative systems – essentially the Internet and the media – because they are the main way in which these movements can reach out to those who would adhere to their values, and from there to affect the consciousness of society as a whole" (Castells, 2001: 140). The movements, as embedded in the public sphere, understand their limitations of creating the change they want or gaining the

following they need in order to have an impact on the parliamentary complex. As established by Habermas, the power of the public sphere lies in the communicative action as well as in their ability to organize through society. In this perspective it is only logical that the movements are centred around communications systems. In Castells description of the characteristics of movements in the Information Age as cultural and of matters of the mind, values etc. he even goes as far as to call them "emotional movements". This characteristic reinforces the communicative power that they have, and that they need to have in order to gain media attention, which, in a mediatized society equals impact: "Emotional movements, often triggered by a media event, or by a major crisis, seem often to be more important sources of social change than the day-to-day routine of dutiful NGOs. The Internet becomes an essential medium of expression and organization for these kinds of manifestations, which coincide in a given time and space, make their impact through the media world" (Castells, 2001: 141). The Internet functions in this regard both as a medium of expression, to make an impact in the media, but also as a medium of organization. "The novelty is their networking via Internet, because it allows the movement to be diverse and coordinated at the same time, to engage in a continuing debate, and yet not be paralyzed by it, since each one of its nodes can reconfigure a network of its affinities (…) And because the internet is its home it cannot be disorganized or captured" (Castells, 2001: 142). This is arguably an important aspect to the possibilities that the Internet presents. The decentralized, non-physical, potentially global network that is social movements on the Internet, poses unprecedented possibilities for such formations. "The horizontality of networks support cooperation and solidarity while undermining the need for formal leaderships" (Castells, 2015: 194). In turn, it also makes the movements highly dependent on the Internet due to their reliance on global information networks for organization and communication. Thus, the movements are arguably quite extensionally subjected to the logics of the social media and other information networks on the Internet. As argued earlier, they are also dependent on media logics. But as Castells argues, the movements simultaneously transform the Internet: "from organizational business tool and communication medium, it becomes a lever of social transformation as well" (Castells, 2001: 143). This emphasises the circular interdependencies of communication systems in the public sphere from the Internet to news media and to social movements.

Social Movements and The Internet

Already in 2001, Manuel Castells proclaimed that "The internet is the fabric of our lives" (Castells, 2001: 1). 20 years later, that statement has only become more truthful, perhaps in ways that Castells, at that time, could not even imagine. This is also why it is almost impossible, or at least quite pointless, to examine any social communicative formation without taking into account the Internet and more specifically social media.

According to Castells, the Internet is a form of extension of the age-old human practice of organizing in networks. With technology of the internet, networks have taken on a new form: that of information networks (Castells, 2001: 1). Where human networks have had their weaknesses in accomplishing greater tasks, thus traditionally "networks were primarily the preserve of private life; centralized hierarchies were the fiefdoms of power and production." (Castells, 2001: 2). But now, powered by the Internet, human networks are able to overcome this earlier inherent obstacle of horizontal networks. Because of communication technologies such as the Internet, networks are able to deploy the flexibility and adaptability with means of coordinating tasks and manage complexity in an unprecedented combination (Ibid: 2). Because of this, networks of information will, according to Castells, outcompete and outperform any vertically organized corporation and centralized bureaucracy of the economy and society in general (Ibid: 1). Castells even calls this a combination of "coordinated decision-making and decentralized execution, of individualized expression and global, horizontal communication which provide *a superior organizational form of human action*." (Castells, 2001: 2 my own emphasis).

What is most revolutionary about the internet in communication terms, is the communication of many to many in a medium that defies time and space in a global scale (Ibid: 2). Thus, setting aside the one directional, one-to-many forms of communication such as radio, television and physical newspapers. But even the thought of the internet as a superior organizational form of human action and the nods toward a more democratic, de-centralized horizontal network of communication, we must not succumb to normativity when analysing and discussing the impact of this medium: "Neither utopia nor dystopia, the internet is the expression of ourselves" (Castells, 2001: 6). As Castells argues, the internet and its potential and uses is deeply intrenched in the societal context within which it exists: "it all depends on context and process. (…) the Internet is a particularly malleable technology, susceptible of

being deeply modified by its social practice, and leading to a whole range of potential social outcomes" (Castells, 2001: 5). However, the Internet and its applications like social media, is not a neutral technology only shaped by its uses. In fact, this networked culture "where information and communication got increasingly defined by the affordances of web technologies" also gave way to the quick rise of social media platforms in the first decade of the 21st century (Van Dijck, 2013: 5). The non-neutrality of social media platforms is an important component in analysing how it influenced social movements. In the following I will present such ideas.

2.2.4 COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

This thesis revolves around the Habermas' theory of communicative action that he describes as occurring "whenever the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding. In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions." (Habermas 1991: 286 This arguably relates to how actors of social movements organize and communicate with one another on social media platforms, as well as try to draw attention to, and create change on a societal level.

In the above quote, Habermas differentiate between two different objectives of communication: Reaching egocentric success and reaching understanding and agreement. For real communicative action to take place, agents must have the objective of "reaching understanding [which] is considered to be a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects." (Haberman 1991: 286) Thus "In this respect the negotiation of definitions of the situation is an essential element of the interpretive accomplishments required for communicative action" (Ibid: 286) This is relevant when investigating into communicative processes on political-social issues in the public sphere.

The negotiations of definitions are essential in reaching understanding which ultimately means agreement. Negotiating definitions on a societal level is an obvious challenge because "agreements rests on common *convictions*." (Ibid: 287 emphasis in original). In my understanding of Habermas, the social movements chosen as cases in this thesis, arguably relate to societal issues and their communicative action is struggling and negotiating to find agreement. However, a public is made up of multiple *convictions* that make this communicative action towards agreement difficult. These *convictions* may be informed by discourses around the issue which in turn may be informed by certain power structures. This is where we find agents whose communicative objective is not understanding or agreement but rather before-mentioned egocentric calculations of success. Habermas writes "without doubt, there are countless cases of indirect understanding, where one subject gives another something to understand through signals, indirectly gets him to form a certain opinion or to adopt certain intentions by way of inferentially working up perceptions of the situation" (Habermas 1991: 287). In relation to the subject area of this thesis, I apply this understanding to the news media which arguably communicate with the goal of *egocentric calculated success* rather than hoping for genuine understanding and agreement with their reader/viewer/listener/consumer.

In this perspective it seems to emphasise an institutional media logic: "where, on the basis of an already habitual communicative practice of everyday life, one subject inconspicuously harnesses another for his own purposes, that is, induces him to behave in a desired way by manipulatively employing linguistic means and thereby instrumentalizes him for his own success." (Ibid: 289). Here, the habitual communicative practice of everyday life can be understood as relating to stereotyping, sensationalizing etc. In fact, according to Fuchs, "for Habermas, critical theory questions the fact that steering media (money, power) attack 'the communicative infrastructure of largely rationalized life worlds'" (Habermas, 1987: 375 in Fuchs, 2016: 29). Habermas' goal is undistorted communication in the lifeworld (the public) and stresses the emancipatory role of communication. (Ibid: 30).

Communicative Action and Public-Interest Groups

Habermas perceives the political system of politics and law as open to the lifeworld and is differentiated into two spheres of administrative and communicative power (Habermas, 1997:

270). The administrative power system or sphere is the "state apparatus" and the sphere of communicative power is where we find the public sphere that is arranged around the communicative complex (the media). Habermas refers to this as the political action system which relies on the institutionalized opinion- and will-formation which in turn depends on the "informal context of communication found in the public sphere, in civil society, and in spheres of private life. In other words, the political action system is embedded in the lifeworld context" (Ibid: 270). A circular idea of the media as the institutionalized opinion and will-formation that depends on *supplies* coming from the life world. Thus, the media informs the public but also depends on it as a source. This can be compared to Van Dijck & Poell's (2013) model of social media logic where the news media uses social media as a source of 'raw' material of public opinion or 'the voice of the people'[1].

The life world a network of composed communicative actors such as associations, collectives and organizations (Habermas, 1997: 271). Some of these systems become socially integrated through shared values, norms and mutual understanding and develop a special code. They are however all anchored in the society component of the lifeworld through the "legal institutionalization of steering media" (Ibid: 271). These *communicative actors* embedded in the public is a wide spectrum of groups including 'public-interest groups' who "give voice to social problems, make broad demands, articulate public interests or needs, and thus attempt to influence the political process more from normative points of view than from the standpoint of particular interests" (Ibid: 272). These opinion-forming associations "belong to the civil-social infrastructure of a public sphere *dominated by the mass media*. With its informal, highly differentiated and cross-linked channels of communication, this public sphere forms the real periphery." (Ibid: 272, my own emphasis).

Here Habermas argues that the political processes of opinion- and will-formation in the periphery are actually at the heart of democracy in that they are supposed to be decisive for political development. The democratic legitimacy of political decisions "must be steered by communication flows that start at the periphery and pass through the sluices of democratic and constitutional procedures situated at the entrance to the parliamentary complex or the courts" (Ibid: 272). However, these procedures more often than not rely on established

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[1] As a side note, this is problematic as the information from social media platforms can never be understood as 'raw' or unmediated. This is an issue that is further discussed in the social media logic section

patterns and routines within the administrative complex and must be open to renovative impulses from the periphery. These renovative impulses could be understood as the social movements (or public interest groups as Habermas describes them) and their objective to draw attention to certain issues in order to 'renovate' and influence these established patterns of political decision-making within the state-apparatus.

Communicative Action and the Political Influence

One process of 'renovation'/influence especially relating to media is "characterized by a consciousness of crisis, a heightened public attention, an intensified search for solutions, in short, by *problematization*." (Ibid: 273, emphasis in original). When the perception of problems have taken a conflictual turn, the attention span of the citizenry enlarges and with the pressure of public opinion "then necessitates an extraordinary mode of problem solving, which favours the constitutional channels for the circulation of power and thus actuates sensibilities for the constitutional allocation of *political responsibilities*." (Ibid: 273, emphasis in original).

This demonstrates the process of mediatization, news media logic as well as social media logic. Here, a heightened conflictual problematization that caters to news media logic, informed by public attention through social media functions then as a catalyst for disruption (or at least political attention). Here, *problematization* and conflict, as Habermas emphasises, are important components in this communicative circulation of power, from the periphery of the public sphere to the administrative complex.

However, it must be emphasised that regardless of the intensity of pressure from communicative actors, ultimately the parliaments and the courts are the only two branches of government that are *formally* empowered to take action and also actually determine the direction in which communication circulates (Habermas, 1997: 273).

These processes are at the centre of this problem which I will analyse and discuss in this thesis. Habermas encapsulates how the empirical weight of the circulation of power in society "depends primarily of weather civil society; through resonant and autonomous public spheres, develops impulses with enough vitality to bring conflicts from the periphery into the centre of the political system" (Ibid: 255). But how to do that?

This is where Habermas arguably describes a notion of mediatization, where the public-interest groups in a way use media logic the same way that Hjarvard (2009) would describe that politicians do as 'riding the wave of media logic'. Habermas writes that "the public sphere must, in addition, amplify the pressure of the problems, that is, not only detect and identify problems but also convincingly and influentially thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions, and *dramatize* them in such a way that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes" (Habermas, 1997: 274, my own emphasis).

In a way one could argue that the public is urged to take advantage of the mediatization of politics in *dramatizing* issues in such a way that the media pay attention and then – in a mediatized society – results in politicians paying attention and hopefully taking action as well. Somehow it seems that the public interest groups – a component to the public sphere – must first mobilize the media in order to mobilize politicians in a mediatized society. Because Habermas describes the problematization *in such a way* that issues are dealt with in the parliamentary complex.

However, this process is possible "only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environment and if anonymous audiences grant feedback between an informed elite discourse and a responsive civil society" (Habermas, 2006: 412). This is an important point, because it shows how the media plays a decisive role in the process of facilitating deliberative legitimation in the public sphere. The media must be independent and objective and there must be feedback between elite discourse produced by media professionals (Habermas, 2006: 417) and the civil society (counter narratives, e.g. presented on social media).

3. METHOD

As this thesis is explorative in the subject area, the problem formulation is not a strictly hypothetical assumption that is to be falsified or verified. Here, the qualitative methods can help to make the creative process of hypothesis-formation *a part* of the empirical work and not only place it in the rational considerations *before* the empirical work (Collin & Køppe, 2014: 552). "The prerequisite to the empirical work is a hypothesis-formation, which based on earlier empirical work etc., form some statements or assumptions about connections in the world" (Collin & Køppe, 2014: 552, my own translation). In order to form the problem formulation for this thesis, it was necessary to first understand the concept of mediatization and also to gain understanding of social movements and their relation to social media.

I had done a research project about the MeToo movement and in general followed the Black Lives Matter movement on social media. I had thus formed assumptions about the subject area beforehand thus "the qualitative methods can help to give further aspects to the assumptions that are made beforehand" (Ibid: 552). This is due to the complexity of the human world where more knowledge creates more diversified aspects in a subject area. However, my approach is not strictly hypothesis-deductive since my empirical material partly builds on already existing knowledge: The research articles that I intend so analyse. The abductive approach can assist here because it does rely on a premise that is evident (social movements *are* influenced by mediatization and social media) but the outcome of the abductive study is of a probable nature, which means forming a conclusion from the information that is known; the best explanation (Meriam webster)[2]. I wish for this study to present new information about the communication processes between the life world and the media complex, thus present generalised findings.

3.1 QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY AND CHOICE OF EMPIRICAL DATA

To answer my problem formulation, I have chosen to analyse these processes as the happen in a real-life context: A qualitative case study. Because the subject area is quite content

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[2] https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/deduction-vs-induction-vs-abduction

specific, I decided to study three different cases: The Black Lives Matter movement, the Me Too movement and finally the Occupy Wall Street movement. What they all three have in common is that they have had a strong presence on social media as well as in the mainstream news media. Their causes are quite different, however they arguably relate at the core, to some form of societal dominance/suppression (racial, sexual and economical) thus they are concerned with social issues of the life world. I am aware of the US national context of the movements. However, I do believe I will be able to draw generalised conclusions that can be applied to other national contexts. This is due to the supra-national nature of social media as well as the globalizing effects of all three movement, something, however, I will not delve deeper into. Furthermore, the national context of the US makes sense in the way that social media is an American invention, arguably based in a North American capitalist market logic.

Through my three-part analysis, I wish to explore the underlying principles of communicative action as well as social media logic and news media logic. Since the scope of this exploration is relatively broad covering both social media and news media impact, I chose to use pre-existing empirical data. Due restrictions on time and resources, I would not have been able to obtain such diversified insights and create quality data myself, on both processes of social media use, news media representation, and insights into the three movements respectively. Applying academic articles enables me to broaden the scope as well as the ensuring the academic validity and relevance of the data. I will understand my findings as explorations into the subject area and I wish to present generalisations of these processes.

3.2 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

To make this study operational, I will find academic research articles that has made enquiry into the three cases respectively, and their relations to social media and news media as well as give an overall outline of the course of the movements respectively. I will then apply my own theoretical perspectives on the findings of these articles as well as the general discourse of the democratic potential of social media that is presented in the article. This means that I will not only look into the findings of the article but also the position the author takes on social media. In researching and assessing sources, I will validate the articles in critically check the source of the information, e.g. the university or the journal that has published the article as well as

the academic credibility of the author. In light of my interest and perspective on the subject area I will use articles that have made enquiry into a number of aspects relating to my problem formulation:

1. Articles about media reception and narratives of each movement in order to identify media events that catapulted an extensive media-coverage, the offline origin and nature of said event. To identify media-logic in the narrative of events. To examine the consequence/outcome of the heightened media attention for the movement. In analysing this theme I will apply Castells' concept of social movements on the Internet as well as Habermas and Castells' notions the 'media event' or the *problematization,* to identify and analyse the catalyst of the movements respectively.

2. Articles about each movement's use of social medias as mean of organization and communication and to understand the nature of the movement's social media presence. This way I will also be able to examine to what extent the movement has been dependent of social media for its global impact. In this theme I will apply the theoretical perspective of Castells, Fuchs, Habermas and especially Van Dicjk & Peoll's model of social media logic.

3. Articles that has made critical inquiry into mainstream news media representation of the movements. These findings I wish to analyse using Hjarvard and Schulz' theories of mediatization as well as Asp's model of media logic.

The structure of my analysis will follow this thematic disposition, to make an equal inquiry into each movement. However, the focus may differentiate following the focus of the sources and analytical interest points. Furthermore, my analysis will be conducted using the hermeneutic circle where I will go back and forth between specific observations in the research articles and the meta-level of the chosen theory. This way I will expand my understanding of the phenomena at hand.

Finally, I will compare and discuss the findings from each movement which will allow me to answer my problem formulation. In this way I will be able to identify differences and similarities and from that make the best interpretation and generalization about how mediatization and social media influences social movements.

4. ANALYSIS

The following analysis is divided in three parts, each analysing the case of Black lives Matter, Me Too and Occupy Wall Street. Each part consists of three segments, each segment covering different aspects of my problem formulation and research questions. Each section starts with an introduction to how each movement started and what it stands for. Second, is an analysis of how the movement interacts with social media, and finally an analysis of how the movement is presented in the media.

4.1 ANALYSIS PART 1: BLACK LIVES MATTER

4.1.1 BLACK LIVES MATTER INTRODUCTION

The Black Lives Matter movement was founded in 2013 by three black community organizers; Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors-Briggnac and Opal Tometi in the wake of the acquittal of the police officer who shot and killed black teen Trayvon Martin in Florida, 2013 (Choudhury et al., 2016: 92). The official website of BLM states that their objective is to "imaging and creating a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic, and political power to thrive."[3]

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[3] www.blacklivesmatter.com, 'about', 'what matters'

The movement grew in 2014 following the highly publicised police-killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York (Choudhury et al., 2016: 92). BLM is organized around the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter and "social media, especially Twitter, due to its pervasiveness and adoption, has provided the fundamental infrastructure to this activist movement." (Ibid: 92). Additionally, Carney's writes "the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter (…) became the rallying call for protesters" (Carney, 2016: 181). The idea that a hashtag, which is a function on social media, is characterized as the *rallying call* for a movement is an interesting statement because it shows how the movement is, to some extent, centred around social media. Habermas' argument that protest groups are organized around media systems agrees with Castells' "because they are the main way in which these movements can reach out to those who would adhere to their [the social movements'] values, and from there affect the consciousness of society as a whole" (Castells, 2001: 140).

Co-founder Cullors-Brignac stated that ""*Because of social media we reach people in the smallest corners of America (…) There is a network and a hashtag to gather around.*" (…) Similarly, and in contrast to the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968), activist DeRay McKesson noted: "*The tools that we have to organize and to resist are fundamentally different than anything that's existed before in black struggle.*"" (Choudhury et al., 2016: 92, emphasis in original). This is interesting in relation to the aspect of *substitution* in Schulz' mediatization theory, because he argues that media does not only substitute real-life communication but also enhances it. The simple fact that social media makes it possible for BLM activists to connect, communicate and organize through space and time, demonstrates how the BLM movement in a contemporary mediatized society, has unprecedented possibilities[4]. Castells' idea of social movements' use of the Internet as a networking and organization tool that even becomes an essential medium of continuing debate, since each of its nodes can reconfigure a network of its own. And because the Internet is its home it cannot be disorganized and captured (Castells, 2001: 142). This is quite clear in the quote from BLM co-founder especially her comparison with the Civil Rights Movement from decades ago (pre-Internet). Castells' argument of strength in its ability to reconfigure comes across in

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[4] Simultaneously it arguably does give a notion of dependency on such communication networks like social media which is why this analysis must take a critical theoretical approach in analysing the work that has been done within the subject area.

Choudhury et al.'s analysis: "The BLM protests were highly de-centralized but coordinated. Without any formalized hierarchical structure and were often led by different groups of people in geographically disparate locations" (Choudhury et al., 2016: 93). Mundt et al.'s analysis concours: "BLM is characterized by its explicit rejection of hierarchy and centralized leadership, instead billing itself as "leader-full," horizontally structured (…) they have rejected the old style of leadership [and this is] what makes this movement most powerful." (Mundt et al, 2018: 3, 4).

Furthermore, Castells' characterization of social movements in the Information Age as wanting to influence the mind rather than state power and that they are "emotional movements, often triggered by a media event, or by a major crisis" (Ibid: 141). The triggering media event of the BLM was – and still is – the police killings of black men. Leopold & Bell characterize Brown's death as "an important point in stimulating BLM protests" (Leopold & Bells, 2017: 274). Both Castells and Habermas refer to an event that heightens media attention, *problematizes* the cause and potentially creates change, in Castells' words more so than the every-day hard work of NGOs.

The choice of words of Leopold & Bells is quite interesting in this regard because it gives an idea of a circular information-stimulation flow that goes both ways. That not only real-life social movements gain heightened media attention but also that media attention, as information, reflects in heightened real-life protest and support of the movements. The most recently example of this is the highly publicised event of the murder of George Floyd that arguably has catapulted the BLM movement into new offline and online uprising as well as heightened media attention.

Mundt et al. cites findings from Freelon et al. (2016): "the relative success of BLM is due to its focus on the concrete issue of police brutality, noting "Unlike wealth or income inequality, police brutality is concrete, discrete in its manifestations, and above all, visual" (Mundt et al., 2018: 82). They argue that this emphasis makes BLM's cause particularly well-suited to Internet-based activism, in contrasts with, for example, Occupy Wall Street, with its focus on the more amorphous (and difficult to visually express) issue of wealth inequality." (Mundt et al., 2018: 3). This observation is quite interesting from a mediatization perspective. Mundt et al. relate their observation to internet-based activism, however one could also relate this to a notion of mediatization of social movements.

As established in Habermas and Hjarvard's observations, in order for communicative actors of the public sphere to have political impact they must *problematize* issues in such a way that it will penetrate the communicative complex (the mass media) and from there the administrative complex (government). In the observation of the differences between BLM and Occupy Wall Street and the difference in 'success' arguably build on notions of media logic: the specific issue of police brutality is visual and "concrete" in line with the *professional standard* aspect of Asp's model of media logic. The professional standards relate to the commodification of news, simply said the way news are produced in order to gain and hold costumers. One of these are *concretization* (Asp, 2014) along with *personalization, confrontation, simplification and accentuation*. One could argue that media events of the police killings of black men relate to each of these storytelling techniques designed to hold and attract readers.

Thus, based on Mundt et al.'s observation on the relative success of BLM, one could argue that this could be a result of the fact that the BLM cause caters more to media logic, than the more abstract cause of for example the Occupy movement. The media events (fatal police brutality) relating to BLM is of such a violent character that they get heightened media attention in contrast to Occupy that may not be based on the same heightened media events such as death and violence, at least not in a very concrete, visual way as we see it time and again in BLM.

This can arguably be a testimony to a mediatization of social movements, understood in the way that the media events that are connected to the cause are of a character that 'fits' well with media logic it gets more 'air-time' in the press. However, more 'air-time' is not necessarily equal to political influence, shift in public discourse or even systemic changes.

4.1.2 BLACK LIVES MATTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Through their analysis, Mundt et al found three ways that BLM use social media: "(1) for mobilizing internal and external resources, (2) for building coalitions among and between BLM groups and other social movements, and (3) for controlling the narrative of the movement." (Mundt et al, 2018: 6)

Scaling and organization

One of the most important functions of social media for the BLM movement have been the ability to organize and connect with members – current and potential. In line with my argument of mediatization of the BLM movement, Shultz' *Substitution* dimension to mediatization relates to the idea that a social experience is enhanced when it happens through media, and also *extension* that makes it even possible for people to connect and communicate across time and space. Like so, one could argue that BLM is quite dependent on social media when it comes to communicating between members because the same communication offline between members is not possible on the same scale as their online communication. In this way it is possible to characterize BLM's organization and communication activities as *direct mediatization* (Hjarvardt, 2009) because the activity of organizing and communicating is performed through interaction with a medium (social media in this case).

Furthermore, there is a necessary dependence on the social media in order to perform the activity which was before purely offline. It should be noted that 'before' does not relate to BLM because the movement did not exist before the Internet, rather it relates to reflections on how a movement such as BLM could have had the same relative success if they did not have the Internet and social media. This contrast of activities before and after the use of social media is quite saying when looking at it in relation to theories of mediatization. To mention the quote again of activist DeRay McKesson: "*The tools that we have to organize and to resist are fundamentally different than anything that's existed before in black struggle.*"" (Ibid: 92, emphasis in original). Carney (2016) writes: "In previous decades, young people like those currently dominating the discourse on social media, which has in turn influenced

news coverage and more mainstream or traditional forms of media, might not have had the opportunity to participate in the public sphere." (Carney, 2016: 196).

Mundt et al. offer their perspective on this idea of direct mediatization of previously offline activities now happening online: "They also note the importance of Facebook pages and groups in providing "safe spaces" for protesters to meet [virtually], as well as "a type of public commons for free speech" not available elsewhere" (Khamis & Vaughn, 2012: 157 in Mundt et al, 2018: 2). Actually, in this case there may not even be talk about offline activities going online, but rather opportunities for activities that are *only* available online. Milan (2015) in Mundt et al. even suggests that interactions among activists on social media "serves as the vehicle of meaning work, adjoining and to some extent replacing other traditional intermediaries such as alternative and mainstream media and face-to-face interactions." (Milan, 2015: 890 in Mundt et al., 2018: 2).

It can be argued that social media interactions around BLM does not only *replace* offline activities but create new ways of communicating and organizing that was impossible before social media and the networking possibilities of Internet. In this way one can reflect about the question if BLM would have the relative 'success' without the affordances of social media.

Changing the Public Discourse

Carney (2016) interprets the social media activity of the BLM movement as a way for users to challenge dominant discourses of race-based stereotypes. She characterises black people in America as the 'working class' and highlights the public sphere as historically belonging to middle or higher classes who inherently do not have understanding for struggles of (working class) black people. Thus, her argument is that social media poses an unprecedented opportunity for especially black youth to participate in the public sphere. She states that the public sphere is normally dominated by white discourses and marginalizes the voices of the oppressed thus ""'#BlackLivesMatter: Call to Action,'' consists of posts from activists seeking to dismantle institutional racism who seized the opportunity to create a discourse about the oppression of Black men by the police." (Carney, 2016: 194). She goes on: "Social media serves as a public sphere where youth of colour are particularly skilled and well

equipped to gain some amount of power over public discourse to express their experiences and viewpoints." (Carney, 2016: 196). The notion of social media functioning as an alternative public sphere is also prevalent in Chaudrey et al.'s analysis: "One of the most powerful attributes of social media platforms has been their ability to bring the voices of the masses to the fore during times of societal and political upheavals and our findings indicate that the Black Lives Matter activist movement is no exception." (Chaudrey et al., 2016: 100).

From a critical perspective, it does raise questions of how the activists actually bring voices to 'the fore' – what is 'the fore'? As well as black youth's ability to gain power over public discourse. When returning to Habermas' theory of communicative action, the public is a space "dominated by mass media" (Habermas, 1997: 272). However, Habermas' reading of mass media as the media complex (news media) and Hjarvardt (2009) and Asp's (2014) reading of the news media as an institution, arguably the public sphere is still dominated by news media which is much different than social media. As Carney writes: "In the future, we should stay alert to the ways in which public discourse on social media directly or indirectly influences policy and affects change on a structural level within the nation." But in light of Habermas' understanding of the public's communicative power is limited in the fact that the public need to *problematize* events and issues inn such as way that the media pay attention in order for politicians to pay attention. Carney (2016) thus seems to forget the middle step in the process of public communicative action towards political influence. She seems to assume that a public discourse on social media has the potential to directly influence political decisions – but she misses the middle step which is the media.

As Habermas (1997) argues, the public's political power is quite limited and is thus dependent on the media complex in order to influence the parliamentary complex. Carney states that "Engaging in activism and participating in a forum that allows traditionally silenced groups to be heard are valuable in and of itself. In the future, we should stay alert to the ways in which public discourse on social media directly or indirectly influences policy and affects change on a structural level within the nation." (Carney 2016: 197). This statement along with the premise of the article is arguably engaging in a taking-for-granted notion of social media as a neutral, democratic space for public discussion, discourse formation and a space for a new and more just public sphere to emerge. This premise of an

inherent neutrality of social media and its seemingly limitless possibilities of social change also build into this take-for-granted notion of social media.

4.1.3 BLACK LIVES MATTER AND NEWS MEDIA

It is particularly important to create counter narratives because the dominant ones in the media functions - in a mediatized society - like an objective representation of reality because of the *amalgamation* (Schulz, 2004) of social reality and media representation of reality, often taken for granted in a mediatized society. In a way it can be argued that the amalgamation dimension of substituting real life experiences with media experience makes people rely on media in constructing their reality rather than their own experience or don't have a real-life experience with for example racism.

Counter Narratives: From Social Media to Mainstream Media?

Referring back to Castells' (2001) statement of how everything that goes on outside the media does not exist in the collective mind (public sphere) demonstrates how important it is for BLM to both draw attention to their cause but also to create counter-narratives on social media otherwise the only representation of their struggles is the one represented in the media. However, in order for counter narratives on social media to seriously impact or alter the dominant discourse they must converge to news media because this is where public discourse is produced and represented. Here we must look critical at the media complex as an interpreting and scrutinizing entity (Asp, 2014) and we must be critical in the notion that whatever happens on social media will automatically be amplified in traditional news media – this is simply untrue (Van Dijck & Peoll, 2013).

An interesting finding from the articles is the discourse surrounding social media as a neutral platform of direct communication between people and activists. This discourse is not only to be found in the scholars' interviewees among BLM activists but also in the scholars' own sentiments and more specific in their criticism of the platforms which seem to be quite

lacking in some cases. The notion of social media as a neutral public space and a space for creating counter narratives of BLM is often juxtaposed to mainstream news media. An example of this is Mundt et al.'s interviewee, a BLM group administrator saying: "I could see how accurate Twitter was, versus what the media was saying (…) You couldn't cite the Internet before… you can actually cite Twitter, now you can actually cite Facebook, and it's because now there's more credibility, there's more exposure. You can actually find the people, the grassroots activists and be there and watch and see their videotaping and then I can read the same article [in mainstream media], or an article of accounts of the same day and I can say. "That did not happen."" (in Mundt et al., 2018: 10). Mundt et al.'s outtake from the quote is as follows: "the use of social media for presenting and amplifying non-dominant narratives highlights an important function of digital platforms in contributing to shifts in public discourse." (Ibid: 10). Mundt et al. seem to claim that by the mere fact that BLM activists share counter-narratives on social media automatically will create a "shift" in public discourse.

One must take into account the fact that if a number of people posts counter-narratives on social media, the users who see their posts most likely see them because they are following the person (BLM activist) which most likely mean that they agree with the person and the narrative. This relates to Van Dijck & Poell's (2013) *datafication* component to her model of social media logic, where through algorithm, users' activities are collected, analysed and then applied to models of personalized interests. Users are thus presented with content that they like in order to keep them engaged. This may result in the BLM counter discourses only circulating in the BLM community and rarely reach outside of the users who already agrees.

Furthermore, the complicated notion of public discourse and especially what it would take to "shift" – and even prove that there has been a shift - seems to be quite a difficult task to undertake academically. Are the activists just preaching to the choir (their social media following)? Mundt et al.' as well as their interviewees seem to confirm this idea of social media as a tool of social change: ""Social media provides us [BLM activists] a platform to tell our story as real, as raw, and as relevant as it may be, without the worry of a filter being put on, or someone else's perspectives and biases." Moreover, social media tools facilitate amplification of preferred narratives through functions such as "repost" or "share" options."" (Mundt et al, 2018: 9). There seem to be an idea of social media being a direct megaphone to

the public sphere but unfortunately in reality, the 'social media public sphere' it is far more fragmented than so.

There is no doubt that the social media activity as well as the protests does generate public attention, however, does that mean it also generate a "shift" in public discourse around race? As we will get into in the following section, the processes of counter-narratives towards the public sphere may be more complicated than so.

News Media Narratives

In the following I will partly demonstrate how mainstream news media represent the struggles of BLM. Leopold & Bells (2017) analysis is based on news articles about the BLM protests in the city of Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, published within a period of 6 months, starting one month before the acquitting of the police officer who shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed black teen. Findings from Leopold & Bell gives various examples of what they identify as aspects of the *protest paradigm* which is a typical negative language-use about protests in mainstream media. However, I analyse these aspects in relation to Asp's media logic theory to understand processes of mediatization. Of Asp's media logic theory, *professional standards* that relate to the production of news, under this, regulative rules made in order to attract and hold audiences (consumers), thus certain storytelling techniques are applied, among others; *personalization, confrontation, simplification.* Leopold & Bell present a number of exerts from articles where in which I identify aspects of media logic. Especially storytelling techniques that, according to Asp, are based on the commodification-aspect of news production: to attract and hold costumers. Roughly said: a way to narrate news-events in order to sell.

Leopold & Bell found that often times the protesters in Ferguson would be juxtaposed to the other residents of the city, a confrontational dichotomy that worked also to create a description of the protests as disorganized, criminal and riot (without a cause) in sharp contrast to the residents (even though protesters were also residents of Ferguson). Missouri governor Jay Nixon is quoted on Ferguson protesters: "Criminals intent on lawlessness and destruction terrorized this community, burning buildings, firing guns, vandalizing storefronts and looting family businesses, many for the second time." (Queally and Muskal, LA Times,

2014 in Leopold & Bell, 2017: 725). Same article goes on: ""Protests unfolded in major cities across the nation Tuesday night as more than 2,000 National Guard troops and hundreds of police officers converged in the St Louis area to guard against the vandalism, arson, and looting that erupted in suburban Ferguson a night earlier" (…) Ferguson Mayor James Knowles deploying the national guard "to protect our people"" (Ibid: 725). The juxtaposition of the protesters on the one side and the state officials and (other) residents on the other side does give a notion that the articles are not being completely objective in describing the events. This relate to Asp's analysis of news media as an institution has gone from a primarily monitoring function to a proactive, scrutinizing and interpreting function and even goes as far as to characterize the news media as a political actor in itself (Asp, 2014: 261). According to Asp, this position gives a mandate for the media to speak for the people and have an upper hand in the public debate. This position and function of the news media gives incredible power which makes the critical analysis of framing and language use around such events crucial.

Leopold & Bell also found that quotes from regular people are often from bystanders and not protesters, furthermore with a negative assumption. They quote an example of this: "Ferguson resident Jill Hatcher said she used to drive by and honk her horn in support. 'Now I speed by with my windows up and my doors locked' she said" (Addo in St Louis Post-Dispatch, 2014 in Leopold & Bell, 2017: 725-726). The same article cites the Missouri governor: ""I am deeply saddened for the people of Ferguson who woke up to see parts of their community in ruins" the governor said "No one should have to live like this. No one deserves this. We must do better and we will" (…) "These senseless acts of violence have been devastating to the city of Ferguson" said Dan Isom, director of the Department of Public Safety. "These criminals must and will be held to account for their actions."" (Ibid: 728).

These quotes are incredibly interesting in themselves due to the fact that the state officials are directing their concern towards the destruction of property rather than the killing of a black unarmed teen by a police officer and the killer's later acquitting, though racial injustice is not the subject area of this thesis. However, it is important in order to understand how elected politicians and state officials use these events to not only show where their concern and sympathy lies (*not* with the protesters) but also how they themselves use the c*onfrontation* and *simplification* aspect of media logic. Arguable this is an 'act' of mediatized politics. In the state-officials' choice of words and language, they create a divide between 'us' (the

government and non-protesting citizens) and 'them' (the mindless criminals known as protesters). Additionally, the politicians create a simplification of events by only focusing on the destructions during the protests and not the cause behind events. Furthermore, to have National Guard troops deployed in Ferguson can arguably also be a political signal of 'law and order' and especially the Ferguson Mayor's expression for his wish for the National Guard to 'protect our people'. It is very clear who are the Mayor's 'people' and who are not.

In addition to that, systemic racism may be too complicated an issue and media institution thus also use *personification* in order to make the news consumer be able to see her/his own point of view in the issue. Arguable many Americans understand the 'bad for business' paradigm as the universal indicator of good vs. bad. Does protesters make small family businesses shut down or even being vandalised by protesters, it is quite obvious that the bad person is the one who destroy the small family owned businesses.

More examples of this is as Leopold and Bell describe "pointing out attempts to disrupt holiday events such as Black Friday shopping" (Adam and Macmillan, 2014; Feuerherd et al., 2014 in Leopold & Bell, 2017: 276). In fact, Leopold & Bell found that 54 percent of the articles analysed "consistently made note of social and economic disruption by describing long lines of traffic, pointing out that protesters had disrupted holiday shopping, and using quotes from storeowners who had seen declines in shoppers and total sales." (Ibid: 727). To put this in relation, just 23 percent out of the quotes used from protesters in the articles "contained in-depth information about the motivations, desires, or aims of the protests or protesters" (Ibid: 727). Leopold & Bell argue that "without accompanying the descriptions with an analysis of the issues only serves to delegitimize the protests by highlighting superficial aspects of the protests." (Ibid: 727). This also testifies to the *simplification* of events on order to make them more 'sellable'. Arguably not many people have the time or desire to read a lengthy analysis of protesters motivations and systemic racism which is why the issues are often violently simplified in news media to make them more digestible/sellable.

The media logic aspect of objectivity and the independent discussion of 'each side' is highly contested and the news media's increasing interpreting function is quite blatant in the following quote: "Police already tense from a series of violent confrontations have turned to 12-hour shifts and limits on vacations as they face a new challenge of potentially hostile protests that may blanket the region this weekend" (St Louis Post-Dispatch, 2014 in Leopold

& Bell, 2017: 728). This is arguably *personalization* since it is something that the average newspaper costumer can relate to in their own life and does create a certain discourse around protesters versus 'us' normal, peaceful, hardworking (white) Americans. In a critical theoretical perspective, it demonstrates the media as being part of the dominant class and reproducing dominant discourses surrounding race in America.

Repercussions of Media Attention

The Leopold & Bell (2017) analysis of newspaper articles about BLM gives an interesting angle to the idea of news media being the catalyst for the political change that social movements assumedly wants. It raises the question if all media attention is good attention? Can media attention harm the objectives of the movement? If the movement succeeds in 'penetrating' the news media and get the national (and global) attention on the issues at hand, does that mean they will gain support in the broader public sphere and thus political change? Do they get their counter-narratives across? It might be a too simplistic idea that for a movement to crate political change they must get the attention of politicians, or at least create media attention around an issue that the politicians can see as an opportunity to assert him/herself by acting on public concern. However, there is one step missing which is the media representation of the issue at hand which further influences public opinion and ultimately which 'stance' politicians will take to the issue.

This is of course not as simple because society is made up of several public opinions as well as multiple politicians representing and catering to multiple publics/supporters/segments. However, in a critical theoretical perspective there are dominant discourses and counter discourses and even though each is heterogenic they can be roughly categorized as dominant and non-dominant. Leopold & Bell concludes that "newspaper coverage of BLM ran the gamut of delegitimization, marginalization, and demonization – relying heavily on riot frames, official sources, and bystander input to characterize the protests as disruptive, dangerous, and a disservice to the normal order of the cities in which they occurred." (Leopold & Bell: 2017: 272).

Leopold and Bell argue that they consider their findings as being not so much based on individual journalists' racist biases, but rather a question about news production - in my perspective, news media logic. "It is important to reiterate that the protest paradigm characteristics are considered to be partly the result of the routinized production of news." (Ibid: 730). This emphasises the idea of news media as an autonomous institution with inherent rules and logics that operate on a meta-level and transcends every piece of production. As Leopold & Bell write "Rather, the analysis is to bring to the forefront one side effect of news routines and the roles routines play in reproducing systemic racial bias" (Ibid: 731). As Asp writes in his theory of media logic, that the professional norms about production and commodification - the institutional rules of news media - impacts the content in a major way, especially in leaving out the important reasoning behind the protests, the motivation, the nuances etc. can cause harm: "Without accompanying the descriptions with an analysis of the issue only serves to delegitimize the protests by highlighting superficial aspects of the protests" (Leopold & Bell, 2017: 727). As news are highly competitive due to increasing commodification of news – an important aspect of media logic.

Ultimately it demonstrates how mediatization as real events portrayed in the media under media logic - can have a negative effect on the movements. This furthermore plays into the notion discussed earlier, of the ability of social media counter-narratives influencing policy as somewhat naïve. In a critical theoretical perspective, the dominant discourse of the state officials as quoted above can be argued as an example of the media reproducing the dominant discourses (from state apparatus). The protests can be read as the offline activities of BLM, where the production of counter-narratives on social media is the online activities of BLM.

Summary of Black Lives Matter

Through the above analysis we can see how offline activities of BLM are portrayed in the dominant space of the public sphere (the news media). This may give an indication on how the online activities of BLM would be portrayed in the media if we had such sources. Thus, in conclusion we may argued that the imagined potential of the online activity of BLM (the counter narratives) must first go through processes of media logic before it is presented in the dominant public sphere (the news media).

In order to "shift" public opinion and discourses surrounding race, the counter-narratives by BLM activists circulating om social media must reach the nationwide public sphere which is still dominated by traditional media channels - which in turn rely on media logic. As demonstrated with the offline activism of protests, the activists are not in control of the framing and language, not to mention is the news media is even interested in amplifying these counter-narratives? This goes back to my interpretation of Habermas (1991) in what drives news media. Communicative action of public interest groups (such as BLM) are driven by an objective to create understanding and agreement on the basis of common situation definitions. That is what their social media counter-discourses is seeking out. My argument is that the news media in this case is relying on indirect understanding using stereotypes and manipulatively using linguistic means to obtain egocentric calculations of success.

4.2 ANALYSIS PART 2: METOO MOVEMENT

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE METOO MOVEMENT

The MeToo movement originated in 2006 where Tatiana Burke first introduced the phrase 'Me Too' to empower women who had been victims to sexual abuse (Brünker et al, 2020: 2359). The movement in general has the objective to give voice to the sexual assault victims and to counter a silencing culture around such crimes and furthermore "to drive political action to create change" (Hösterman et al., 2018: 85). The official MeToo website states that "When survivors channel their unique empathy in community with one another, and in service of a future free from sexual violence, that's when change happens."[5]

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[5] www.metoomvmt.org, Vision & Theory of change 'the 'me too.' Movement believes…' 2020

The hashtag MeToo and the following social media driven movement gained ground in October 2017 when Hollywood actress Alyssa Milano - following the sexual assault allegation of Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein - tweeted "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet" and within 24 hours, Facebook recorded 12 million posts from 45 million users in the US (Hösterman et al., 2018: 69). This furthermore resulted in what Benedictis et al. (2019) characterises as the first of three peaks in news covering around the MeToo movement. In this way it is safe to say that Castells' characterisation of a social movement being catapulted into the public sphere in relation to a significant media event. In this case the media event was actually happening on social media (Milano's tweet) but since Milano is a media celebrity, her tweet can arguably be characterised as a media event. Even as it was a reaction to another media event: the highly publicised allegations against Harvey Weinstein, another media personality. This also connects social movements to the media world and underlines the mediatization aspect – or even prerequisite – to 'successful' social movements in that "celebrities hold an important role within social media-driven movements, namely gathering attention to issues." (Brunker et al 2020: 2362). The interesting point, in a mediatization and critical theoretical perspective is the numerable findings "showing that high status individuals are more likely to be retweeted" (Ibid: 2362). This is in part a testimony to how celebrity culture has infused news media and well as social media. Celebrity activity could be understood as part of the *personalization* aspect to media logic where the novelty of a story is connected to a media personality. The fact that high status individuals are more likely to be retweeted in turn demonstrates how the media logic of celebrity culture spills over into social media logic. The *popularity* aspect of social media logic relates to brands and promotion that can be pushed on social media (though payed adds) and the aspect of *datafication* where users with large following, through algorithms, get more visibility on social media platforms shed light on these processes. Furthermore, in a celebrity culture, celebrities do have large following on social media, creating a win-win situation where celebrities' social media activity drive engagement from users, thus create traffic and in turn create promotion around the celebrity. As the example of Alyssa Milano catapulting the MeToo movement serves as an example of how especially the MeToo movement is entrenched with media celebrity activity. This is further discussed in Benedictis et al.'s analysis of media coverage of the MeToo movement where they recorded three 'peaks' in media coverage of the MeToo movement all relating to *media events*. This show the correlation of social media and mediatization of MeToo. First

wave was Milano's tweet that catapulted both social media use of the hashtag MeToo as well as media activity. The first peak in media coverage consisted "mainly of articles discussing new revelations about sexual abuse withing the media, entertainment and sports industries, which emerged in the wake of MeToo" (Benedictis et al., 2019: 728). The second peak in media coverage of the MeToo movement is all related to media events: the Golden Globe where many actresses wore black in solidarity of the MeToo movement, Oprah Winfrey's acceptance speech (supposedly MeToo related as well), Catherine Deneuve's public denouncement of MeToo as well as sexual abuse accusations against Woody Allen and other Hollywood celebrities. The third peak in media coverage surrounding the MeToo movement came with the 2018 Oscars and International Women's Day (Benedictis et al., 2019: 728). This observation is in line with Castells' characterization of social movements being correlated to major media events and times with heightened media attention. The fact that the movement initially started in 2007 but did not gain ground until the celebrity tweet 10 years later does undeniably relate to Castells' words: "Emotional movements, often triggered by a media event, or by major crisis, soon often to be more important sources of social change than the day-to-day routine of dutiful NGOs. The Internet becomes an essential medium of expression and organization for these kinds of manifestations, which coincide in a given time and space, make their impact though the media world." (Castells, 2001: 141). However, social change should not be taken for granted as a natural result of heightened media attention. This will be further discussed in the mediatization section of this chapter.

4.2.2 ME TOO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The MeToo movement seem to use social media in a different way than the BLM movement. This is arguably in part due to the quite different nature of the two where MeToo has the objective to create a space to share personal stories of sexual abuse with the hope to counter a culture of silencing or shaming victims of sexual assault. This objective differs from BLM where BLM used social media in a great extent to gather members, spread information and not least to organize offline activities such as protests. What a number of articles analysed

was the content of posts related to the hashtag MeToo, thus the academic research done on this particular movement was much more post content specific. This helps to shed light on how social movement use social media in different ways.

Emotional Support and Direct Mediatization

Based on findings in the articles, how the MeToo movement relate to social media was mainly as a way to share traumatic experiences and to get emotional support from other users. Hösterman et al. (2018) found that victims of sexual assault and rape are more likely to seek support online due to the social stigma of this kind of experience. Either they did not have real-life support, or they got negative feedback from friends and family and thus turned to social media for support from weak-ties meaning online friends, acquaintances or strangers (Hösterman et al, 2018: 74). "Victims have described online forums as "alternative virtual communities" regarded as a place to safely disclose viewpoints and experiences, particularly those within marginalized groups or for those who are in socially isolated settings or abusive relationships" (Hösterman et al, 2018: 75). In a way, victims using the MeToo hashtag are operating in a direct form of mediatization where their offline face-to-face interaction of sharing their story is partly or fully being replaced by sharing and receiving emotional support online. Hösterman et al. write that "victims perceive online spaces as judgement free zones where victims can talk through their experiences" (Ibid: 85) and further this function of social media as being quite significant as "victims report feeling stigmatized and embarrassed from the assault and turn to anonymous online support rather than to family and friends" (Ibid: 86). The non-judgemental support from strangers online confirm the notion of direct mediatization that was also prevalent in BLM, however in a very different way. In BLM there was an idea of social media as providing a 'safe space' for discussion as well as connecting with likeminded people to share common experiences and support from strangers, had little to no counterpart in real life for members of both BLM and MeToo. There is thus talk of direct mediatization as the media (social media in this case) provide an alternative or even substitutes real life face-to-face interactions. Hösterman et al. even states that the social media tweeting and acknowledgement from weak-tie users can aid in the recovery process of sexual assault victims (Ibid: 86). This is a quite profound use of social media because it, again, demonstrates how social media can function as a substitute of real-life support systems

that may not be available to the victim. "Given the advantages of access to a larger group of people and resources, anonymity, and the ability to disclose topics to obtain social support from others without taking the time necessary to form a close relationship, weak tie social support messages in digital communications is ideal for many victims and supporters. Sensitive topics such as sexual violence or harassment are particularly suited for online social support messages." (Hösterman et al, 2018: 87) On the basis of Hösterman et al. analysis, it seems that it is the exact weak-tie, non-personal relation between 'posters' and 'responders' that encourage victims to speak and to receive support. Thus, it's arguably the very *nature* of online social media interactions that is the prerequisite to this function of the MeToo movement's use of social media. Here there is arguably talk of *amalgamation*, a component to Schulz' (2004) model of mediatization. This shows in how media activities merge with non-media activities in the way that victims' sharing and feedback on social media can potentially be a profound component in their recovery process. This process of how media becomes such an integral and profound part of private life is a testimony to mediatization of society in Schulz's idea of the concept.

Expanding the notion of direct mediatization in MeToo social media use, Hösterman et al. found that posters of the MeToo hashtag would also use the social media "to expose perpetrators as a form of "vigilante justice" to address crimes outside of a justice system that was perceived as failing to do so" (Hösterman et al, 2018: 76). This indicates another form of direct mediatization where offline real-life functions such as the justice system fails the victims who then turn to social media to seek support and "justice". This is also interesting in relation to social media users' sense of social media as a public sphere. Arguably, the victim who feels failed by the justice system turns to the public sphere for a kind of 'public court' which arguably has been a historic function of the public sphere. If the victim can get the public opinion behind him or her it arguably functions as leverage even when the state justice system fails.

'Spreadability'

Brünker et al. (2020) found in their analysis of tweets and retweets of MeToo posts that is was mainly posts using "emotional and affective language is regarded as a reason why some content in more likely to be retweeted than other." (Brünker et al. 2020: 2358). This point is

quite important because, arguably an objective of social movements in their social media use is to spread information and gain support among users. Thus, one can argue that in order for a social movement to be 'successful' on social media the message must be "spreadable" meaning it has to get other users to engage with and share the information among networks.

"The special focus on retweet-probability can be justified because it was found that Twitter's retweet functionality was a central key mechanism for information diffusion on this platform" (Ibid: 2358). This raises questions that in order for a social movement to be 'successful' on social media, the message must somehow be sure to generate activity and engagement. Brünker et al. goes on: "Positive as well as negative emotions receive more feedback than others and can catch attention as well as cognitive involvement. This concludes that language affects the tendency to retweet some content more than less affective content." (Ibid: 2358) Furthermore, in their content analysis of spread-ability, Brünker et al observed that the "content category "sharing of personal information" was by far the most retweeted, followed by "reference" and "call for action"" (Ibid: 2363). This draws some similarities to media logic in the notion that certain messages on social media are more 'popular' than others and that these, according to Brünker et al., often are relating to personal information and emotional and affective language. Due to the idea that social media logic and media logic is not opposite to one another but rather is based on similar 'business-models' of commodification, clicks and 'eyeballs' one could read the 'spread-ability' factor as relating to the storytelling techniques of Asp's *regulative rules* in media logic. Arguably the affective language and "sharing of personal information" does seem to relate to *personalization* and *simplification* as well as *confrontation* (with the perpetrator) within media logic. Furthermore, there are also form rules that relate to the process of producing news in order to fit a certain technological medium, following the standards of specific format (Asp, 2014: 262). On Twitter for example, users are limited to 140 characters when telling their story, thus they can be argued to be subjected to getting their story of sexual trauma across in relative few words which may in turn influence how they chose to present their story. Additionally, one can raise questions of whether there is a component of *accommodation* present, in Schulz' understanding of mediatization, which refer to how politicians, businesses etc. all seem to adapt to the rules of the media system. However, in my argument it is rather private users who may unconsciously adapt to social media logic as well as media logic in framing their posts in a way that render them with 'spread-ability' (emotional, affirmative

language as well as personal information) in order to get likes and engagement which in turn helps in their recovery. This idea only relies on assumptions and is quite difficult to 'prove', however it is an interesting question in relation to social movements and their interaction with social media. In Brünker et al.'s findings of language-use and especially Sharing of Personal Information as having a direct influence of spread-ability, one can argue that spread-ability is actually likeability, thus is the other users' ask themselves if they want to like and share this post or not. Thus, the post must 'strike a chord' with the 'audience' in order for them to act and engage with it. In turn, the liking and sharing (positive engagement) is, according to Hosterman et al., the prerequisite for the social media activity to function as a support and help in the process of recovering (*amalgamation*). The fact that the positive acknowledgement is what drives the potential of help to recovery, this is what the victim may have in mind when they post their story: they seek feedback and support, but a positive feedback from other users to help in their recovery.

4.2.4 ME TOO AND NEWS MEDIA

In connection to the notion of 'spread-ability' as 'likeability' of a post, it is interesting to look into how social status has played a role in the MeToo movement on social media. As we know it was not until Alyssa Milano shared the hashtag in relation to the Weinstein case that the movement obtained its relative 'success' on not only on social media but also in mainstream news media. If we take for granted that 'success' of a social movement builds on a large usage of the hashtag on social media as well as an increase in media attention on the issues/message of the movement. Brünker et al found that celebrities hold an important role within social media driven social movements social movements in bringing attention and following to the issue (Brünker et al., 2020: 2363)

MeToo and the Film Industry

Benedictis et al. (2019) quite bluntly states that news stories of sexual violence "make good copy" and "are often sensationalized and 'prompt outrage, fear, sadness and anger – emotional draws which are used to shift papers and make money'" and furthermore with the resources of social media content, the mainstream media can appropriate such stories for free and attract readers' attention (Mendes, 2015 and De Benedictis et al., 2017 in Benedictis et al., 2019: 722). This again refers to the media logic of which stories (or movements) cater most to media logic in order to be 'sellable'. In this term, MeToo with a simple victim/perpetrator narrative, emotional outrage and highly personal and intimate information shows how news media inform many of the same logics as we found in the social media context. For example, Benedictis et al. found that in the media coverage of MeToo the "spectacular expressions, such as celebrity feminism, achieve[d] far greater visibility that 'unsexy' stories like those related to the women working in industries, such as hospitality, since these women tend to be mostly poorer, non-shite and/or migrants." (Ibid: 731). Even the findings discussed in the introduction to this section, showed that the media attention around MeToo was highly driven by media events such as the initiating Alyssa Milano tweet, the Golden Globe and the Oscars. This arguably demonstrates that the media attention around the MeToo movement was driven by female celebrities' interest in the movement.

In line with Asp's argument that the press has become a political actor in itself, Benedictis et al. found that there was a significant difference in covering the MeToo movement in a positive of negative way: "MeToo has been most clearly and overwhelmingly embraced by the left-leaning liberal press, while conversely it has received that least positive coverage and highest negative coverage in the conservative press." (Ibid: 730). This may be an unsurprising finding, however in its taken-for-granted simplicity there is quite serious implications of a press that presents "facts" in politically coloured framing. Here we must keep in mind the powerful position of news media in a mediatized society and the Schulz' *amalgamation* argument where "the media's definition of reality amalgamates with the social definition of reality" (Schulz, 2004: 89). Connecting this to Asp's argument that the media's traditional role as a pillar of democracy shield them from much scrutiny, but at the same time they have become an interpreting entity and a political actor in itself (Asp 2014: 266). And, that this position gives them a mandate to speak for the people and have the upper hand in the public debate (Ibid: 266). My point is that Benedictis et al. found that there was a distinctive

positive/negative framing prevalent in respectively the liberal and conservative media and this is a testimony in itself to Asp's professional norms of media logic (independence and objectivity) are seriously compromised. And as we will see, this may have consequences for the ability of a social movement such as MeToo to create any real systemic change. However, it is not the liberal press' positive coverage that is the goal here because the liberal press still subscribes to media logic. Thus, a 'positive' coverage is not equivalent to a system-critical or solution oriented – it is just positive. As Benedictis et al. found, the coverage more broadly "framed the MeToo movement in individualizing terms rather than in structural and systemic ones. Specifically, the reporting tended to frame women's accounts of sexual abuse and harassment as human interest stories, highlighting these women's *personal* working through or overcoming or the traumatic events" again discussing the issue on an individual level (Benedictis et al., 2019: 731, my own emphasis). Additionally, Benedictis et al. emphasise how this kind of news coverage represents rape as a singular occurrence and individual cases (Ibid: 722) demonstrating the *personalization* and *simplification* storytelling technique of media logic based in the commodification of news. In other words, it is much simpler for readers to understand and identify with an issue in personalization terms rather than a thorough and explanatory 'story' of the systemic inclinations of rape culture in society – and it is arguably more 'interesting' to read about a celebrity's sexual assault account. Benedictis et al. even suggest that the *personalized* as well as 'high profile' cases, e.g. from the entertainment industry, create a certain type of "'popular' or 'neoliberal' feminist discourse, which tends to obscure structural critiques of gender inequality" (Banet-Weiser, 2018 and Rottenberg, 2018 in Benedictis et al., 2019: 720). For example, even though the press coverage was overall positive towards the MeToo movement, 60% of the articles analysed in Benetictis et al.'s case, was focused on the entertainment and fashion industry (Ibid). That goes to show that, the coverage may be positive, but it is still steered by media logic. An example of this is the coverage of the Golden Globes event where female celebrities wore black in support of MeToo, however the content of the articles was more about discussing the fashion choices rather than e.g. rape culture (Ibid: 731). Benedictis et al conclude that even though the press "might have done some way in exposing the widespread prevalence of rape and sexual abuse as symptomatic of a wider culture of sexual violence, it offered limited space for discussing potential solutions that address systemic problems, let alone that encourage radical social change." (Benedictis et al., 2019: 732). The press coverage did help the social media campaign in presenting information to the general public and thus for the

message to reach new readership beyond social media as well as publicised original stories from social media to the general public. However, Benedictis et al.'s criticism is that in focussing on celebrities and media personalities – as I have argued, is due to media logic – the media coverage "has helped to reinscribe a dominant version of feminism, one that forefronts White women, and most often White women with a substantial amount of economic, social and cultural capital" (Ibid: 734). In a critical theoretical perspective, one could argue that this is an example of how the media, in a class-based society, is an institution of the dominant class based on capitalist market logic, and thus will inevitably reproduce dominant discourses in society: in this case, White women of substantial social and economic status. Furthermore, Benedictis et al. argue that the media coverage "seems to have followed reinforced familiar patterns (…) an individualizing and thus de-politicizing tendency through a focus on celebrity and the cultural industries and fashion sector, and the centring of the experiences of the 'ideal victims', namely, celebrity female subjects (who are predominantly White and wealthy)" (Ibid: 733). The institutionalization of media logic in news media coverage inherently reinforces existing power structures. Furthermore, in the *simplification* of representation the press has failed to inform the public about or to debate potential solutions "Thus, it appears that the vast majority of coverage focused on announcing rather than attempting to address the root cause of sexual violence (…) #MeToo's coverage has helped to expose the scale and pervasiveness of sexual violence, [however] its heightened visibility has largely remained 'an end in itself rather than a route to dismantling asymmetries of power'" (Ibid: 732). Benedictis et al. critique the press' role and writes that it "should *inform the public about and debate potential solutions*" (Ibid: 731, emphasis in original).

Summary of MeToo

This analysis arguably demonstrates a limiting function of a news media - that is based on an institutional media logic – as the expected role as a democratic entity that informs the citizenry. Habermas' argument that, what sets 'real' communicative action (with the mean to create understanding between agents) aside from indirect understanding where the objective is *egocentric calculated success*. In this case, the media's intent or objective is not to create understanding such as presenting solutions and dismantling a systemic culture of sexual violence, but rather to communicate with commodification as an ultimate objective. This is

seen in the above analysis, where there are multiple examples of media outlets filter the story through a media logic rather than to inform the public about and debate potential solutions (Benedictis et al., 2019: 731). Furthermore, the social media activities around MeToo may also cater to this notion due to the fact that the movement had relatively small following before the media event of Milano's tweet. The spread-ability of the social media posts also seem to rely on storytelling techniques as seen in Asp's model of media logic. This ultimately demonstrate an intertwining of social media and news media logic and how and what drove the MeToo movement.

4.3 ANALYSIS PART 3: OCCUPY WALL STREET

4.3.1 INTRODUCTION TO OCCUPY WALL STREET

The Occupy Wall Street movement was initially 'started' by a Canadian alternative anti-consumerist news media *Adbusters* on September 17, 2011, who, on their webpage, urged 20.000 of their readers to assemble on Wall Street with the objective to catch the attention of the Obama administration: "Our government would be forced to choose publicly between the will of the people and the lucre of the corporations." (Adbusters, 2011 in Gerbaudo, 2012: 108). This goes against the common idea of the Occupy movement as a leaderless and spontaneous formation, in fact "at its inception Occupy was a carefully orchestrated campaign, whose logo, copy and imagery had been professionally packed by the creative graphics team of Adbusters" (Ibid: 108). It was designed with inspiration from the Egyptian uprising and the Spanish indignados in what Adbusters saw as a 'shift in revolutionary tactics' in the use of social media such as Facebook. Something the two main forces behind the Adbusters call for revolution – Mica White and Kalle Lasn – had previously denounced as 'clicktivism' and criticised Facebook as being a 'commercialization of friendships'. However, following the Arab spring and the role Facebook had played in the organization and mobilization of activists, White suggested that "'technology can birth the barricades of the 21st century'" (White, 2011 in Gerbaudo, 2012: 109). This is an interesting example of a

more conscious and intentional use of social media by a social movement – not to mention a more 'leaderful' characteristic of a purposely attempt to "jumpstart" a revolution by two individuals, inspired by previous revolutionary movements. Even the date of the post on Adbusters "was chosen on practical grounds. 'that was time enough to get the Twitter feed to go crazy and that was enough for the Facebook page to come together and we tried to do it as quickly as possible', Lasn explains. (…) The very name of the campaign was tuned into a hashtag - #OccupyWallStreet – so as to *facilitate* its 'viral' diffusion" (Gerbaudo, 2012: 109, my own emphasis). However, they did not construct a specific demand of the movement but chose to let it be up to the activists 'on the ground' to decide. By 2020 the Occupy Wall Street official webpage states that "The movement is inspired by popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia and aims to fight back against the richest 1% of people that are writing the rules of an unfair global economy that is foreclosing on our future."[6]

Though the activist community in New York at the time was critical towards Adbusters' naïve and simplistic idea of 'jumpstarting' a revolution, claiming that in order to be 'real' there had to be on-the-round real-world activism. However naïve, Adbusters' call for gathering in Wall Street did initiate meetings within the activist community and the movement started to form very slowly in the 'offline' world by creating sit-ins and camping in parks around the Wall Street area. It was only after the activists had physically occupied Zuccotti Park in the 17th of September 2011 that the social media activity around the movement began in a more serious way, however still very small compared to BLM and MeToo. Arguably the occupation of Zuccotti Park was the 'media event' necessary for Occupy to gain attention among the public, and it was only "after two episodes of police repression and threat of eviction [from Zuccotti Park], that Occupy started attracting attention on social media and eventually also on mainstream media" (Ibid: 113). However, still it did not manage to gain an explosive media attention or social media following in the initiating stages. Gerbaudo (2012) claims a number of reasons why the Occupy movement failed to do so, naming the "almost non-existent mass media coverage prior to the protests constituted a major obstacle to raising the awareness of the majority of the population." (Ibid: 113, 114).

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[6] http://occupywallst.org/about/, 'About'

Gerbaudo's observation is very much in line with Habermas' argument that that the public's communicative power lies in the ability to *problematize* an issue to such an extent that it gets media coverage. Compared to the BLM movement there was highly problematized media events helping to push both the social media following as well as general public attention and the overwhelming social media following of MeToo was arguably also initiated by a media event: the tweet of a media personality. There was thus, initially, a lack of media attention around the issue and also a lack of social media engagement. This could give some indication of a certain dependency on mass media for social movements to 'penetrate' social media, and vice-versa. Gerbaudo records that "the OWS Facebook page began getting significant traffic only after activists had physically occupied Zuccotti Park on the 17th, with a rapid, though not explosive progression in the following days" (Gerbaudo, 2012: 114). In my analytical perspective on Gerbaudo's recording it could as well read that the Occupy Facebook page began getting significant traffic *when the occupation of Zuccotti Park resulted in two episodes of police repression and threat of eviction which attracted some media attention.* It seems that Gerbaudo understands that what sparked the movement to gain social media following was after the Zuccotti Park occupation thus meaning an 'offline' event, as he previously stated that the activist community had argued. However, in my mediatization perspective, I argue that it was the media attention coming out of the police activity in the park that actually created the (however small) momentum for the movement to start growing through public attention. When Occupy really started to take off both regarding social media and news media was because of two emotionally triggering events: a police officer unprovokedly pepper-spraying three female activists at a peaceful protest and a mass arrest of 700 protestors one the Brooklyn Bridge shortly after (Ibid: 117).

What also sets Occupy apart from the two other cases is the fact that it was more situated in an offline activity and that part of its call for action was a specific physical (hence offline) activity: the physical occupation of Wall Street (and other sites around the country and also parts of Europe). This also sets it apart from BLM and MeToo that both has communicative objective that can be 'exercised' from the computer. Protests are however also part of the movement but the stories of sexual violence, the videos of police brutality are ultimately as (if not more) important as the physical protests. The communication was a mean to and end for BLM and MeToo. Occupy Wall Street had a much more concrete act as its mean to its end: the offline occupation.

4.3.2 OCCUPY WALL STREET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Gerbaudo (2012) argues that part of why the social media 'campaign' initially started by *Adbusters* did not gain much engagement at first was due to "their status messages completely lacked that emotional component (…) The OWS admin wrote infrequently, and his status messages were telegraphic unappealing (…) the messages were not exactly designed to create an emotional connection with the public. They had a cold informative tone" (Gerbaudo, 2012: 115). This points to an adaption of media logic to social media. What keeps newspaper consumers/news media costumers engaged, I argue, may be equivalent to what triggers social media users to engage with social media content. The findings from the MeToo analysis showed a clear difference in social media posts containing affective language as well as personal stories got more engagement compared to posts that did not use that kind of framing. This arguably confirms Gerbaudo's finding as well as demonstrating 'what it takes' for a social movement to gain the large following/engagement on social media which was what the Occupy Wall Street initiators were trying to achieve. The spread-ability.

Gerbaudo (2012) argues that it was the launch of a Tumblr website urging supporters to upload a picture of themselves holding a sign describing their financial troubles (Ibid: 118). It was the *emotional* as well as *visual* nature of these posts that ultimately resonated with a larger public. Gerbaudo's observation demonstrates the necessary emotional component as Castells discuss as being a sort of prerequisite for contemporary social movements to be 'successful'. Also, the importance of visual representation does connote to the understanding of a mediatization of a movement referring here to media logic: there must be a message that is simple to understand, personalized and relatable for an 'audience'. This in conjunction with two important media events created the necessary circumstances for the movement to gain attention in the news media and social media: first, a video showing three young female protesters being pepper-sprayed by a police officer went viral on YouTube, clear personalization (young 'defenceless' women). Second, a mass arrest of protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge, a clear *confrontation* between police and protestors, laying the ground for

outrage on either 'side'. My argument is that there were components present that made the movement 'fit' to mediatization.

Centralized Administration

What is interesting in the Occupy movement's use of social media is that the seemingly purposeful design of the movement in a way contradicts the horizontal network that is the typical characteristic as well as strength of a social movement on social media. As we found in the section above, even the initial phase of the movement was both orchestrated as well as initiated from a 'centre'. Furthermore, it was anchored in a physical focal point, the Zuccotti Park, and additionally, the main Twitter account and general information outlet, was controlled by a core group of activists who even established an office in New York City. Opposite BLM and MeToo that were both driven by a hashtag, the Occupy activity on social media was centred around a Twitter account - @OccupyWallStNYC and other 'official' accounts such as Occupy London etc. – driving the content information. As we found in the two former movements, the activity was around a hashtag that any social media user could use along with their post. In that way, anyone could add to the information pool, whether it was planning and organizing, creating counter narratives, sharing personal stories etc., the content (that arguably makes up the movement on social media) was thus driven by an unofficial network. The Occupy movement was more controlled in the sense that there were 'official' accounts that controlled information from a core leadership. "The team administering the account was called 'Tweetboat', later renamed to 'Tweetship'. Requests to join the team had to be discussed by Tweetboat members and agreed by consensus. New members were added on Tweetboat with a 'Limited' permission and with one of the administrators acting as a mentor who was responsible for training the new member and approving her/his tweets before they were published (…) Regardless of these efforts, the design of social media platforms meant that the administrators of social media accounts had a significant role in shaping the collective voice." (Kavada, 2015: 882). Regardless of Occupy's claim to be leaderless, horizontal and grassroot, there is a quite clear sense of gatekeeping and of editorial control of the information circulating around the movement. This gives an interesting angle to Van Dijck & Poell's *datafication* aspect of social media logic, where social media platforms, such as Twitter, portray themselves as providing a 'raw' look

into public opinion in the formation process. This 'function' of social media as a vox pop is something that Van Dijck & Poell has debunked, however, it is an idea that mainstream media (when it suits their ideology) subscribe to. This taken into account, one could argue that a movement such as Occupy, on social media, claims to be a movement of the people (quite literally, the 99%), however, as Kavada (2015) found, their social media activity was highly planned, edited and, dare I say, hierarchically controlled by a small group of activists. But it did signify the opposite on social media, that it was a networked grassroot movement. This also underlines the general perception of social media as being a democratic/neutral/horizontal/genuine/raw space, both enhanced and made possible by the proprietary protection that such platforms enjoy.

In this line Kavada (2015) had interesting findings showing how the metrics on Occupy's social media page was actually used in exactly the way describes above: "The 'likes' and comments served as a useful metrics for the activists running the social media accounts of the movement, allowing them to evaluate the movement's resonance and success. In this regards Spyros [Occupy activist interviewee] noted how following the metrics of the Facebook page helped him to draft guidelines for other content creators to ensure that the information they posted was engaging" (Ibid: 881). So, in this sense, the movement on social media is run by a centralised administration who has as its objective to ensure engagement from other members of followers of the movement. This is highly interesting because it does not only show how it was strategically created but also how the 'administrators' of the movement had as their main objective to create engagement. In a critical theoretical perspective, one could go as far as to say that the core activists, the administrators of Occupy in social media, used strategic planned communication as well as metrics tool to measure popularity - 'which posts *works*' - in the same way that some companies, arguably, use social media for corporate interests and advertising. And even to create a manual for other content creators to use, based on engagement metrics, in order to reach their objective which apparently was high engagement on social media. This strategic use of social media even also showed in the most typical use of social media for movement which is the organizational affordance. Occupy administration created specific Twitter accounts to be used for circulating tactical information, for example during a protest with police intervention, administrators could then 'control' the movements on the ground though Twitter: "giving people specific directions or suggestions on what to do, or on how to divert police crowd-control attempts, in a kind of activist equivalent to

military Command, Control and Communication (…) managed by a core group of organisers, composed of around 20 people." (Gerbaudo, 2012: 128).

The participation on social media was also a way for Occupy administration to diffuse information about the movement and also, in my argument, to create a sense of community. For example, social media was used to broadcast, through livestream and live-tweet, offline activities such as General Assembly meetings, however, "online spectators were given few opportunities to intervene in the decision-making process of the General Assembly" (Ibid: 881). Furthermore, in having the control of the official content "the administrators of social media accounts had a significant role in shaping the collective voice" (Ibid: 882). This is an important observation since a large part of the external communication from the Occupy movement would be found on social media, where the perceived collective voice of the movement was actually only the voice of a few. Gerbaudo (2012) had same findings: "these conversations [on social media] were led and moderated by a handful of core organisers managing influential movement Facebook and Twitter accounts" (Gerbaudo 2012, 132). This, in a way, is a testimony to the false perception of social media in general as an unedited 'raw' public space.

The End of Occupy

One could speculate that the reason why the Occupy movement virtually 'died out' after the real-life focal point (Zuccotti Park) was removed by police on November 14, 2011, was due to the fact that it was exactly so centralised administered – and even administered at all. What Castells argue is that exactly because social movements on the Internet are so resistant is because they are leaderless and function more like a network of users rather than a real-life focal point or "command centre". Arguably, the administrative centre of the Occupy movement was removed with the Zuccotti park eviction, thus it shows that it was actually possible to 'kill' the movement when the police removed its 'head' – because it had a 'head' and it was removable in the physical world. With this I mean that if it had been only online it was not possible to remove it and also it had been leaderless thus it would not have a 'head' at all.

4.3.3 OCCUPY WALL STREET AND NEWS MEDIA

Skonieczny & Morse (2014) found in their analysis that there was recorded a lack of media coverage of the Occupy movement. A lack which was not only according to 'occupiers' but also by New York times and Aljazeera English who "began to *expose* the lack of media coverage by other major media outlets" (Skonieczny & Morse, 2014: 666, my own emphasis). Interestingly renowned TV journalist Keith Olbermann asked on his show on MSNBC – however just 5 days into the occupation of Zuccotti Park - "'Why isn't any major news outlets covering this? If it was a Tea Party protest in front of Wall Street about Ben Bernanke putting stimulus funds into it, it's the lead story on every network newscast. How is that disconnect possible in this country today with so many different outlets and so many different ways of transmitting news'" (Olbermann, 2011 in Skonieczny & Morse, 2014: 666). There is a certain insinuation in this quote that, because of the message of the movement - the fact that it was protesting an unequal, class-based economic system - it did not receive as much news coverage from the major capitalist news networks. However, the coverage from major news media networks did eventually follow, and mainstream news media coverage grew. There may also be another reason for this, which was the same as the lack of following on social media. There needed to be a 'media event' present as well as visualized and emotional content in order for the Occupy message to cater to media logic and as Gerbaudo (2012) found, in the initial stages of the movement it just was not happening. After the Tumblr page as well as the news story of the three women being pepper sprayed by police and the following mass arrest, social media and news media did catch on. However, occupiers as well as the renowned journalist Olbermann may read into it a certain ideological interest of the major news networks, of not covering the movement in fear that it may cause revolt in the 99% og the US population. This could also be true when looking at it through Asp's (2014) characterization of institutionalized news media as a political actor in itself. This may explain the lack of coverage, however since mainstream media did 'catch on' eventually when the movement became more media logic 'friendly' it may as well be an expression of news media logic. Furthermore, Skonieczny and Morse (2014) argue "because of the critique [of lack of coverage], a reaction to the lack of coverage began to grow amongst traditional media" (Ibid: 666). Skonieczny & Morse thus seem to believe that the traditional

mainstream media reacted to the critique and therefore started to cover the movement. However, in a mediatization perspective it can be argued that it was not due to a moral obligation to cover Occupy, but rather that news production is based on media logic of which a large part of the *modus operandi* is based on a commodification logic. The news has to resonate with the consumer, and, as argued in the section above, at that time, the movement did not even resonate with social media users because of the lack of emotional identification. If, however the mainstream media had continued being silent around the movement, there may have been indications of ideological interest, but that is, in my argument, not the case.

Negative News Media Coverage

Skonieczny & Morse found that in a total of 276 articles in the US where the word 'Occupy' appeared in 2011 the most commonly co-occurring word was 'protesters' (67 article) and after that 'police' (47 article) (Ibid: 672). In their analysis, they focussed only on CNN video broadcasting from the start of the occupation of Zuccotti Park on September 17, 2011 to the nationally coordinated eviction of multiple occupations around the US on November 17, 2011. What they found was four different narrative framings: police/security frame; illegitimate frame; protest frame and finally socio/economic critique frame. Cissel's (2012) findings from a more differentiated news media representation found the illegitimate and violence/police/protests representation as well.

Illegitimacy Framing

Cissel found that "the mainstream media used confusion over the event as their dominant frames (…) the mainstream media placed the protesters as fault of the violence" (Cissel, 2012: 74) relating to illegitimacy and violence framing. Cissel quote a New York Times article describing the Occupy movement as a "festival of frustration, a collective venting session with little edge or urgency (…) a leaderless resistance movement of a couple of hundred people (depending on whom you ask) (…) the protesters would first be meeting at Bowling Green Park for a program that included yoga, a pillow fight and face painting" (Blow, 2011 in Cissel, 2012: 72). When understanding the media from a mediatization perspective, it is a production of reality and "anything that takes place outside the media

disappears from the collective mind" (Castells, 2010: 365). In this perspective one could argue that it is quite problematic with such a insinuating framing of events. Drawing on Schulz (2004) the journalist's representation of 'reality' – in this case the Occupy movements activities – *amalgamates* with social reality, in a mediatized society, this representation may be taken as reality by readers. The New York Post quoted an 'occupier' as the "complaining 24-year-old college student named Moses Appleton (Saul & Walker, 20122 in Cissel, 2012: 72). Furthermore, Cissel recorded language use such as "claim," "so-called," "few," "small-scale," "disorganized," and "confusing" (Ibid: 72) in journalists' coverage of the Occupy movement. Skonieczny & Morse (2014) found examples where the CNN coverage "contain stories that ridiculed the movement, mostly by stating that there was no goal, and portraying the protesters as outcasts of society (…) the key terms used in this framing were 'hippie', 'inconvenience', 'tea party', 'mockery', 'pot' and 'bums'. For example, certain headlines in this category included, 'Stein: Occupy Wall Street full of "bums"', 'Wall Street protests just inconvenience?' and 'What does Occupy Wall Street stand for?'" (Skonieczny & Morse, 2014: 669-670). This framing is arguably a typical stereotype of 'ultra-left' socialists in the US that the articles make use of. This furthermore relates to Habermas' idea of indirect understanding "where one subject gives another something to understand through signals, indirectly gets him to form a certain opinion or to adopt certain intentions by way of inferentially working up perceptions of the situation (…) manipulatively employing linguistic means and thereby instrumentalizes him for his own success." (Habermas, 1991: page). Habermas does not directly relate this to news media, however it seems to resonate with the journalistic 'linguistic means' as well as 'indirectly gets him [the reader] to form a certain opinion'. Basically, what Habermas is demonstrating is communication with the objective of *egocentric calculated success* rather than understanding between agents. In relation to theories of mediatization and institutionalized media logic, my argument is that news media wants a calculated success (selling news) rather than reaching genuine understanding and agreement between agents (communicating events through thorough, critical and objective analysis).

Conflict Framing

Cissel's findings show an overrepresentation of articles using a conflict frame: "The NYPD had taken action to prevent protestors from wreaking havoc" and in general blamed protestors for the violence (Fox News, 2011 in Cissel, 2012: 72). Skonieczny & Morse also found in the CNN coverage that it "framed the protests as a matter of police confrontation and threat to security." using key terms such as "'police', 'anger', 'arrests', 'confrontation', 'violence', 'security' and 'riot'" (Skonieczny & Morse, 2014, 669). Furthermore, "The narrative described in these clips is that the Occupy protests are a factor in social unrest and have evoked the authority of police forces in order to attempt to return stability and safety to the public." (Ibid: 669). This show a certain use of *simplification* as well as *confrontation* of events due to the fact that Skonieczny and Morse also found that in this framing, there were no mentioning of the socio/economic critique frame that otherwise had been present in some CNN coverage. Notable, when it was related to violence and police confrontation, the framing and language of the socio/economic critique was absent.

Additionally, the socio/economic critique frame actually covered the objective of the Occupy movement in a more nuanced way where video broadcasting used keywords such as 'economic', 'disparity', 'wealth', 'gap', '1 percent', 'inequality', 'poverty' and 'corporate' (Ibid: 670). It was an investigation into the critique brought forward to the Occupy movement, which was positive for the movement, however "the 'Socio-economic critique' frame was the *least* occurring frame in CNN's coverage." (Ibid: 671, my own emphasis).

Interestingly, Skonieczny & Morse found that, as time passed, the police/violence framing became the most dominant the way up until the eviction in November 2011. "In part the increase in the 'police/violence' frame justifies the use of force to clear public spaces and remove the camp. Increasingly the media emphasized the safety concerns surrounding the camps and the rise in violence and crime in downtown areas. This was often seen in news reports days before police raids of the camps took place (…) as the San Francisco Examiner reported the day before the police raid of the Oakland Occupy camp, 'Merchants and residents have issued calls for the camp's removal, citing ongoing problems with vandalism, crime and lost business in the downtown area'" (Ibid: 671). This seeming conjunction between the attitude/framing in the media getting more negative towards the point of the police eviction. This does give an indication of how the news media functions as a producer of public opinion and has the upper hand in the public debate (Asp, 2014). If the news media

did portray Occupy as more positive, the police eviction may have been more problematic to do.

Summary of Occupy Wall Street

In this analysis, it came clear that the intended 'jumpstart' of a social media campaign was not successful. Rather, the initial 'fail' actually demonstrates how a social movement spreads and gains support on social media as well as attention in news media. There are components that need to be in place such as affective language, a media event that caters to media logic as well as heightened news media attention. Furthermore, the seemingly rapid decline of attention following the physical removal of the occupation in Zuccotti Park demonstrates how vulnerable the 'offline' components of a social movement is. The offline physicality, in addition to the very centralized and hierarchical control and administration of the movement is in actuality the opposite of a social media driven movement. Following Castells' characterization of an Internet-based movement, as de-centralized network without a 'removable centre' one could argue, that what made Occupy lose its relative success so quickly was its 'non-Internet-based' design. Even the initiation was planned and hierarchically strategized which, as we found, did not seem to obtain spread-ability due to language as well as the missing 'media event' that only came later. Furthermore, the media coverage seemed to be based in reluctance and stereotypes and only quite small amount of analytical-critical coverage of some of Occupy's objectives and critiques. This is not surprising. However, what was interesting was the increase in negative news coverage, almost working in conjunction with the final political decision to evict the occupiers. I say political because the occupation of the public park was illegal, however law enforcement coordinated a national eviction much later than they supposedly could have. As Asp argues, the media "undoubtedly have the upper hand in the public debate" (Asp, 2014: 266). At the same time as the media's negativity grew, the Occupy movement had grown into a global movement, thus demonstrating the media's 'upper hand' in the public opinion. A public opinion that the parliamentary complex seems to take into account when they decided when to evict the occupiers. Social media support grew, news media support declined and then the political decision of national eviction of occupied spots. This may demonstrate the ultimate 'power' of the media in 'producing' public opinion.

5. DISCUSSION

In Habermas' theory of communicative action, he argues that the public most problematize issues to such an extent that they will be brought to the fore of the arena of the public sphere: The news media. But *how* this problematization is done is one of the central findings my analysis. There seems to be a pattern in how the movements are able to use their communicative action and problematize issues of the life world that they each find pressing. In the communication on social media there are patterns of specific language use, visuals and affective sentiments. These patterns have commonalities with media logic which may also point to the fact that the objective is for the social media communication (counter-discourses) is to be transferred onto news media or at least catch the attention. This show that the news media is still considered the arena of the public sphere and dominant discourses. These are in some cases conscious choices from members or administrators, but also shows that it might be what makes a movement successful or not. This was prevalent in how Occupy administrators analysed and changed their language to be more emotional and the MeToo posts had higher spread-ability the more confrontational, personal and emotional the stories were. Black Lives Matter used social media to create counter narratives on social media with the objective to shift public opinion and narratives around race I conjunction with offline protests disrupting holiday events and traffic in order to garner attention from news media.

This process can arguably be an indicator of a mediatization of social movements. If a movement's message is not emotional, confrontational, visual or in any other way caters to media logics – will it be able to gain the public attention and awareness or the following on social media?

On the other side, social media influences social movements' communicative action in the way that actors can communicate around an issue and that way they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions (Habermas, 1991). The organizational and inter-communicative function of social media in social movements is quite important. However, as Fuchs (2016) and Van Dijck & Poell (2013) argue, the inherent

logics of social media are not transparent. There is another component which is that even if the news media utilize and present social media data as being pure fact, it *must* be emphasised that the news media does not automatically amplify whatever is 'trending' on social media. The power of communicating counter-narratives on social media may not be as powerful as participants seem to believe in these examples. This was prevalent in the findings that the media representation of the movements was generally counter-productive for the overall objective if the movement. Fuchs (2016) argues that the inherent capitalist marked logic of both news media and social media as corporations are counter-productive in movements pushing the same exact dominants capitalist systems and institutions.

In the expressions of interviewees as well as scholars discourse shows a general 'acceptance' of the democratic potentials of social media in creating counter discourses. When users/activists are of that belief that their posts can create serious change, they are arguably more inclined to do 'digital labour' such as keep posting, engaging, liking, sharing and commenting thus creating traffic and data - data that equals profit for social media platforms. Van Dijck & Poell also touch upon how users can then 'counter-act' on the *programmability* by for example retweeting in a massive way in order to get a topic trending. However, again, though the users behind this 'tactic' may feel empowered to intentionally 'use and co-opt' the inherent programmability. However, Twitter arguably does not care that one topic is trending over another – BlackLivesMatter or AllLivesMatter – Twitter cares about the massive retweeting, the increase in activity generating data, and the reproduction of the imagined idea of social media as the social sphere of the 21st century.

This role of social media as the new public sphere that scholars, activists, politicians, corporations, NGOs seem to accepts, renders unprecedented power to the corporations who own and administer the platforms. Mostly because of the inherent 'secrecy' that the platforms enjoy in a massive way. There is very little knowledge about how the algorithms work and diffuse information on the platforms. It is problematic when a small number of social media corporations control communication platforms for the public sphere – especially because it is not transparent how the diffusion of information in these platforms actually works. Arguably, any platform that presents itself as conveying unbiased factful information should be scrutinized and transparent. Both as a seemingly 'neutral' fact-provider for news media, a truth teller of public opinion but also as the imagined one tool for the public to create counter-narratives and social change. There is misconception in both sentiments.

First, as Van Dijck & Poell stresses there are issues in the 'facts' coming from social media. Second, the idea that any activity that is 'trending' *enough* will automatically be amplified in the news media, thus the counter-narratives will eventually reach the larger public sphere. Furthermore, how algorithms work (that we do not know for certain) *may* be with a "you may also like…" sentiment, which may result in posts and counter-narratives circulating in demographics that algorithms deem as "agree with". This can of course not be known for sure but referring to Van Dijck & Poell's *programmability* aspect of social media logic we do know that social media platform wishes to keep users engaged, because engagement is the social media currency for owners. Is works to "trigger and steer users' creative or communicative contributions" (Van Dick & Poell, 2013: 5).

At the same time there are also indicators that point to the fact that a heightened media attention does not necessarily work in favour of what the movement is trying to achieve. In Habermas' (1991) theory of communicative action, the power of the public lie in the problematizing an issue to the point that in penetrates the media complex and from there in parliamentary complex. But a very important point is that in a mediatized society, the news media is a political actor in itself – a scrutinizing and interpreting agent. The news media has the editorial power to decide which voices and beliefs are put to the fore and which are not. Both activists and scholars of these articles seem to believe that social media activity around issues is a constructive tool in the process of penetrating the media complex. However, if the goal is to shift public discourse around an issue, exposing systemic oppression or even create political legislative action, communicative action through social media does have its limitations. Habermas (1991) argues that successful communication – reaching understanding and agreement - rests on common *convictions*. As found in the analysis, the general framing in news media can be said to rely on certain *convictions* about the issues at hand. These convictions can be argued to be an inherent part media logic (commodification of news: confrontation, sensationalist, outrage, lack of deeper analysis, stereotyping) in the sense that news media ultimately seek to garner readers rather than solutions to societal problems. Furthermore, capitalist news media is, per definition, part of the dominant class and thus rely on (and reproduce) hegemonic discourses in society.

The general notion of social media being an emancipating alternative to mainstream news media is interesting in in Fuchs' analysis: "The concept of social media is a manifestation of class-based society. It hides its own potential and ideologically presents the reality of the

exploitation of digital labour as truth, fun, democracy, wealth, revolution, rebellion, and participation. Social media as a concept however also points towards its own unrealised essence – a truly social and co-operative society that can never be attained under capitalist rule and in a class-based society. The capitalist reality of social media contradicts its own essence." (Fuchs, 2016: 46). This indicates that both news media and social media are bound in a market logic, which may have some counter-productive impact on social movements that are protesting forms of societal domination and exploitation - arguably all expressions of a capitalist market logic.

6. CONCLUSION

I have in this thesis tried to shed light upon the flows of communication from the periphery of the public sphere (social movements) to the centre (the news media complex).

In a mediatized society, social media have different context-specific effects on social movements. What can be said in general is that it is an unprecedented tool for networked movements and can be argued to make social movements of today more resilient than those in the past. An example is the Black Panther movement that was dissolved when the US government imprisoned, killed and exiled its leaders. With use of the internet, the movements are decentralized and not in the same way dependent on individuals and offline physical organizing which, as we found in the Occupy case, actually can be a weakness.

Furthermore, these findings can give an idea of a *mediatization of social movements* in contemporary Western democracies. Because mediatization of society also relates to social media, the findings that members of BLM, MeToo and Occupy, in their social media communication, are seemingly steered by an awareness of communication techniques which are based in media logic. Furthermore, it can be argued that their offline real-world activities (protests and occupations) have the objective to attract media attention in order to impact public opinion.

On social media, the user believes that their act of 'liking', sharing or commenting could potentially propel a topic straight into the public debate on the news media in the hopes that

counter-narratives of for example race could 'make it' to the broadcasting news media. This is a misconception, because the news media has the editorial power over the activities happening in the lifeworld: Which discourses are put to the forefront and which are not. However, as long as this misconception stands, users are inclined to create immense digital labour with the hope that their message will reach the broader public sphere (arguably the news media). This digital labour creates traffic and data trails which ultimately generates profit for a number of corporations that own social media platforms. This sentiment also reinforces the news media as the dominant public sphere arena because of the one-to-many broadcasting as opposed to the more fragmented social media. The activists believe in the counter-discursive power of their activities on social media, however at the same time they are aware that for public discourse to "shift" their messages must penetrate the news media complex. In this way social media can be read as belonging to the life world – the periphery of the public sphere - rather than the media complex which is still centre of the public sphere.

Arguably the core issues of both BLM, MeToo and Occupy are forms of systemic oppression and domination: physical, sexual, discursive, social and economic. Even though social media gives a sense of discursive emancipation, in reality, Fuchs' argument points to an inherent class hierarchy of social media where celebrities are favoured. Additionally, the data driven information diffusement may result in counter-discourses circulating within limited networks, creating a false sense of impact on public opinion: The deliberative enclaves. Traditional broadcasting news media is still the dominant influencer, editor and producer of public opinion. Ultimately, the public sphere in a mediatized, capitalist society is dominated by powerful institutions of communication – social media and news media - which directly or indirectly dominate, edit, limit and facilitate social movements' communicative and organizational activities. We do not know to what extent or with what motivation, but it does interfere with the communicative action of citizens in the periphery of the public sphere.

7. DISSEMINATION ARTICLE

Master Thesis in Communication & Cultural Encounter 2020

Charlotte Koch Erhardtsen

Choice of Medium and Target Group

The purpose of this dissemination article is to present my academic findings to a non-academic audience. The key to that is to catch the interest of a target group that might not normally be interested in scientific research. With current protests of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and elsewhere, the subject matter of this thesis is arguably quite 'newsworthy'. For that reason, I have chosen to write my dissemination article for a newspaper. In this way, I can tie the findings of my thesis to current events which might catch the attention of the reader because it has a sense of relevance.

Due to the critical theoretical perspective to the problem, it can be argued that this thesis has a somewhat anti-capitalist sentiment. Furthermore, the subject matter of the movements such as fighting racial inequality, exposing sexual harassment culture as well as economic inequality might cater to a more left turned audience. As I have also argued in this thesis, news media is more often than not differentiated in political beliefs thus I have chosen the newspaper Dagbladet Information. Their readers are part of Gallup Kompas' Individual-Community oriented segment of Danish society. That segment consists of politically engaged, left-wing voters in the age group 20-49, where social responsibility, tolerance, and humanity are keywords[7] Arguably they would be interested in not only social movements but also use social media as well as agree with a critical perspective on capitalist culture and would thus be interested in reading this dissemination article.

Dagbladet Information often runs series where they go in-depth with current themes to present a deeper analysis and even longer articles. For that reason, they may be inclined to the public an article about academic and 'background' to a current societal theme. Some of the themes that Dagbladet Information has published in he past relate to Habermas' (1991) examples of public interest groups. Series critically reflecting on capitalist impact on the environment and climate change, "How does racism look in Denmark?", "Ethnic diversity in Danish film & TV", Hegel's 250th birthday, "Book-club about class struggle" and "The truth about democracy" just to name a few (My own translation)[8]. Some of these themes intersect

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[7] https://tns-gallup.dk/kompas-segmenter

[8] https://www.information.dk/serier?hdr

with the subject matter of this thesis which may give an indication that their would be interested in an article about Black Lives Matter, Me Too, Occupy Wall Street and communication corporations

Dissemination Article

Can Social Media Help Change the World or is it just Pretending?

Like, share, comment, post – social media activism is the all-encompassing tool for social movements of today, but how effectful is social media-driven activism really? A new study from Roskilde University raises questions around the democratic potential of social media, a potential that may be more of a PR stunt of Twitter and Facebook to get us to engage more on their 'free' platforms. Because for these mega-corporations, increased engagement means traffic, data, and profit. Are we fighting for equality on platforms that are inherently everything but?

By Charlotte K. Erhardtsen

#BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #OccupyWallStreet: The familiar social media hashtags that many of us see as no different from the real-life social movements that they refer to. Social movements of the 21st century seem to be equivalent to their social media expressions – but what is the problem in that? Social media is the perfect tool for contemporary social movements: It defies time and space limitations and it's a database of alternative narratives to the dominants ones we see in the news media. Its where you and I can become activists by one click and join a global network of members supporting a common cause. On social media, we can finally communicate with one another without the interference of news media that traditionally has been the filtering and framing force of the public sphere and public opinion.

Is there even a downside?

Social media seemingly empowers these public formations of resistance. But at the same time, we more often than not see advertisements of products on our social media feeds, about products that we might just have discussed with a friend a few hours earlier. Scandals such as Cambridge Analytica were a political communications agency - hired by Donald Trump's presidential campaign - bought data on US voters from Facebook. Data that was then used in targeting non-decided voters all across the US. Such scandals show that these 'free' social media platforms may come with a price – however, clandestine.

One point that this study wish to bring attention to is this exact business model of social media platforms: All your activity on social media platforms leave a data trail that can then be harvested, analysed and applied in tailoring messages exactly to your personality, fears,

joys, triggers, political beliefs and more. This means that social media platforms have logics that are designed to drive such engagement from users.

This becomes interesting when we look at the enormous social media traffic that goes on around social movements – most recently with the reignition of Black Lives Matter following the murder of George Floyd.

With this in mind, the study found that online activists and researchers in the field are generally of the conviction that social media has great potential to bring counter-narratives of oppressed groups to the fore. But is this democratising potential of social media actually bringing about change? Or is it only bringing about heightened traffic on social media platforms meaning more data to harvest, more of our personal information for platforms to sell to powerful entities? Information that these entities then use to manipulate us into buying (or voting) as they wish, arguably reinforcing dominant power in society. In academia, this is coined as *digital labour* – a modern, digital expression of capitalist exploitation of online communication processes.

Another finding of the study is that the discursive power of counter-narratives circulating on social media may not be as impactful on public opinion. News media tend to still represent such struggles in sensationalist, confronting, and stereotypical ways (to sell news), not bringing these counter-narratives to the front of the mainstream news – even though they circulate on social media.

This study suggests that social media platforms wish to have a role in society as a new public sphere, one that is challenging the traditional broadcasting news media. In many ways, the affordances of social media pose unprecedented possibilities for public formations of resistance such as Black Lives Matter and MeToo to organize, communicate, and circulate

counter-narrative information. However, despite its seemingly egalitarian functions of many-to-many communication flows, social media is a corporation like any other based in a capitalist market-logic. It is a profit-driven communication platform, whose "free" business model relies on yours and my data trails. Data trails that are generated, mined, and harvested every time we comment, like, share, or post. The study argues that we must keep this in mind when we do digital labour in our quest to push back against dominant institutions and systems. The ones that profit from our digital labour are those exact dominant capitalist institutions. Social media platforms profit greatly in our conviction that social media is a counter-hegemonic public sphere, a public sphere where we believe real change can happen through consistent communication, organizing, and information-circulation.

The study ultimately suggests that powerful social media platforms want us to think that the retweeting and engagement on social media can directly influence dominant discourses in the public sphere. When we believe that, we are more inclined to keep generating data and profit. But how can we ever emancipate ourselves and break free from systemic domination if our resistance and struggles are being commodified in real-time?

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