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Digital Movements: Challenging Contradictions in Intersectional Media and Social Movements

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Digital Movements: Challenging Contradictions in Intersectional Media and Social Movements

1   Introduction

The past decade has seen an incredible increase in global social movements adopting a wide range of digital technologies to mobilize and represent the issues and images of their time. Social movement studies have only just begun to account for the use of social media in movements, and media and communication studies scholars are similarly asking how digital media are being adopted and adapted to support movements.

With the rise of the Arab and African Spring, Occupy, the Indignados, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, Standing Rock, and Idle No More, we have seen a profound shift in messaging, organizational forms, and digital media strategies emerging from an intensifying global network of interconnected social movements. No longer isolated causes, this network connects local issues to global movements, and marginalized groups from around the globe can connect to and organize with others at great distances. Connections are also built across issues in new forms of multi-issue organizing, often taking an intersectional perspective to reflect on how issues might shape, inform and impact each other. These can include, as in the list of movements above, causes related to generalizable issues such as corruption, austerity, and the banking crisis, which have been well researched, or related to the empowerment of marginalized, disadvantaged, excluded or oppressed groups such as women, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) and LGBTQQIP2SAA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, Two-Spirit, asexual, and allies)[1], shortened to LGBTQ+. These latter groups have not been as well studied in their communities of practice including mobilization of digital technologies for social change across intersectional shared issues.

Shared issues also link to shared alternative values, ideas and practices regarding horizontal distributed leadership (sometimes called leaderless) structures, including innovative forms of participatory democracy. At the same time, digital media affordances and opportunities have shaped and have been shaped by a growing emphasis on intersectional multi-issue organizational forms and networks. Intersectionality is the concept that identities and oppressive structures such as race, class, colonialism, sex and gender are not separate categories but that they shape each other and are experienced simultaneously rather than independently. Intersectionality has been used to develop practices that challenge these interlocking systems of oppression (Breton et al., 2012; Daring et al., 2012; Eslami & Maynard, 2013; Jaggar, 2014; Costanza-Chock et al., 2017). Intertwined intersectional media and movement practices allow us to understand the interconnectedness of issues, and to shift from an individualized case-by-case understanding of oppression toward a deeper analysis of the underlying intersectional systems and structures that are the root causes.

Social movements and media activists together have played an increasingly pivotal role in a global digital and political—or technopolitical—shift through intersectionality practices,

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[1] I shorten this to 'LGBTQ+' as above or 'queer and trans' while acknowledging these acronyms and terms change over time and may be replaced by other terms.

digital networks, and distributive leadership structures. These shifts have in some instances very rapidly led not just to policy or legislative change but also to more profound transformations in social norms and behaviours, which are typically much slower to change.

Autonomous media have had a pivotal role in this technopolitical shift. I use the term 'autonomous media' to refer to media projects within the field of intersectional anti-capitalist alternative media (Jeppesen 2016b), and in contradistinction to alt-right media. I have elsewhere defined grassroots autonomous media as follows:

> First, they are part of broader grassroots anti-authoritarian, militant or autonomous social movements. Second, they are anti-capitalist not just in content but also in funding models, which are both anti-corporate and not for profit. This anti-capitalism is often linked to an anarchist, left libertarian, Marxist or socialist political perspective. And third, they exercise collective autonomy in their political, cultural and decision-making models, structures and practices, which are prefigurative, directly democratic, horizontal and rooted in anti-oppression politics on issues of race and colonialism, class, gender, sexuality and disability. (Jeppesen 2016a)

In this context, I critically analyze four key conceptual frames for understanding contemporary autonomous digital media movements—translocal organizing, transmedia mobilizations, intersectionality, and the political economy of autonomous media. I argue that intersectionality theory is fundamental to our understanding of the online and offline actions of contemporary digital movements and we must therefore critically analyze and account for the ways in which social movement and media activists use intersectionality in their organizing and media work. Further we must better understand how activists themselves articulate and attempt to mitigate and shift the political economies, organizational structures, media affordances, and economic exigencies of intersectional autonomous media. While these intersectional media commitments and practices are not without their challenges—complex challenges and contradictions that will be explored below—I nonetheless contend that they have been key to the success of many current social movements at the forefront of social change today. Finally I argue that the integration of intersectional politics with new technological affordances and innovations has created a key framework—intersectional technopolitics—for understanding the hybridity of digital media and social movements as part of our contemporary technosocial assemblage.

2 Translocal Digital Movements

The first mode of organizing in intersectional grassroots movements is through translocal networks. Many multi-issue social movements use translocal strategies to connect specific related local issues across global locations. As such they work under the same general objectives within a broad-based social movement that is taken up transnationally but works autonomously at the local level by raising local culturally specific concerns.

Increasingly translocal social movements tend to include a consciousness around multiple related political issues, identities and systems (such as the education system, the prison system, the welfare system, the media system, as well as systems or structures of oppression across race, class, the sex/gender system, disability, colonialism, etc.). Contemporary translocal movements tend to be characterized by seven key dimensions that distinguish them from past waves of contention, as outlined below.

a) *Advanced network society after alter-globalization.* The alter-globalization movement of the 1990s and early 2000s was part and parcel of the paradigm shift from linear telecommunications to the network society (Castells 2010[1996]). That earlier shift has impacted everything from economics and labour to politics, education, social relations and more. The dominant mode of activism in this period was summit hopping and coalition building. However, with Web 2.0 and ubiquitous computing, there has been a digital media and device-driven shift toward the advanced network society in a period of intensified global neoliberalism and austerity capitalism. Anti-globalization has given way to anti-austerity waves of contention, and autonomous but interconnected translocal communications and campaigns have supplanted coalitions. The Occupy movement and the Indignados are excellent examples as there were local movements in many cities who did not necessarily directly communicate with each other, but through digital communications utilized similar tactics and strategies online (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) and on the ground (Occupying squares with protest camps).

b) *Virtual summit hopping and international solidarity.* The physical summit-hopping of previous eras has been augmented in two ways: through virtual summit hopping and days of international solidarity. Virtual summit hopping is facilitated through the use of livestreaming and live-tweeting where mass mobilizations can dominate the internet allowing protesters to participate digitally at a distance during global summits. International Days of Solidarity against the G20 and other global neoliberal institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have replaced the need for activists to travel to the site of the summit itself. Days of mass mobilization in one global location are supported translocally through protests in oftentimes hundreds of other countries, while also live-tweeting, live-streaming, and using transmedia techniques to broadcast the protest from the streets. An excellent example of this was the Women's March on Washington after the inauguration of US President Donald Trump in 2016, where numerous translocal autonomously organized marches featured participants in hand-knit pink 'pussyhats' (a reference to Trump's declaration he likes to grab a woman by 'the pussy').

c) *Intersectional Indigenous resurgence.* Anti-colonial Indigenous movements of resurgence are taking a 'Red intersectional' approach (Clark 2016) to draw attention to issues such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Trans people (MMIWGT), Indigenous land and treaty rights, environmental protection, Indigenous cultures, languages, and identities. These are all premised on the claim of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination from a position of power and strength. Part of this resurgence in Canada is taking place within a framework of Truth and Reconciliation after the federal government apologized for two episodes of history where Indigenous children were removed (stolen) from their parents without their consent, and first, placed in Residential Schools where many suffered horrible abuses and many others died, or second, placed in white families as foster children and forced to lose their language and culture during the so-called Sixties Scoop, child removal that continues on a large scale to this day. Drawing attention to intersections of gender, race, colonial capitalism, and the environment, resurgence movements such as #IdleNoMore have brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to denounce Canada's persistent role in colonialism, and in particular the MMIWGT tragedy. In New Zealand, Maori

culture is also in the process of a resurgence, establishing Maori cultural centers, universities, TV stations and more. Some theorists have referred to the global outpouring of Indigenous culture and the arts as an Indigenous Renaissance (Green 2016).

d) *Protest camps and reclaiming the commons.* Protest camps were not invented in Tahrir Square or by the Occupy or Indignados movements. They have existed for decades, including the 1981 women's peace camp on the Greenham Common (Roseneil 1995; Reading 2015), no-border camps contesting 'Fortress Europe', and the anti-nuclear camps that have taken place in Germany for decades. However, during the 2010-15 wave of contention, protest camps have developed in several new directions. Unlike the anti-nuclear camps and no-border camps, which tended to be for a fixed period of time, protest camps such as Tahrir Square, Occupy and the Indignados started one day and persisted until they either achieved their objectives, such as in Egypt where the dictator Mubarak was ousted from office in 2011, or until they were removed by police, which happened in many of the global Occupy camps (Feigenbaum, Frenzel, and McCurdy 2013; Gavin et al. 2017). While earlier protest camps were organized by activist groups or NGOs such as the Ruckus Society, and participants were largely activists focused on one single issue (borders, nuclear power, or war), the recent wave of protest camps have been multi-issue, multi-generational, intersectional, and multi-participant, with ordinary non-activist citizens of all ages and political stripes participating. Finally social media and other digital media forms such as texting, WhatsApp, Telegram and more, have played a pivotal role in organizing the protest camps in the squares, where many people participated both online and offline (Gerbaudo 2012; Castells 2015).

e) *The logic of connective action.* Social movement organizing through social media has enabled activists to bypass formal top-down organizing through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), trade unions and other civil society organizations, in order to organize directly with inter-connected individuals through informal social media 'friend' networks. Forms of collective action promoted by NGOs, unions and coalitions are on the decline, and have been supplanted by the logic of connective action (Bennett and Segerberg 2012). According to this logic, people are mobilized by open-ended action frames, such as Occupy's "We are the 99%," or the Indignados' "We are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers." These frames can be individualized to express a person's political position, identity and more. Movements such as Tahrir Square, the Indignados and Occupy, sometimes called "digitally enabled action networks" (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 22) tended not to have any large formal organization mobilizing their actions, and some such as the Greek Indignados even banned political parties. Yet they created a massive outpouring of digital media content, actions, events and analysis produced by everyone everywhere and disseminated to everyone everywhere. Thus digital movements generated a collective identity that sustained their movements by eschewing traditional political parties and traditional civil society organizations alike and instead focusing on self-representation (Bennett and Segerberg 2012, 21).

f) *Participatory distributive organizing.* How do movements implement the logic of connective action? They use distributive models of organizing through social networks that encourage participation both online and offline in the streets or camps. Participatory

distributive organizing enables individuals and loose-knit groups to take on quasi-leadership roles in their local communities, to organize actions, develop critical analysis, write for social media, create events, call for solidarity, and take many other types of actions. In the past these were typically centralized in traditional civil society organizations and undertaken by paid organizers; whereas today, distributive organizing allows for people to join by participating and to organize anything they like, in other words, to take on a horizontal translocal leadership role, through access to multiple online venues, platforms, apps and the like. Thus the potential virality of connective action frames translates into participatory leadership from multiple translocal sites, but with shared overall objectives. These were often expressed through political states of being, such as for the Indignados the expression of being indignant (a political emotion) regarding the corruption of government and banks, or for the Occupy movement, the shared action frame of being the 99% (a sociopolitical class identity). Distributive organizing may or may not be coordinated among groups and individuals and therein lies its beauty—it is flexible enough to accommodate the needs and leadership of the wide range of individuals and groups wanting to organize and participate in many different interconnected actions and campaigns.

g) *Intersectional movement leadership.* Distributive leadership in the new digital movements is oftentimes facilitated by people experiencing multiple intersecting oppressions. For example, Black Lives Matter (BLM), started by three queer women of colour, emphasizes that they are not leaderless but rather "leaderfull" (Khan-Cullors and Rao 2018) with many leaders in chapters throughout North America and beyond. They advocate for Black lives not just in a general way, but they repeatedly name and raise consciousness around all intersectional black lives, including LGBTQ+, non-binary, disabled, incarcerated, youth, elderly, neural-divergent, and more. Taking a stance against racialized policing and the prison system as well, the intersectional leadership of BLM is what led BLM-TO to stop the Toronto Pride Parade in 2016, demanding the removal of the police float and a commitment of Pride organizers to better support BIPOC participation in Pride. They also successfully led a campaign to remove police from Toronto schools. To take another example, #IdleNoMore was started by four women, three Indigenous and one non-Indigenous, signifying a movement toward affected people working together in distributed leadership roles supported by allies. And in 2006 a woman of colour, Tarana Burke started the #MeToo movement, later popularized by Alyssa Milano "in support of friend Rose McGowan's allegations of sexual harassment against Harvey Weinstein" (Borge 2018 np). Having two acknowledged 'founders' who had never met demonstrates how #MeToo is a translocal movement with multiple horizontally connected leaders addressing intersectional issues.

The powerful horizontal intersectional distributed leadership of digital movements has challenged hegemonic power and some deeply entrenched cultural and social norms through ending the silencing of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people. Groups and networks are empowering themselves through digital media, self-expression and mass global social movements, protests and campaigns. Thus, while the logic of connective action allows us to understand how distributed networks use individualizable action frames, it is intersectionality that shapes not just individual experiences and systemic oppressions but also collective actions and movements that can catalyze widespread social transformation.

3   Transmedia Digital Mobilization

Inseparable from translocal organizing, transmedia digital communications technologies inform strategies to mobilize interconnected intersectional movements. Researcher-activist Sasha Costanza-Chock defines it thus: "Transmedia organizing includes the creation of a narrative of social transformation across multiple media platforms, involving the movement's base in participatory media making, and linking attention directly to concrete opportunities for action" (Costanza-Chock 2014, 50). Four key characteristics emerge from this definition. First, technologically, media produced must be transmedia ready, which means linkable across platforms and shareable on many apps. Second, in terms of content, it circulates transformation narratives created by those at the forefront of movements. Third, in terms of processes and practices, it must be participatory, accessible by and for all those who might be interested in producing media. And finally, transmedia practices actively create political and social movement actions rooted in connective and collective action. For Costanza-Chock (2014) these four characteristics mean that "transmedia organizing is also accountable to the needs of the movement's base" (50). Therefore, while transmedia mobilizing typically focuses on technological affordances—what technologies enable movement and media activists to do across platforms—transmedia mobilizing works to ensure accessibility and accountability to those at the forefront of being affected and of the related anti-oppression struggles.

There are three key platforms that digital movements are using today in transmedia mobilization—Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. In this analysis we must account for the ways in which these platforms are taken up by intersectional activists. We recognize that on the one hand, the viral social media messages of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ can have a profound impact not just on governance and policy change but also on widely held beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Yet on the other hand, the power of these messages can also result in unintended consequences, contradictions which will be critically analyzed below.

Twitter, hashtag activism and trolls

The use of a specific Twitter hashtag can result in virality: a massive number of tweets, comments and retweets to a hashtagged word or phrase (G. Yang 2016). US journalist Imani Gandy argues that Twitter is the epicenter of communication for marginalized communities, such as young people, or people of colour, who do not tend to participate in mainstream political processes (Amnesty International 2018, 9). Digital movements use hashtags to mobilize protests, camps, demonstrations, marches, occupations, sit-ins, civil disobedience and other actions in public spaces in what Gerbaudo (2012) refers to as "Tweets and the Streets." Popularized during the Arab Spring, which is sometimes dubbed the 'Twitter revolution' (Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheafer 2013), hashtag activism has subsequently been adopted by many global intersectional movements including #BlackLivesMatter, #IdleNoMore, #NoDAPL and #MeToo. Hashtag activism is not driven or determined by Twitter, however, but by digital movements using Twitter as a transmedia mobilization tactic. Digital movements have the agency to shape social media uses, as "a rise in the number of extensive protests is more likely to precede changes in the use of social media than to follow [them]" (Wolfsfeld, Segev, and Sheafer 2013, 116). It is therefore ideal for transmedia mobilizations, allowing for short bursts of immediately useful information such as smartphone live-tweeting from protests to other protesters in the streets, as well as

aggregation of analysis and links to more in-depth media reports. It can thus be understood as a dual-purpose transmedia tactic that offers public messaging immediacy and a built-in aggregation function.

Unfortunately, Twitter is also a space inhabited by vicious misogynist, racist and transphobic trolls, as the Amnesty International research report *#ToxicTwitter* finds (2018). Some digital movements, such as the Greek Indignados or Aganaktismenoi, abandoned Twitter in 2011 when it became infiltrated by trolls (Treré, Jeppesen, and Mattoni 2017, 417). This is because, unlike Facebook, Twitter does not require you to use your real name. Anonymity online is a serious issue as people feel empowered to say anything without repercussions. But the consequences for those targeted can be very damaging. Thus, considering Costanza-Chock's characteristics of transmedia mobilizing, while Twitter is participatory on one hand, used to mobilize actions through call-outs and create narratives through live-tweeting, on the other hand, it is not accessible to people who are heavily trolled and the anonymous trolls are not accountable to anyone, and particularly not to the social movements they are attacking.

Facebook, Virality, Metadata and Surveillance

Facebook's insistence that people use their real names does provide for a level of accountability that makes it somewhat less vulnerable to trolls. Digital movements create and curate their own FB pages for debates, analysis and action callouts. The Greek Indignados were one of the first broad social movements started by a Facebook callout to protest in Syntagma Square in Athens on May 25, 2011. "This came not from seasoned activists, but from a small group of what one interview participant called 'hipster activists,' who did not belong to any traditional organization or political affiliation. To everyone's amazement, twenty-five thousand people converged" (Treré, Jeppesen, and Mattoni 2017, 411). Facebook is therefore, on the one hand, a participatory site of concrete action opportunities and movement narratives. Moreover, it can be used in tandem with other social media platforms to create viral content.

On the other hand, there are some tensions and contradictions in using Facebook. One predominant tension is between privacy rights and the desire for discoverability. Because of the use of real names, unless privacy settings are high, personal data, such as home address, phone number, and family relationships, are publicly available, discoverable and open to stalkers, as well as dataveillance or data surveillance (van Dijck 2014). This makes Facebook users' information vulnerable to doxing or the release of personal information online with malicious intent. Facebook activists with low privacy settings have also been surveilled and arrested by police who use social media analysis for predictive policing, for example, at the Toronto G20 protests in 2010 (Milberry and Clement 2015). While high privacy settings will protect a person from doxing and police surveillance, these settings also mean that posted content is not publicly discoverable and thus cannot go viral. Public posts can be picked up by mainstream media, publicizing the issue, but this is also a process open to co-optation or theft of un-copyrighted material by mainstream journalists (Atton 1999).

A second contradiction is between mobilization opportunities and economic exploitation. The Facebook smartphone app now has 'Facebook Live', a built-in livestream feature, used by Diamond Reynolds to livestream Philando Castile's police shooting death (Uberti 2016). The more people who watched this live video recording of a person being shot and

killed by the police, the more money Facebook generated, while Reynolds or the Castile family received no financial benefit from sharing this livestream feed on Facebook. Therefore we can understand this as economic exploitation by Facebook of a personal tragedy, with this being just one example. At the same time, this particular video quickly went viral, allowing for the rapid mobilization by the Black Lives Matter movement to support Diamond Reynolds and demand justice for Philando Castile. The Facebook Live video also provided direct evidence of the police wrongdoing and Castile's compliance and innocence, serving as a direct witness account by Reynolds who through her action became an instantaneous citizen journalist.

While today every social movement will have a Facebook page—not to have one is to languish in obscurity—these two contradictions demonstrate how Facebook's pros and cons can be difficult to navigate.

YouTube, Livestreaming and the Public Good

Video activism emerged in the 1990s with the advent of lightweight camcorders that activists (who could afford one) could bring to media-worthy events to create their own narratives of liberation (Harding 1998). The filming of activist events has greatly shifted since then, as smartphone video cameras have become so ubiquitous that protest events now generate an overwhelming amount of footage.

Activist video has become a crucial element of protest mobilization, with mobilization and issue-based videos being uploaded to YouTube, and protest videos livestreamed by smartphone or more advanced video cameras directly from the streets. Live reporting from the streets was initiated by fledgling Indymedia activists in 1999 at the Seattle anti-WTO protests, using an activist-owned platform for autonomous journalism purposes. These activist reports undermined the legitimacy of some of the mainstream media's claims regarding activist vs police violence.

Today with the dominance of social media, the greater reach of sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube means that activists attempt "to appropriate commercial social media as platforms of alternative reporting" (Poell and Borra 2012, 696). YouTube is no exception, providing an excellent and 'free' advertising driven platform for video sharing. At the G20 protests in Toronto, for example, "222 YouTube videos were uploaded by 65 different authors" (Poell and Borra 2012, 702) and tagged with #g20report, with more users participating actively during the days of protest than in the days before or after the summit (Poell and Borra 2012, 701). While it was found that one video activist created 28% of the videos (703), user influence on YouTube was widely distributed and the videos of #g20report "can to some extent be characterized as a collective account of the protests" (704).

More recently in 2014 with the Black Lives Matter mobilization to contest the shooting death of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, Livestreaming became a crucial element of the mobilization. As Livestreamer and communications professor Chenjerai Kumanyika notes, the Ferguson protests were met with a massive show of militarized force by the state, including tanks, helicopters, the National Guard, and more (Kumanyika 2016). The Livestreamers thus played a crucial role in holding the police and military force accountable for their behaviours, as the protesters and activists

were able to report live from the streets. Both the #g20report and the #Ferguson YouTube and Livestream social media activity are excellent examples of transmedia mobilizations producing narratives of liberation and self-expression of communities across multiple platforms in hybrid protest forms.

Like Twitter and Facebook, however, these forms of social media video activism are not without their own contradictions and tensions. For example, many activists are aware of "the implications of public good being created collectively by private individuals via the enabling technology of a company that is responsible for complying with the principles and regulations of corporate responsibility, but which is not necessarily required to prioritize the public interest" (Burgess and Green 2013). In other words, while protesters and activists are mobilizing for the public good, YouTube is interested in keeping viewers' eyes on its site to drive up its advertising revenues, an objective that does not support and may even contradict notions of the public good. YouTube space amplifies these "tensions between top-down and bottom-up, 'labor' and 'play', democracy and profiteering" (Burgess and Green 2013). The question remains whether the social media logic of YouTube is a "threat to the viability of alternative or community media spaces, or alternatively, whether its visibility and accessibility might in some ways actually promote and sustain them" (Burgess and Green 2013, 75-76).

While translocal and transmedia mobilization allow digital movements to participate in global networks of cross-platform organizing, the question remains—who exactly are the participants in contemporary digital movements? The concept of intersectionality, as we have seen, can help us to be attentive to this question. The intersectional concerns and practices of digital media and social movements turn precisely around the complex question of participation.

4   Intersectionality in Digital Movements & Media

Accounts of media and protest movements tend to assume that we all understand the same thing when we speak about movement participants. However, few studies delve into specifically who the participants of movements are and how their social locations and subject positions will influence their demands, modes of mobilization, and media practices. In my earlier collaborative work with the Collectif de Recherche sur l'Autonomie Collective (CRAC), an anti-authoritarian feminist research collective in Montreal, we found that micro-cohorts of women, queer and trans, and people of colour played a key role in organizing radical anti-authoritarian movements in Quebec (Breton et al. 2012a, 2012b). Moreover, we noted that movements were increasingly engaged in intersectional approaches to organizing, often led by queer and trans and/or people of colour and/or feminists and allies (Breton et al. 2012a, 2012b).

Intersectionality theory has importantly developed in both academic and activist spaces. Simply put, it is the idea that aspects of people's experiences and identities once considered separately, such as gender or race, are interconnected or intersecting axes. Moreover, experiences and identities are impacted through intersecting axes of oppression and privilege that take place in society through systems and structures that shape the way we live. While the identities, including oppression and privilege, are experienced on the individual or micro level, they are constructed on the society-wide and sometimes global or macro level. Intersectionality can therefore have political, cultural, economic, and social implications.

While the term intersectionality itself was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1998), the concept of the relatedness of identities and experiences was conceived much earlier. Indigenous women explored the gendered economic and age-based effects of colonialism, considering the relationships among the four intersecting axes of gender, capital, colonialism and age in the early 1900s. Building on the work of Sojourner Truth, who famously claimed 'Ain't I a Woman?!' bell hooks analyzed the intersections of race and gender, demonstrating how Black women are oppressed not just as Black people marginalized by the existing white supremacist power structures, but specifically by white women in feminist movements, and Black men in anti-racist civil rights movements (hooks 1982). Since these seminal texts, feminists have gone on to consider the intersections of identities based on race, class, gender, sex, LGBTQ+, colonialism, and disability, as well as structures and systems of oppression including white supremacy, capitalism, the state, climate change, the police, war, and more.

More recently, as a culmination of many years of work on intersectionality, theorists Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016: 2) offer the following definition:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other.

Intersectionality is an excellent analytical method for understanding complex experiences, identities, and systems of oppression in society. At the same time, I argue that intersectionality is an excellent tool for understanding and engaging in liberatory anti-oppression practices through autonomous media production and social movement organizing. The theory and on-the-ground practices have emerged together. In order to properly account for the systemic critiques being mobilized by movement and media activists today, an analysis of digital movements must consider intersectionality theory and practices that directly challenge systems of oppression.

But what do we mean by systems of oppression? We might be used to thinking of oppression and privilege in terms of individual experiences, identities, or groups of people. For oppressed groups we might imagine homeless people, people with disabilities, trans people, or Indigenous people. For privileged groups we might think of white people, males, or the rich and elite labelled the 1% by the Occupy movement. But these divisions are not natural, they are created through 'systems'—the everyday workings of society, including social, economic, political, cultural and linguistic norms and practices. There is a very basic contradiction we are working against here—we tell ourselves in our societies that 'all people are equal' when anyone can see that in reality this is not the case. Therefore, to better understand the root of this problem in society, and importantly, to be able to change it toward the day when we all live in actual equality, we need to understand the intersectional systems of oppression that create these divisions and inequalities in the first place.

To do this work we need to develop a deeper understanding of systems or structures of oppression. Using race as an example, sociologist Salvador Vidal-Ortiz explains structures of oppression this way:

> the dismantling of whiteness (as structure) is different from white (as race). When we talk about race in the classroom, I always make sure to distinguish between a race, a group of people, and the system that races encode. Here, I talk about whiteness as a discourse that enables a set of practices, which activates, with its own set of codes, certain responses and actions. But I am not speaking of white people -- whether administrators, colleagues, students -- or even whiteness as a race. (Vidal-Ortiz 2017 np)

We need to take care in doing this work, in building this understanding, not to vilify groups of people or individuals based on identities, whether they are perceived to be in a dominant or oppressed group. Therefore we are careful not to talk about white people or even the so-called white race, but rather we want to unpack and understand whiteness as a structure that is used to organize society and everyday life.

We can also extend this logic to include the structures of gender, sexuality, social class, colonialism, and other socially constructed systems. Systems or structures of oppression include four specific mechanisms that work together to organize society:

1. **discourses** or language imbricated with power, including professional jargon, street slang, formal and informal discourses, etc.

2. **codes** or symbolic representations and images, which might include visuals, symbols, idioms, words, stereotypes, etc.

3. **everyday practices** and the policies that govern them such as working, going to school, children in day care, parental leave, participation in sports, shopping, where elderly people live, health care, entertainment, sexuality, etc.

4. **social norms** enacted through socially accepted attitudes and related behaviours, responses, actions and reactions prescribed in particular circumstances, which might include clothing in formal or unwritten dress codes, hairstyles, eating habits, gender norms, etiquette, standards of behavior, and more.

Using this definition, we move away from saying one or the other group is good or bad—again it is not really about individual people or specific groups—and toward revealing the mechanisms, structures, practices, policies, discourses etc. that combine to maintain social divisions, with the ultimate objective of being able to unpack, deconstruct and then transform them at a much deeper level by accounting for intersectional interlocking systems of oppression and privilege.

Thus we can see that intersectionality is fundamental to understanding social movements that are advocating around both individual identity-based issues such as race, class, LGBTQ+, Indigeneity, and gender, as well as the related and interrelated systemic oppressions such as capitalism, patriarchy, racialization, colonialism, and finally socio-economic structures and systems such as the legal system, the prison system, the education system, climate change, and more. These systems are all intersectional with capitalism and therefore a political economy approach can help us better understand some of the challenges, complexities and contradictions at hand.

5   The Political Economy of Atuonomous Media Activism

Intersectional issues all articulate to—they are both shaped by and tend to shape—capitalism, therefore the last conceptual frame key to understanding digital movements is political economy, or questions regarding media ownership and other economic issues in

media activism that impact the capacity of media movements to undertake successful political action. In other words, how do activist media fit into the larger framework of media economies, and what are they doing to challenge economic structures through political organizing of media and movement networks?

In simple terms, capitalist media is part of an economic system in which individuals and corporations own property, businesses, industry and trade, which are competitive and profit driven. In capitalism the capitalists (sometimes referred to as the bourgeoisie) own and profit from the means of production, and the workers (sometimes referred to as the proletariat) work to generate profits for the capitalists, for which they typically receive pay. Capitalism is often contrasted to two other economic models: state ownership of industry and property, and cooperatives that are collectively owned by participants.

Media ownership and convergence

Within capitalism there are three models of media ownership: (1) private or corporate; (2) public or state-funded; and (3) community or independent media, sometimes called third sector media (Gasher, Skinner and Lorimer, 2016). In this triad, the intensity of capitalism is generally strongest in private media, moderately strong in public media, and weakest in independent media. Political economy is most often used to study how corporate media dominate economically to reinforce hegemonic political positions. Here however I undertake to turn the political economy spotlight onto alternative media.

Within the context of contemporary global capitalism, media ownership models have undergone two convergence trends—digital or technological convergence, and economic or corporate convergence. First, in digital convergence, with the advent of digital technologies, multiple media genres that used to be produced and distributed using very different analog technologies are now produced using similar digital technologies and disseminated on the same devices. For example, newspapers have consistently been produced on printing presses, distributed on paper, delivered to stores or consumers, and consumed in print. With digital convergence, the same articles are now produced in digital formats and distributed online, often with additional digital materials such as video or audio files, and consumed on laptops, smart phones and tablets. This changes how people understand the source of media. Ten years ago, when I asked students where they got their news, they would name newspapers—the Montreal Gazette, the Globe and Mail, the New York Times. Today they name their device or a social media platform such as Facebook, or sometimes a news aggregator app. They are disconnected from the knowledge of who is producing the news, and all sources appear the same—digital. The concern is that all 'news' looks legitimate, which opens the door to fake news and post-truth alternative facts.

Second, in economic convergence, also sometimes called corporate concentration, multinational corporations have bought up many different media genres in a shift toward cross-platform ownership. Now one conglomerate will own multiple newspapers, magazines, TV networks, radio stations, film studios, advertisers, and more, disseminating the same news and entertainment content across massive global media networks. As many scholars argue, corporate convergence has led to a monoculture of news and entertainment production with limited perspectives (Giroux 2002; McChesney 1999; Hackett 2009).

Some media owners, such as News Corp or Sinclair Broadcasting Group will dictate content

to their news stations. In April 2018, the openly pro-Trump Sinclair network, with 200 stations across the US, forced all of their news stations to read the same script decrying one-sided or biased reporting. Timothy Burke created a video montage of 36 news anchors reading the identical words (https://theconcourse.deadspin.com/how-americas-largest-local-tv-owner-turned-its-news-anc-1824233490), which went viral with 6 million Twitter views, largely due to the irony of the broadcast where a station widely known to be biased is denouncing bias, with some calling it creepy, terrifying, or outright propaganda (Stewart 2018).

Audiences, publics and counter-publics

Not just broadcasters and ownership but also audiences under digital capitalism are influencing bias. Audiences have shifted toward greater engagement in content production which is often opinion based, as well as toward the consumption of content that confirms their pre-existing biases. First, because digital media has become ubiquitously interactive, we see an explosion in participation and content production by audiences who have become 'produsers' or 'prosumers'—a hybrid between producers and users or consumers of media. This takes place predominantly through social media platforms, which are increasingly multi-media, making space for podcasts, articles and comments, video, photos, links, and other combinations. Audiences can generate their own content, aggregate the content of others, or simply look at content produced by other audience members. Personal media and corporate media have started to increasingly resemble each other, as the former strives for legitimacy and the latter strives for popularity. The promise for democracy of this massive outpouring of amateur or citizen content, however has not been reached (Curran, Fenton, and Freedman 2016) largely due to the continued domination of corporate media combined with the confusing plethora of fake news and post-truth alternative facts reporting.

Audience members have an increasingly difficult time sorting through this miasma, which leads to the second shift in media audience habits and practices. Audiences have migrated toward what I call "media me" whereby individuals curate their own media consumption patterns to be self-absorbed, self-focused, and self-reflecting. They engage strictly with content that reflects back to them their preconceived notions of the world, never feeling the need to learn, rethink or challenge their ideas. They also consume on an affective level, focusing not on learning new ideas or perspectives but rather how they feel about the media content presented.

Audiences are often aggregated to form publics or "emergent sociopolitical assemblages with shared or interlocking concerns who know themselves as, and act as, publics through media and communication" (Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández 2016, 80). If publics are engaged actors with a common interest in democracy, civic action, and political participation, the risk with 'media me', despite the promise of participation, is deactivation—public debate is limited, audience members become isolated, and citizens no longer share common reference points. Most audience members do not engage with most other audience members so that, instead of sharing common social, political, cultural or cognitive frameworks—the national imaginary—publics have instead become polarized.

The most obvious example is the Democrats and Republicans in the US Trump era who have difficulty engaging in any meaningful dialogue. Online this polarization means that

the dominant form of engagement increasingly seems to be trolling, flaming, sub-Tweeting, and doxing. These negative forms of engagement come predominantly from the right, as they attack marginalized groups who are advocating for improvements in lived social realities, as well as in the law. For example, Black Lives Matter, female gamers and tech industry workers, female politicians in many countries, LGBTQ+ groups and individuals, and grassroots Indigenous organizations have all experienced online attacks that sometimes also translate into personal attacks offline, also known as In Real Life (IRL) or away from the keyboard (afk).

These negative engagement patterns are most intensified and dangerous for marginalized groups, particularly women, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people, who are routinely threatened with many forms of violence, sexual assault and death in online forums. A prominent example is the 2014 GamerGate controversy where women asserting their right to be gamers met with a horrifically violent backlash from men (Burgess and Matamoros-Fernández 2016). Non-binary and LGBTQ+ gamers intervened to challenge the male vs. female aspect of that debate and to demand more diversity of gaming characters (Evans and Janish 2015). Another intervention was the creation by Randi Harper of a bot blocker called ggautoblocker, an app for Twitter users to block trolls; Harper has gone on to form a non-profit Online Abuse Prevention Initiative (Harper 2014). Thus, we can see how anonymous online trolling makes the digital public sphere unsafe for marginalized groups and networks, eroding their experiences of self-worth and value in society along with their ability to safely access online spaces.

Strong diverse and active publics and counter-publics, however, are crucial to thriving democracies. Strong publics will be more engaged in civic debate and publicly oriented action, and less involved in consumerist media (e.g. entertainment media dominated by advertising, which includes social media). On one hand, Robert McChesney has argued that media ownership concentration in the hands of a limited number of wealthy media moguls creates weaker democracies, largely due to the construction of weak, consumer-oriented audiences disinterested in political issues (McChesney 1999). On the other hand, counter-publics develop among social groups who feel underrepresented or misrepresented in mainstream media, such as women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ groups, to counter this silence or misrepresentation (Kidd, Barker-Plummer, and Rodriguez 2006; Downey and Fenton 2003; Fraser 2012; Gavin Brown 2007). Social media has increasingly played a pivotal role in the development of counter-publics that support stronger communities and democracies.

Public interaction and control over media generative of strong public and counter-public spheres, I contend, proceeds in the inverse direction of capitalist ownership. Community and independent media produce strong, radical political publics and counter-publics who actively participate in civil society through grassroots social movements; these media are more often co-operative, non-profit or explicitly anti-capitalist. Public media, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) or the US-based National Public Radio (NPR), produce moderately strong publics whose citizens are moderately engaged in civic action and may be somewhat critical of capitalism. And finally, private, corporate, capitalist profit-driven media produce weak publics oriented more toward consumerism and entertainment than civic engagement. Ownership and economic models will often shape management processes and funding models; ownership will also have an impact on media content—who owns the media influences what appears in the media.

Media work under neoliberal capitalism

Media work has been directly impacted by the global economic crisis. Although journalism has typically been a field where freelance work is more common than not, working conditions have worsened under austerity measures, with many journalists joining the *flexploited precariat* – workers who are forced into flexibilized temporary contracts, freelance contracts, or part-time work, placing the worker in a permanently precarious employment situation. For media makers, there are several ways this can play out.

a) *The unpaid media internship* – often done by young people, students, or new university graduates, who turn to unpaid internships to gain experience in the field. These positions can only be taken by people with access to outside financial support meaning the privilege of having wealthy parents can be leveraged into workforce experience in ways that those needing to find paid labour cannot benefit. Even then, "Internships may provide the proverbial foot in the door, but they come with no guarantees: a 2012 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the U.S. reveals that a slim 37 per cent of unpaid interns received job offers" (Evans and Janish 2015). Internship exploitation intensifies racialized and gendered marginalization within media structures (de Peuter, Cohen, and Brophy 2012).

b) *The over-educated indebted service industry worker* – university graduates from journalism, media and communication studies programs with massive student debt who are unable to find employment in the media field, and are not in the position to take on unpaid labour, instead work in underpaid service sector jobs to pay off student loans while cohabitating in low-rent apartments. These are predominantly part-time minimum-wage jobs, including the food service industry, call centers, and retail stores. This work hardly pays the bills and it can be exhausting, requiring employees to have multiple jobs, and leaving little time for writing or researching news articles, filming documentaries, or the other media work that their education has trained them to do.

c) *The immaterial labourer* – workers whose online labour is invisible, including their "communicative capacities and sociality" Cohen (2013, 181), where information, cultural content, and affective networks are created outside paid worker-employer relations but nonetheless subsequently translated, as data or metadata, into value for capitalist and state dataveillance. This includes people creating content for social media, a form of unpaid labour that generates both free content for the platform and metadata sold to advertisers, as discussed above. Many aspiring journalists share their work this way to get their voice heard and develop their 'brand' (see entrepreneurial journalism below). Immaterial labourers, particularly those doing social, emotional and affective labour, are most often women, LGBTQ+, and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC).

d) *The cognitariat* – a highly educated segment of the *flexploited precariat* who often have graduate degrees and work in the highly competitive and insecure working conditions of the knowledge and cultural production sectors, including as sessional university instructors, writers, and artists (Dean, 2014). The *cognitariat* generates exceptional new knowledge and cultural forms, key to policy and social change, yet their work is increasingly unsupported, insecure and undervalued. They may live from grant to grant, from show to show, or from contract to contract in the overeducated, underpaid precarious *gig economy*.

e) *The involuntarily unemployed* – people not engaged in paid media, culture or communications labour, not necessarily by choice, but because of the high levels of unemployment perpetuated and intensified by neoliberal capitalism. The unemployed *cognitariat* have limited or no access to unemployment insurance, paid parental leave, medical, or other social or economic benefits that have either been cut or never existed, depending on the country. Media workers between contracts, or whose media outlet has closed altogether, such as the closure of the national TV station in Greece during the austerity crisis, experience unemployment while continuing to produce alternative media in an unpaid capacity.

f) *The Entrepreneurial Journalist* – journalism students or graduates who can no longer expect to find work in a newsroom, must brand themselves as producing a certain kind of niche journalism that can then be leveraged into freelance prospects. In addition, they have to be adept at all forms of journalism, not just writing but also photography, video, website development, radio, as well as promotion and other areas of business. Entrepreneurial journalism deepens the precarity of media work as all journalists are now expected to be freelancers, outside unions, paid by the article, with no fixed employment (Cohen 2016). It also privileges those who can create a niche that can be perceived as unbiased in not challenging the status quo, whereas those who do, such as Desmond Cole's reporting on anti-Black racism in Canada, are seen as biased and may lose opportunities despite journalistic excellence.

g) *The Media Activist* – reports from the side of protest movements, and organizes as an activist within campaigns, acknowledging their subjectivity while also pointing to the impossibility of objectivity in journalism. Media activists are often unpaid media producers, engaged in Do It Yourself (DIY) media as a labour of love, whereas others try to develop funding streams through grants or crowdfunding (Jeppesen et al., forthcoming). Bristol Cable in the UK is an example of a mixed model of paid-unpaid labour, whereby in 2017, journalists were hired for ten hours per week, of which six hours were paid and four were volunteer, with the ultimate target of raising the funds for full paid employment.

h) *The Citizen Journalist* – passing by an unfolding event, they pull out their cellphone and start live-streaming or live-tweeting. The Rodney King bystander video by George Holliday from 1991 is the first famous example of this phenomenon (Deggans 2011), with others include citizen reporting on the earthquake in China in 2008 that the government attempted to deny (Moore 2008), or the Facebook Live-streaming by Diamond Reynolds of the police shooting of her boyfriend Philando Castile at a traffic stop in 2016, with Reynolds becoming an appreciatively calm commentator in that moment (Uberti 2016), as mentioned above. Citizen journalism can also emerge when marginalized groups are misrepresented, silenced or absent from mainstream media, filling in missing voices from the margins (Rodriguez 2001).

These forms of *flexploited* media work have emerged at the same time that the economic crisis has precipitated an increase in many forms of hyper-exploitative labour. These are as far ranging as domestic work, day care staff, hospital volunteers (Cloutier-Fisher and Skinner 2006), and other affective unpaid or underpaid labour (Dowling, Nunes, and Trott 2007), sex work (van der Meulen 2011), underpaid undocumented immigrant or migrant

labour (Costanza-Chock 2014), indentured labour, or human trafficking and slavery (Kempadoo, Sanghera, and Pattanaik 2015), all of which are intensified across racialized, gendered and class lines globally. The economy has always "depended on the welfare provided by women through unpaid care work, while at the same time failing to reward and value it" (Sandoval 54). The difference is that today working conditions have eroded and exploitation has simultaneously intensified with neoliberalism, leading to the rise of hyper-exploitation.

6   Conclusion

The political economy of intersectional grassroots media has been shaped by the translocal organizing and transmedia mobilizing practices of transformative media and movement activists. This media labour requires a rethinking in terms of not just observing the multiple intersectional oppressions at work in the world, including movements and media, but also recognizing the unpaid and invisible immaterial labour of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ activists, upon which the recent wave of contention has built a widespread and deep-seated network of global movements.

From the alter-globalization 'movement of movements' of the 1990s through more recent anti-austerity, trans/feminist, LGBTQ+, anti-racist and anti-colonial movements, digital shifts are changing the way social movements organize, from coalitions or networks to the translocal mobilizations of the Indignados, Occupy, Slut Walk and No One Is Illegal. At the same time, they are embracing, albeit with some healthy skepticism, the digital shift to mobilize as much online as offline, using newly emergent digital and technological affordances offered by a wide variety of social media platforms for transmedia mobilizations. These new digital movements are highly evidenced in the hashtag activism of #BLM, #MeToo, and #IdleNoMore. The multi-issue anti-globalization movement in conjunction with intersectional Black feminism can be seen as two important drivers of the widespread emergence of intersectional multi-issue political organizing as demonstrated by the LGBTQ+ focus of Black Lives Matter, the emphasis of #IdleNoMore on specific issues affecting Indigenous women, girls and trans people (MMIWGT), and more.

Intersectional technopolitics is therefore the predominant organizing model of these new digital movements. Intersectional technopolitics can be defined as critically engaging the politics of contemporary social movements through adapting and hacking emergent and dominant technologies such as capitalist social media platforms. Intersectional technopolitical movements are organized by tech-savvy activists engaging distributive leadership models in translocal mobilizations connected online through a range of digital modalities, and taking place in the streets through both connective and collective action.

Rather than engaging in a 'race to innocence' whereby people distance themselves from the oppressions of others, preferring not to feel implicated, activists of all kinds are acknowledging multiple intersecting systems and structures of oppression and privilege, integrating this understanding into their repertoires of contention and communication. As such they are acting as allies in solidarity, and exploiting and cross-appropriating a wide range of digital technologies to achieve incredible results in their campaigns.

Within social media platforms used for transmedia mobilization, the technological and social affordances, political economies, and participatory opportunities are rife with contradictions and tensions, as we have seen. It is important to keep in mind "the 'real digital

divide' [which] is the result of a social shaping of new media toward the interests of already powerful social groups, marked by class-specific characteristics, including profound individualization" (Burgess and Green 2013, 78).

Social media appears excellent for transmedia mobilization, as the affordances are ubiquitous and the transparency of public posts means that everyone can participate in public debates and create content. Social media thus has great promise for participatory action, however, private ownership of most social media platforms leads to a great contradiction at the heart of this participation (Curran, Fenton, and Freedman 2016; Fuchs 2012, 2009) in terms of who participates and who benefits from this participation.

Not everyone online participates the same way. Individuals can take on three different roles: they may write content, repost content, or simply read content. It has been found that a "1% Rule" emerges where these three roles typically take place in a 1-9-90% distribution, respectively. In other words, 1% of social media participants generate new content, 9% are aggregators who participate predominantly by reposting content, doing the bulk of the transmedia mobilization work, and 90% are lurkers who might read but do not engage ("1% Rule" 2018). If only 1% of people have the access, capacity and skills to create content, transmedia mobilization in fact provides a role for non-producers to play as aggregators that is key to increasing distributed leadership models of mobilization.

The content they produce, however, is no longer owned by the producers once it has been posted. According to Facebook's copyright policy, and the policies of most social media platforms generally speaking, they own any media that users post on the platform. So while corporations are quick to invoke copyright law to contest pirating or peer-to-peer filesharing, they are just as quick to claim copyright over material they did not themselves produce.

Social media platforms also use targeted advertising based on data mining of "Likes", which is increasingly lucrative; for example Facebook's 2017 advertising revenue topped $40 Billion, a great proportion of it coming from mobile (Roettgers 2018). Advertising in effect doubles the labour social media users are doing for the platform. They are not just creating content which is then owned by the platform, but they are also generating personal metadata which is data mined by algorithms, aggregated and sold to advertisers. The more they post across platforms using transmedia mobilizing, the more data they are generating, and the more the corporate platforms have captured their eyeballs, and advertisers' funds.

A user's personal taste, as determined (and not always accurately) through clickstreams, becomes a valuable commodity, with app designers intentionally working to make apps and platforms habit-forming to increase production of this commodity (Andersson 2018). Users are thus directly generating profit for massive corporations, engaged in double unpaid immaterial labour in the typically exploitative capitalist manner whereby those who produce the commodities do not own the commodities produced but receive some limited value in return, in this case, social movement outreach affordances.

As my research with the Media Action Research Group (MARG) shows, and Amnesty International confirms, this unpaid digital labour is more often undertaken by women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals who may be systematically prevented from accessing mainstream media and therefore rely on social media for public discourse and creating counter-public spheres (cf. "Black Twitter) (Amnesty International 2018, Jeppesen and Petrick 2018

forthcoming). However, the risk is that their social media output further marginalizes them economically through unpaid labour. Perhaps contradictorily, their work can at the same time have immense positive social and political impacts (Jeppesen and Petrick 2018 forthcoming).

There are also serious debates today about the authoritarianism of social media (Treré and Barassi 2015; Amnesty International 2018). Zeynep Tufekci argues that the hidden algorithms of Facebook, Google, YouTube and other massive corporate digital platforms have the power to influence elections and were in fact used to do so during the recent Trump election of 2016. Moreover, because they individualize the media messages and ads that users see, citizens are not receiving shared information, we do not know what information others are receiving, we have no way to discern the truth value of the messages we receive, and public debate, she argues, is more or less impossible (Tufekci 2017). Similarly, Jaron Lanier suggests that because Google, Facebook and other digital platforms are advertising driven, and particularly because of the way they are structured to provide instantaneous feedback loops, they are no longer social media networks but have become "behavior modification empires." These empires are driven by the negative hateful messages rising to the top of our news feeds and searches, because negative news is faster at trending, whereas, Lanier argues, positive news that builds love and trust is a much more time-consuming and long-term prospect (Lanier 2018). These last two sources were, perhaps ironically, sourced from YouTube TED Talks. They indicate that, although social media platforms have been crucial for mobilizing social movements, these dominant platforms also generate many negative unintended consequences (Lewis 2017).

Moreover, as José van Dijck and Thomas Poell argue, the "constellation of power relationships in which social media practices unfold" (2013, 2) also need to be accounted for in any analysis of transformative digital movements. They note four grounding principles of social media logic, which are programmability, popularity, connectivity, and datafication, all of which impact who has access and who benefits from social media's new galaxy of social, political, economic, cultural and technological opportunities. Social media logic then is defined as "the processes, principles, and practices through which these platforms process information, news, and communication, and more generally, how they channel social traffic" (5). Importantly, the notion of a logic means that these processes, principles and practices also extend themselves out into society and culture, beginning to establish themselves in public and institutional spheres as supposedly natural processes which have, contradictorily, been shaped by economic, advertising, political, and other priorities of the state and capitalist elite (5).

Van Dijck and Poell (2013) find, however, that both sides of the participatory emancipation vs constricting communicative capitalism debate on social media are strong: "The double-edged sword of empowerment—of users and platforms—is a recurring trope in the evolving socio-technical logic of social media" (11). The questions raised largely revolve around who has access, who has power, and how are these structures and systems being interrogated and challenged by digital movements. I argue that these interrogations are strengthened, despite some of the inherent contradictions, through an intersectional technopolitics approach.

Intersectional technopolitics is the digital movement model of our time, engaged on the front lines of the complex contradictions of social media logics, and forging new ways forward that are unimagined by those creating the algorithms to be hacked and attacked by

activists. These movements are not without their contradictions and tensions, the primary one being the fact that mainstream social media continues to amass economic capital through the labour of anti-capitalist and other intersectional activists, even as they are building, mobilizing and carrying out global intersectional anti-capitalist actions. Regardless of the contradictions, or perhaps because of them, intersectional technopolitical media and social movements have met with great success in the past decade's multiple waves of contention. With the more recent rise of populism, it remains to be seen where the potential and actual organizing models of these digital intersectional technopolitical movements might take us.

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