Digital media and the transnationalization of protests

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List of original papers in the thesis

I. Dahlberg-Grundberg, Michael. 2015. ”Technology as Movement: On hybrid organizational types and the mutual constitution of movement identity and technological infrastructure in digital activism.” *Convergence, The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Published online before print April 2, 2015, doi: 10.1177/1354856515577921.

II. Dahlberg-Grundberg, Michael and Örestig, Johan. ”Extending the local – activist types and forms of social media use in an case of anti-mining struggle.” Submitted to journal.

III. Dahlberg-Grundberg, Michael and Lindgren, Simon. 2014. ”Translocal Frame Extensions in a Networked Protest: situating the #IdleNoMore hashtag.” *IC – Revista Científica de Información y Comunicación, 11*: 49-77.

IV. Dahlberg-Grundberg, Michael, Lundström, Ragnar and Lindgren, Simon. ”Social Media and the Transnationalization of Mass Activism: Twitter and Trade Union Revitalization.” Submitted to journal.

Abstract

Background: Recent developments in communications technology have transformed how social movements might mobilize, and how they can organize their activities. This thesis explores some of the geographical consequences of the use of digital media for political activism. It does this by focusing on the transnationalization of protests. The aim is to analyse how movements with different organizational structures and political scopes are affected by their use of digital media. This is done with a specific focus on how digital media use influences or enables transnational modes of organization and activism.

Methods: The thesis comprises four different case studies where each study examines a social movement with a specific organizational structure. There are, however, also important similarities between the movements. In each study, somewhat different perspectives and methodological approaches are used. Some of the methods used are semi-structured interviews, content analysis of written data (retrieved from Facebook as well as Twitter), and social network analysis.

Results: The analysis indicates that digital media do have a role in the transnationalization of protest. This role, however, differs depending on what type of social movement one studies. The organizational structure of social movements, together with their specific forms of digital media use, influences how the transnationalization of protests and movements is articulated and formed. In cases where a social movement has a hierarchical organizational structure, there is less transnationalization, whereas in social movements with a more non-hierarchical organizational structure one sees more transnationalization.

Conclusion: The thesis concludes that the transnationalization of protests is affected by social movements' organizational structure. The more decentralized the social movement, the more vibrant the transnational public. In order to explain how transnational social movements, using digital media, can emerge in cases where geographical distances might make such coalitions unlikely, the thesis introduces the notion of *affectual proximity*. This concept helps us understand how transnational social movements, connecting actors from all over the world, can emerge through digital media.

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Introduction and aim

Political and activist uses of the Internet have been on the rise ever since the early days of the medium. Opinions seem to differ as to whether this development is good or bad, and deliberations on the political potential of the Internet have been recurring over the last few decades, making this technological and discursive phenomenon "a 'contested terrain'" (Kahn & Kellner, 2005: 80; cf. Castells, 2001: 137) as well as "a centre of political struggle in and for itself rather than a mere adjunct of other struggles" (Halpin, 2012, p. 19). It is important to note that digital media, as with everything else in crisis-ridden capitalist societies, exists within a contradictory context where different interests fight over the "content" of produced media as well as the ownership of media production in itself (cf. Fuchs 2014a & 2014b). This means that any form or use of media always carries multiple potentials and can be questioned by different actors. For instance, subversive uses of media are often met with harsh measures, and this becomes evident with a quick look at some of the contemporary expressions of digital politics.

One the one hand, alternative and progressive political groups, such as the controversial and somewhat ominous activist cluster Anonymous (Norton, 2011, 2012; Coleman, 2011; Coleman & Ralph, 2011; Beyer, 2013), have made significant use of the Internet to work, among other things, to challenge state oppression and to support freedom of speech – although not always through legal means. In addition, the Occupy Wall Street protests (Gaby & Caren, 2012; Penney & Dadas, 2014), the demonstrations during the Arab Spring (Howard & Hussein, 2011; Wilson & Dunn, 2011; Lotan et al, 2011; Lim, 2012), and the Indignados movement in Spain (Anduiza et al, 2013; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2013) have all to some degree been described as being dependent on social media. Wael Ghonim, one of the key figures in the Egyptian uprising in 2011, has even gone so far as to claim in an interview with CNN that "if you want to liberate a society, just give them the Internet. If you want to have a free society, just give them the Internet" (Ghonim, 2011).

On the other hand, there are actors that in different ways have tried to limit the affordances that the Internet offers to social movements and political activists. During 2009 and 2010, the election protests in Iran (which some termed a "Twitter revolution") was, among other things, met with Internet censorship as the government blocked access to certain websites (Morozov, 2009). In 2011, during the Arab Spring, the Egyptian government shut down Internet access completely in an attempt to quell the escalating protests, although with little success. In 2013, when large groups of activists in Turkey ardently objected to the destruction and commercialization of Gezi Park,

Prime Minister Erdogan condemned the demonstrators' use of digital technology, dubbing social media "the worst menace to society" (Letsch, 2013). It is, in light of these events, quite evident that the Internet and digital media have been, and still are, subjects of political struggles.

Irrespective of whether one chooses to be optimistic or pessimistic about the empowering political potential of Internet communication, the advent of digital media has clearly had effects on the activities of social movements. One essential issue being addressed in several studies in the field of media and activist politics relates to the economic, social, cultural, and political internationalization and globalization of modern societies and the implications this has for extra-parliamentary politics (see, for instance, Castells' (1997) influential distinction between 'spaces of flows' and 'spaces of places'; Olesen, 2005; Flesher Fominaya, 2014). On the one hand, the proliferation of and access to digital media have meant that corporations and other financial interests are less and less circumscribed by national regulations and laws and are in a position – on a global, or at least non-national scale – where they can obstruct and destabilize the previous power of the nation state and national or regional political movements. On the other hand, the same technological advancements have given social movements and activists the ability to connect with geographically distant like-minded actors and to establish counter-publics that can engage in struggles working to transform the economic and political status quo on a scale beyond the local or national (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Milan, 2013: 138-140; Sassen, 2012; Olesen, 2005; Tarrow, 2005a). Thus, just as financial organizations and corporations that are standing outside and moving beyond any democratic control have continuously been gaining more power, the radical politics of some social movements have also been subject to similar processes of re-scaling. One means with which to accomplish such a scale shift has been the development of interactive digital media platforms.

This need to address additional scales, and the changes in political movements that in some cases have become necessary, has been conceptualized in terms such as transnational activism, translocal politics, and the transnationalization of protest (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 2005a, 2011; Vicari, 2014). It is in this field, addressing issues such as changing levels of political activism and the role of digital technology within this development, that the present dissertation aspires to make a contribution.

In light of this background, the present work aims to study how digital media are assisting a variety of social movements in the process of transnationalization of what are often initially local protests. Specifically, *this dissertation aims to analyse differences between movements with different organiza-*

tional structures and political scopes in terms of if and how a social movement's use of digital media influences or enables transnational modes of organization and activism. In focusing on these themes, this dissertation offers input into the fields of media studies and social movement studies of transnational and translocal phenomena, for instance by putting the spotlight on digital movements and thus contributing to the seminal work done by Tarrow (cf. 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Tarrow & McAdam, 2005) on transnational activism.

In order to study the influence of digital media on different social movements in terms of transnational activism, this dissertation examines four case studies that comprise a gamut of movements ranging from new and networked movements to more traditional examples. Drawing on a theoretical framework focusing on transnationalism and the transnationalization of protest, the purpose with this approach is to capture the movements' differences as well as what unifies them and to provide a conceptualization of their underlying premises in terms of space, locality, and protest cultures with regards to transnational activism and modes of organizing.

Given this backdrop, a set of research questions, underlying the separate case studies, stand at the centre of the dissertation:

- What is the *role* of digital media in the transnationalization of protest?
- How do the different organizational *structures* or *characteristics* of political and social movements influence the process of transnationalization through the use of digital media?
- In relation to previous work on transnational activism, how can a conceptual framework for transnationalization and social movements be constructed that takes into consideration the role of digital media?

By taking a case study approach, this dissertation covers several important parts of the spectrum of digital political activism – from net-based, mainly digital or "Internetworked" (Langman, 2005) movements to traditional social movements that have employed digital media. What ties the different studies together is that they, besides targeting social movements that have made use of some sort of digital media when engaging in often contentious forms of politics, relate to dimensions of locality. An Internetworked social movement is targeted in Paper 1, which focuses on the digitally enabled movement Telecomix. New social movements are targeted in Papers 2 and 3, which focus on two indigenous and environmental movements. The first studies a protest campaign opposing a hazardous mining project in Kallak in the north of Sweden, and the second studies the Canadian movement Idle No More. A traditional movement is targeted in Paper 4, which focuses on the

digital aspects of the labour right's network LabourStart. These cases, and their differences and similarities, will be outlined in more detail under the section "Results – summary of the papers".

By assuming an all-embracing position, an approach that brings together several different cases risks erasing dissimilarities between the cases. On the other hand, such an approach might offer a vantage point from which the larger effects of digital media on social movements and non-parliamentary politics can be observed and might allow broader interpretations to be drawn. By juxtaposing different case studies and by targeting movements with different structures and adversaries that are all employing digital media, my hope is to provide answers to the research questions and shine light on the main aim of the study, i.e., if and how, through digital media use, transnationalization is enabled differently in regards to different forms of social movements.

A remark is needed here before moving on. Because there is a difference between new forms of mediatized organizing and the capacity to affect political outcomes, one cannot take for granted that the new forms of organization or mobilization that are enabled by digital media technologies also alter the opportunities for actually affecting things like policy making. In other words, the analysed transformations do not automatically entail better prospects of having an impact in broader political terms. It should thus be noted that the main area of research in this dissertation is not so much the success or failure of digital media usage among social movements and activists but, rather, if and how transnational activism is articulated differently depending on the organizational structure of the movements being studied. It should also be noted that the term "organizational structure" is understood as how social movements communicate and decide upon political actions (for instance, horizontally or vertically) as well as how they are organizationally arranged (for instance, having formal or informal – or non-existing – leadership).

The ensuing parts of this introductory text have the following format. After this introduction, which briefly delineates and highlights some trajectories and events underlying the recent interest in the relationship between digital media and extra-parliamentary politics together with the dissertation's aim and research questions, comes a section on previous research in the field of digital social movements. This section describes social movements' media use in general paired with a particular focus on digitally networked social movements and publics and on new forms of social movement organization. In addition, the section offers definitions of central concepts used throughout the dissertation and provides a brief account of critical perspectives on and approaches toward technology in general and digital media in particular.

The succeeding section presents the theoretical and analytical basis for the dissertation. Then follows two sections: “Methodology”, which introduces the dissertation’s methodological approach, and “Results”, which describes the case studies and the specific methods that were used in each of the papers. The latter section also presents the individual papers in more depth and outlines the conclusions drawn from each of them. The final and concluding section re-engages with the dissertation’s aim and research questions and focuses on the implications of the different studies taken as a whole.

Definitions and previous research

Digital activism and social movements – some initial definitions

Social movements (cf. della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tarrow, 2011) are understood in this thesis as formal or informal extra-parliamentary political groups, organizations, networks, or loosely connected individuals with shared goals or common objectives for how they believe contemporary society should be constructed. Furthermore, social movements will be viewed as processes (cf. Melucci, 1996; della Porta & Diani, 2006), or flows, that are in a constant state of flux as different dimensions of contention and different actors are continuously being incorporated and/or removed. This is one of the reasons why I will speak not only of transnational or translocal protests but also of a *transnationalization of protests*. In other words, transnationalization is used in order to emphasize transnationalism as a process. I am also influenced by the definition that Costanza-Chock (2013: 98) provides for the concept of "social movement formations", which describes "any set of actors engaged in a shared process of collective action" and can be "individuals, informal collectives, non-profit organizations, projects, formal networks, ad hoc networks and political parties". Hence, it "is not necessarily a formal organization" and it "may be ad hoc and temporary in nature, and it is not always organized around a discrete mobilization." A similar process-oriented approach will be taken regarding the notion of collective identity. Here, I mainly draw from the work of Melucci (1995, 1996). Such continual movement processes are facilitated by communicative practices, in particular such media practices that make possible and encourage continuous, horizontal networked interaction between several actors within or between movements (cf. Askanius, 2012: 54).

Activism will be understood as non-parliamentary political communication or action performed with the purpose of redefining, disrupting, criticizing, or challenging some current economic, social, cultural, or political structures with the intention of replacing those structures with more egalitarian ones. (Of course, activism could also designate conservative or non-egalitarian movements, but in this thesis the focus is on alternative, progressive initiatives.) Digital activism, online activism, protest 2.0, cyberactivism, activism 2.0, and so on (Jordan, 2002a; Jordan & Taylor, 2004; Lievrouw, 2011; Hands, 2011; Meikle, 2002, 2010; Petray, 2011; Cammaerts, 2007a; McCaughey & Ayers, 2003; Taylor, 2001; Harlow 2012b; Dahlberg-Grundberg, 2014) are all forms of activism that in various ways employ, or

are more or less embedded in, some sort of digital tools or environment. Digital activism, which will be the term mainly used throughout this introductory text, covers the range from digital sit-ins, email campaigns, or DDoS attacks to using the Internet for communication and mobilizing purposes, e.g., working to organize and coordinate an offline protest or to establish a movement. Online activism comes in multiple shapes, and not all online activism has to be extrovert and radical or entail new organizational forms or be channelled through a movement. Some forms of online activism can concern quite regular cultural and political action and appropriation that one can engage in from one's home, such as so-called subactivism/subpolitics (Bakardjieva, 2009, 2011; cf. Lindgren & Linde, 2012).[1]

In this dissertation, the term digital media will be used to denote all digital communication occurring on social media and other communicative platforms (such as IRC [Internet Relay Chat] channels and email) as well as these platforms themselves. There are, I realize, differences between certain media platforms and their affordances. When it comes to the platforms analysed in the present dissertation, Facebook can be said to function in one way, Twitter in another, and IRC channels in yet a third way. Nevertheless, I will argue that there are certain key similarities between them, for instance, that they all allow for decentralized forms of communication within social movements and between social movement actors, and these similarities allow comparisons to be made and joint conclusions to be drawn.

Before moving on to previous research and critical perspectives, some comments are necessary regarding the notions of space, place, and locality. Even though these spatial notions are all constantly interlinked, it can be beneficial, for the sake of analytical clarity, to keep their particular characteristics in mind. Space is used throughout this dissertation to address non-physical, or abstract, spatial forms. Place, on the other hand, is used to describe their physical counterparts. Locality, in comparison, is employed to describe actual physical place (which means that it is used interchangeably with place) as well as a contrast to notions such as national, international, and global (in this manner describing not only a physical setting but also a setting physically close to the actors of a particular movement). Locality – as a complement to place – is the most important notion geographically, whereas space is the most important notion theoretically and will be used analytically most often in relation to digital media and the spaces to which digital media are attached.

[1] Such practices, however, risk turning into what Kahn and Kellner (2005) refer to as "soft activism" or, as described below, slacktivism/clicktivism.

Previous research: political potentials and shortcomings of digital media

The use of digital media has been extensive in recent years among social movements and in activist circles, and the variations among such movements and their use of web-based resources have been the focal point for numerous studies (for some recent articles on the matter, see Juris, 2012; Maireder & Schwarzenegger; 2012; Anduiza et al, 2013; Bastos et al, 2014; Kavada, 2015). It should be noted that expressions of political activism and social movement politics are, of course, in no way new phenomena. Still, new technological developments might alter, but not actually replace, their circumstances of operation.

This means that even if one, due to technological advancements, can trace the emergence of new ways of functioning for social movements, this does not necessitate that traditional ways of understanding movements or traditional technologies become obsolete. As we will see, some scholars have claimed that these new media further grassroots mobilization and lead to additional democratization of activist politics and that local contexts are supplanted by transnational or global counterparts. It can also mean that older forms of extra-parliamentary actions are strengthened, that local places are augmented, or that conventional organizational forms are given new, but equally prominent, roles. As certain forms of activist or social movement practices, via new communication technologies, are given the means to be revitalized, the development of digital media, and the effects accompanying this development, must be understood in terms of both variation or transformation *and* (dis)continuity because old forms of politics, identities, histories, and places/spaces continue to be of importance (cf. Flersher Fominaya, 2014: 194-195). Yet, according to Dahlgren, even if old forms of media are still "vital to political life [---] if we are concerned with alternative democracy, we simply find many more manifestations of it on the web" (Dahlgren, 2013: 4).

Some scholars have suggested that digital media, such as social networking sites and other communication platforms, have given contentious political actors new means with which to carry out or discursively disseminate their agendas. For instance, it has been suggested that access to digital media can open new paths for activists to disseminate their own material (Loader & Mercea, 2012; Kavada, 2010, pp. 106; Vissers et al, 2011) and to construct their own media channels and can provide spaces in which the policies and repressions of authoritarian governments can be exposed (Breuer, 2012: 5) or from which alternative news can be proliferated. One example of this is the independent media centre IndyMedia (Kidd, 2003; Garcelon, 2006).

Such a development means that social movements, in a best-case scenario, can function without having to turn to conventional mass media conglomerates (della Porta & Mosca; 2005; Lievrouw, 2006, 2011; Penney & Dadas, 2014; Gaby & Caren, 2012). The same technological development might also enable new decision-structures, making social movements more receptive to the views of the activists operating within the movements confines and improving the means of communication between actors in a specific movement (cf. Mercea, 2012 & 2013). Also, digital media might give social movements new possibilities for mobilization and coordination (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011; Earl & Kimport, 2011). This has, according to some researchers, been the case for Occupy Wall Street, the Spanish Indignados movement, and the British student movement that, in 2010, fought against increased university fees (Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Fernandez-Planells et al, 2014; Theocharis, 2012).

However, one can also identify certain problems and pitfalls that have accompanied the rise of the Internet and digital media. Cammaerts (2007b: 266) writes that ”an overemphasis on the Internet and communication as such tends to obscure that social change and achieving political aims has to be fought for beyond the media too”. Others stress that technology in itself cannot provide the remedy for the shortcomings of the political and democratic system of today, and to claim otherwise “would be to succumb to a kind of technological determinism” (Meikle, 2002: 101; Enzensberger, 1970). Thus, broad general comments on the political potential of digital media need to be avoided (Cottle, 2011: 652). For instance, the mere existence of a flat, open-access organizational structure, supported by social media, does not automatically result in further democratization nor does it mean that “the political discussion they [social media] engender is necessarily in line with idealized conceptions of civic discourse” (Howard & Parks, 2012: 362; cf. Loader & Mercea, 2012: 3).

Also, the freedom of information, which some have suggested would follow as a consequence of the decentralized and democratic structure of the Internet (Rheingold, 2000), has not brought about a scenario where egalitarianism and freedom prevail, but instead has, according to some, introduced us to a situation where questions of power and dominance have simply reappeared in other forms (Halpin, 2012). Because the Internet offers a plethora of ways to communicate, connect, and mobilize, the sheer amount of information might, by enabling informational overload (Wright, 2004; Jordan, 1999; Garrett, 2006: 215; Hwang, 2010) and an economy of attention characterised by scarcity (Berardi, 2009a, 2009b; Marazzi, 2010; boyd, 2011: 53; Fenton, 2012a), actually come to restrain political actions that are motivated by a desire to overcome the societal status quo (Dean, 2005, 2010). In addi-

tion, increased informatization can aid in the transition from a society of discipline to a society of control (Deleuze, 1992), for instance by enabling new forms of surveillance, control, and information gathering (cf. Galloway, 2004; Galloway & Thacker, 2007; Fenton, 2012a: 138; Carlsson, 2013). Others, however, emphasize that increased usage of digital technology and strictly online ways of mobilizing, which might result in alienation and fragmentation due to the lack of face-to-face deliberation (della Porta & Mosca 2005: 165; Gerbaudo, 2012), can fail in creating the means for building the movement-forms necessary for radical social change (Gladwell, 2010). Another outcome that has been implied to follow a rise in the political use of digital media is an increase in slacktivism and clicktivism (Morozov, 2009a & 2009b; White, 2010a & 2010b; Christensen, 2010).[2]

As a consequence, Internet communication and the activism following from it has also been criticized for only creating weak social ties (Gladwell, 2010; cf. Harp et al, 2012) that tend not to go beyond low-risk protests (cf. Earl & Kimport, 2011). This can create a situation where the use of communication technology by activists and social movements leads to the creation of mere temporal political groups that lack longevity (Juris, 2012). A broad dissemination of digital technology can also foment a strongly articulated individualism (Dahlberg & Siapera 2007; cf. the notions of liberal (individualist) uses and conceptions of Internet activity in Dahlberg 2001 & 2011). Such a development risks strengthening an individualistic outlook on society by overemphasizing "the role of individual actors" and neglecting "the relative autonomy of the sphere of communication" (Albrecht, 2006), and this might lead to more atomistic political participation that moves toward self-promotion rather than collective action (cf. Langlois et at, 2009; Mercea, 2013, p. 1309; Fenton, 2011 & 2012a; Fenton & Barassi, 2011).

In addition to the discussion of the political shortcomings of digital media presented above, some notes on the technological and social foundation of digital media are needed before we proceed. Without saying too much, recent (and previous) social and technological transformations can, in the best of worlds, be the seedbed of a more democratic society. Yet, such notions (or

[2] These terms refer to the tendency to be politically active in front of the computer, or at least at a safe distance from "actual" offline events such as riots or demonstrations. These tendencies risk, according to Morozov (2011), creating a climate where activists feel important politically even though their acts, in the long run, have no real political effects other than what he terms "civic promiscuity" (p. 190). However, even so-called slacktivism can have positive effects because "it can be argued that these forms of mediated resistance make it possible for those whose everyday lives prevent their participation in ongoing activism, to engage, pledge support and donate, which subsequently serves as a leverage to legitimate and strengthen active activists" (Cammaerts et al, 2013: 14; cf. Halupka, 2014; Svensson et al, 2015: 156-157 & 160-161).

even myths) about the Internet can themselves be detrimental, especially because they risk affecting actual interpretations and outcomes (Mosco, 2004; Hindman, 2009). The Internet and digital media certainly offer new pathways into the future, but only a few of these pathways will lead toward democracy and emancipation (cf. Fenton, 2012a: 142 & 2012b). It is, therefore, from a somewhat more critical standpoint, necessary to point out that communications technology can always be used in contrary fashions (Negri, 2005: 48; Feenberg, 1995, 2002; Dyer-Witheford, 1999), meaning that it can also be used as a means of power because "[t]echnology as such cannot be isolated from the use to which it is put; the technological society is a system of domination which operates already in the concept and construction of techniques" (Marcuse, 2002, xlvi; cf. Jordan, 1999, 2002b). Thus, digital media cannot be viewed as neutral or be ascribed any built-in qualities in the direction of either political oppression or emancipation (Svensson, 2012: 106). For instance, because "social media are not neutral tools, as they are always already entangled in complex techno-cultural and political economic relations" (Poell, 2013: 2), their material modes of existence can affect the discourses on and the effects of phenomena such as Internet politics and digital activism (cf. Christensen, 2011).

In other words, even if one can envisage empowering uses of digital media (cf. Enzensberger, 1970), it is in no way given that digital mobilization, communication, and technology will automatically have democratic outcomes because the Internet

> is embedded into the antagonisms of contemporary society and therefore has no in-built effects or determinations. [...] The actual implications depend on contexts, power relations, resources, mobilization capacities, strategies and tactics as well as the complex and undetermined outcomes of struggles (Fuchs, 2012: 781; cf. Poell, 2013; Lindgren, 2013a: 13-17).

As an example, because many social media platforms that activists use to disseminate messages or execute resistance are corporately owned and thus open to censorship and control, and because "[c]yberspace is deeply embedded in both finance capital and the creation of commodities" (Jordan, 1999: 150), commercial interests might be obstacles to an emancipatory way of employing digital media (Fuchs; 2008, 2011; Langlois et al, 2009). As a consequence, the social inequalities and exclusions that exist in our society of networks and informational capitalism might actually be increased via or resurface through *digital divides* that characterise or are inherent to a technology (Norris, 2001; Castells, 2001; Fuchs, 2008, 213ff; Albrecht, 2006; cf.

Jonsson, 2011).[3] Thus, it is important to stay clear of the trap of cyber-utopianism, a concept denoting the idea that political or social problems can be solved via the innovative use of digital technology (Morozov, 2009b & 2011), something Harvey (2005: 68) calls a "fetish belief". In short, even if the field of political communication is changing, it is still important to note its fundamental material and economic foundations (Mosco, 2004; Fuchs, 2008, 2011).

Given the preceding sections, it becomes clear that the (inter)relationship between the offline world and digital media, or the online world, is a complex one. As Dahlgren (2013: 38) notes, "We can and should still distinguish between on- and offline contexts, but our daily lives have become dependent on their entwinement." One way of avoiding the types of dichotomies presented above is to treat the political dimensions of society and the old and new media as entangled and to focus on their interdependence rather than trying to prise out their individual characteristics (Kavada, 2014: 363). Here, one can speak of *hybridity* (cf. de Souza e Silva, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Kluitenberg, 2006, 2011; Chadwick, 2007, 2013; Lindgren, 2014b; Dahlberg-Grundberg, 2014), a concept alluding to the entanglement of the online and the offline. These two dimensions (or spheres, or what have you) are always intertwined and cannot be detached from one another – except with serious methodological and theoretical implications. Even if they "are analytically different", they still exist "within the same world" (Joyce, 2013b). Using a hybrid approach, the Internet and digital communication are not to be viewed as external aspects in relation to the offline world but should, instead, be viewed as permeating the latter and the other way around.

Related to this, digital and non-digital political resistance are co-dependent (because online and offline tactics used by activists tend to be in a dynamic relation with each other), which means that any theory of digital dualism, which approaches online and offline as separate spheres, must be avoided (Jurgenson, 2012). When it comes to hybrid relations between online and offline in terms of social movements, some scholars have identified a transition from online mobilizations to offline equivalents, indicating that online and offline activism can strengthen one another (Harlow 2012a & 2012b; Harlow & Harp, 2012; Wojcieszak 2009; Varnali & Gorgulu, 2015; Carty, 2010: 170; Farinosi & Treré, 2010). Others have shown that online mobiliza-

[3] The notion of a digital divide emphasizes that new technologies (such as faster and improved communication and more flexible money-flows) predominantly tend to benefit the already propertied classes, thereby curtailing the Internet's democratic or radical political potential. This can, in a worst-case scenario, render a situation where existing discrepancies pertaining to socio-economy or culture are, if not augmented, at least sustained.

tion does not necessarily cause a spillover effect to the offline (Vissers et al. 2012). Most researchers maintain that even if digital politics are becoming more and more prevalent and accepted, if they are to manifest or engender real political change they have to reach beyond mere media use or must be translated into conventional offline political modes, actions, and concepts. To succeed and exercise influence in the offline world, an online political movement therefore needs to have a non-media offline counterpart (Ayer, 2003, p. 162; Joyce, 2010; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2013; della Porta & Mosca, 2005; Langman, 2005: 56; Fenton, 2012b: 164).

Social movements and digital media

Developing some of the aspects mentioned in the preceding section regarding social movements, more can be said about their use of digital media. With the evolvement of new, more informal movements (e.g. those expressing grievances in relation to issues regarding the environment, human rights, or broad cultural values), the playing field for extra-parliamentary politics and collective action is being transformed. Social movements, previously understood mainly in terms of large administrative bodies – e.g. unions, NGOs, or different class-based associations – where individuals gathered to aggregate resources or ease mobilization or collective action (cf. Melucci, 1995; della Porta & Diani, 2006), have in certain cases become less dependent on coherent movement identities and fixed organizational frameworks (cf. Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Bennett et al, 2014; Juris, 2012). This is a result of transformed social, political, cultural, and economic contexts – both local as well as global – and is in no way only a consequence of innovations in technology. However, the rise of digital media and other networked technologies have, some researchers have argued (Castells, 1997, 2012; Bimber et al, 2012: 60; Svensson et al, 2015: 154), in recent years been proven to affect the political activities of and constitutions within social movements, for instance, by altering the purviews of collective action and the conditions for mobilization and coordination.

More profoundly, from a social movement perspective the affordances of digital media might mean that the classical dilemma of the free-rider (Olson, 1967) now can be bypassed or challenged because it, according to some scholars, has become easier and cheaper to communicate (cf. Bimber et al, 2005; Breuer, 2012; Tufekci, 2014; Lupia & Sin, 2003; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). This might have important consequences for social movements and social movement theory. For instance, it has been claimed that organizational and strategic structures within social movements might correlate with their practices of communication, meaning that how a movement is struc-

tured influences the means of communication it uses and vice versa (cf. Bennett, 2005; Castells, 2012: 15; Kavada, 2013). This can mean that digital media in itself to some extent supplants traditional forms of organization for social movements (Tarrow; 2011: 137) because "the internet is more than a form of communication; it is at the core of a new movement form" (Tarrow, 2005a: 136). For example, by using new, digital media, movements might be able to interconnect several different forms of movements and grievances at an unprecedented scale. This can stimulate what Ruiz (2014) terms "polyvocal dissent" and enable situations where heterogeneous voices can come together in protests. According to Langlois and colleagues (2009: 420), these new possibilities of communication and modes of political participation are not simply a matter of "human actors mobilizing communication technologies, but also of communication technologies enabling new patterns of political organization."

Such a scenario might contribute to the emergence of new organizational forms characterized not by hierarchical structures but by horizontality and participation engendered by the horizontal social and technical architecture inherent in certain digital media (cf. Anduiza et al, 2013; Joyce, 2013a; Bennett, 2003, Bimber et al, 2005; Bimber et al, 2009; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013; Theocharis, 2013). Internet use can, therefore, lead to a form of participatory political culture that, by being mediated by divergent digital networking tools, is based not on formal organizational involvement but on more personal and decentralized ties. A more modest conclusion here can be that even if Internet-supported networked organizational forms do not make traditional social movements redundant, they can at least imply that their presence is less necessary (Barnard, 2012) by enabling, for example, an "organizing without organizations" (Shirky, 2009; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Bimber et al, 2012).

As mentioned in the introductory section, this dissertation compares a range of distinctive social movements in order to determine if, and if so how, transnational processes take form differently depending on the organizational and digital media dynamics that underpin and characterize the movements in question.[4] In order to lay the foundation for such a compara-

[4] As will be further explained below, transnational social movements will be viewed as contentious extra-parliamentary organizations or networks that connect locally situated individuals outside of distinct national borders and that challenge certain social, economic, or political opponents across a national scale. The concept of transnational processes, or processes of transnationalization – notions that reappear in this introductory part of the dissertation – are understood as doing and undoing, for instance through negotiations, (re)framing procedures, and the diffusion of information or political issues, of transnational protest coalitions that grow out of the connective, networked interactions between movement actors.

tive analysis, a distinction will be made between traditional social movements, new social movements, and Internetworked social movements. Traditional movements, mainly labour movements and unions, have a centralized and hierarchical structure, but also often rest on structures of formal membership and tend to have more economic and organizational resources than other forms of social movements. New social movements are more fluid, identity focussed, and complex than traditional movements (such as the labour movement), while at the same time promoting decentralized organization and an atmosphere of participation (Melucci, 1996; Castells, 1997). They also tend to have a loose notion of membership, and – in comparison to traditional movements – small amounts of economic and organizational resources. Internetworked social movements, a notion put forward by Langman (2005), are a consequence of the rise of the networked society (cf. Castells, 1997). Such movements "can better be understood as flows than formal organizations" (Langman, 2005: 46) and are made possible by digital communication technology. They function according to temporal linkages that are made as much between contentious individuals as between various movements (i.e., loose membership structures).

> Further, whereas earlier social movements depended on face-to-face interaction and leadership structures, for the ISMs [Internetworked social movements], much of the information, analyses, meanings, and understandings come through the Internet. There are comparatively fewer face-to-face, person-to-person interactions, but at certain times, millions of people can participate in some way (Ibid.: 55).

Hence, one thing that distinguishes Internetworked social movements from their historical predecessors is that they are less dependant on actors being in the same place in order to organize.

Theoretical and analytical framework

The movements studied in the papers comprising this dissertation are more or less dissimilar, even though some of them – to some extent – have certain commonalities in terms of organizational infrastructure (mainly the movements scrutinized in Papers 2 and 3) and even though they share some features when it comes to the themes of their struggles. One common theme among the movements is that they are all, as will be further described in the section "Results – summary of the papers", fighting for more democracy and against restrictions on people's autonomy. They also, to some extent, all reflect the complex relation between individual actors and larger movement structures, or the "power dynamics between individual and collective modes of action and agency in contemporary forms of social movement politics" (Askanius, 2012: 23), which has been a prominent area of study in social movement research over the last few decades. In the following section, I will introduce the theoretical and analytical framework – transnationalism/translocalism (which are seen as dialectically connected), connective action, and scale shifts and framing – that will be employed in order to understand these power dynamics and to conceptualize the movements and their underlying similarities and differences.

Transnational and translocal activism

According to many scholars, the modern and globalized world is characterized by a situation where people as well as organizations are becoming less and less dependent on being in the same physical place in order to interact. Giddens (1991: 17; cf. Langman, 2005), in his famous account of modernity and self-identity, states that

> [m]odern social organisation presumes the precise coordination of the actions of many human beings physically absent from one another; the 'when' of these actions is directly connected to the 'where', but not, as in pre-modern epochs, via the mediation of place.

Even though such a development cannot be reduced to or explained by technological advancements alone, access to digital means of interaction have certainly affected this development. This development also has consequences for social movements and radical politics because, according to Dahlgren (2013: 35), "[a]s power and political issues take on an ever stronger global character, the web facilitates protest and solidarity on the global arena". Thus, just as the powers that social movements are fighting are becoming increasingly global or international, a similar pattern has been identified for

social movements (Castells, 2007: 249). This is so because digital platforms, which support political and affective structures that are less dependent on movements sharing physical places, have been suggested to enable "electronic elsewheres" (Papacharissi, 2015; cf. Berry et al, 2010), that is, social and interactive spaces for actors who lack access to a common geographical location.

One result of these advancements is a further development of transnational social movements (Vicari, 2014). Such movements are, it should be noted, not only a result of the development of digital media. The Internet and other technological advances have facilitated transnational activism in the sense that the diffusion of ideas and practices has become easier, while at the same time interactions among geographically dispersed activists have been simplified. Still, because transnational social movements precede digital media, communicative instruments by themselves are not able to give a full account of the phenomenon (Tarrow, 2011: 254). Thus, the preconditions for transnational social movements are altered with the advent of digital media because connections between different activist circles can be facilitated by online communication (Askanius, 2012: 51; Curran, 2012: 11-12), but it is important to remember that such movements were possible long before the advent of networked communication and digital media.

In this dissertation, in which the notion of transnational social movements makes up the theoretical epicentre, I will take Tarrow's (2005a, 2005b; cf. della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Vicari, 2014) work on transnational social movements as my primary point of departure. Tarrow describes transnational social movements as "*sustained contentious interactions with opponents – national or non-national – by connected networks of challengers organized across national boundaries*" (Tarrow, 2011: 241; cf. 2005a), whereas transnational activists are defined "as *people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts*" (Tarrow, 2005a: 29). It is important to note that global social and economic processes and mechanisms do not automatically establish transnational social movements. Such movements need to be actively constructed through scale shifts as well as through interconnections and identity building between movement actors (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005). Transnational movements are therefore to be viewed as dynamic processes, and as processes they are targets of negotiations, instances of (re)framing, temporary coalition forming, and much more (Ibid.). What partly separates them from traditional movements is that this process of constructing the movement is constituted by actors interconnecting with individuals, as well as with movements/organizations, beyond local or national scales. In this

sense, the actors involved in these movements can be viewed as "rooted cosmopolitans" and, as such, they can be understood "*as individuals and groups who mobilize domestic and international resources and opportunities to advance claims on behalf of external actors, against external opponents, or in favor of goals they hold in common with transnational allies*" (Tarrow, 2005a: 29).

Tarrow's work briefly touches upon *digital* transnational movements and the theme of whether access to new communication technology might affect processes of transnationalization. But this issue is not the main concern in his work, which instead focuses on studying transnationalization and social movements in a broader – and more historical – sense. The hope is that this dissertation will contribute, theoretically and empirically, to the field of movement studies both by developing the concepts at hand as well as by adding a much-needed focus on contemporary, digitally mediated movements and by exploring if and how digital media might aid in the creation of transnational social movements.

It is, with this background, imperative to note that a transnational perspective does not need to neglect the local. Even though various global protest movements exist today that are interconnected through a variety of ideas, diffusion mechanisms, and political processes, the local and national, despite the importance of the global, are still highly essential ingredients in the protest cultures and social movements of contemporary society (Olesen, 2005; Farinosi & Treré, 2011; Sassen, 2012; Flesher Fominaya, 2014: 186). That transnational movements are established, or that transnational connections emerge during temporary upsurges, does not mean that national particularities are removed or are less important (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow & McAdam, 2005), and it has even been argued that it is within local spheres that transnational social movements attain "advocacy power" (Vicari, 2014). Instead, what we have is a transformation rather than a removal of locally situated social movements, expressions of contention, and struggles. Differently put,

> [w]hat we normally see in transnational contention is the *transposition* of frames, networks and forms of collective action to the international level without a corresponding *liquidation* of the conflicts and claims that gave rise to them in their arenas of origin (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: 123).

One way to simultaneously re-establish the local and the international/global is to use *translocality* (a notion that recurs in the papers that make up this thesis). Translocality is a useful concept when studying communicative deterritorialization and political connectivity because it points to the importance of not losing track of the national or the local by privileging an

international and/or global theoretical-empirical starting point (Hepp, 2004). With this conceptual point of view, the local can be highlighted at the same time as the global is studied. While in many cases it is common that the local is viewed as being enmeshed in the global, the notion of translocality rather focuses on the other direction, i.e. how the local can be extended to a global level (Carpentier, 2007). In such a move, a social movement does not need to lose track of its original locality but might, instead, interconnect on a global level with other movements, thus emerging as a simultaneously local and global political enterprise.

In the analyses to follow, transnationalism and translocalism will be seen as interconnected concepts that together form a totality because both can be used to capture connections between different social movements and various places/spaces (albeit with varying starting points). This, one can argue, is a reasonable point of departure because today local, national, and trans/international dimensions of place and space tend to simultaneously permeate some social movements (cf. Olesen, 2005). This agrees with Castell's (2012: 222-223) notion that contemporary networked social movements are "local and global at the same time" meaning that "[t]hey prefigure to some extent the supersession of the current split between local communal identity and global individual networking" as well as with Tarrow's (2005a: 206) suggestion that transnational activists "are the connective tissue of the global and the local". This should be kept in mind because transnationalism (and variations of this notion) will be the concept mostly used in this dissertation.

Connective action and individualization

One must acknowledge the fact that access to technology is not, in itself, sufficient as a means to establish more or less stable transnational social movement networks. An identity or ideological dimension has to be present as well (cf. Melucci, 1996; della Porta & Diani, 2006: 89-113; Flesher Fominaya, 2010). As Gerbaudo (2012: 9) stresses, "the process of mobilization cannot be reduced to the material affordances of the technologies it adopts but also involves the construction of shared meanings, identities and narratives" (cf. Ruiz, 2014: 80; della Porta, 2013: 34; Papacharissi, 2015). When trying to understand how connections are made between and within movements, and in relation to an increasing individualization paired with a lack of trust in established organizations and states, Bennett and Segerberg's work on "connective action" (2012, 2013; Bennett et al, 2014) can prove helpful. This is because, according to the authors behind the concept,

> [t]he linchpin of connective action is the formative element of 'sharing': the personalization that leads actions and content to be distributed widely across social networks. Communication technologies enable the growth and stabilization of network structures across these networks. [...] [C]onnective action brings the action dynamics of recombinant networks into focus, a situation in which networks and communication become something more than mere preconditions and information. What we observe in these networks are applications of communication technologies that contribute an organizational principle that is different from notions of collective action based on core assumptions about the role of resources, networks, and collective identity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012: 760).

Social movements characterized by connective, rather than collective, actions and identities are, the authors claim, more individualized, meaning that those who participate in the movement are doing so not so much to follow a collectively formulated and articulated ideal but their personal convictions, thus blurring the lines between the individual and the organization (cf. Bimber et al, 2012: 68). To establish a collective action frame, some sort of collective identity is needed, and to form a collective identity, which needs to be viewed as a continuous process, some form of collective action is required. Differently put, the concept of collective identity "cannot be separated from the production of meaning in collective action" (Melucci, 1995: 42-43). Connective actions are based not on pre-established collective identities but on personalized sharing of content or personalized action frames, that is, combined or aggregated individualized forms of meaning making that tend to be more flexible than their collective action counterparts because they are not based only on the ideologies or identities of particular groups (at the same time as they are enhanced by digital media).

Connective action differs from collective action because the latter is more related to traditional social movements with hierarchical structures, more cohesive ideological foundations, and stricter identities, whereas the former is more informed by the network structure of digital media. Therefore, connective action is related to less cohesive, and more flexible, identity configurations within personalized or individualized non-hierarchical social movements that are characterized by inclusivity. Some transnational social movements are to a high degree based on sharing (texts, ideologies, political frames, and images) and, I would argue, connectivity. They are brought together more by sharing individual, personalized ideals and motives than by having faith in institutionalized values or belonging to formal organizations. Also, they are working to support selected causes rather than cohesive organizational structures, even if certain organizational values continue to have some prominence (cf. Castells, 2007; Bimber et al, 2012: 5-6 & 67-68; Papacharissi, 2015: 128-129; Varnali & Gorgulu, 2015).

Juris put forward similar thoughts when contrasting the ”logic of networking” (2005; 2012) and ”logic of aggregation” (2012):

> Whereas networking logics entail a praxis of communication and coordination on the part of collective actors that are already constituted [...] logics of aggregation involve the coming together of actors qua individuals. These individuals may subsequently forge a collective subjectivity through the process of struggle, but it is a subjectivity that is under the constant pressure of disaggregation into its individual components (Juris, 2012: 266).

Maireder and Schwarzenegger (2012: 172) make a similar point when they write about “post-traditional issue communities”, which are facilitated by digital media and are more of an aggregation of interlinked individuals than formal or traditional types of social movements. In sum, “the novel capacities created by technological innovation have altered the structures and forms of collective action efforts today toward the direction of enhanced individual agency” (Bimber et al, 2012: 3).

For Papacharissi (2015), affects can be described as a form of connective tissue that unites such temporal coalitions. In building upon the theories of Bennett and Segerberg, Papacharissi claims that in such an individualized society as ours is said to be the connective dimensions of digital media can help to create and sustain ties between separate actors who are acting individually on personal and affective grounds in order to create different forms of networked publics (cf. boyd, 2011). Papacharissi calls such publics “affective publics”, arguing that they are established by actors temporally sharing sentiments and worldviews rather than adhering to fixed ideologies. She defines them as “networked public formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment” and are “transformed by networked technologies to suggest both space for the interaction of people, technology, and practices and the imagined collective that evolves out of this interaction” (Papacharissi, 2015: 125-126). These perspectives can help us to understand how temporal bonds are established between actors. Still, something more is needed in order for us to better describe how publics and movements are made transnationally. Here, it can be good to recognize that the connective elements that help constitute affective or networked publics – and are facilitated by digital media – also have an effect on the relation between social movements and spaces/localities as the preconditions for framing and scale shifts are altered.

Scale shifts and the act of framing

If the act of sharing is important in terms of connective action, the question regarding how this is done emerges, especially when this is done transnationally. Through connectivity, personal proximity becomes less important at the same time as the value of individual emotions and affects increases. "Increasing personalization, wireless portability and ubiquitous connectivity of the Internet foster the development of 'networked individualism' in 'networked societies'", according to Varnali and Gorgulu (2015: 3), and they go on to posit that "with the increasing use of the information and communication technologies, individuals become less dependent on people in their immediate surroundings for social interactions" because "[i]n this era, connections are to people and not to places". The point is that even if conventional communities are not always created through digital media use, such use within movements can still engender a common consciousness and a shared sense of solidarity among activists who are engaged in collective political actions and struggles – even if there is no single physical place that connects the actors (cf. Papacharissi, 2015: 68). Thus, even though a social movement needs a place to gain attention or perform political activities, such a space does not need be physical today. If, for instance, access to a public place is limited (or if it is located in a geographical periphery), the use of digital media might aid the movement by functioning as a sort of public square (cf. Hemsley & Eckert, 2014: 1844, and their concept of "the relational public squares of digital interaction"). This was the case, according to Croeser and Highfield (2014), with some strands of the Occupy movement. Access to such digital spaces can help "connect geographically dispersed but politically linked physical places" or, if access to physical places is limited, some actors might use digital media to be able to "enter" a certain protest site (Ibid.).

This is one of the reasons that digital communication platforms can, hypothetically, enable transnational ties for social movements. If actual proximity to places becomes less important, as some have argued is the case in modern, postindustrial societies (della Porta & Diani, 2006: 94-95), then identification and participation transgressing geographical boundaries could be an outcome. Put differently, relational space, and not just physical place, is of importance under circumstances where digital elements are central in protest manifestations because "geography is more than just 'where a person is,' but includes one's relationship to and identification with the geographic spaces, cities, neighborhoods, and communities in which we live" (Hemsley & Eckert, 2014: 1844). Such identification can be accomplished via "transnational framing", a communicative and interactive process that "inspires a sort of transnational imaginary – that is to say, a common 'mental picture' of

activism that works as a homogenizing force, fostering mutual recognition" (Milan, 2013: 138-139).

Based on the contemporary – and often technologically organized – increase in the individualization of collective action and social movement politics, Bennett and Segerberg (2012: 744-756) describe the notion of inclusive "personalized action frames", that is, frames that are based not on collective forms of communication but on "personalized communication". In order for such a framing to be established, ideas, tactics, and strategies have to be diffused throughout the world and conveyed between movements and individuals according to the workings of scale shifts (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005; Tremayne, 2014). Two mechanisms through which scale shifts occur as movement actors connect movements are *relational diffusion* (where previously connected actors and movements transfer or exchange information) and *brokerage* (where previously non-connected actors and movements become connected as information is transferred or exchanged) (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005). A scale shift can be upward, but also downward, i.e., it can go from a local movement to a global level, but also from a global level down to local movements. That is, with a downward scale shift global issues or campaigns are acted out on a local level whereas in cases of upward scale shifts localized struggles are spread from their original areas to either a global level or to other localities (Tarrow, 2005a: chap. 7). Via scale shifts, local or small-scale actions or struggles can become better known and can be transformed into large-scale movements (Tremayne, 2014: 112). These ideas can help us understand how transnational movements are built because many struggles, issues, and grievances are established according to similar patterns.

Through such procedures, a collective, or connective, frame can be created, and at the same time the creation of the frame also affects such procedures. This is especially relevant for the brokerage mechanism because "when borders are to be crossed and distant social actors brought together, brokerage is the more likely mechanism of scale shift" (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: 146). Frames (cf. Snow et al, 1986; Benford & Snow, 2000) are central to social movements because they bring together

> grievances, connecting them to other grievances, and [construct] larger frames of meaning that will resonate with a population's cultural predispositions and communicate a uniform message to power holders and to others (Tarrow, 2011: 144).

Through procedures of framing, the actors involved in a movement can become signifying agents as they engage "in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" (Ben-

ford & Snow, 2000: 613). Through *processual* mechanisms such as frame articulation, where political events and understandings of political scenarios are brought together via signifying, communicative practices, or through frame extension, where movement frames are extended beyond their "primary interests to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential adherents", separate actors and movements can become – even if only temporarily – aligned through a shared sense of meaning or through the adherence to similar political aims (Ibid.: 623-628; cf. Snow et al, 1986). As personalized action frames are articulated, shared, and extended, for instance via the use of digital media to directly communicate or disseminate political symbols, connective social movement frames and relationships involving a multitude of actors and ideological viewpoints might evolve. Also for transnational movements, a central concern is to establish a common frame of reference that defines a common project (Milan, 2013: 143). The point of analysing transnational framing processes is that this procedure "allows us to analyse how transnational networks are formed as opposed to why they emerge" (Ibid.), and such an analysis can be aided by the use of connective action.

Scale shifts, or forms of (transnational) framing, are not made possible by digital media, but digital media can change the conditions in which they occur (cf. Bennett, 2003: 149-150, 2005: 205-206; Tarrow, 2005a: 136; Kavada, 2014: 358; Tremayne, 2014). Through digitally enabled scale-shifts, groupings of activists and movements that share similar ideas or ideological and political rationales might be able to become critical publics that are objecting to certain aspects of a social or political culture. (It is, however, vital to remember that even if digital media might aid in processes of diffusion, such "mediated diffusion" might be hard to sustain over time because it tends to generate fewer direct interpersonal connections and less trust among actors (Tarrow, 2011: 192-193).) In the concluding section of this thesis, I will discuss if and how scale shifts occur within the studied movements and if they produce transnational coalitions, the extent to which digital media support such a process, and whether or not connective action can be used to explain such patterns.

Methodology

This dissertation consists of four case studies of distinct social movements (cf. Gomm et al, 2000; Yin, 2003). Case study research is often based on generating in-depth data on organizations, events, phenomena, or movements and tends to involve multiple methods such as interviews, observations, and different quantitative methodologies. The cases in question can be local cases, key cases, or outlier cases (Thomas, 2011). The papers in this dissertation are to be viewed as key cases because they offer crucial knowledge about a particular phenomenon: the transnationalization of protest and social movements through digital media. Also, viewing the separate papers as parts of a larger case study of transnational movements makes it possible to interpret the actual movements, and the data generated from the analyses, as complementing each other.

The selection of cases was based on the aim to cover a full range of social movements in relation to digital media and transnational activism. In order to make this possible, some selection criteria were necessary. First, and most obvious, all of the movements had to use some sort of digital media. Second, all of the movements are what can be termed progressive and egalitarian ones. Of course, such a selection does not exhaust the phenomenon of digital activism, and one can easily find conservative or non-egalitarian examples of digital activism. However, because the cases needed to be somewhat comparable, this form of ideologically based selection was deemed necessary. Third, because the dissertation aims to study if and how transnational activism is expressed differently when comparing different forms of social movements, various types of movements had to be studied. Therefore, one Internetworked movement (Paper 1) was chosen to represent a form of movement that, according to theory, is a decentralized form of political movement with a fluid ideological centre that has been made possible by digital, networked technology. One labour movement initiative (Paper 4), which according to movement theory often have centralized organizational structures and quite fixed ideological centres, was chosen in order to represent a traditional social movement. Two environmental and indigenous movements (Papers 2 and 3), interpreted as having comparatively decentralized organizational structures with less ideological stability in relation to traditional social movements, were chosen to represent so-called new social movements. With some variations, the research questions and analyses in all papers were guided by an interest in how digital media was employed by the movements, how organizational characteristics affected and were affected by the media use, and what geographic themes could be distinguished.

Because the movements studied here did not use the same forms of digital media platforms, and in the cases where they did use similar platforms they used them somewhat differently, somewhat different research questions were posed in the individual papers and different methods had to be applied in the case studies. The methods where chosen in order to capture the particularities of each case. Thus, an interview study was used in relation to the Internetworked Telecomix social movement, which mainly communicated through an IRC channel. This choice of method was based in part because the paper aimed to closely examine the views of the actors involved in the movement, and in part because there was little quantitative data or textual material produced by the movement that could be used to compare to the other cases. In Papers 3 and 4, both movements made frequent use of different digital media, but the papers focus specifically on their use of Twitter. Because the aim of Paper 3 was to examine the use of one particular hashtag as well as hashtag co-occurrences (however, one part of the analysis also involved performing qualitative content analysis of a selection of tweets) and the aim of Paper 4 was explore how Twitter communication was used in terms of mobilization and communication on the one hand and how this communication was structured in terms of geography on the other, network analysis was considered a reasonable methodological approach in both cases. This method made it possible to analyse a large amount of tweets and made it possible to visualise some of our findings. In Paper 2, where the aim was to study which types of activists used Facebook and in what ways it was employed, the material consisted of written comments, thus making qualitative text analysis paired with thematic coding our method of choice.

To more succinctly describe the methods, in Paper 1 I conducted a qualitative interview study (where the interviews were thematically coded), in Paper 2 the main method was qualitative content analysis of Facebook data from user posts, in Paper 3 we used a combination of social network analysis and content analysis of Twitter data, and in Paper 4 we used social network analysis and geomapping of Twitter data in combination with some descriptive statistics. Each of these methods offers a specific point of view from which to analyse potentially transnational social movements and can hopefully provide exhaustive and deep knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon. I maintain that the methods, together with the various movements studied, complement each other by enabling a broader interpretation of transnational social movements than can be provided by single studies or approaches. As Snow and Trom (2002: 160) write, a "case study can be both, a study of a single case or of multiple cases, so long as the cases share some attributes in common and are variants of some larger, encompassing category" (Snow & Trom, 2002: 160). Thus, because one can read the papers as separate, single case studies and as parts of one larger case study of transna-

tionalization and digital media within an encompassing framework of social movement theory, the differences when it comes to the movements being studied and the mixture of methods being used can be viewed as a strength of this thesis.

Different levels of analysis have been used in case studies and social movement studies. According to Snow and Trom (2002: 149; cf. Rueschemeyer, 2003: 333), one can focus on the micro-level, such as recruitment processes within one or several movements, on the meso-level, such as the features of and relations and connections between movements acting within a similar protest culture, and on the macro-level, such as cycles of protests, for example using a longitudinal approach. The approach in this dissertation focuses on the first two (studying single cases). However, when comparing the cases and viewing them as parts of a similar dimension of movement development (being influenced by increasing access to digital media), this thesis will also interpret them as belonging to a larger movement coalition in order to explore whether there is a family resemblance between them.

Case studies, however, have certain problems. For instance, one limitation with case studies is that they tend to be associated with a certain time period, which means that they can quickly become out-dated, and this is especially the case in a thesis like the present one because the field of study is characterized by significant and rapid technological developments (Lovink, 2011). This can, however, be overcome (Askanius, 2012). One way for such a problem to be handled concerns the use of theoretical notions to guide us as well as to give us broader fields to which we can offer more long-lasting contributions (Ibid.: 38). By creating, or departing from, concepts that are usable in several fields, and that can be employed as analytical tools over time, this dilemma of case studies can be at least partly resolved (Lovink, 2011: 7). Such a conceptual, or theoretical, approach is also a relevant strategy because one of the central advantages of case studies is that they, to a large extent, "serve the purpose of theory testing " (Rueschemeyer, 2003: 310).

Another problem with this choice of general method concerns the interpretation of cases. As suggested above, in previous research scholars have offered divergent views on the political potential of the Internet and digitized social movements. As Earl and Kimport (2011: 29-31) point out, this can be the result of the researcher's choices of cases and methodological premises. In other words, the choice of cases will affect the general conclusion one can draw. If one studies a case where the Internet is proven to have a central role, one will probably describe the potentials of the technology in more optimistic terms, but if the case at hand shows Internet technology to be unhelpful or unimportant (or even harmful) for movement actors, one will like-

ly draw more doubtful conclusions. In a similar vein, different media have different affordances, meaning that we need to be careful when comparing and making conclusions based on diverse cases. It is paramount that we recognize how different media platforms, with particular characteristics and affordances, might affect media use in various ways (Dahlgren, 2013: 37-40). In other words, one must acknowledge the dilemma of generalization and transferability. Is it methodologically feasible, or even cognitively reasonable, to draw more general conclusions from a specific case (with particular features) and, in a later stage, compare it with other cases that might have been studied with different methods? More bluntly put, can one compare cases with certain, more or less salient, particularities? Because the approach in this dissertation is to illustrate the effects of digital communication on transnationalization in relation to divergent forms of social movements, and because there are certain similarities between the cases, the point of departure will be the principle that this is a reasonable strategy as long as one is aware of its potential complications.

Generalization need not be the main aim of case studies (Gomm et al, 2000: 5), and when working with case studies it is important to remember that "statistical generalization is not the only form of generalization" and that one can also focus on "analytic, or theoretical, generalization", according to Snow and Trom (2002: 164). They define three openings for theoretically focused case studies: theoretical discovery, theoretical extension, and theoretical refinement. This dissertation primarily strives to extend existing theory by applying transnational social movement theory to a number of heterogeneous empirical cases in order to explore how different movements articulate or embody transnationalization and how digital media influence that articulation. This is because, as Snow and Trom (2002: 166) go on to write,

> the utility of movement case studies is not limited to the generation of richly detailed, thick, holistic descriptive accounts of the movements or processes investigated, but [because] case studies can also function as an important mechanism for theoretical generalization (Ibid.: 166; cf. Rueschemeyer, 2003: 330).

Thus, because a theoretical as well as empirical focus is equally important in this dissertation, comparative case studies seem to be a viable approach that will hopefully generate transferable insights and concepts. In light of this discussion, one basic premise in this dissertation is that irrespective of dissimilarities between cases, for instance when it comes to the media platforms employed, the methods used, or the divergent organizational structures the movements represent, the theoretical and conceptual framework makes comparisons feasible.

Results – summary of the papers

The cases/movements

The cases chosen in this dissertation share commonalities, even if there are some pertinent differences between them. Because one of the aims of this thesis is to compare movements with disparate patterns of organization, the cases were strategically chosen in order to complement each other by offering particular movement characteristics as well as "reactions" to media use. Telecomix, the movement studied in Paper 1, struggles against certain forms of information politics, illegitimate surveillance, and authoritarian states (in other words, they are fighting for democracy and the free flow of information), and this led them to become involved in the Arab Spring. The labour movement LabourStart, studied in Paper 4, is struggling – with more or less vehemence depending on the target – against capitalist society, infringements on labour rights, and non-democratic economic systems. The Kallak movement studied in Paper 2 struggles against the mining industry, global capital (corporations), and politics that are detrimental to indigenous populations. The Idle No More movement studied in Paper 3 struggles against environmentally harmful interventions by financial interests, racism, politics that are detrimental to indigenous populations, and certain form of state politics. Even though the movements are fighting for and against fairly divergent forms of politics, there are unifying features to their struggles. Mainly, they are all fighting against authoritative forms of politics and for an increase in political and economic transparency and democracy. In terms of organization, Telecomix can be viewed as an Internetworked movement (a loose organizational structure that to a large extent works digitally), Kallak and Idle No More can be viewed as new social movements (place-bound decentralized movements with loose organizational structures), and LabourStart can be viewed as a traditional movement with a decentralized membership structure but still maintaining an organizational kernel.

The decentralized movements of Kallak and Idle No More share certain traits, but some differences need to be highlighted. For instance, the struggle depicted in Paper 2 (the anti-mining conflict in Kallak) is far more connected to one specific locality than the Idle No More conflict, thus, in some sense, making it more material. In a similar vein, even though they both have decentralized characteristics, they can be viewed as decentralized in different ways. In the case of Kallak, the activists on site constitute the kernel of the movement to a larger extent than in Idle No More because the latter can be interpreted as having several localities and, thus, several centres (or no cen-

tres at all). In one sense, both can be viewed as organizationally and/or ideologically decentralized whereas the Idle No More movement is, additionally, decentralized in terms of geography to an extent that Kallak is not.

There are also some similarities when it comes to the digital platforms and forums the movements make use of in their endeavours to reach their respective goals. They are all communicating through different forms of social media even though they mainly use specific platforms. For instance, Telecomix employs Twitter as well as Facebook but mainly communicates via an IRC channel. The other movements also use a variety of platforms for communication and organization. Nevertheless, in the papers there is a focus on particular platforms from which the data are gathered (Twitter for Idle No More and LabourStart, Facebook for Kallak). I argue that even if there is a difference regarding the forums of communication studied below, and even if the particular media that the case studies explore partly offer different affordances, there are certain similarities such as accessibility and decentralized communicative potentialities. These commonalities between the cases make general, comparative conclusions about them possible. Still, the divergences of the media should be kept in mind.

In the following section, the aims, methods, theoretical perspectives, and conclusions from each paper are presented in more detail. In the final section, "Conclusions", the studies will be interpreted as a whole, making broader inferences possible in relation to the research questions presented in the introduction.

Paper 1.

Technology as Movement: On hybrid organizational types and the mutual constitution of movement identity and technological infrastructure in digital activism

The year 2011 saw several uprisings in the Middle East. The events, labelled the Arab Spring, took somewhat different turns in different countries. In Egypt, it led to the ousting of Hosni Mubarak, the country's president. This paper studies how digital politics in general, and the – mainly – Western activist network Telecomix in particular, influenced this process. The paper is based on interviews with individuals who were involved in Telecomix at the time. The interviews where thematically coded, focusing on the practical activities of Telecomix and the network's organizational structure and how that structure influenced, and was influenced by, its technological underpinnings and communications strategies. Central codes in this procedure were communication, hybridity, internal constitution, and organizational dynam-

ics. Telecomix – which has members from all over the world – became involved in the Egyptian struggles and in various ways tried to aid the demonstrators who physically took to the streets to fight the repressive regime. By offering tools for free communication, by opening up channels of communication that circumscribed the Internet politics of Egyptian state representatives, or by faxing in pertinent information on, for example, how to treat tear gas attacks, techno-political activists from places like Sweden, France, and the US were able to be part of a conflict hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away. Approaching communications technology in somewhat unconventional ways, that is, by trying to debunk, circumvent, or disrupt infringements on free communication and to facilitate non-surveilled forms of information dissemination, Telecomix worked with what could be described as "alternative computing" (Lievrouw, 2006 & 2011). The main question of the paper, however, concerned the dynamic, organizational network form Telecomix used in its activities in support of the Arab Spring uprising. Having no apparent leaders and no fixed administrative structures, members of Telecomix (or agents, as they prefer to call themselves) were able, using only an open IRC channel as a communication platform, not only to decide on what actions were necessary but also to actually coordinate and carry out these actions.

In an attempt to answer the question of how they did this, and to study the "organizational ramifications of the communication" (Mercea, p. 2013, p. 1307), the paper employed concepts such as *hybridity* and *media ecology* with the aim to better understand the effect of the conjunction of human and technological networks that were apparent in Telecomix's activities. It set out to explain if, and if so how, Telecomix's communications architecture interacted with and affected Telecomix's organizational form. It concluded by claiming that in this particular case the structure and identity of the movement/network and its technological infrastructure mutually constituted each other. In such a case, where "communication is always also a form or organisation" (Gerbaudo, 2012: 138) and where organizational dynamics and communicative tools are located within a complex dialectical relationship, we see the emergence of what the paper, following Chadwick (2007; cf. 2013), calls a "hybrid organizational type". Therefore, Telecomix might serve as a representative example of the hybrid status of some contemporary protest movements, a status that might become more frequent in the future. The actions of Telecomix might be taken as an illustration of how activists not only use technology to make their messages heard, but also how they are themselves shaped by their use of certain techniques and methods. Also, because the Telecomix network was able to bridge geographical gaps separating regions and continents, it clearly became a movement with certain

transnational characteristics – and this development was, to a high degree, facilitated by access to and the use of digital media.

Paper 2.

Extending the local – activist types and forms of social media use in an case of anti-mining struggle (Co-written with Johan Örestig)

Even though most studies of contemporary social movements that are making use of digital media tend to focus on cases from urban areas, digital political activism does not have to be an urban process. This paper focused on a case of environmental anti-mining activism taking place in the rural area of Kallak (outside of the town of Jokkmokk in northern Sweden) in 2013. This struggle also came to be fought in terms of indigenous rights because the threatened area is important for the local Sami population. The protest campaign, which tried to obstruct the commencement of test extractions by a British mining company, combined on-site resistance (e.g. creating roadblocks to impede the company from reaching the test site or by trespassing on the test site to disrupt the company's activities) and digital media use by employing Facebook as a means for creating resistance. While the former, quite obviously, was a highly localized phenomenon, the latter took on rather global tendencies. The paper analysed the potential of digital media use by social movements acting within rural/peripheral areas, and its aims were to study who used Facebook and how it was used as part of the movement and to use theoretical notions such as hybridity and translocality to study what larger practical and theoretical implications could be derived from this specific case.

The paper is based, in terms of data, on a qualitative analysis of all of the posts on the two main Facebook pages that the protesters used. With regards to the activists' roles, the data were thematically coded according to the post's *sender*, the sender's *location*, and the *on- and offline relationship between activists that the posts conveyed*. With regards to the forms of media use, we used the same themes while also focusing on the *goal* of the post. The central theoretical analysis in the paper focused on the notions of translocality/transnationality as well as concepts such as the scale shift mechanisms of relational diffusion and brokerage. When analysing the material, we found that three ideal types of activist roles emerged during the conflict. The first were *local activists* who were actually protesting on-site and communicating outwards to the movement's followers. The second were *digital movement intellectuals* who contributed to discussions on the Facebook pages and thus communicated inwards and intervened in the struggle by taking part in discussions and offering arguments in different critical de-

bates. These actors took an active-interventional part in the struggle. The third were *digital distributors* who liked and shared posts from other contributors. These actors took a passive-redistributive part in the struggle. We also identified the following four different forms of media use among the activists: *mobilization*, *construction of the physical space*, *extension of the local*, and *augmentation of local and translocal bonds*. Using these categories and roles, the paper shows how the use of digital media might give a translocal dimension to local and marginalized political struggles and conflicts through processes of scale shifts. This means that geographically remote places can become politically relevant in new ways through media connections. From this it follows that transnational ties that connect partly different – albeit ideologically and politically similar – movements can be established by digital media use.

Paper 3.

Translocal Frame Extensions in a Networked Protest: situating the #IdleNoMore hashtag (Co-written with Simon Lindgren)

As with Paper 2, one central and underlying aim of this paper was to study how a locally situated movement made use of digital media and to interpret the consequences of that use. To do this, we studied the Canadian social movement Idle No More and focused on how it employed Twitter. Idle No More emerged at the end of 2012 as a reaction to bill proposal C-45 that, among other things, posed a threat to the autonomy and sovereignty of Canada's indigenous populations and their territories as well as to the Canadian environment. The decentralized Idle No More movement used a number of tactics and strategies, and among these the use of social media was of central importance. The broad aim of this paper was to study how Idle No More used Twitter and how the #idlenomore hashtag was deployed during the time just following the movement's appearance within Canada as well as to explore how the hashtag transgressed both national boundaries and the organizational structures of the social movement. In order to accomplish this, we analysed all of the tweets from January 2013 – which was just after the movement made its appearance – containing the hashtag #idlenomore (for a total of about 500,000 tweets). The more specific aim was to study how the #idlenomore hashtag co-occurred with hashtags related to other social and political movements, to explore how connections can be made during a movement's emergence and consolidation, and to better conceptualise Twitter's potential as a medium for political communication and organization. There were three research questions. 1) To the extent that the #idlenomore hashtag co-occurs with other hashtags, what political struggles and movements do these hashtags signify and how can we interpret any ideological or

political affinities between them? 2) How can the diffusion of, and interconnection between, #idlenomore and other co-occurring hashtags be interpreted geographically, and can any translocal or transnational connections or patterns be identified? 3) How do any such connections relate to processes of framing? As theoretical points of departure, the notions of networked protest and translocality were put to use in order to conceptualize the geographical aspects of the protest ecology of Idle No More, and framing theory and theories of ad-hoc publics were used with the purpose to provide an understanding of how hashtags can function as movement frames and how movement connections can be established via the co-occurrence of Twitter hashtags.

The data were analysed in a three-fold manner corresponding to the three research questions. In the first step, we conducted a network analysis focusing on which hashtags co-occurred with the #idlenomore hashtag, and we analysed the hashtags to determine whether or not they had any ideological or political affinities. In the second step, we focused on all social movement and indigenous-group hashtags that where identified in the first step, and we categorized these other hashtags based on the struggles they represented and what geographical context they signified. In the third step, we performed a qualitative content analysis of a number of tweets containing #idlenomore and some additional social movement or indigenous-group hashtags in order to study how discursive ties between movements were formulated and framed. In the concluding section of the paper, we argued that, despite some limitations with the study, our analyses and interpretations indicated that a connection between hashtags can establish chains of meaning with longer duration than the particular movements involved and represented by the hashtags. We also argued that the Twitter sphere surrounding and embedding #idlenomore, stemming from the discursive connections between several movement actors, created an issue-based or ad-hoc public that was important for individual actors, especially because this could give them strength and legitimacy by being connected to a larger public. The Twitter sphere can also engender a sense of solidarity between and among different social movements. Because such a shared public transgresses local and non-local bonds, one can also claim that such a common discursive public has translocal and transnational characteristics because it connects geographically dispersed movements.

Paper 4.

Social Media and the Transnationalization of Mass Activism: Twitter and Trade Union Revitalization (Co-written with Ragnar Lundström and Simon Lindgren)

In contrast to Papers 1–3, where we studied what were described as networked and new social movements, we studied in Paper 4 what we term a traditional social movement. The movement was the labour rights network LabourStart, a workers' rights network advocating and working for better conditions and rights for workers all over the world. Not really a labour movement, and not merely a union (or even really a union *per se*), LabourStart is defined in the article as a "hybrid organizational type" (Chadwick, 2007; Chadwick, 2013). The reason for this approach is that LabourStart uses multiple forms of digital media and it has numerous "purposes" or projects. It functions as a platform for campaigning for workers' rights, as a news site, and as an advocate for labour rights. In this paper, however, we focused on LabourStart's use of Twitter. The aim of the study was twofold. First, we wanted to explore how LabourStart used Twitter for communication, mobilisation, and organisation, and second we wanted to gain knowledge regarding how this Twitter communication was structured in terms of geography. In order to accomplish this, we posed two sets of research questions where the first set targeted how LabourStart employed Twitter and which of the platform's affordances it utilized (did it, for instance, use Twitter's interactive features in order to create a decentralized climate within the movement?) and the second set targeted certain geographical aspects by asking how user accounts that contributed to the data were geographically distributed and what countries were mentioned in the analysed tweets.

Our theoretical point of departure was the notions of *connective action* (because we analysed if LabourStart, through its media use, was able to establish an individualized, or personalized, connective action frame) and *translocality/transnationality* (because we analysed if LabourStart, via its media use, was able to engender translocal/transnational connections between various struggles). The dataset consisted of all tweets from 2008 until the beginning of 2015 stemming from any of the LabourStart accounts (there was one official account, based in Great Britain, and several other national accounts) and all tweets mentioning LabourStart or using the #labourstart hashtag. The methods consisted initially of a tentative content analysis of a selection of tweets from 2008/2009 and 2014, and this was followed by a network analysis. This paper generated three main conclusions. 1) LabourStart's use of Twitter cannot be described as generating digitally stimulated connective action because the network maintained centralized and

hierarchical forms of communication structures. 2) Due to LabourStart's centralized Twitter use, the network is not, it seems, able to establish any translocal or transnational connections between struggles and grievances. 3) In short, for unions (as in most cases of politics), the context within which a media is put to use influences the effects of the media use and the range of said use. In conclusion, the paper illustrates that a centralized and hierarchic organization or movement structure drives the media use of the organization/movement in question toward similar, i.e., centralized and homogenous, communicative methods and styles.

Conclusions

This dissertation poses three research questions:

- What is the *role* of digital media in the transnationalization of protest?
- How do the different organizational *structures* or *characteristics* of political and social movements influence the process of transnationalization through the use of digital media?
- In relation to previous work on transnational activism, how can a conceptual framework for transnationalization and social movements be constructed that takes into consideration the role of digital media?

Regarding the first question, focusing on the role that digital media played for the different movements, the answers differ in the four papers presented here. In Paper 1 it became clear that the communicative platform used by Telecomix, together with the fact that the movement's actors primarily communicated on and acted from their IRC channel rather than being tied to an actual physical place, encouraged the growth of a transnational movement logic. In addition, as the movement grew via its involvement in the Arab Spring uprisings, a process of transnationalization whereby new actors – from different parts in the world – continuously became involved in the network took place. This was made possible by the open communication environment that Telecomix, through its use of IRC, sustained by continuously inviting new actors from the areas where its agents intervened. In the cases of the new social movements (Papers 2 and 3), another pattern was discernible: through the use of digital media, the movements studied were able, through the connective activities of their followers, to extend or transcend their localities through scale shifts, and through such shifts create transnational movement frames. In the case of Kallak, the use of text and images in Facebook groups made it possible to disseminate – and gain support for – ideas and causes by connecting with other individual actors and movements on a local as well as transnational level. In the case of Idle No More, the actors' use of Twitter and Twitter hashtags made it possible to connect with hashtags from other movements and to establish transnational frames involving actors from other movements. Through such symbolic and discursive frames, based on connective actions and individualized sharing of grievances, it was, at least partly, possible to bridge divides between movements acting in different regions and nations.

Even though there are some differences between the two decentralized movements, for instance, that Idle No More is less connected to one specific physical locality than the Kallak conflict, the similarities here become obvi-

ous. In both cases, digital media helped them to emerge as critical publics, and their media presence made it possible for their issues, through individualized and connective acts of framing, meaning-making, and scale shifts, to become more widespread and embraced by similar, albeit distant, movement actors (hereby extending the original protest initiative). Thus, these two publics were not identical in structure and content, but they were both partly constituted by how their issues were presented through digital media and how their personalized action frames were diffused through such media. In the last paper, focusing on a traditional form of social movement, the outcomes of digital media use in terms of transnationalization were less obvious (or even completely absent). The reason for this, we claim, was that LabourStart maintained a centralized and hierarchic use of Twitter with little or no connective elements. Even though there were signs of scale shifts, in comparison to the other cases there was little sharing of connective personalized action frames. The role of digital media for transnationalization was, therefore, negligible because the movement's organizational structure was not affected, and a geographical and digital Western epicentre continued to be reinforced (at the same time as this structure also affected the way the digital media was used). Consequently, the role of digital media in the process of transnationalization differs depending on what form of movement one studies. When looking at networked and new social movements, digital media use seems – in different ways – to have played a role by encouraging and facilitating the formation of transnational publics by allowing for interconnections between movement actors in different places. In the case of traditional social movements, a similar role for digital media was in principle non-existent.

Looking at the second question, focusing on how the movements' structural or organizational characteristics influenced the process of transnationalization, we again see somewhat different outcomes from the movements' respective media use. In the case of Telecomix, the organizational structure, which to a large extent was affected by the inclusive form of communication that the movement enforced via its use of its IRC channel, was highly decentralized and the movement lacked perimeters that clearly separated the outside and inside of the movement because anyone could join and contribute. This helped contribute to transnationalization as new members could continue to contribute to, and actually affect, the movement's work as it unfolded by, for instance, becoming involved in the planning and performing of activities by communicating on the Telecomix IRC channel. A similar pattern, although with fewer possibilities to affect the work of the movements, was found in regards to the new social movements studied in Papers 2 and 3. In both of these cases, a flat organizational structure made it possible for individual actors from areas far from the actual protests to connect to other

movements and to perform connective actions. Thus they were able to create common, yet personalized, frames of reference.

In the case of Kallak, the decentralized structure of the movement made it possible for individual actors, through the use of Facebook groups where supportive statements, comments, and images could be posted by activists on-site as well as distant followers, to share personalized action frames leading to the engendering of transnational ties with, and frames involving, individual actors and movements. In the case of Idle No More, the decentralized structure of the movement made it possible for individual actors, through the use of Twitter hashtags where connections were established with other movements and struggles (represented by their specific hashtags), to extend the initial protest frames to a transnational level. In both of these cases, there was a connection between the decentralized structure of the movements in terms of organization and the personalized diffusion of frames and connective action that the digital media made possible. Of course, there were some disparities. Because Kallak was a more geographically rooted protest movement, it also came to have a stronger centre of activists than Idle No More, the latter being more geographically dispersed. Still, both examples showed decentralized as well as transnational characteristics that, I maintain, were made possible by the fact that their issues were diffused as personalized action frames through digital media, making common meaning-making and meaning-bridging possible.

Lastly, LabourStart, which still had a conventional social movement structure with a somewhat cohesive organizational core, was less able than the other movements to form a transnational public – and this can be explained by its (lack of) organizational dynamics. Briefly put, the organizational structure of social movements, paired with their specific digital media use, influences the ways in which the transnationalization of protests and movements are articulated and formed. Here, I would like to put forth the idea that the structure and organizational logic underpinning a movement clearly affects its abilities to make transnational connections. When establishing a functioning transnational public for intervening in political struggles and campaigns, organizational structure is vital – the more decentralized the movement, the more vibrant the transnational (counter)public. One way to understand this is that more flexible and decentralized movements, because they are less dependent on relational diffusion and thus better adjusted to stimulate interconnections between previously non-connected actors (i.e. diffusion through brokerage), are better suited for creating individualistic, albeit border transgressing, frames and ties between actors.

Regarding the third and last question, focusing on how an empirical and conceptual framework can be elaborated, I argue that certain notions, as presented in the theoretical section above, can help us understand the processes touched upon and described in the papers. Given the connective affordances of the digital media platforms the movements employed, and the opportunities for disseminating individualized action frames and affective connections that digital media provides, the transnational movements that appear in several of the papers seem to transgress the need to be physically close to their political peers. This is, for instance, accomplished – using the work of Tarrow & McAdam (2005) – as scale shifts that connect local and non-local places and actors via acts of brokerage take place. Even though the need to be in the same place to, for example, coordinate a mobilization, plan activities, and establish movement ties is becoming less important thanks to digital media, such connections are still necessary because a certain degree of ideological, or affectual, affinity seems to be needed for a transnational movement, or what Papacharissi (2015) calls an affective public, to emerge. Following Bennett and Segerberg's work on connective action, such affinity can be argued to, at least partly, move beyond the need for large, traditional movements and broad, overarching ideological frameworks because they can be built using temporary linkages between individual actors within, or between, movements. Such temporary or loose ties, based on the connection of personalized action frames, might be facilitated by the employment of digital media (cf. Svensson et al, 2015).

In order to address the third research question concerning the elaboration of a theoretical way to target transnationalization and digital media, and to explain how personalized action frames or identities can be established, I introduce the notion of *affectual proximity*. This is based on the idea that movement identities tend to build on emotions and affectual ties (Papacharissi, 2015; Castells, 2012: 13; Tarrow, 2011: 152-15), and I believe that this concept captures some of the factors explaining how transnational movements are established. Even if physical proximity is today, in some cases, less important than it has previously been claimed, some sort of proximity is still needed, I argue, in order for a movement identity to surface in a political struggle, for instance through the emergence of coalitions of individuals digitally sharing information along with their personal affects and frames of action. Affectual proximity emerges as a consequence of digitally enabled connective actions based on sharing of information, scale shifts, and brokerage. These connective actions interconnect various individuals (and their personalized action frames) and dissimilar movements from all over the world. Thus, with the advent of digital media that can create ties and diffuse movement frames, affectual proximity emerges next to physical proximity (the former supplementing, not replacing, the latter) because transnational-

ism, and transnational framing, can provide "symbols for collective identification and cross-national solidarity via the modular diffusion of ideas and formats" (Vicari, 2014: 107). Affectual proximity is not, of course, made possible by digital media alone, and connections transcending national borders have occurred long before the advent of the Internet. Yet, the conditions for affectual proximity are transformed via access to connective digital media. Expressing support for, and intervening in, struggles far from one's own geographical position is, as is shown in the papers, possible to a greater extent when using digital media as a complement to other activist tools – something that can be explored in terms of connective action.

I would posit that all but one of the papers in this thesis (the exception being the case of LabourStart) demonstrate a certain degree of affectual proximity. And such an affectual proximity is, to a high degree, affected by access to digital media and the connective action – and connective action frames – that such media enable. Even if different forms of digital media cannot, in themselves, fully explain all aspects behind the processes of transnationalization of protests, they can, I maintain, facilitate such a development. This can be accomplished, for instance, through digitally enhanced scale shifts where acts of brokerage, connecting previously unrelated actors acting in or from unrelated localities, are established. In Paper 1, the affectual and ideological cohesiveness of the individuals involved in Telecomix clearly structured the working of the movement. What held Telecomix together was not only its organizational structure, but also the communicative platform itself together with the cognitive praxis, based on affectual proximity, that united the engaged members. Irrespective of the differences already mentioned, a similar pattern was noticeable also in Papers 2 and 3 where distances in terms of geography were bridged in terms of ideological proximity. This transpired, for instance, through the tying together of different social movements' frames through hashtags on Twitter or the use of text and images on Facebook. In Paper 4, however, we could not find a similar pattern. We argue that the absence of transnational ties, and also a lack of a sense of affectual proximity, in that specific case could be derived from the fact that LabourStart's use of media, which in itself is based on its organizational structure, was highly centralized with few interactive elements.

In these transnational cases, there is a link between the place of the movement and the space of the movement. For a transnational movement to arise, there seems to have to be some sort of locality involved. Still, even if a movement remains tied to its local setting it can, as the papers indicate, by *also* being connected to struggles in other parts of the world, engender a process of transnationalization that is both local and non-local by way of transposing its agendas and by embracing, through acts of brokerage that

connect previously unconnected actors, other individuals' and movements' agendas and frames of references. Such a scenario is, in short, based on affectual proximity. Affectual proximity helps us understand how activists using communicative and connective spaces can establish joint political ventures and penetrate distant physical places. The affectual space might also become an affectual place – and vice versa – as individual actors share and connect their personal action frames using digital media. Thus they can establish a proximity that can travel across physical places through the use of connective spaces. In other words, the localities in question can be multiplied as additional localities that are "brought in" by scale shifts involving "rooted cosmopolitans" actually acting from other places and spaces, and these can supplement and extend the original site of contention. Locality and space, in other words, are conditions upon which the transnationalization of social movements depends. Without the presence of some sort of locality, a transnational movement can scarcely emerge. At the same time, digital media makes such localities more porous and flexible. In other words, locality of place is always interconnected with a mediated space, pointing to a hybrid form of politics.[5]

Thus, in closing, the role of digital media in the transnationalization of protests and movements was indeed of some significance in the movements studied within this thesis. The transnationalization was often accomplished through the interactive establishment of common frames of reference and through brokerage between activists from different localities. These, in turn, if not made possible directly by digital media, were at least to a high degree facilitated by them because personalized action frames were more easily diffused through digitally enabled sharing, brokerage, and scale shifts that connected actors from different localities. As became clear in the analyses included in this thesis, these processes were also informed by the particular movements' organizational structures. In cases of more decentralized movements, transnationalization was aided to a higher degree than in cases with more centralized, traditional organizational structures. These organizational dynamics also influenced how movements and different groups of movement actors used digital media. Lastly, the transnational connections made possible by digital media can be understood in terms of bridging actors from different parts of the world both ideologically and affectually through

[5] One can object that this distinction, also highlighted previously in the section on conceptual definitions, risks reproducing a dualistic point of view where online and offline, or place and space, are disconnected from one another. It is not my intention to establish such a conceptual tension, nor to reproduce a dichotomized logic. Rather, the concepts presented in this paragraph are to be viewed as analytical tools with which we can more easily investigate the phenomenon of transnational activism and social movements.

common frames within and between movements and individual actors. In order for this to be possible, at least some degree of affectual proximity is necessary. This concept helps us to grasp how transnational ties and movements can be instituted through the sharing of particular sentiments and individual action frames and how these are mediated by digitally enhanced connective action without the actors involved being in the same locality.

As mentioned previously, this dissertation had the ambition to empirically and theoretically contribute to the work done by Tarrow as well as to offer novel insights regarding the development of *digital* transnational social movements. In relation to Tarrow's work on transnational social movements, the present work brings to the fore the role of digital media. In relation to previous research, it gives deeper knowledge concerning how contemporary social movements, which in many cases are heavily dependent on digital media, are aided in processes of transnationalization by the use of such media. It also indicates that, in terms of networked means of communication, decentralized social movements are better equipped to utilize the full potential of digital media than movements with more static or hierarchic organizational structures.

The notion of digitally enabled connective affectual proximity also benefits the understanding of how transnational movements, through shared acts of digitally networked brokerage and scale shifts that connect actors, places, and struggles from different parts of the world, can be established in the first place despite a lack of access to the same physical localities. The concept of affectual proximity developed above aids us, I suggest, in understanding how the engendering of transnational social movements, comprising individuals and movement actors from all over the world, have evolved given advancements in communication technologies. The latter have, to an extent that has previously been hard to imagine, facilitated the interconnection of disparate places and struggles because affects, protests, grievances, and contentions can easily travel from and between different localities. And such processes, which make it possible to see the similarities between social movement actors in terms of objections to certain contemporary political or economic issues, can be understood in terms of the connection of affects through the connective sharing of personal action frames. In light of this, digitally enabled affectual proximity might assist in further inquiries into the field of how transnational social movements are constituted and established even when geographical distances can make such connections hard to envision.

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