



Transforming Mexico: social movements, human rights and social media

By: Rupert Knox

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sheffield

School of Languages and Cultures and Department of Sociological Studies

Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Faculty of Social Sciences

Submission date:

14 November 2018

Abstract

Mexico's partial democratic transition resulted in widespread violence, human rights violations, inequality, corruption and impunity, frustrating the hopes and aspirations of many sections of society. However, between 2011 and 2016 three major social movements emerged to challenge injustice and demand social change. The Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity, YoSoy132 and Ayotzinapa 43 were plural non-institutional social mobilizations empowering those victimised and marginalized in the defective democratic settlement.

Human rights discourse and digital and social media have become embedded in political discourse and social practice around the world, but their meaning, uses and implications are complex and contested. This thesis examines their role in contentious collective movements in Mexico's specific socio-political context. Qualitative case study research methods are used to examine their dynamic uses and meanings in the three mobilization processes in order to explore their enabling and constraining features. The thesis also draws on the author's previous experience as an international human rights advocate and researcher working on Latin America.

The research shows the diverse ways that human rights discourse and digital and social media feature in the practice and meaning of each movement. They are understood to enhance key aspects of civil society mobilization processes, such as strengthening the impact of trigger events and enabling the configuration of skilled support networks, but also to entail certain constraining logics which the movements grapple with to sustain contention. They contribute shaping qualities to the movements but do not monopolise or determine their practices or meaning. These are rooted in the dynamic adaptive approaches of plural actors engaging with their concrete social and political context, creatively using the resources available to mount collective public sphere challenges to the powerholders of Mexico's partial democracy.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 What are the issues?	1
1.3 Significance of research	4
1.4 Research purpose	6
1.5 Research questions	8
1.5.1 In relation to recent social movements involved in non-institutional contentious politics in Mexico, how have human rights discourses and uses of digital and social media enabled and constrained these mobilization processes?.....	8
1.5.2 What was the role of human rights discourse in claims-making in the social mobilizations challenging powerholders and pursuing social change?.....	8
1.5.3 How has the use of digital and social media featured in the practice and significance of these social mobilization processes?.....	9
1.5.4 How did movement practices relate to changing digital news media environment and to digital counter-attacks and threats?	9
1.5.5 What does the research mean for our understanding of civil society, the role of social media, the state, and censorship in contemporary Mexico?	10
1.6 Context	10
1.7 Research approach	14
1.8 Personal experience motivating research	15
1.9 Scope and limitation of research	17
1.10 Structure of thesis	18
1.11 Summary Findings	19
Chapter 2	22
Literature review	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Democracy, civil society and the contested public sphere	22

2.2.1	Democracy	22
2.2.2	Civil society and active citizenship	27
2.2.3	Public sphere, deliberation and contestation	31
2.3	Human rights discourse	34
2.3.1	Emerging human rights norms, practice and justification	35
2.3.2	Transnational activism versus local context in construction of human rights	37
2.3.3	Human rights, injustice, victims, voice and agency.....	41
2.4	Understanding social movements.....	44
2.4.1	Collective behaviour, rationality and structural determinants	45
2.4.2	Framing theory.....	47
2.4.3	New social movements (NSM).....	49
2.4.4	Emotions	51
2.4.5	Actors and practices.....	52
2.5	Networks, technology and communications	54
2.5.1	Mainstream media, digital media, the public sphere and movement practices.....	55
2.5.2	Citizen journalism, alternative media and independent digital news platforms	58
2.6	Digital and social media in social movements practice	60
2.6.1	Reducing resource costs of organizing protest	60
2.6.2	Social media as interactive emancipatory technology.....	60
2.6.3	Digital and social media and emotional engagement.....	61
2.6.4	Connective vs collective action	63
2.6.5	Security threats	64
2.7	Conclusion.....	65
Chapter 3.....	68	
Socio-political context.....	68	
3.1	Introduction	68
3.2	Socio-political context and consolidation of a partial and violent democracy.....	68
3.3	PRI corporatism, the neoliberal turn, civil society and partial transition	71
3.4	The failures of the PAN transition governments.....	73
3.5	The ‘war on drugs’, violence and political process	74
3.6	The return of the PRI and gathering indignation	76
3.7	Human rights crisis and the victims.....	77
3.8	The role of international human rights discourse in the transition process	80
3.9	Plural civil Society, social movements and human rights NGOs	83

3.10	Media and new media environment	88
3.11	Internet access, social media and information plurality	91
3.12	Digitally networked activism	94
3.13	Digital threats.....	95
3.14	Conclusion.....	98
Chapter 4.....		100
Methodology		100
4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	Philosophical outlook: Ontology and epistemology	100
4.2.1	Reflexivity.....	104
4.2.2	Identity position	104
4.2.3	Biography	105
4.2.4	Beliefs and worldview	107
4.2.5	Reflexive practice	108
4.3	Research design and implementation	109
4.3.1	Data analysis and framework method	117
4.3.2	Transcription and data management.....	122
4.4	Ethical Consideration.....	123
4.5	Conclusion.....	125
Chapter 5 Chapter		127
The social movement case studies		127
5.1	Introduction	127
5.2	Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad (MPJD).....	127
5.3	YoSoy132.....	136
5.4	Ayotzinapa 43.....	145
5.5	Conclusion.....	154
Chapter 6.....		155
Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity (MPJD): data analysis and findings		155
6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Context and trigger event	156
6.3	Orienting networks and human rights discourse	158
6.4	Framing peace, injustice, dignity for victims	161

6.5	Human rights and victim agency	164
6.6	Human rights discourse in movement articulation	167
6.7	Digital disruptions of media environment.....	174
6.8	Trigger event in a pluralising and critical environment.....	174
6.9	Strategic approach to the media.....	175
6.10	Mobilizing networks and emotional engagement	179
6.11	Connective action and agency	182
6.12	Insecurity and social movement activism.....	184
6.13	Conclusion.....	186
Chapter 7.....		188
YoSoy132: data analysis and findings.....		188
7.1	Introduction	188
7.2	Democratic discontent and human rights discourse in trigger event	188
7.3	Networks orientation and skills	191
7.4	Mobilizing frames and collective identity.....	195
7.5	Participant Agency.....	201
7.6	Movement articulation.....	203
7.7	Disrupting the media	206
7.8	Social media, reducing costs and developing identity	210
7.9	Affect transmission.....	214
7.10	Connective action.....	216
7.11	Security	221
7.12	Conclusion.....	224
Chapter 8.....		226
Ayotzinapa 43: data analysis and findings		226
8.1	Introduction	226
8.2	Human rights crisis made visible.....	226
8.3	Networked activists orienting action	231
8.4	Framing injustice and human rights in a plural movement.....	235
8.5	Agency	239
8.6	Dynamics of the movement coalition and human rights discourse.....	243
8.7	Disrupted media environment.....	247
8.8	Social media, organization, participation and contention	252

8.9	Transmission of affect	256
8.10	Connective action.....	259
8.11	Security threats	262
8.12	Conclusion.....	265
Chapter 9.....		267
Discussion chapter		267
9.1	Introduction	267
9.2	Framework.....	268
9.3	The role of context	269
9.3.1	Emerging crisis	270
9.3.2	Reconfiguring human rights discourse.....	271
9.3.3	Communications landscape	273
9.4	Trigger events.....	274
9.5	Networked mobilization and digital communication.....	277
9.6	Narrative framing	281
9.7	Agency	289
9.8	Movement articulation.....	296
9.9	Dangers and challenges	303
9.9.1	Digital downsides	303
9.9.2	Making human rights meaningful	306
9.10	Conclusion.....	310
Chapter 10.....		312
Conclusions.....		312
10.1	Introduction	312
10.2	Background	313
10.3	Limitations and strengths of research	314
10.4	Discussion of research questions	317
10.4.1	What was the role of human rights discourse in claims-making in the social mobilizations challenging powerholders and pursuing social change?.....	317
10.4.2	How has the use of digital and social media featured in the practice and significance of these social mobilization processes?.....	325
10.4.3	How did movement practices relate to changing digital news media environment and to digital counter-attacks and threats?	329

10.4.4	In relation to recent social movements involved in non-institutional contentious politics in Mexico, how have human rights discourses and uses of digital and social media enabled and constrained these mobilization processes?.....	334
10.4.5	What does the research mean for our understanding of civil society, the role of social media, the state, and censorship in contemporary Mexico?	340
10.5	Policy recommendations and follow up research questions	345
10.5.1	Policy recommendations.....	345
10.5.2	Additional research areas and questions	347
Bibliography		350
Appendix		383
	What is meant by ‘human rights discourse’ in this thesis?	383
Annex		386
	Annex 1: YoSoy132: un pliego petitorio al pie de la Estela de Luz. 23 mayo 2012.....	386
	Annex 2: Asamblea Nacional Interuniversitaria "Yo Soy 132"	389

Abbreviations

AMLO	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
CADHAC	Ciudadanos en Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos A.C.
CISEN	Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional
CENCOS	Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social A.C
EPN	Enrique Peña Nieto
FECSM	Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico
FUNDEC	Fuerzas Unidas de Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila A.C.
GIEI	Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Internacionales
IACHR/CIDH	Inter American Commission on Human Rights/Comisión Americana de Derechos humanos
IGO	Intergovernmental organization
INGO	International non-governmental organization
MORENA	Movimiento Regeneración Nacional
MPJD	Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAN	Partido de Acción Nacional
PGR	Procuraduría General de la República
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
Centro PRODH	Centro de Derechos humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez A.C.
SERAPAZ	Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz. A.C
SMO	Social Movement Organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This PhD thesis examines how three recent social movements in Mexico – Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity (MPJD), YoSoy132 and Ayotzinapa 43 - used human rights discourses¹ and digital and social media² to mobilize and enact political contention. By analysing these practices and their implications in the concrete social context of Mexico's partial democracy, the thesis presents important findings on how diverse uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media enable and constrain civil society's expressive and strategic collective actions oriented toward justice and progressive social change.

1.2 What are the issues?

The transition to electoral democracy in many Latin America countries at the end of the 20th century did not produce rights-protective regimes, greater social justice or consolidated liberal democracies as assumed by much Western political theory (O'Donnell et al. 1986; Fukuyama 1989; Huntington 1993). Instead, in countries such as Mexico, elections and economic liberalism created a partial democracy which also featured aspects of authoritarianism and state capture (O'Donnell 1994; Waisman 2006). This includes pervasive clientalism, corruption, discrimination, violence, human

¹ In this thesis 'human rights discourse' refers to the broad intellectual project and tradition of human rights as universal standards of behaviour and treatment that individuals and communities are entitled to by virtue of being human. Human rights discourse encompasses structured international norms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as international, regional and national laws, treaties and mechanisms, but these legal instruments are only part of the wider discourse of human rights used and contested in the media, popular culture, activism and academia. See appendix 1 for a more detailed definition of aspects of human rights discourse addressed in this thesis.

² The term 'digital and social media' is used in this thesis to refer to the range of digital communications tools and platforms available to citizens in Mexico and around the world. This includes more interactive 'web 2.0' social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, but also other internet based tools such as email and websites and messenger services, such WhatsApp and Telegram, primarily used on smart phones. The broad nature of this term is intended to capture the range of digital communications tools and practices which rely on the internet and which increasingly feature as part of daily life, including in political and social activism.

rights violations, impunity and extreme inequality (Olvera 2010; Espinoza Valle et al. 2012; Esquivel Hernández 2015). Despite this, a plural civil society and public sphere continued to develop in the region (Olvera et al. 2003; Munck 2013). Independent and progressive elements of civil society have promoted greater equality, political participation, accountability and protection of human rights (Dagnino et al. 2006; Farro et al. 2014).³ However, the absence of effective institutional routes to challenge elites and shape remedies to acute social grievances entrenched forms of partial and violent democracy (Arias et al. 2010a). It has also inadvertently fostered the emergence of several social movements demanding action on specific issues but also aspiring to more radical transformation of Mexico's democracy (Bizberg 2014; Pleyers et al. 2017).

It is in the context of obstructed political and social development, but creative civil society engagement in the public sphere, that I examine how three social movements struggled to change the terms of Mexico's deficient democracy through non-institutional collective action. However, these movements cannot be understood only in terms of their narrow strategic impact on the institutional order. They also represent an expressive culture and values of non-institutional resistance to the status quo (Cohen 1985; Melucci 1996) through claims-making against powerholders.⁴ As people motivated to participate in collective contention they represent the complex potential of non-institutional social engagement, but their experiences also illustrate some of the limitations of these processes. This is particularly so when facing an entrenched political establishment unwilling to address profound democratic deficits. The July

³ 'Civil society', as chapter two discusses, is a contested concept. This research focuses on individuals, groups, collectives and associations operating independently of institutions of the state or political parties in collective action oriented toward forms of progressive social change. There are other actors that participate in the wider field civil society activities, which include a range of less-independent and non-progressive actors, but they are not the focus of this research.

⁴ In this thesis the term "powerholder" is used to indicate official political authorities, but also economic, political and criminal actors that wield considerable informal power, often imposing their interests over official political and administrative authorities. Human rights discourse is traditionally focused on circumscribing the responsibilities and actions of a strong unitary Weberian state. These responsibilities include prevention and punishment of arbitrary abuses of power and also use of institutional resources to positively ensure the welfare, equality, autonomy and dignity of all citizens. The concealed networks of power that often guide Mexico's formal political and administrative office-holders, challenge assumptions about the unitary state as the locus of power. They also reinforce the importance of ensuring that all powerholders, not just official office-holders, are held accountable and bound by human rights norms.

2018 election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) as President of Mexico provides an opportunity to change these entrenched practices and deepen Mexico's democratic and social development, but only time will tell if this is the case. Civil society, the public sphere and social mobilizations will continue to be important factors in shaping institutional and non-institutional political culture and practice in the coming years in Mexico.

The political opportunity structure (Tarrow 1998) of Mexico's partial democracy imposed constraints but also proved fertile for the three movements to mobilize, articulate, communicate and enact their protest. These mobilization processes also shed light on the challenges of enacting different forms of plural collective contention (Laclau et al. 1985; Mouffe 2005) and public sphere deliberations (Calhoun 1992; Habermas 1996) in the process of constructing identity and meaning to promote justice and social change. A key discourse for enacting forms of collective contention is human rights, appealing to both the idea of universal values, but also concrete legal protections. In Mexico, human rights discourse became part of the formal language of the transition to democracy and institutionalisation, but it continues to be a discourse for non-institutional and independent civil society to demand social accountability of powerholders (Ackerman 2005). The plurality of uses and openness of human rights discourse make it useful, but also double edged, for a range of social actors (Morris 2010). Despite the rise in nativist populism in different parts of the world challenging the idea of universal human rights (Rieff 2018), in Mexico it has remained an important discourse in the country's political development.

It is therefore important to understand how human rights discourse has been mobilized and made meaningful in different ways by contemporary movements, including consideration of the limiting logics of the discourse for particular social mobilizations (Landman 2006; Goodale et al. 2007). As such, this work contributes to debates about how ideas of human rights are constructed and fought for in specific contexts and political cultures (Stammers 1999, 2009; Goodhart 2013). This contrasts with the approach of conceptualising the spread of human rights discourse in terms of

'socialising' cosmopolitan international human rights law to non-compliant peripheral states through institutionalization (Risse et al. 1999; Goodman et al. 2013a).

Digital and social media has also become increasingly integral to social relations in Latin America, with the digital divide declining rapidly in Mexico since 2010, particularly in urban areas (Asociación de internet.mx 2018). In line with other international experiences, this increasing digital permeation has disruptive dynamics; influencing the wider media environment which has traditionally been dominated by elite aligned mass media (Trejo Delarbre 2011a). This has opened up new forms of communicative practice for networked social activists. However, it has also provided a powerful new tool for institutional political actors and other types of powerholders to defend their domination (Bradshaw & Howard 2017; Faith & Prieto-Martin 2016). Mexico's partial democracy makes it particularly relevant to understand the enabling and constraining features of digital and social media uses for grassroots mobilizations in the pursuit of social change as well as their relation to a burgeoning hybrid media environment (Chadwick 2013).

1.3 Significance of research

a) The thesis is timely as it explores pressing issues, particularly in Latin America, where the consolidation of democracies, such as in neighbouring Central and South American countries, challenges traditional liberal democratic theory (Arias et al. 2010b). This raises questions about the capacity of civil society to peacefully influence political and social development of states captured by often violently competing vested interests which operate under the cover of competitive electoral democracy.

b) Human rights discourse has become increasingly embedded in social practice and public discourse in Latin America. Despite this, its meaning and relevance is constantly contested and undercut by state failures to guarantee rights or instrumental use of human rights, for example, to justify military adventures or impose Western capitalist values (Rajagopal 2003; Douzinas 2007; Posner 2014). This thesis examines the different meanings and uses that human rights discourse has had in plural

contentious mobilizations at national level in instrumental and expressive terms. This is important for reflecting on how human rights discourse is adopted and adapted as part of local and national struggles for accountability, agency, participation and social change, but also, simultaneously, how it can be perceived as alien, external, institutional and limiting of these mobilization processes. This dual dimension of human rights discourse is less well recognised in scholarly literature, particularly in relation to the 'socialization' of international human rights law (Finnemore et al. 1998; Goodman et al. 2013a; Risse et al. 2013). This research addresses the complex, and sometimes ambiguous, processes involved in human rights discourse becoming meaningful in national contexts and political cultures.

c) Use of digital media, particularly social media, is increasingly integral to the social and political life of countries of the Global South as well as the North. This makes it an important area of sociological and political study, particularly concerning the potential to modify civil society's ability to communicate, organize and challenge established powerholders in partial democratic settings such as in Latin America (Breuer et al. 2014). By facilitating the extension, distribution and density of network connections between individuals and groups, as well as their capacity to produce and share information independently, uses of digital media can shape changes to the communications environments and media practices. As a result, these emerging uses of digital and social media have the potential to impact social and power relations, including the way citizens interact with each other, with institutions, with state and non-state actors, and with global networks. However, the increasing reliance on digital media has also introduced new instabilities to public sphere discourse, including threats directed at social activists and journalists to deter independent voices contesting official narratives.

In Mexico, social mobilizations have used internet based digital technology as part of their communications practices since the pioneering transnational support networks of the Zapatistas in 1994 (Ronfeldt et al. 1999; Rovira Sancho 2007). The uses of social media that facilitate civic participation in politics and protest movements has been analysed and researched from different standpoints (Dahlgren 2009; Milan 2013;

Wessels 2017), including in relation to aspects of the movements in this study (Rovira Sancho 2012; Garcia et al. 2014; Treré et al. 2014; Meneses Rocha 2015; Treré 2015a). This thesis explores the uses of digital and social media in terms of their contribution to mobilization, identity, agency and endurance in the context of partial democracy and how this relates to increasing plurality in the wider media environment. It considers aspects of digital and social media practice as part of an increasingly hybridised media environment (Chadwick 2013) where actors rapidly shift between different platforms and technologies to maximise strategic impact. It also examines some theoretic claims of social media practices, such as sharing of emotion (Papacharissi 2015) and individualised participation processes (Bennett et al. 2013) to understand their contribution to mobilizations. By examining these features in context, rooted in the experience and understanding of participants, this research provides new empirical evidence of some of the constraining and enabling aspects of digital and social media practices in the development of political agendas and mobilization processes.

1.4 Research purpose

As human rights discourse and digital and social media have become integral to many forms of social activism and the wider political culture, this appears to have changed the potential of collective social actors to mobilize and challenge power structures dominating Mexico. The objective of the research is to understand the different dynamics of these practices and what their implications are for social movements challenging the terms of Mexico's partial democracy.

The social processes engaging plural actors in collective action are complex, negotiated and often contested. The different meanings of movements are constructed through the process of mobilization, but are not necessarily shared uniformly across diverse participants with different roles in the movement or by those not directly involved in the mobilization process. This research explores these intersubjective processes of meaning-making and social practice, seeking to identify particular features of the uses

of human rights discourse and digital and social media which enable and constrain mobilizations in concrete contexts.⁵

The research focuses on the movements as manifestations of non-institutional national political contention, responding primarily to domestic events and oriented toward local political actors, but also as part of wider global dynamics and networks. The rootedness in the national setting is important for understanding the mobilization processes and the varied significance of human rights discourse and digital and social media for plural social actors.

In the course of developing the research, I refined my research questions to address more precisely these central dynamics. Firstly, the different ways that human rights discourse and digital and social media feature in each movement as part of the instrumental and expressive practices. Secondly, how these different dynamics are understood by the plural actors involved and the implications for civil society collective action aspiring to social change. This approach does not limit the meaning of actions to the intentions of the actors, but explores the various ways these processes unfolded and were understood. Civil society activism is a diverse, reflexive and adaptive activity, with actors examining their own actions and those of others. This is not only to evaluate the extent to which intentions have been realised and are consistent with values, but also the ways this has not occurred and there have been unforeseen consequences with implications for future actions.⁶ This dynamic process also relates to the

⁵ These enabling and constraining qualities are not treated as objective structural determinants, but as part of the meaningfulness of movements engaged in specific non-institutional civil society struggles oriented toward justice claims and of progressive social change.

⁶ This approach adopts features of Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984), which proposes understanding the relations between social structure and individual agency as a duality between the structuring effects of social relations enacted through the agency of both 'practical' and 'discursive' (or reflexive) consciousness of actors engaged in the world. The point that I take from this theoretical approach is how actors engage in forms of routinized, intuitive but also reflexive practice in their actions, interpreting their context and experience (though Giddens refers to these factors in terms of 'rules and resources') as part of processes of action and reaction. The complex basis of motivation for action may never be possible to fully determine (particularly given the difference between how action is taken in reactive daily activity compared to retrospective rationalizations). However, the meaning that individuals attribute to context, causes and motivations is central to decision-making processes. These are constitutive of individual agency as well as the constraining and enabling features of social relations.

developing orientations of the actors; their beliefs, values and ideologies, and how these are negotiated and adapted in the mobilization processes and subsequently. It is these nuances of the mobilization process and how these relate to understandings of human rights discourse and digital and social media which the research questions explore, ensuring the data analysis emerges from but remains rooted in the specific context of each mobilization.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 In relation to recent social movements involved in non-institutional contentious politics in Mexico, how have human rights discourses and uses of digital and social media enabled and constrained these mobilization processes?

The principle research question establishes the overarching field of investigation, that is the domain of recent non-institutional progressive social movements in Mexico engaged in forms of politically contentious mobilization in the public sphere directed at institutional actors. This means the emergence and maintenance of the movement in enacting contentious politics online and offline. The purpose of the mobilization is understood broadly as addressing democratic deficits. The core of the question focuses the research on the particular ways that human rights discourse and digital and social media were mobilized by the movements, and their specific enabling and constraining features for the mobilization process. This is understood as their contribution to the meanings and significance of the movements.

The following three subsidiary questions focus in on particular aspects of the process.

1.5.2 What was the role of human rights discourse in claims-making in the social mobilizations challenging powerholders and pursuing social change?

This question addresses the different dimensions of how human rights discourse was mobilized; its relevance to movement actors and the particular ways it was used in each movement's claims-making. This considers how human rights discourse has

certain legitimated meanings in society which featured in interpreting and enacting the movement trigger events, developing claims-making and featuring in mobilizing narratives against the institutional powerholders. In addition, it explores how the adoption of human rights discourse is not necessarily limited to narrow instrumental purposes, but can also involve claimants and movements in expressive enactment of universal values with the potential to empower claims-makers, facilitate convergence of diverse actors in plural movements and further embed the social meaning of human rights discourse. This also enables exploration of how these processes are varied and unstable, including some of the perceived negative or ambiguous connotations of mobilizing human rights discourse.

1.5.3 How has the use of digital and social media featured in the practice and significance of these social mobilization processes?

This question addresses how uses of digital and social media increasingly featured in each social mobilization, contributing to networked recruitment, coordination and movement projection to national and international audiences, but also how this increased instability. The question allows the movement practices to be considered in the light of claims that particular affordances of digital and social media facilitate forms of mobilization, including individualised engagement in collective action. It also explores how these practices developed with each movement and claims that digital and social media can contribute to deliberative democratic practice through more horizontal forms of digital mobilization. It enables an empirically grounded assessment of these processes according to those involved, revealing the limitations and vulnerabilities of such practices as well as the increased potential for contentious movements.

1.5.4 How did movement practices relate to changing digital news media environment and to digital counter-attacks and threats?

The third question interrogates how movement mobilization processes related to wider changes in the media environment, including disruptions to the mainstream media. This involved the emergence of new independent and alternative new media outlets as well as more horizontal communications within movements. The question also considers how increasing civil society recognition of the vulnerability of digital and social media to manipulation and attack by powerholders, has resulted in various modifications in practice and understanding of the role of digital and social media in contentious mobilizations.

These questions ensure the research is rooted in the context and particular features of each social movement, especially in relation to Mexico's partial democratic transition. In order to reflect on the wider implications of the research for Mexico's political and institutional development, the concluding chapter also considers an additional question:

1.5.5 What does the research mean for our understanding of civil society, the role of social media, the state, and censorship in contemporary Mexico?

This question addresses the impact of the three movements and their practices in contemporary Mexico, particularly in the light of the 2018 presidential elections, and what this may herald in the coming years.

1.6 Context

In 2000, Mexico ostensibly became a democracy when the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), which had ruled Mexico for 70 years, was defeated in elections by the *Partido de Acción Nacional* (PAN). Notwithstanding the PAN's commitment to institutionalise international human rights, in practice it failed to develop a rights-protective democracy or hold to account those responsible for grave human rights violations and corruption. It enabled dominant vested interests to flourish and inequality to increase, leading to worsening insecurity and violence. In 2006, the second PAN government started a militarized 'war' on organized crime, dramatically

exacerbating violence and insecurity. This led to tens of thousands of killings, disappearances and forced displaced at the hands of criminal gangs and security forces. In 2012, the PRI returned to power but failed to address democratic deficits, allowing corruption and impunity to accelerate further and deepening the crisis of human rights violations and violence. The years of political transition consolidated electoral processes, but undermining undermined social cohesion, institutional trust and belief in democracy (Corporación Latinobarómetro 2017).

It was in this context that the three overlapping social movements emerged to challenge the state's handling of the violence and human rights violations as well as institutions captured by vested interests involved in propelling the PRI back to power in 2012. The first was the MPJD which emerged in April 2011 in response to the killing of the son of nationally renowned poet, Javier Sicilia. It mobilized shared outrage at unprecedented levels of criminal violence and state abuses which President Calderon's 'war' had unleashed. The mobilization rapidly recruited relatives, students, activist groups, human rights defenders, faith groups and dissident trade unions in a plural coalition committed to exposing the violence and the plight of victims.⁷ Public actions included demonstrations, vigils, silent marches, masses civil society caravans across violent regions of the country and the USA. The MPJD gained widespread media attention and public support leading to Peace Dialogues with the government and subsequently the General Law on Victims. However, by 2013 the movement had lost momentum and gradually fragmented. The movement was arguably the first major social movement to emerge during the transition years. It represented a citizen-based initiative to challenge government policy by placing victims at the centre of the national crisis of violence, human rights violations and impunity. It used aspects of human rights discourse in its practice and involved human rights NGOs, but it did not originate in the NGO sector. It also used digital and social media from the outset to circulate information and facilitate participation. It was an organic mobilization, emerging in direct response to the social and political context.

⁷ The term 'victims' also includes the relatives of those killed or disappeared.

The second movement, YoSoy132, irrupted in May 2012 as a political revolt, primarily by university students, against the manner in which the 2012 presidential election was being conducted. It was particularly targeted at the PRI candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN), and mainstream media manipulation of the political narrative in his favour. Social media featured in the initial process of mobilization and subsequent forms of participation, mirroring aspects of the Occupy and 15-M protests in the US and Spain, but specifically focused on Mexico's political context. Digitally enabled networking allowed participation to spread to groups around the country and internationally, facilitating an array of public protest actions and creative events online and offline to challenge the electoral process and awaken the political consciousness of a new generation. The movement received national and international attention, shifting the dynamic of the electoral process, but not ultimately changing the result. The movement itself rapidly evolved into a broad-based student mobilization with aspirations to become a popular movement uniting plural social actors across the country. However, it struggled to regain momentum after the elections, ultimately becoming the target of police violence and arrests during the inauguration of the new PRI president. Human rights discourse featured in parts of the movement mobilization, but it was not a human rights movement. This distance from human rights discourse provides an important contrast to the other two movements. In Mexico, YoSoy132 was particularly identified with millennials' use of social media as a tool for counter-power communications to challenge the institutional political system.⁸

Ayotzinapa 43 emerged in September 2014 in response to the enforced disappearance by state agents and non-state actor criminals of 43 young men studying to become rural teachers (Hernández 2017). Supported by human rights NGOs and a wide variety of social and political groups, the parents and surviving students called for mass protests to demand the authorities return the disappeared alive and bring those responsible to justice. Despite support from around the world and protests over

⁸ Media and political elites as well as the security services attempted to portray YoSoy132 as controlled by the left-wing opposition candidate, Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). Despite the acknowledged sympathy of some activists with AMLO, there was no evidence of further links and the movement refused to endorse particular candidates.

months and years, a government cover-up prevented the victims' access to truth and justice (GIEI 2015a, 2015b). Nevertheless, the movement contributed significantly to the collapse in the PRI government's credibility. The movement focused on the victims, particularly the struggle of the mothers and fathers for truth and justice. Human rights discourse was important to the mobilization process, but not exclusively. This makes it an important case to understand the manner in which human rights has been made meaningful for different actors involved in the movement. Social media practices have also featured as an important element of actions. The movement presents instances of integration of human rights discourse and social media practices, but also the limits of these in the process of sustaining contentious collective action against entrenched powerholders.

The three movements often shared participants and know-how, developing new approaches in response to earlier experiences. They confronted different powerholders with varying strategies and expressive practices. These similarities and differences emerged from and in response to the concrete context of flawed democratic transition and specific trigger events. The latter dramatically representing wider institutional failings.

Despite these systemic problems and crises, most Mexicans continued to lead their lives in relative normality and detached from social violence or contentious political struggles. In this context, it was a challenge for active civil society to find the means to express and communicate grievances effectively; to reach new sectors of the population and foster mobilizations capable of challenging the official narrative of improving democratic governance and modernizing efficiency. Human rights discourse and digital media were two means available to social activists to engage with the public sphere through nationally focused collective action which also enjoyed wide international support and solidarity. That is why these three movements are important examples of contentious civil society mobilizations rooted in their specific socio-political context.

1.7 Research approach

This research adopts a qualitative social science methodology to examine the movements, but with an interdisciplinary outlook. It draws on concepts developed in various disciplines such as sociology, political science, history, media and communications, international relations, human rights law and philosophy.

In line with my worldview (Creswell 2009), the research is focused on exploring the intersubjective understanding of social and political processes and how their meanings are culturally constructed and negotiated among various social actors. The qualitative methodology (Mason 2002) is based on 30 semi-structured interviews with participants and close observers of movements, as well as additional data drawn from qualitative analysis of media and social media content of the movements. This methodology assumes a constructivist ontological outlook in which the empirical data gathered in the interviews is subject to inductive reasoning and an interpretative analysis to identify patterns of meaning to make sense of the data. The interviewees were a range of social and political actors with different roles and participation in the movements, involving a variety of perspectives. They included NGO human rights defenders, communications workers with NGOs, student activists, faith-based participants, digital activists, political activists, survivors, journalists and others. Using Gertz's model of 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) to explore the beliefs, attitudes, values, judgements and interpretations of the interviewees, the research develops a framework analysis (Ritchie et al. 2003) to systematise and map the different thematic issues and concepts that emerge from and explain the data in relation to the research questions. This method facilitated detailed accounts of and perspectives on the various social interactions and dynamics involved in each movement's practices as well as reflections on the cumulative experiences of the different social movements and their contribution to Mexico's political culture.

The development of this framework emerged in the data analysis through the process of comparing and contrasting different features of the practices of each movement. This ensured that the analysis remained rooted in the movements' socio-historical context and content of the interviews. But the thesis is also developed through a

dialogue with analytical and empirical literature on democracy, civil society, human rights, social movements and digitally enabled activism. These fed into the data analysis and understandings of particular features of practice. As a result, this process ensures that the analytical framework presented in the discussion chapter and conclusions in the final chapter develop organically in response to the research material in the three case studies, but are also rooted in contemporary debates on the role and meaning of human rights discourse and digital media.

The research methods are compliant with the guidelines set by the British Sociological Association, UK Data Archive and University of Sheffield. The research was funded by the University of Sheffield 2022 Futures scheme.

1.8 Personal experience motivating research

Prior to undertaking this doctorate, I worked for 18 years with Amnesty International (AI) as a human rights researcher and campaigner focused on Latin America. I was responsible for field research on Mexico for 12 years, regularly visiting different regions of the country to gather information on human rights violations, work with local NGO partners and lobby government and state officials. I was responsible for writing AI reports on a range of human rights issues in Mexico, including on impunity, gender-based violence, police and security force abuses, discrimination, violence against indigenous peoples, migrants and peasant communities, politicised use of the justice system and attacks on human rights defenders and journalists (for example, Amnesty International 2006; Amnesty International 2007b; Amnesty International 2009; Amnesty International 2010; Amnesty International 2013a; Amnesty International 2014). This period covered Mexico's transition governments enabling me to observe at close hand the institutionalisation of human rights discourse for state legitimisation purposes and the failure in practice to develop a rights-protective and more socially just democratic society.

As a representative of the international human rights movement, I was also aware of the important but limited impact of advocacy campaigns undertaken with international

and local partners to exert ‘boomerang’ (Keck et al. 1998) pressure on the Mexican government to improve institutional compliance with international human rights norms. A question that struck me was how does human rights discourse become meaningful and gain political traction for domestic actors not involved in organized human rights activism? How can the struggle for the recognition and implementation of human rights norms move beyond simulated institutional responses to the demands made by foreign experts and national NGOs? In what circumstances can human rights discourse become an enduring contentious issue in the local and national political agenda, meaning a cost for political parties or leaders that ignore or misuse it in domestic politics? In such a context, political leaders might potentially consider the investment of substantial political capital to make real human rights advances, rather than simply using formal institutionalisation of human rights to serve the appearance of democracy. In short, in what circumstances could human rights discourse be more organically relevant and meaningful in Mexico’s partial democracy, enabling the enactment of citizenship and public sphere engagement as part of bottom-up democratic development.⁹ These reflections did not exclude the role of international actors in exerting pressure, but understood them as secondary to domestic processes.

A form of dynamic challenge to institutional actors, including political parties, that I observed during my time working for AI, was the role of civil society, particularly social movements. These emerged to challenge the terms of the status quo and injustice, often involving unruly protest practices (Khanna et al. 2013). Their dynamic collective practices suggested how local or national social movements could make sense of and use human rights discourses, making them a particularly important focus of potential research. The three movements in this research project first appeared while I was still working with AI, enabling me to observe their development and impact.

⁹ It could be argued that this is a description of the ‘socialization’ process of international human rights (Goodman et al. 2013a). However, this term tends to assume a rather direct transmission of values and norms by external or international actors to local settings and institutions. My experience was that it was only when these issue were contested and struggled over in domestic political culture did they gain a rooted significance which was no longer reducible to conceptions of international human rights law. As a result, I consider ‘socialization’ is an inadequate term to reflect these processes that are primarily subject to conditions of domestic political context, even if international actors play an important role.

Another important feature of these new movements which I detected was the increasing use of digital and social media as part of the mobilization process and the environment they emerged from. The use of this technology in the region was shifting communicative practices, including the relation of citizens to the traditional mainstream sources of news information. These changes reflected the increasing fluidity and rapidity of information flows between global, national and local networks (Castells 2009a). They also seemed to support the capacity of movements to reach beyond limited local contexts to secure the support of national and international networks. This also had interesting parallels to the way human rights discourse could be used to reframe local injustice as a universal issue affecting human dignity and attracting global solidarity (Castells 2009b).

As a result, working on Mexico with an INGO and my reflections on that experience informed the development of this research project. In addition, my experience as an advocacy researcher with contacts among diverse civil society organizations and social activists in Mexico enabled me to recruit a wide range of interviewees during fieldwork. My sensitivity to security concerns and the context of social activism in Mexico also enabled me to develop a safe and productive interview environment for my recruits which helped ensure a rich dataset to develop my analysis and conclusions.¹⁰

1.9 Scope and limitation of research

The interdisciplinary approach means that the thesis does not fit neatly within one academic field, but applies different elements of these to interpret Mexico's particular social and political dynamics. The thesis develops a narrative discussion of the framework themes, exploring how they relate to different understandings and practices involving human rights discourse and digital and social media. But the conclusions do not propose a totalising analytical or conceptual model to interpret

¹⁰ In chapter 4, I discuss in more detail my methodology and my reflexive position in relation to the research material, observing both its contribution to the analysis and the steps taken to limit any potential bias.

contexts beyond Mexico's partial democratic situation. Nonetheless, they shed important light on how mobilization processes are enabled and constrained by different uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media. These are relevant to other regional contexts, particularly in Latin America, where plural civil societies struggle to challenge the terms of partial democracy.

The research is limited to three case studies of specific movements. Not all aspects of the movements are analysed, only those that relate to how human rights discourse and digital and social media were mobilized as part of dynamic movement practices. The focus on the significance of the movement for participants and close observers also means this research does not seek to establish a quantitative assessment of the political and social impact of each movement in terms of institutional politics - though reflections on impacts form part of the context, data analysis and discussion chapters.

Another potential limitation of the research is that the analysis is developed on the basis of a dataset of 30 qualitative interviews conducted over a month in Mexico. A larger sample might have enriched the dataset and analysis. However, the interviews enabled clear thematic patterns to emerge to address the research questions in depth.

This thesis does not seek to analyse issues of gender equality or forms of discrimination in relation to the movements or social change agendas in Mexico. Neither does it address some of the particular human rights approaches of the movements, for example, in regard to litigation strategies, documentation of abuses or institutional advocacy campaigns of NGOs which participated in the movements. Equally, the thesis is not primarily concerned with the process of institutionalisation of human rights discourse in Mexico's state apparatus outside the particular dynamics of the social movements and the context out of which they emerged.

1.10 Structure of thesis

This thesis is made up of 10 chapters, including this introduction. Chapter 2 explores scholarly literature, both theoretical and empirical, engaging with the key concepts of

the thesis in relation to democracy, civil society, human rights, social movements and digital and social media. Chapter 3 explores the socio-political context out of which the three movements emerged and which their mobilizations were oriented toward. This includes an examination of Mexico political development, the 'war on the cartels', the institutionalization of human rights, the emergence of plural civil society and shifting patterns of media influence over the political agenda with the increasing adoption of digital and social media. The methodology of the project is presented in chapter 4, setting out the constructivist and interpretivist approach to the research and the thematic framework developed to identify and analyse key themes which emerged in relation to the movements. In chapter 5, each case study movement is described briefly in context, including the relevant events, actors and impacts involved in the mobilizations. Chapter 6 presents the data and analysis of on the MPJD. Chapter 7 applies the same approach to #YoSoy132, and chapter 8 to Ayotzinapa 43. These data chapters enable the central concepts and themes to be surfaced and analysed in relation to the framework analysis. Chapter 9 brings these points together in a discussion of the key themes, involving a fuller comparative exploration of these ideas and themes in the framework. Finally, chapter 10 concludes by addressing the research questions and makes recommendations in the light of these findings.

1.11 Summary Findings

This is a summary of some of the enabling and constraining features which this research identifies in relation to the evolving uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media as part of social mobilizations.

- The increasing incorporation of human rights discourse into the public sphere to analyse institutional deficiencies, violence and citizenship, facilitated the interpretation of trigger events in terms of the crisis confronting the country. This supported the activation of plural civil society in collective acts of public solidarity and resistance.

- Despite this, the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 movement narratives were not primarily framed in terms of human rights discourse which was considered alien and too technical for national constituencies. A more emotionally expressive discourse was integral to identity and activation of grassroots mobilization. This focused on the human face of suffering, the abusive and stigmatising institutional treatment of victims and the urgent demand for justice in a language resonant with the experiences and feelings of ordinary people.
- In YoSoy132, where the focus was not on justice for victims, but transforming democratic participation and media bias, the minimum standard of human rights discourse was not felt to be particularly useful, either for problematizing the focal issues or for mobilizing support.
- In the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, human rights discourse was facilitated by the participation of national and international networks of adaptive skilled activists. It also contributed to the agency and legitimacy of victims in their concrete claims-making against the state. It provided an important, but limited point of articulation for plural movement actors. However, this was insufficient for the movements to develop a unifying and enduring transformative political agenda.
- Digital and social media malleability and low costs facilitated networked mobilization locally and globally. In particular it facilitated the sharing of the movement's emotional narrative, key to transforming claims-making of the movement into a personalised and affective language engaging the moral sentiments of national constituencies. It also helped root the mobilizations in their context, which facilitated the participation of diverse international solidarity networks.
- Increasing use of digital and social media with each movement facilitated early forms of horizontal autonomous participation in the mobilizations, but these dynamics were insufficient to maintain movement mobilizations in the longer

term. This required more traditional social movement practices to sustain expressive and strategic collective action against entrenched powerholders.

- The vulnerability of digital and social media to manipulation, surveillance and threats by powerholders introduced new forms of risk for activists, resulting in self-limiting communications practices, restricting more deliberative and open forms of engagement in the public sphere.
- Despite the continuing dominance of mainstream media, the changing digital media landscape enabled more diverse voices to reach national and international audiences. This strengthened the capacity of civil society actors to challenge official narratives, shape the public sphere, support mobilization processes and influence the political agenda.

These findings, based on empirical experiences and interpretative analysis of the cases, suggest that human rights discourse and digital and social media play important but also limited roles in mounting and sustaining contentious mobilizations against powerholders. These features are often under-recognised or over-estimated in academic and activist understandings of how human rights discourse and digital and social media are used in pursuit of justice and social transformation, particularly in contexts of partial democracy.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines theoretical and empirical approaches to the key themes addressed in the research, particularly the role of collective non-institutional actors in processes of social change. I explore a range of concepts developed in different disciplines which underpin and are in dialogue with the analytical categories that emerge in the data chapters and which are presented and discussed in full in chapter nine.

Firstly, I consider different understandings of democracy and the role of civil society, participation and human rights discourse in relation to democratic practice as part of a globalised world; reflecting on how these ideas have featured in and been interpreted in Latin America's political development from authoritarian to partial democratic regimes. The second section considers aspects of social movement theory as a means of analysing and understanding multiple aspects of non-institutional collective mobilization, particularly those relevant to interpreting the dynamics of the case studies. The last section considers the significance of digitally networked communications for civic engagement, including the relevance of a diversifying and hybrid news media environment. This also includes discussion of debates about particular features of digital and social media practices which have the potential to enable and constrain aspects of contentious social mobilization.

2.2 Democracy, civil society and the contested public sphere

2.2.1 Democracy

There is a clear tension between the normative ideals of democracy and its historical development, particularly the focus on elections as the principle legitimising moment of citizen involvement compared to other forms of civic participation. The wider role of non-institutional civic engagement has been less theorised in comparison to the

dominant focus on the state and institutional order in the processes of democratic transition. The historical development of democratic theory tends to downplay or ignore the role of non-institutional actors in the consolidation of rights-protective regimes and more participatory forms of democracy based on equality and justice. In Latin America, this has generated intense debate about the form that civic participation should take and the role of dominant elites in shaping the configuration of the state and governance. In this context, the contributions of collective social mobilizations are understood in varying and disputed terms.

The normative ideal of democracy is a system of self-governance by which a constituent community, or people, share equal status in the direct deliberation, formulation and expression of their collective will (Held 2006). However, the practical process by which the idealised 'collective will' is established is infinitely problematic, particularly in mass societies where direct participation in deliberations and decision-making is logistically challenging and majority power risks domination of individuals or minorities (Cohen 1997; Held 2006). In 17th century Europe and America, ideas of liberal democracy developed to dilute executive power and extend political participation within elites. The election of political representatives served to aggregate societal interests into political parties, enacting majoritarian decisions through the powers of the state. However, these were also constrained by the rule of law on the basis of individual pre-given 'natural rights' (Locke 2014) to 'life, liberty and property' (Axford 1997). Nevertheless, until well into the 20th century, the electorate was limited to educated men with substantial property. The majority of the population was excluded from participation in the election of representatives to formulate the collective will, and liberal rights primarily served to preserve and strengthen the particular advantages of the enfranchised elite.

Yet this is only one dimension of institutional democratic development. Equally important is the challenge of non-institutional collective actors identifying with Rousseau's (1968) republican ideal of civic engagement, agitating for the extension of the franchise and other rights (Tilly 2004; Stammers 2009) promoted by movements like Chartism. In addition, internal establishment voices such as JS Mill (1986)

advocated limited, but greater individual and collective involvement in democratic politics as a moral good (Held 2006). These combined pressures, including the growing power and status of the industrial working class and women, gradually forced the extension of the franchise, reorienting liberal democracy more toward the normative ideal of equality.¹¹

However, growing populations and industrialization also created complex mass societies. This introduced new inequalities and state bureaucracy. Mass political participation representing new interests only increased the complexity and risks of realising the common good.¹² Schumpeter (2003) dismissed normative ideals of democracy as dangerous, instead proposing a form of pragmatic rational-legal 'competitive elitism' (Held 2006). This allowed mass society to legitimise elite government through narrowly controlled elections between elite groups, but excluded any other popular or civic influence over the political agenda.¹³ Dahl (1956; 1998) recognised this approach was insufficient to address the complexity of modern societies, proposing 'polyarchic' democracy to aggregate multiple interests and widen political elites. However, this once again primarily focused on competitive elections in line with market theory, albeit with limited civil and political rights to extend the criteria of the fairness and openness.

These dominant US academic models of liberal democracy helped marginalized more horizontal and participatory democratic ideas about the formation of collective political will (Pateman 1970; Barber 2003). As such, democracy was reduced to the management of elections. Issues of the public good, allocation of resources, human

¹¹ Admittedly, this normative ideal applies more to European democracies than the United States, which preserved individual liberty above that of equality - at least until the civil rights movement.

¹² This is reflected in Weber's sceptical approach to democratic governance. It is also exemplified by the crisis of European democracy in the first half of the 20th century and its failure to avoid the slide into popularism and totalitarianism.

¹³ As Espinoza Valle and Monsiváis (2012) suggest, this instrumental vision of democracy, focused on choreographed elections and technocratic elites to the exclusion of other forms of civic engagement, has cast a long shadow over Latin America's political development.

dignity and how these were defined, deliberated and addressed was the realm of state institutions and political elites, with civic deliberations reduced to electoral choice.¹⁴

This elite conception of state politics and democracy was highly influential in Latin America and the interpretation of transition processes to democracy (Avritzer 2006).¹⁵ O'Donnell (1986) argued the transitions from authoritarian to electoral regimes came about almost exclusively as a result of cleavages, negotiations and pacts within ruling elites. He granted human rights organizations an important moral authority in reasserting the realm of 'personal dignity' (p52), against the abuses of authoritarian regimes. However, he considered the 'popular upsurge' of grassroots movements as merely useful in hurrying the transition, and 'always ephemeral' (p55), even ultimately destabilising. He argued that elections were essential to demobilize non-institutional social actors and return politics to purely institutional channels.

Yet this approach became problematic when the new electoral democracies in the region did not consolidate into the liberal ideal which many Western political theorists had assumed would occur at the end of the Cold War (Fukuyama 1989; Huntington 1993). Instead, they continued to display many of the qualities of their predecessors. As a result, scholars proposed hybrid models such as 'competitive authoritarianism' (Levitsky et al. 2002) and 'illiberal democracy' (Zakaria 1997). O'Donnell (1993, p1355) referred to 'delegative democracies' based on 'low-intensity citizenship and a state which combines strong democratic and authoritarian features' with institutions marked by 'clientalism, patrimonialism and corruption' (O'Donnell 1994, p59).¹⁶ The result of this flawed process was that political transitions in the region often produced

¹⁴ The narrow focus on election processes, to the exclusion of the content of democracy and the role of citizens, played a key role in interpreting the third wave of democratic transitions in the 80s and 90s, particularly in Latin America (Huntington 1993; Brownlee 2009; Levitsky et al. 2010).

¹⁵ During the Cold War, the US policy of strategic 'containment' of communism (Smith 2005), promoted, at best, versions of "competitive elitism", but more broadly authoritarian regimes sympathetic to US interests, ensuring dominant client elites, regardless of elections, were the exclusive political actors at national level, largely free to crush dissent, including non-institutional social and political activism (Edward et al. 1988).

¹⁶ He suggested that electoral democracy in the region empowered forms of centralised executive authority to wield, often unconstrained, power outside the control of formal constitutional safeguards. This also enabled subnational levels of authoritarian governance to operate unhindered.

electoral democracies which followed the prescriptions of neoliberal economics, but did not enact democratic governance understood as upholding equality and the rule of law or responsive to the social and economic welfare of the population. This included failing to prevent abuses by state officials, curb crime or maintain security, and equally importantly, failure to address high levels of poverty and social exclusion.¹⁷ The hopes of many sections of the population that political transition would not only enable elections, but also transform the state, creating more responsive and accountable governance and more equal societies, were not fulfilled (Weyland 2004; Olvera 2010; Espinoza Valle et al. 2012).¹⁸

O'Donnell's model of 'delegative democracy' focuses on the illiberal actions of elected executives. However, this insufficiently addresses the fragmentation of formal and informal power, including the 'captured' (Acemoglu et al. 2015) dimensions of political parties and institutions. In relation to Mexico, scholars have referred to 'frustrated democracy' (Alonso Sánchez 2012), 'elusive democracy' (Olvera 2010) and 'civil war democracy' (Schedler 2013), 'violent pluralism' (Arias & Goldstein 2010a), suggesting that inequality and violence are integral to its form of neoliberal democracy (Velasco 2005; Von Holdt 2014). These analyses reflect differing attempts to approximate the complex empirical reality with wider analytical criteria of democracy, not limited to fair elections. In this thesis I use the term 'partial democracy' to convey the multiple deficits of Mexico's existing democracy without seeking to establish an exhaustive typology or suggest that Western liberal democracy is the definitive version.¹⁹

¹⁷ In the 2000s, it could be argued that this changed significantly as various shades of left-wing government were elected in several South American countries, leading to a decade-long shift to more statist and redistributive policies which has now gone into reverse. However, in general this did not change the quality of governance, which continued to manifest the features that O'Donnell identified in relation to "delegative democracies".

¹⁸ The end of the Cold War and democratic transition in different regions also led to an increasing focus by international institutions such as the UN on the quality of democratic participation and pluralism as an intrinsic element of development (UNDP 2002). This process stimulated comparative political studies assessing features of "rights-protective regimes" (Donnelly 2013), gradually widening the evaluation of democratic performance to include criteria of enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. These indicators remain state focused (Landman 2006) but suggest the relevance of human rights norms as a legitimated discourse to identify types of democratic deficits which are not limited to electoral procedures.

¹⁹ This does not mean the end of centralised state power, but institutions, including political parties, have become interpenetrated by multiple interests, such as criminal networks. In this confused melee

O'Donnell and others could only conceive of state elites to strengthen 'horizontal accountability' (O'Donnell 1993, p1367) across institutions, leaving citizens with elections as the exclusive moment of 'vertical accountability'. However, other scholars have proposed various forms of 'societal accountability' outside elections to enable civic monitoring and influence over institutional performance (Peruzzotti et al. 2003; Ackerman 2005; Camargo et al. 2013; Hibbert 2017). These models of non-institutional civic engagement include ideas of participatory involvement in policy decision-making (Avritzer 2006), critical independent media (Malena et al. 2004), scrutiny of institutional performance and policy (Cameron et al. 2012) as well as mobilized citizenry (Shefner 2008) and social movements (López Pacheco 2013).

These initiatives focus on how forms of non-institutional, sometimes unruly, civic participation, can positively influence or shape the conduct of the state. They illustrate the inadequacy of traditional approaches to democratic transition which assumed that periodic elections were sufficient to ensure the state and political elites would recognise and effectively pursue the public good. These traditional political science approaches not only tended to downplay the role of independent civil society in democratic development, but ignored the importance of creative engagement of plural autonomous social actors with the political process and challenging the injustices of superficially democratic states.

2.2.2 Civil society and active citizenship

There are diverse historical approaches to the concept of civil society. These have influenced autonomous political and social action in Latin America, resulting in the

of actors, violence is a routine medium of social action and interaction; human rights violations are frequently committed by state actors and non-state actors, and, the state is unwilling or unable to protect the population, particularly socially marginal communities, from multiple forms of violence (Pearce 2010). This contrasts with Weber's (Weber 1946) notion of modern unitary state, exerting domination through institutions governed by rational law, with a monopoly of the use of force.

plural and sometimes contradictory understandings of the role of civil society from which social movements emerge and which contribute to political development.²⁰

Civil society is an amorphous concept: 'a sphere of uncoerced human association between the individual and the state, in which people undertake collective action for normative and substantive purposes, relatively independent of government and the market' (Edwards 2011, p4). Cohen and Arato (1994) argue autonomous social participation challenges and constrains state power, particularly promoting the instantiation of rights. Alexander (2006) defines civic space as a vital realm of universal solidaristic sentiment and action underlying social interaction. The vagueness these notions is due to the normative idea of civil society bringing together diverse processes, interactions and actors into a single concept.²¹ This diversity makes plurality itself a defining feature of civil society.²² Nonetheless, it is important to trace the historical development of the idea to illustrate how different approaches to the individual, community, social relations, the economy and the exercise of organized power are all involved in different understandings of civil society as a political actor.

In the European enlightenment, the idea of civil society emerged as an intermediary realm connecting individuals and mediating relations to politics, society, economy and the state. Liberal thinkers like Locke considered civil society had emerged from nature as the realm of social organization guaranteeing the individual's right to liberty and property under law. Adam Smith identified civil society as the realm of economic activity; of autonomous individual capitalist interests driving collective wealth creation, but also driven by high moral purpose (Alexander 2006). Hegel recognised the realms of the family, civil society and the state. He initially accepted Smith's vision of civil society as autonomous commercial interaction of equal individuals, but increasingly

²⁰ The plurality of understandings make it contested but also open to interpretation and appropriation by diverse actors. This has served social actors in Latin America in their relationship with each other and approaches to the state, including the aspiration of social transformation (Dagnino 2011).

²¹ For example, the Oxford Handbook of Civil Society identifies six different categories of civil society practice: non-profit sector, development NGOs, grassroots associations, social movements, social enterprise and social entrepreneurs and global civil society (Edwards 2011).

²² More pessimistically, Shefner (2008) considers "division" rather than plurality as its defining feature.

believed that it was not shaped by high moral purpose but by power and selfish individualism, creating inequality and undercutting the public good, thus requiring the state's controlling intervention (Ehrenberg 2011).

Following this approach, Marx (1844) dismissed civil society as the sphere of 'egoistic' capitalist self-interest, there to conceal the structural drivers of the class struggle.²³ Gramsci was the first Marxist thinker to reconsider the potential of civil society, but largely as an enemy terrain which could be instrumentally subverted to challenge the cultural codes with which the dominant class imposed its hegemony through control of civil society (Gramsci 1971). His focus on struggles within civil society and democracy as strategic routes for subaltern resistance and social transformation particularly influenced the Latin American Left, which had unsuccessfully pursued ideas of state developmentalism or confrontation with capitalist authoritarian regimes (Munck 2013). As a result, by the end of the 1970s, many left-wing progressives viewed civil society as 'a space between the state and the market where social organizations of citizens could organize human rights associations, trade unions, and varied social movements' (p43).²⁴ It was this plurality of civil society practices and their relative autonomy from the repressive state which made them a promising catalyst for social transformation. It led to a reawakening of interest in the idea of civil society as a progressive force in the region, particularly popular community-based movements challenging social exclusion (Alvarez et al. 1992) and increasingly as part of alliances demanding democratization (Olvera 1997).²⁵

²³ This identification of civil society with capitalism strongly influenced left-wing thinkers for generations. In the 20th century, the emergence of complex mass industrial societies and the growth of the technocratic administrative state also reduced interest in ideas of an autonomous civil society, particularly when it had failed to prevent the rise of totalitarianism.

²⁴ In Eastern Europe, the emergence of autonomous civil society as a space of resistance to all-encompassing state socialism also rekindled interest in the radical potential of civil society and the possibility of instantiating rights through autonomous social mobilization (Cohen et al. 1994; Baker 2002). However, these democratization processes also reawakened interest in civil society as the handmade of liberal individualist capitalism, leading neoliberal advocates to equate the demands for democracy to demands for liberal individualism (Madison 2002).

²⁵ The resurgence of normative ideas of civil society also coincided with the emergence of a multiplicity of civil society organizations in Western democracies from the 1970s onwards in the wake of New Left thinking which broke with the paradigm of class struggle to engage in new forms of social action and engagement in political and cultural struggles. These included grassroots community associations, but also new movements focused on feminism, human rights and environmentalism as well as other groups

In contrast to this more radical stance, civil society has also frequently been identified with conservative and liberal approaches to culture. De Tocqueville (2003) argued that the practices of associational voluntarism of 19th century USA (based on personal liberty and commercial self-interest), generated a political culture capable of preventing the state falling under the control of populist majorities (Calhoun 2011). A century later, the concept of civic culture shaping political regimes was analysed by Almond and Verba (1989) who tried to empirically test this comparative cultural influence on state formation in five different countries. Putnam (2000) later argued that the collapse in associational life of modern North America undermined the social capital which De Tocqueville had identified as necessary to sustain democracy. These culturalist approaches to political attitudes and practice have faced considerable criticism for their methods, assumptions and conclusions, particularly for downplaying structural economic drivers shaping political regimes, cultures and practices; for confusing causes with effects. Despite these limitations, they address an important dimension of political society; how individual beliefs, attitudes and agency are central to meaning-making as part of collective political processes. These are not only the consequence of institutional politics or reducible to structural determinants, but have to be considered in their own right, playing an important role in the enactment of transformational moments in the life of societies (Goldfarb 2012). As such, they point to how forms of political engagement necessarily involve culturally rooted dimensions. These play a role, albeit imprecise, in individual engagement in collective political processes. Each of the case studies explores these complex and nuanced dynamics in relation to the meaningfulness of participation in the social movements.

Despite the differences in these understandings of civil society, there is a measure of convergence around the potential of non-institutional actors to strengthen democracy

committed to democratic societal accountability of institutions, and others engaged in a range of global issues. Many of these new actors became increasingly institutionalised and professionalised, developing into non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the same time, the resurgence of liberal capitalism in the 1980s and the increasing hegemony of neoliberalism, fostered the creation of civil society organizations to take over the provision state services; a “third sector” of non-profit organizations and client associations dependent on the state.

on the grounds that 'societies should maximize individual self-development and self-direction by altering power structures in favor of inclusion and voice' (Warren 2011, p388). This also points to the dual role of civil society as both opening democracy up to more republican participation, but also how such participation enables the emergence of a culture of self-realising autonomous and expressive citizenship, reasserting the role of agency and political subjectivity in the process of civic engagement.²⁶ However, the question then arises as to what form of civil society practice in the public sphere contributes to democratic citizenship and social change.

2.2.3 Public sphere, deliberation and contestation

There are two normative approaches to public sphere processes of political engagement and deliberation that have been particularly influential in Latin America, including with social activists engaged in the social movement practice of the three case studies.

Habermas (1991) envisages the public sphere as an intersubjective discursive process, involving an open and equal group of autonomous individuals enacting public reasoning, reflecting on issues of public good. He suggests this ideal process can overcome the self-interested rationality of the enlightenment individual, through debate, challenge and impartial consensus formation. This can then be communicated to wider publics and the political establishment, influencing state policy and action.²⁷ He argues an open and inclusive public space constitutes a normative ideal of democratic deliberation, independent of institutional concerns and not reduced to the aggregation of individual or class interests of representative democracy. He suggests the deliberations of autonomous civil society in a distributed public sphere, facilitated by forms of media communication, is the basis of collective evaluations of the political system and the state. This is particularly important for states suffering a collapse in

²⁶ This is the dimension of democratic practice frequently ignored by political scientists focused on institutional democratic performance and elections.

²⁷ Habermas reimagines the historical precedent of the 18th century bourgeois coffee house society approaching this ideal, but falling short due to its own contradictions, such as the exclusion of women and classes outside the privileged bourgeoisie (Habermas 1991).

governance credibility with their citizens or 'legitimation crisis'. The state's capacity to respond to the 'communicative rationality' of the autonomous public sphere can act as a democratic corrective. The capacity of civil society to exercise this function is maintained by the instantiation and protection of the constitutional rights of citizens (Habermas 1996).

Critics have pointed out that any empirical public sphere will always exclude some voices, and also that there will always be power imbalances between individuals within publics (Fraser 1990). These deficits in openness and equality will inevitably shape the resulting consensus undercutting its claim to impartial rationality (Held 2006). Others have also pointed to an absence of clarity (which Habermas also acknowledges) about the process by which impartial deliberations are transmitted through public opinion and to the political system, without becoming subject to the instrumental interests of media and technology corporations.²⁸ However, the normative ideal of civil society publics, including counter-publics of the excluded (Fraser 1990), deliberating and challenging institutional political elites through public communication and diverse use of media technologies is powerful. It is an important inspiration for forms of non-institutional collective political and civic engagement (Castells 1996), particularly those challenging the reductive vision of elite dominated neoliberal democracy.²⁹ In Latin America, the ideas of Cohen and Arato (1994), who developed Habermas' concepts in the context of democratic transition, were widely adopted. They served to analyse the role of autonomous civil society as part of the 'lifeworld' resisting domination by the authoritarian state and neoliberal market forces in deliberative consensus forming processes to instantiate cosmopolitan human rights and strengthen democratic practice (Olvera 1997; Davis 1999). However, the failure of legal instantiation to result in changes in practice has called into question the applicability of this model, particularly in contexts of weak or captured states such as found in Latin America.

²⁸ Habermas recognises this problem and is particularly critical of the mass media in shaping the communicative narrative for instrumental purposes.

²⁹ It also influenced Castells approach to digitally networked communications of autonomous individuals enacting forms of horizontal communicative rationality, free from the shaping power of the mass media to enact emancipatory and democratic deliberations in distributed counter-publics (Castells 2008).

A different approach to plural civil society publics, which rejected the pursuit of impartial deliberative consensus, has been particularly influential on the Left in Latin America. This focused on the construction of radical democracy and popular sovereignty, not the instantiation of rights. Laclau and Mouffe (1985; Mouffe 2005; 2018; Laclau 2005) argue that liberalism and democracy are historically contingent, not intrinsically connected as liberals assume. In the place of representative democracy, they envision a radical democracy based on sustained popular contentious conflicts. They identify plural excluded social actors coalescing to press their interests forged in particular contexts of social injustice, and developing their political subjectivity, autonomy and identity in processes of collective struggle and claims-making against the neoliberal authoritarian state (Laclau et al. 1985; Mouffe 2005). They argue that collective popular movements can avoid the trap of liberal aggregation of interests. This requires plural social mobilizations which do not aspire to take control of the state or to reach consensus. Instead, they propose sustained 'agonism', a form of vivifying conflictual challenge to dominant interests. Through this process of political engagement new political actors emerge in praxis and as such their identity cannot be predetermined. This reworking of Marx and Gramsci focuses on popular plural civil society mobilizations, rather than class, as the primary form of political resistance to domination. It re-politicises civil society and the public sphere, making them a domain of popular contention rather than a space of deliberative consensus formation. This approach to plural social actors collectively challenging the injustices of neoliberal democratic transitions offered a more radical reenvisioning of democratic practice and social activism than suggested by Habermasian consensus.

However, the idea of plural popular social actors coming together, but not in consensus, to assert forms of radical democracy, begs the question of what unifies and articulates the actors beside their acceptance of democratic rules. Laclau proposed the notion of an 'empty signifier' to enable 'populist unification ...on a radically heterogeneous social terrain' (Laclau 2005, p98). In effect, the enactment of radical democracy acts as this signifier in the process of participants developing their political

subjectivity.³⁰ However, the articulation of plural movements around contested concepts or ‘empty signifiers’, including human rights discourse, seems to avoid the question of how plural actors develop common strategic or expressive practices or political agendas cohesive enough to carry them beyond the symbolic and idealised moment of unifying plurality. This is a theme which is explored in relation to the experiences of the three case study movements.

These are two very distinct normative ideals of civil society actors engaged in non-institutional public space processes, one oriented toward deliberation and consensus, the other toward plural contestation of domination. They represent different points on the spectrum of theories of civic and popular engagement in collective democratic struggle. Both helped academics and activists, including those involved in the case studies, to interpret and engage with the social and political context in Latin America and the role of autonomous civil society in the pursuit of forms of democratic social change. One draws on more liberal and reformist traditions, the other more radical with transformative aspirations. Yet both draw on the universalist ideas of human rights as a potential discourse to strengthen civil society capacity to challenge the injustices of the political order and to reconfigure the relationship between citizens and with the state.

2.3 Human rights discourse

Different and shared approaches to human rights discourse and activism is a feature of our increasingly globalised world. These include, on the one hand, human rights discourse being relevant for the claims-making of victims of abuses and movements engaged in social justice struggles against powerholders, on the other hand, operating as a discourse of state legitimation for institutional actors. These different aspects of human rights discourse play an important role in understanding various dimensions of social movement practice.³¹

³⁰ He also suggested that human rights discourse had served in the 1980s as a point of unity to articulate resistance struggles to authoritarianism. However, this was only a historically contingent convergence with aspects of liberalism, as other popular demands could emerge (Laclau 2005, p171).

³¹ See appendix for a more detailed account of what is meant by human rights discourse in this thesis.

2.3.1 Emerging human rights norms, practice and justification

The modern understanding of human rights developed in response to the horrors of WWII with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent international and regional human rights treaties. These codified legal constraints on states (Turner 1993) to prevent abuses of power as well as positive obligations to fulfil minimum elements necessary for human dignity (Sjoberg et al. 2001).

The new international legal order affirmed these human rights were universal and indivisible, including economic, social and cultural rights. These went far beyond the limited conception of 'negative' rights of traditional liberal political thought (Habermas 2010).³² The international legal recognition of human rights asserted their moral authority and universal validity, but compliance remained the responsibility of sovereign states themselves. As a result, human rights obligations and commitments were largely rhetorical for states amidst the wider geopolitical demands of international relations and domestic governance.³³ However, it was the engagement of emerging civil society actors in the 1960s and 70s with the ideal of pressing states to respect the human rights enshrined in the UDHR, that challenged their marginal status in international relations. New INGOs, like Amnesty International, treated them as contentious issues, demanding solidarity and political action to exert pressure on states to live up to their commitments. In an increasingly interconnected world, these INGOs along with local activists who increasingly adopted the discourse of human rights, exposed grave violations around the world, principally addressing instances of political repression. The strategy focused on mobilizing international public opinion to

³² In principle the inclusive process of drawing up the UDHR, involving contributions from a range of civil society actors and legal traditions around the world, affirmed human rights on the basis of equal right to dignity of all humans. This universal equality reclaimed the discourse of rights from narrow liberal traditions, applied within nation states and often only for the benefit of particular groups. However, human rights treaties while asserting universal applicability also establish a host of exceptions, for example, the rights that migrants can claim in host countries (Nash 2015).

³³ Human rights discourse was also used selectively and instrumentally by powerful states to further their interests and justify military interventions (Douzinas 2007) and impose neoliberalism (Baxi 2012a). This once again exposed human rights discourse to the charge of the Marxist Left that rights were simply a liberal smokescreen for the pursuit of economic interests and domination.

get governments of the Global North to include human rights demands in their foreign policy and pressure non-complaint states, principally in the Global South or the then Soviet bloc.³⁴

The status of and attitude toward the idea and practice of human rights has an important bearing on their significance and political weight in particular socio-political contexts. The UDHR simply asserts the universality of human rights on the basis of shared humanity, but scholars have attempted a variety of ontological justifications to bolster or refute this assertion.³⁵ These includes appeals to 'natural law' (Tasioulas 2013), universal human frailty (Turner 1993), personhood (Griffin 2008), universal consensus (Donnelly 2007) and cosmopolitan democratic citizenship (Habermas 2010).³⁶ Others argue that the lack of incontrovertible foundational support for human rights is also their strength (Freeman 2011) making their refutation impossible and focusing attention on their practical use to further human agency and freedom (Ignatieff 2003).

In the absence of consensus on foundational justification, the universality and moral authority of human rights is frequently claimed on the basis of their codification in international treaties and legal mechanisms which states have voluntarily committed themselves to uphold. This is particularly the case with INGOs, whose great success has

³⁴ The new activism was primarily focused on mobilization of Western public opinion to influence governments to put pressure on usually weak or client states in the developing world – though not exclusively, as some human rights violations were also addressed in the US and Western Europe. This largely pragmatic approach to state power provided ammunition to counter-charges that human rights norms were often really Western human rights, hiding behind universalist claims to legitimate cultural imperialism by hegemonic powers (Rajagopal 2003; Douzinas 2007). However, this process has never been clear cut. For example, the Carter administration (1977-81) in the US, was the first to explicitly incorporate human rights concerns into its foreign policy agenda (Moyn 2010). As a result, there was pressure on the client dictatorships of Latin America - which earlier US administrations had helped to install - to be held to account for human rights violations. Despite the Regan administration reverting to the traditional US approach to Latin America, civil society human rights demands continued to feature as a primary critique of the client regimes and US-backed armed opposition groups. In this context, civil society demands, both locally and internationally, for human rights to be respected were increasingly linked to calls for democratization and not simply as a tool for furthering narrow state interests.

³⁵ To rebut the traditional Burkean dismissal of rights as 'nonsense on stilts', but also other conservative and relativist arguments attacking claims that human rights are universal.

³⁶ Others like Moyn (2010) argue human rights discourse is simply historically contingent on the collapse of utopian socialist ideals, generating the promotion of a discourse advocating forms of social justice.

been to encourage many nation states to adopt these legal statutes, making them a form of de facto global consensus.³⁷ This has the advantage of seeming to place human rights beyond the challenge of everyday political debate in many countries; focusing attention on their technical implementation not partisan political agendas or disputes about whether there are such things as rights. However, there are perils in over reliance on international law as justification of the validity of human rights (Nash 2015). It risks downplaying or inadequately understanding the actual social and political processes involved in sustaining human rights claims to challenge abusive practices. These processes have the potential to generate the type of domestic political contention leading to substantive, not just rhetorical, respect for human rights (Goodhart 2013). Put another way, excessive belief in the claims of human rights discourse to apolitical universality may lead practitioners to pay insufficient attention to understanding the complex dynamics that make human rights discourse meaningful (or not) in domestic political contention. It is this aspect of the struggle around the meaning and uses of human rights discourse that that this research addresses.

2.3.2 Transnational activism versus local context in construction of human rights

There are important tensions between understandings of human rights discourse as rooted in the system of international relations compared to the construction of rights through local claims-making.

International relations (IR) scholars identified the emerging international human rights movement as ‘principled-issue networks’ (Sikkink et al. 1993) made up of activists of globalized civil society promoting human rights norms to benefit others and to moderate sovereignty. The ‘boomerang-spiral’ model (Risse et al., 1999, p15) highlighted how INGOs worked with local human rights activists who lacked domestic leverage due to living in repressive political environments in the Global South. This enabled them to publicly ‘shame’ the states responsible for human rights violations on the international stage, leading to international pressure from the UN and Western

³⁷ Though this climate is under threat as powerful international actors seek to unpick and debilitate international human rights mechanisms and law (Posner 2014; Rieff 2018).

governments to recognise human rights norms and ratify treaties. In effect, violator states seeking to assert their political legitimacy in the modern world order would entrap themselves into legal commitments to respect and protect human rights. Further violations would then be exposed by local activists and INGOs, leading to more shaming and, ultimately, national political decisions to end human rights violations and establish 'rule-consistent behaviour' (Risse & Sikkink 1999, p31). This analytical theory invested INGOs and second governments with the function of 'socialising' human rights law from international law to peripheral local contexts (Goodman et al. 2004, 2013a). However, this model has faced several criticisms.³⁸ These include the fact that the role of local human rights activists was conceived of as relatively unimportant compared with the advocacy, resources and expertise of INGOs (Stammers 2004; López Pacheco 2013). As a result, national political dynamics and the agency of local actors and social movements were treated as marginal and under-theorised (Risse et al. 2013), particularly in contexts of partial democracy.

Beth Simmons (2009) partially addresses this, acknowledging the importance of nationally oriented social movements to promote human rights norms domestically. However, she adopts a narrowly instrumental account of social mobilization processes whose aim is to gain access to political decision-making as part of the transition from abusive authoritarian to democratic rights-protective governance (Tarrow 1998). This characterisation of domestic social mobilization assumes a relatively unitary social movement, strategically promoting the socialization and implementation of international human rights law in domestic settings, following the model of INGO advocacy campaigns.³⁹ The limits of this model are discussed later in this chapter in section 2.4.1.⁴⁰ The subsequent data chapters also suggest this approach does not

³⁸ Including by its authors in their update analysis (Risse et al. 2013).

³⁹ Additionally, IR models of mobilization tend to assume a unitary State (Simmons 2009) which negotiates political interests in line with democratic theory and efficient Weberian administrative, legal and security systems. However, this model of State practice is not consistent with the empirical experience of many partial democracies in Latin America.

⁴⁰ Political Process Theory seeks to explain contentious social mobilization as efforts of excluded groups to gain institutional status. This account fails to address the more complex dynamics of social movements rooted in their own political context.

adequately reflect the plural practices of nationally focused social movements in which human rights discourse is one aspect among several of the mobilization.⁴¹

In contrast to this IR approach, Stammers (1999; 2004; 2009; Stammers & Eschle 2005) argues sociologically that human rights have been constructed in specific local socio-political contexts. Movements deploy instrumental strategies orientated toward the state, but are, also characterised by performative and expressive activism which is 'oriented towards the construction, reconstruction and/or transformation of norms, values, identities and ways of living and being' (Stammers 2009, p165).⁴² In this theory, the process of diverse autonomous movements formulating and claiming rights against power is the moral source of their universality, not the inscription of rights in national or international law. This approach refocuses attention on politics and the self-legitimizing agency of movements to challenge their exclusion and domination by elites through collective action and normative aspirations. It also points to how rights claims can be betrayed in processes of institutionalization. However, it fails to acknowledge that instantiation in law and the exercise of forms of power, as Habermas and Cohen and Arato recognise, are also the means of protecting and upholding human rights.⁴³ Despite these limitations, Stammers embeds social movements in their

⁴¹ In such cases, human rights NGOs may only represent a small part of the movement coalition. Some other actors may only consider international human rights norms as contingent (Laclau 2005) or not a priority, relevant or appropriate to the particular forms of political struggle. This may include "unruly" groups (Khanna et al. 2013) which are not necessarily committed to "civic" forms of protest. However, the case can potentially be made in relation to specific advocacy coalitions of local and national human rights NGOs lobbying for particular institutional actions (López Pacheco 2017), but as the research data illustrates, this is not predominantly how human rights discourse features in complex, dynamic and socially rooted domestic mobilizations.

⁴² He follows Cohen and Arato's theory of autonomous civil society acting collectively to resist domination, but not the deliberative processes of communicative rationality leading to the instantiation of law to protect rights. Instead, he regards the pre-legal formulation of rights claims by movements as emancipatory, but considers their institutionalization in law as ambiguous and paradoxical. He suggests the self-affirming agency of claimants is replaced in the institutionalization process by a technocratic constitutionalism and administrative bureaucracy which exert Foucauldian power and control over their subjects once again.

⁴³ Stammers' work is relevant to this thesis as it focuses on the role of local and national social movements in the historic processes of claiming and constructing rights. It recognises the secondary logistical contribution of NGOs to this process, but identifies the transformative expressive and instrumental potential of mass collective action in and of itself. This has the potential to prefigure forms of social change not yet visible to institutional culture. However, he fails to adequately account for the universal dimension of the disparate local social processes or acknowledge that some of the paradoxes

particular context and makes them agents of their political action rather than offshoots of the international human rights movement. He also points to underlying paradoxes of appealing for institutional protection of human rights from states that are only concerned with simulating respect for human rights to preserve their power.

Despite the importance of refocusing on local or nationally-oriented social movements in the construction of human rights, the role of globalization and international actors cannot be ignored. In particular, the increasing connectedness made possible by digitally networked communications. These enable diverse social actors to rapidly and dramatically visibilise local contexts on the global stage, especially with reference to human rights discourse (Bob 2005). For some this constitutes a democratic, globalized public sphere with new forms of social movement practice (Cohen & Rai 2000). In this approach, human rights discourse is treated as a form of 'lingua franca' of values of the new critical global civil society; as 'códigos culturales compartidos a partir de la práctica crítica sobre la globalización' (Castells 2009b, p17). This contributes discursive support for collective resistance to the domination and inequality of global capitalism in the vein of Habermas' cosmopolitan public sphere deliberations.

Another feature of these more horizontal and diverse forms of local and globalized action is the challenge to established INGOs whose professionalisation and altruism have increasingly been questioned.⁴⁴ In addition, new classes of professionalised NGOs at national level have also faced criticism for creating privileged interlocutors with institutions and speaking for victims (Baxi 2012a; Estévez López 2015). In Latin America, this process of profesionalisation of civil society has been blamed for marginalizing the space for popular social movements to contest the injustices of neoliberalism (Alvarez et al. 1998), and for uncritical adoption of the depoliticised and technocratic language of international human rights law. However, other scholars have noted that the

of institutionalisation are contingent on socio-political context, not the necessary outcome of legal instantiation of human rights.

⁴⁴ For example, for pursuing their own interests by imposing their priorities on local partner NGOs, such as a narrow focus on certain civil and political rights supportive of the economic adjustment programmes of Western governments (Petras 1997), ignoring wider social and economic structural inequalities (Estévez López 2008) or through the pursuit of donor funding (Reith 2010).

relationship of influence with INGOs is not one-way, as national NGOs also shape INGO agendas (Rodio et al. 2010). In addition, new national and local NGOs are part of the modernization of national civil society. This increasingly involves multiple organizational forms and practices reflecting different interests and values; among them, local grassroots movements, community groups and faith-based associations alongside increasingly diversified and specialised human rights NGO and think-tank organizations focused on economic, social and security issues. This, as Lavelle and Bueno (2011) argue, created a new 'organizational ecology of civil society' (p415), but without displacing grassroots social actors or the role victims in claims-making. The plurality of civil society actors involved and their contributions to mobilizations are examined in relation to the three movements, particularly the challenges of using human rights discourse to sustain and articulate unstable movement identities and coalitions.

2.3.3 Human rights, injustice, victims, voice and agency

Victims are key actors in many human rights-oriented movements, including those studied in this research. They often play a unique role as the legitimised agents of human rights claims-making against powerholders.⁴⁵ However, the process by which victims of injustice come to understand and challenge their situation using human rights discourse, including as central actors in social movements, is a complex and sometime fraught process.

In this research, I use the term 'victim' to refer to persons or communities who are directly the subject of crimes, including grave human rights violations - such as killings, enforced disappearance, torture and forced displacement. However, the term also applies to the victim's relatives whose lives are harmed in multiple and enduring ways.⁴⁶ This understanding of victim includes human rights concepts, such as the

⁴⁵ Baxi argues that the 'historic mission of "contemporary" human rights is to give voice to human suffering, to make it visible' (Baxi 1999, p6).

⁴⁶ The term victim has been subject to criticism, particularly in the criminal justice system (Wolhuter et al, 2009) including by feminist theorists, for representing the person solely in terms of the harm "done to" her, as a passive object of the offence, deprived of agency and "fetishized"(Goodale et al. 2007) seemingly identified solely in terms of victimhood. "Survivor" and other terms potentially overcome this

relatives' right to access truth, justice and reparations. In this context, self-identifying with the term victim does not necessarily imply passivity as some suggest (Wolhuter et al, 2009). It can form part of relatives' understanding of their situation as suffering injustice, empowering them to recount their experiences (Hastrup 2003) and facilitate their agency in the process of demanding justice (Forst 2012; Brysk 2013).

The change from understanding a personal situation as a misfortune to an injustice is frequently a political decision (Shklar 1990).⁴⁷ In contexts of routinized violence and stigmatised victims, the process of relatives interpreting their experience as unfair is a necessary step in the formulation of demands against powerholders. A further step is reframing this cry of injustice into the discourse of human rights with its 'distinctive force and remedial logic' (Donnelly 2013, p8). This legitimises and specifies concrete demands for action from the state and other powerholders to meet their obligations toward the victims and society. This complex process of formulating and sustaining human rights-based claims often involves relatives coming into contact with social actors who have human rights know-how, particularly, but not exclusively, legal knowledge. As a result, those with relative expertise and skill, can play an important role in 'socializing' human rights concepts and ideas to make them relevant for victims and affected communities with less knowledge (Goodale et al. 2007; Gordon et al. 2007; Goodale 2009; Goldstein 2012; Landy 2013). Merry (2006b) notes that this 'vernacularization' (p39) of human rights norms - that is making them meaningful to the lived experience of those affected - can enable local actors without knowledge of human rights discourse to recognise its usefulness and adopt it to develop new perspectives on their situation.⁴⁸ This process can facilitate and shape claims-making against powerholders (Merry 2006b, 2006a) and translate local injustices into the

effect. However, I use the term "victim" as defined in international human rights norms (UN General Assembly 1985; A/Res/60/147 UN General Assembly 2006), in part because many of the direct victims of violence in Mexico do not survive, and also because the term includes within its scope indirect victims, such as relatives. In relation to wider human rights norms, victim can also refer to those denied social, political, civil, economic, cultural and environmental rights.

⁴⁷ Shklar also argues that our emotional sense of injustice is prior to and exceeds our sense of justice.

⁴⁸ In contrast, Speed argues that affected communities themselves can reconstitute rights discourse in relation to their own specific social context as part of the process of subaltern resistance without recourse to external expertise or international human rights law (Speed 2007).

globally legitimised discourse of human rights. In this context, the use of human rights discourse is instrumental as it is understood to exert moral and legal pressure on powerholders for a particular end. This includes potentially attracting international support to reinforce the political leverage of claims-makers in line with IR 'boomerang' theory.

However, this process also includes expressive dimensions. The adoption of human rights approaches can imply new frameworks by which individuals and communities interpret their situation and their relation to powerholders, contributing to a sense of enhanced agency, self-hood and citizenship.⁴⁹ This is part of the value transformative aspiration of claiming human rights. However, this is only the case when the use of human rights discourse empowers the voice of victims, rather than speaking for them or marginalizing their complex interests and needs (Nyamu-Musembi 2005).⁵⁰ The former cannot be taken for granted as there are often differences in power, knowledge and status between local human rights 'experts' and 'victims', between the lived complex suffering of victims and the instrumentalism of legal discourse (Hastrup 2003). As a result, these relationships are sensitive and vulnerable to manipulation, misunderstanding as well as calculated misrepresentation by powerholders (Merry 2006a).⁵¹ This can potentially undermine the claims-making of victims as well as social mobilizations supporting them. These risks, which have become apparent as human right practice has developed, have also contributed to some NGOs paying increasing attention to forms of integral psycho-social accompaniment of victims and

⁴⁹ The use of this legitimised discourse, institutional channels for claims-making and international attention may also reduce the risk of direct confrontation with powerholders and repression, but this is by no means guaranteed.

⁵⁰ Another feature that is less acknowledged in this global/local dynamic, is that the direction of influence can also work in the opposite direction: from the local to the global. Concrete and particular examples of injustice ground the more abstracted concepts of human rights norms of international law in real-world human experience. This facilitates debate and development of human rights norms and their official monitoring and interpretation mechanisms as part of the constantly evolving dialogue between international human rights principles and specific situations of injustice.

⁵¹ The counter-narrative of outsider troublemakers manipulating 'naïve' victims to extort powerholders or undermine their legitimacy is common to virtually all contentious conflicts. However, it is also true that local social mobilizations tend to downplay the role of outside influences in the development of claims-making, often focusing the legitimacy and authenticity of their claims on the local rootedness of the injustice (Nash 2012).

communities, particularly in response to situations of violence. In this practice, human rights claims-making can be seen a part of a wider restorative process for victims, at least in theory, driven by claimants themselves (Villa Gómez 2012). It is important to note that while these relationships are not the primary focus of the subsequent data chapters, it is necessary to keep their complex dynamics in mind in the processes of social mobilizations focused around the claims-making of victims of grave abuses.

It is also the case that many social movements do not adopt human rights discourses, particularly when their primary claims-making is not focused on victims of grave injustices, but also when human rights expertise is lacking or when human rights discourse is not understood as meaningful, useful or adequate to the claims-making and mobilization processes.⁵² As a result, it is necessary to examine wider theoretical and empirical approaches to analyse and understand social movements.

2.4 Understanding social movements

Social movements 'are sustained, intentional efforts to foster or retard broad legal and social changes, primarily outside the normal institutional channels endorsed by authorities' (Jasper 2014b, p28). They are collective social and political responses to perceived unfairness or inadequacy in the prevailing political, economic or cultural order. This makes them sociologically important for understanding individual engagement in collective non-institutional processes, but also in terms of their significance as collective political actors. They are outsider challengers to the routinized reproduction of the social order and the closed circle of institutionally endorsed power. As such, they have the potential to impact the political order, but also in a broader sense, to shift accepted norms and values in cultures, contributing to social change (Melucci 1996). In Habermas' terms, social movements challenge the legitimacy claimed by institutions to regulate and represent the social and political order. They assert an alternative legitimacy based on fundamental values of the public sphere, such as humanity, justice, human rights, autonomy, solidarity, citizenship and the common

⁵² As the data chapters will illustrate, this is the case of YoSoy132

good.⁵³ These principles invoke Rousseau’s universal democratic ideals, rather than electoral proceduralism as the basis of legitimacy. The following sections examine the development of theoretical approaches to social mobilizations and the development of different analytical tools to understand various features of their practices. These are explored subsequently in relation to the case studies and the mobilization of human rights discourse and digital and social media.

2.4.1 Collective behaviour, rationality and structural determinants

In the positivist climate in the US after WWII, the new social sciences favoured forms of behaviourism to research mass society, which, like Schumpeter, they viewed with suspicion.⁵⁴ Blumer (1951) used symbolic interactionism and behavioural psychology to focus on individual emotional interactions in mass public events, including social movements. He treated these as manifestations of social unrest, but also with the potential to generate new norms and values outside the prevailing social order. Smelser’s (1962) functionalist ‘value added’ theory focused on social movements as a manifestation of imbalances in the overall social system. He proposed minimum requirements for mobilization, including external strains in society and ‘trigger’ events producing ‘generalised beliefs’ amongst potential adherents about grievances.

Despite such important psychological insights, this early theoretical approach tended to conceptualise individuals within a collective as victims of their emotions and circumstances, subject to manipulation rather than rational political individuals consciously seeking social change.⁵⁵ In a world where civil rights and national liberation movements were increasingly recognised as reasonable collective responses to unjust elites, this

⁵³ This is a somewhat romanticised representation of social movements as necessarily progressive. As noted elsewhere, they can also be regressive, opposing democracy and progressive social change. However, this characterisation serves to illustrate some of the qualities associated with progressive social movements such as those in this research.

⁵⁴ This psychological approach focused on individual relations to groups and wider society is a far cry from Marx’s external structural determinants of capitalism giving rise to specific collective working class interests, leading to class based movements emerging to seize power as part of historical materialism. This approach recognises social movements only in terms of their structural position in relation to other interests, not as dynamic and complex political or social configurations.

⁵⁵ They tended to view non-institutional collective action in pejorative terms, particularly Smelser who referred to it as “deviance”

approach to political unrest and non-institutional social action seemed crudely negative.⁵⁶ New scholars in the US argued that social strain was not sufficient to cause mobilization, as such grievances were common to all societies, but movements were relatively rare (McCarthy et al. 1977), so there must be other factors facilitating mobilization.

Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) used Rational Actor Theory (RAT) to analyse individual participation in movements. RAT, a form of utilitarianism, was developed as part of neoclassical economics to analyse individual and group choices when confronted with alternatives. It circumscribed individual action to self-interested calculations of costs and benefits, treating emotions as producing irrational decisions and actions (Olson 1965). RMT argued that it was the particular internal resources that movements could use to get individuals to overcome their rational reluctance to join collective action which determined their success.⁵⁷ RMT focused on the role of Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), activist biographies, protest repertoires, leadership and communications practices to create the organizational capacity to enable participation in collective action in response to grievances. However, this reduced the agency of decisions to participate to a cold cost-benefit calculation, ignoring features of self-realising agency, solidarity, subjectivity or even external political factors.

Political Opportunity or Process Theory (POT) addressed the latter shortcoming, arguing that the conditions for mobilization were a) the favourable configuration of the political context, b) movement resources (RMT) and c) an 'insurgent consciousness' (McAdam 2010, p51).⁵⁸ POT was particularly applied to authoritarian states, where

⁵⁶ However, their behaviourist analysis was often caricatured and marginalized by the subsequent generation by more structuralist thinkers. Reassessment of their interactionist and subjectivist approaches has supported the cultural turn of recent years, which allows greater weight for meaning and emotions in the interpretation of grievances and decisions to participate in mobilizations (Jasper 1997, 1998; Crossley 2002).

⁵⁷ This was a response to Olsen's "free rider" challenge. This argued that rationally acting individuals would rely on others to take the risk of involvement in social mobilizations, realising that they would benefit if the movement was successful, but not be adversely impacted if it failed. As a result, there must be other grounds for individuals to participate than mere sympathy with the movement as their self-interested judgement would prevail.

⁵⁸ This "insurgent consciousness", which remains vague in the theory, raises the question of internal psychological motivation, which RMT and POT theorists tended to avoid because of their reliance on

excluded movements were understood to demand inclusion in the political system (Tarrow 1998).⁵⁹ The analysis of the political context focused on ruptures in the ruling elites and democratic liberalization much like O'Donnell's interpretation of transition processes.⁶⁰ This bias to institutional politics and assumptions about democratic transition, alienated activists and scholars in Latin America (Davis 1999).⁶¹ Above all, while the structuralist approach of POT recognised the importance of the external political context, it tended to assume these were objective conditions, rather than resulting from movement participants interpreting the context as an opportunity. As a result, the purposive agency of movement participants and their subjective meaning-making was reduced to responding to the 'cognitive clues' (McAdam 2010, p51) generated by the political elites.

These more structuralist approaches provide important insights into the necessary internal resource requirements and external political dynamics contributing to mobilizations. These are explored later in relation to the three case studies. However, they fail to adequately address collective meaning-making or identity formation processes.

2.4.2 Framing theory

Frame alignment theory tries to address these cognitive processes (Snow et al. 1986; Gamson et al. 1996; Benford 1997; Benford et al. 2000).⁶² It suggests how an event routinely accepted in life as a 'misfortune', can be reinterpreted as an 'injustice' which focuses 'on the kind of righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul'

Rational Action Theory and structural causes to understand human behaviour, but it is suggestive of a shared spirit of rebellion against the status quo.

⁵⁹ Ruptures in ruling elites resulted in partial liberalization, reducing the threat of violent repression, opening up the communications environment to influence wider audiences and facilitate participation. However, this locates the point of political opportunity only as subsequent to elite fracture, rather than contributing to this process.

⁶⁰ This is also the approach adopted by Simmons (2009) in her analysis of social movements mobilizing human rights discourse referred to previously.

⁶¹ Nevertheless, the focus on political opportunities emerging from the institutional order remains an important feature for understanding mobilization, for example in relation to the failures of transition processes, the security environment and changes in the media ecology. These are all factors considered in the three case studies.

⁶² It was adopted from Mead's symbolic interactionism.

(Gamson 1995) suggestive of McAdam's 'insurgent consciousness'.⁶³ Benford and Snow argued that movement recruitment succeeded or failed to the extent that potential supporters could recognise and identify with its discourse on the basis of their own experience, values and beliefs; that it cognitively 'resonated' with them (Snow et al. 1986).⁶⁴ Gamson identified three primary frames in collective action: injustice, agency and identity. He argued that an 'injustice frame' was fundamental as this was not merely a 'cognitive or intellectual judgement about what is equitable' but was also a "hot cognition" – one laden with emotion'.⁶⁵

More constructivist approaches to framing theory recognised that enabling and constraining factors for movement mobilization were not determined by objectivist causes, but depended on actors interpreting them or being encouraged to interpret them in a personally meaningful way. However, frames have tended to be conceived of in narrowly instrumental terms in which movements project their discourse or narratives in the media to induce recruitment and mobilize public opinion (Tarrow 1998). This assumes a form of utility maximising marketing by 'movement entrepreneurs', regardless of the consistency of messages or the values, beliefs and ideologies of recruits or to what extent frames emerge out of more complex processes not necessarily under the control of unitary movement actors.⁶⁶ Also frame analysis focuses on 'cognitions' as meaning. As Jasper's notes (1997), this ignores the role of wider culture and emotions in the resonance of frames, evaluations and judgements.

⁶³ RMT and POP had presumed the existence of grievances but did not explained the process by which they were understood as grievances. For example, McAdam characterised it vaguely as a form of "cognitive liberation", but without explaining its development.

⁶⁴ Gamson (2004) describes a frame as spotlighting 'certain events and their underlying causes and consequences, and direct[ing] our attention away from others. Like a building frame, it gives shape and support. A frame organizes and makes coherent an apparently diverse array of symbols, images, and arguments, linking them through an underlying organizing idea that suggests what is at stake on the issue.' (p260).

⁶⁵ The identity frame depended on identifying those responsible for harm as "them", against which the "we-consciousness" (Gamson 1992, p7) of the movement is formed. Lastly, the agency frame is developed on the basis of the movement proposing solutions, that is, what social actors can do to change the situation. This is essential to make participation goal-oriented and meaningful for potential recruits (Noakes & Johnston 2005, p6).

⁶⁶ For example, Feminist critics argued this reliance on utility calculations to maximise frame appeal, ignored the fact that this was not necessarily the objective of some movements whose passionate convictions and identity were more important than mass appeal (Marx Ferree & Merrill 2000).

It freeze-frames fluid multilayered processes involving plural actors, falsely simplifying dynamic and often contradictory practices (Melucci 1996; Benford et al. 2000). As a result its usefulness as a tool of empirical analysis has been called into question (Crossley 2002).

Despite this, forms of framing analysis have served to interpret local movements in terms of their strategies to secure support of human rights INGOs (Bob 2005; Hagan 2010) and in critiques of media strategies of INGOs to mobilize their supporters and raise funds in the Global North by marketing distant suffering (Boltanski 1999; Hopgood 2013), commodifying victims or displacing their voice in favour of 'media friendly' experts (Silverstone 2007; Baxi 2012a).⁶⁷ However, others regard instrumental framing tactics more positively, as part of the practical strategic process of mobilizing national and international awareness and solidarity to support victims and just causes (Brysk 2013).

The importance of framing theory for this thesis is its recognition of subjective interpretation by diverse actors in the process of interpreting context specific grievances in the mobilization and demobilization process; how various movement narratives develop and contribute to identity and motivation to participate.

2.4.3 New social movements (NSM)

New social movement theory addressed the complexity of identity formation. It developed in Europe from the 1970s in the aftermath of the New Left, the emergence of post-industrial capitalism, and the resurgence of plural civil society (Touraine 1971; Habermas 1996; Melucci 1996; Castells 1997). New social movements promoting

⁶⁷ Silverstone points to the risk of silencing the actual voice of victims in favour of 'experts' or by the media (2007, p98). The traditional international humanitarian campaign which narrates the suffering of the distant victims (McLagan et al. 2006) in order to mobilize international public opinion, faces the same risks. The strategic logic of attracting a distant audience can reduce the human rights repertoire to a purely instrumental engagement with the media to secure international attention (Bob 2005; Hagan 2010) if there is insufficient regard to the actual agency and voice of claimants. The framing narrative oriented purely toward the sensibilities of a globalised audience can also jeopardise the meaning and value of human rights discourse, removing it from its localised context and its significance for the actual claims-makers.

feminism, human rights, LGBTism, environmentalism and peace, among others, were no longer seen as representing class interests of structuralist approaches, but shared autonomous identities, particularly around cultural values (Melucci 1996). These movements could act both instrumentally to achieve political ends, but also expressively, that is dramatically enacting and representing their identity, values and beliefs through their actions (Cohen 1985). The strength of this approach was its focus on reflexive individuals, interpreting their lives within social and political contexts, constructing meaning through experience, and recognising themselves in others in the process of developing collective identity (Della Porta & Diani 2006). The process of participation was self-transforming, echoing post-Marxist ideas of emerging political subjectivity through participation and contestation (Laclau et al. 1985).⁶⁸ Advocates argued that plural individual and collective identities could co-exist and cooperate (Castells 1997), developing diverse political and cultural practices, aspiring to social transformation, but without seeking to seize power or demand representation of narrow interests in the institutional political system as envisaged by POT theorists.⁶⁹

Despite Latin America's economic and social conditions not reflecting most features of post-industrial capitalism, scholars and activists in the region widely adopted NSM ideas to interpret and develop their own social movement analysis and practice (Davis 1999).⁷⁰ Particularly relevant was NSM focus on movement values, identity, autonomy and plurality. This echoed strongly in political cultures where there was a wide range

⁶⁸ Habermas suggested movements were primarily defensive publics and counter-publics, deliberative spaces in which social and political changes could be debated and challenged, potentially resisting, and in some cases contributing to, political and social change in democratic states facing legitimization crises (Habermas 1981, 2010). This was a mainly defensive conception of social movements resisting the colonization of the autonomy of the 'Lifeworld' by the encroaching welfarism of the 'System world' in European social democracies of the 1970s. This was widely criticised for its conservative view of social actors resisting change, and inadequately acknowledging the role of marketization, gender inequality and globalization (Edwards 2009). However, the model was adapted to acknowledge the increasing colonization of the Lifeworld by global neoliberal marketization in the 1990s and 2000s, and the progressive resistance of social movements demanding enhanced state protection.

⁶⁹ The supposed newness of these NSM qualities has been called into question, suggesting these identity and value features existed in many social movements prior to the post-modern era (Calhoun 1992).

⁷⁰ The focus on autonomous identity based social action, for example, assisted the emergence of local feminist (Alvarez et al. 1998; Avritzer 2006) and indigenous people's movements (Yashar 2005). Other grassroots movements, though often tenuously based on identity, also suggested new fields in which to apply the theory, and focus on the emergence of new collective political subjects not based on class interests but engaged in forms of radical democracy (Laclau et al. 1985; Laclau 2005; Mouffe 2005).

of social actors. However, strategies of engagement with corrupt authoritarian or semi-democratic institutions usually resulted in co-optation, repression and demobilization, not social change nor real representation in the institutional political system.⁷¹

2.4.4 Emotions

The increasing recognition of social movements as dynamic intersubjective collectivities formed of reflexive individuals (Giddens 1990), engaged with their understanding of and responsive to the world, reclaimed the role of psychology and subjectivity to examine individual motivations (Klandermans 1997). According to Jaspers (2010), the 'cognitive, moral, and emotional dimensions of protest' cannot be understood without 'thick' description (Geertz 1973) of the process of identification, evaluation and decision, in which emotions play an intrinsic part of reasoned action. Narrow RAT cost-benefit equations were insufficient to account for this process. In this context, he stresses the importance of 'moral shocks' and their emotional impact in the mobilization process:

“Moral shocks” are often the first step toward recruitment into social movements: when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action... Most are dramatic and attention getting, but some are modest, more like the 'last straw' that finally spurs action. Similarly, the shock may come from a plan for something new or from new information about something existing, which has already done unseen damage. The information or event helps a person think about her basic values and how the world diverges from them in some important way. Such individuals often search out political organizations themselves, without waiting for recruiters to contact them. These shocks ...can spur recruitment. Events can be powerful symbols' (Jasper 1997, p106)

⁷¹ However, as Davis (Op. Cit.) notes, other less relevant features, such as NSM assumptions of an efficient Weberian unitary State, were largely overlooked.

As a result, it is not possible to understand social movements without paying sufficient regard to the constitutive effects and affect of the grievance event and how this also relates to betrayed expectations and profound feelings of injustice (Shklar 1990). This is particularly important as this approach reasserts the importance of how movement actors understand and respond to “trigger events” to give meaning and emotional resonance to grievances. As the subsequent research data suggests, this is a key element in shaping the mobilization process.

In addition, emotions play a fundamental role in the agency felt by those that participate in mobilizations (Jasper 1997). Agency is both the self-realising action which influences events, however limited this impact may be, and also an awareness of this actual or potential influencing process. It is ‘a sense of personal and collective efficacy, a feeling that one’s participation may actually make a difference’ (Ibid, p197).⁷² As a result, the emotional repercussions of agency are a feature of reflexive understanding and essential to the meaning of participation, contributing to continued motivation to participate.⁷³

2.4.5 Actors and practices.

The theoretical approaches considered above have frequently focused on particular aspects of the mobilization process, reducing the importance of other dimensions. This has sometimes failed to adequately reflect the complex interpenetration of structure,

⁷² Alice Poma and Tommaso Gravante (2015) provide a vivid account of the emotional process of agency and empowerment on the basis of their empirical research with recent social movement participants in Mexico: ‘El hecho mismo de luchar y organizarse, a pesar de las burlas o actitudes de los que no creen, es un trabajo emocional que los que luchan tienen que hacer desde el principio de la movilización. A estas alturas, el empoderamiento es el poder de intentar, de no dejarse arrastrar por los que no creen que valga la pena luchar.’ (p34) and ‘El empoderamiento como “poder de” hacer algo, les queda a las personas que luchan, relacionando tanto las capacidades de luchar y ganar la batallas (empoderamiento político), como a nivel psicológico, en los cambios que los sujetos observan en su misma persona, por ejemplo, el aumento del autoestima, o con la pérdida de la vergüenza de hablar en público...está relacionado con la superación de la soledad y el placer de la unión’ (p35).

⁷³ Addressing the emotional dimensions of mobilization recognises the complex factors involved in participation which cannot be reduced to utility calculations. However, this analysis alone, which has echoes of Blumer’s original behaviourist approach, is not sufficient to account for social mobilization, rather it accompanies structural and symbolic approaches described above (Polletta and Amenta 2001). Nonetheless, it reasserts the importance of emotions in the dynamic processes of individuals becoming engaged in collective action.

meaning and agency in the way social movement participants act, relying on the reproduction of social norms, but also creatively developing forms of political and social action through practice. Crossley (2002) proposes a relational account of how social actors engage in collective action with others on the basis of their lived routinised customs, but open to opportunities and experience of acting with others to generate new movement practices, drawing on and developing protest repertoires (Tilly 2004).⁷⁴ This represents a ‘thicker’ understanding of participation in which strategic decision-making is based on, but not bound by, the existing dispositions, frames of interpretation and rationality, but is also alert to new ways of acting:

‘their actions are not rooted in abstract logical calculations of utility but in a “feel for the game” which they have acquired through involvement in the social world. Their experiences have given rise to a “second nature” and new, social instincts which they draw upon to act’ (Crossley 2002; p176)

This intuitive and reflexive development, which is oriented to strategic action but not defined by it, contributes to evolving movement cultures and practices, as well as forming part of the wider repertoires of engagement in the public sphere.⁷⁵ The adoption of human rights discourse and the different ways it is used and understood by movements relate to this adaptive practice in a structured world.⁷⁶ This concept of practice is not set against previous social movement theories, but recognises their part

⁷⁴ This uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice and habitus (Bourdieu 1990) to account for movement activists as ‘social beings endowed with forms of knowledge and competence, schemas of perception, discourse and action, derived from their involvement in the social world. They are beings with personal histories, which affect them and which are woven into broader collective histories, which affect them too’ (Crossley 2002, p176). However, these constraining or structuring features do not impose a rigid reproduction of social relations as the actors are related to others in their orientations, disposed to adapt and shape their practice in context in pursuit of aims, values and beliefs as well as the day-to-day practice of ‘getting on’. This also reflects Giddens’ approach to practical and reflexive consciousness of actors creatively engaged in the world (Giddens 1984).

⁷⁵ The meaning of these practices are not limited to the actors intentions, as unintended or misunderstood consequences are also part of the fabric of activity in which actors act and react. However, the fact that practices may result from these unintended consequences does not mean movements cease to be purposively directed collective endeavours.

⁷⁶ As human rights have come to feature in global and local discourses, they have a structuring quality of the way the world is interpreted, but they are also open to adaptation and appropriation in different forms.

in the complex ways individuals engage in the collective processes of meaning making, interaction and interpretation in a politically structured and resource-unequal world which both enables and constrains particular mobilizations.⁷⁷ It is this aspect of reflexive practice which is explored in the in the interviews and is fundamental to developing the nuanced understanding of the dynamics of each movement.

The next section turns to the communicative culture of movements, both internally but also the wider media environment in which they operate. These represent both a key element of movement practice but also the structured social relations out of which the three case study movements emerge.

2.5 Networks, technology and communications

The importance of social networks has been widely recognised in social movement theories even before the global spread of digital technology (Castells 1996; Melucci 1996; Diani et al. 2003; Della Porta et al. 2006). Affinity and trust networks enable initial mobilization processes, but also as movements recruit, they produce new network connections, increasing their extension but also the density of connections within the movement.⁷⁸ This process is facilitated and reinforced by the capacity to develop multidirectional informational feedback loops across the participating networks. The widespread adoption of digitally networked communications by individual users has scaled up this capacity and practice. The interpenetrating layers of multiple affiliations within and across societies made possible by individualised digital communications have become an intrinsic aspect of social relations, suggesting, for some, a new global public sphere (Guidry et al. 2000; Castells 2008; Brysk et al. 2017), potentially able to

⁷⁷ It is also a template for considering the practical and reflexive involvement of participants in movements which are discussed in the case studies.

⁷⁸ 'networks operate to create predispositions to action. Being linked to people who are already committed to a certain cause enables individuals to feel part of a "collective we," to elaborate systems of meaning that render collective action both a meaningful and a feasible undertaking, to perceive certain issues as socially relevant and worthy of collective efforts. At the same time, social networks often create opportunities for transforming predispositions into action...People with certain predispositions will be more likely to contact organizations and come across opportunities for participation if they are connected to people already involved' (Della Porta & Diani 2006, 118-119).

enact Habermas' communicative action in a globalized world (Della Porta 2013) and facilitating contentious social mobilization at a transnational scale (Tarrow 2005).⁷⁹

The features of digital networks, such as horizontality, speed and distribution, have suggested for some their inherently democratising influence, aligned with human liberty, individualism and enterprise (Rheingold 2000; Benkler 2006). This optimistic liberal form of technological determinism has been contested as hype, disguising more malign consequences of digital social-networking, such as social fragmentation, selfish individualism and capitalist domination (Hindman 2009; Morozov 2013; Fuchs 2014) as well as facilitating political manipulation and repression (Howard et al. 2016; Bradshaw et al. 2017). Nonetheless, the increasing global adoption of digitally networked communications means they are now embedded in global social relations (Wellman 2001), albeit with the particular social characteristics of the digital divide prevalent in the context in which they are used.⁸⁰ This includes forming part of political culture (Dahlgren 2009) and the communicative networking practices of social movements (Milan 2013) as well as the wider media landscape (Silverstone 2007). It is this context of evolving embedded use of digital and social media and its implications for social movement mobilization dynamics that this research explores.

2.5.1 Mainstream media, digital media, the public sphere and movement practices

The Media, particularly electronic media, such as television, radio, internet and the phone, have come to play a crucial and complex role in mediating the public sphere and our engagement with the world, including politics (Silverstone 2007). Despite liberal assumptions that market competition ensures plurality and democratic accountability (Lawson 2001; Curran 2002), the dominant role of commercial mass media companies (Habermas 1991) and corporate control of digital communications platforms undercut claims of an autonomous and impartial public sphere (Fuchs 2014)

⁷⁹ However, networks do not predetermine or cause movements or guarantee their success, rather they are part of the shifting fabric of human connectivity which movements seek to take advantage of (Diani et al. 2003).

⁸⁰ Although in general terms high rates of digital and social media use around the world are usually concentrated in younger more educated urban generations, with older generations, the poor and rural populations usually experiencing less access.

and place in doubt its deliberative capacity to contribute to democratic culture (Couldry 2012). The extent to which digitally enabled communications can and do contribute to involvement in diverse forms of political participation and civic engagement is an ongoing debate (Dahlgren 2009, 2013; Wessels 2017). However, academic attention has focused predominantly on democratic or authoritarian contexts, with less research into specific situations of partial democracy where civil society is active but under threat and with marginal influence over institutional political practice.

Historically, social movements engage with the diverse forms of media available at the time of mobilization.⁸¹ These media are used to reach new recruits, organize and announce activities, inform on the success of events and address wider public opinion (Downing 2001). In the 20th century, the emergence of mass communication, particularly TV and radio, with close links to the state and elite commercial and political interests, created dilemmas and opportunities for social movements about how to project their message and narratives to wider constituencies and reinforce their identity with participants (Gamson 2004). However, the hostility of the mass media, in both democratic and authoritarian states, to challenger social movements meant their actions were usually framed negatively (Gitlin 1980).⁸² The globalization of mass media outlets also provided more opportunities for strategically reaching wider international publics, particularly to highlight human rights abuses and deter repression by authoritarian regimes (Bob 2005; Hagan 2010). However, coverage was still produced, framed and distributed by news corporations and consumed by mass audiences. The advent of digitally networked communications, such as email and the early internet, began to disrupt this paradigm, providing new possibilities for independently creating and sharing information to distributed actors. However, this was still largely theorised

⁸¹ For example, pamphlets and newsletters in the anti-slavery movement 18th century (Tilly 2004)

⁸² Many movements - where possible and with greater or lesser success - engaged strategically with the media to try to shape coverage. This increasingly relied on professionalised SMO/NGO experts and strategies working with telegenic leaders to reach wider audiences and institutional actors as well as deflect counter-framing attacks (Gamson et al. 1993).

in terms of narrow instrumental use of digital media to achieve movement strategic communication goals (Mattoni et al. 2014; Treré 2014).

The Zapatistas were one of the first movements to engage with the potential of the incipient internet to reach wider global support networks, without purely relying on the mediation of the mass media. By adopting peer-to-peer internet communication, in the form of bulletin boards, mail-lists and websites, tech activists, primarily in the Western university system, developed support networks. These linked to offline communities prepared to mobilize in public spaces and through other media to show solidarity with the Zapatistas and also engage in political lobbying on their behalf (Froehling 1997). The online network was increasingly theorised as an alternative political space of contention and challenge to the neoliberal order (Castells et al. 1995; Cleaver 1998) made concrete through the construction and assertion of autonomous identity (Castells 1997). However, others have observed that the Zapatista success was equally due to their strategy with local and international mainstream media; and that the role of the internet was mythologised from the outset as part of the identity building process (Bob 2005; Mattoni et al. 2014).

Castells, in particular, has argued that individuals have the potential to re-programme capitalist digital networks to produce and distribute information and to collectively deliberate and resist domination in horizontal global counter-publics (Castells 2009a).⁸³ This individualised and autonomous digital networking he has characterised as 'self-communication', which is facilitated by the appropriation of the interactive features of Web 2.0, particularly social media platforms. In this context, the horizontality of networks and internet communication is theorised not only as upscaling strategic communications capacity of movements to influence mainstream media.⁸⁴ It is also conceived of as having radical emancipatory dimensions; as an expressive means of

⁸³ The surfacing of diverse activist groups, many inspired by the Zapatistas, in the anti-neoliberal globalization protests in Seattle in 1999 is frequently invoked as the symbolic moment when plural networked digital resistance took to the streets.

⁸⁴ Other activist scholars theorising the collective action of global justice movements (Hardt et al. 2001, 2005) also argued that loose horizontal networks of individuals, associations and collectives, critical of corporate globalization have developed 'alternative political imaginaries' (Juris 2005).

constituting new forms alternative citizenship in counterpower struggles against neoliberal global dominance (Lievrouw 2011). Central to this idealised view of digitally enabled activism is the new capacity to independently produce and circulate news information not framed by the mainstream media. This conception of digital activism has played an important role in fostering and interpreting digitally assisted social mobilizations (Castells 2013), but has been subject to less scrutiny in relation to specific movement experiences, such as undertaken in this research.

2.5.2 Citizen journalism, alternative media and independent digital news platforms

One aspect of this the increasing adoption of digital technology was to facilitate the emergence of alternative media (*medios libres*) and citizen journalism (Couldry et al. 2003).⁸⁵ This phenomena was not new (Downing 2001), but the low costs of digital technological and its increasing availability, enabled citizens and activists to enact ‘participatory journalism’ (Lievrouw 2011). Any activist or citizen could create and circulate instantaneously digital audio-visual and text covering events, such as police violence and social protests, to distributed networks. This allowed diverse ideological groups and individuals to share and make visible forms of civic resistance, encouraging recruitment and activating international solidarity.⁸⁶

In tandem with this process, plural independent digital news information platforms have also developed to try to challenge the dominance of mainstream media, for example, BuzzFeed or Vice. These employ more traditional journalistic principles,

⁸⁵ For example, in 1999 Indymedia established a network of alternative news platforms which hosted information on local and global economic, political and social issues posted by grassroots political activist.

⁸⁶ This facilitated the creation of niche global constituencies based around forms of activism and acknowledged ideological affinity, but not subject to the mediating frames of mainstream media or the supposed standards of quality journalism, such as fact-checking or impartiality. Initially, sites such as Indymedia hosted contributions, but increasingly digital skills and low costs enabled individuals and groups to autonomously manage and run their own blogs and websites, developing their own particular brand of politically committed alternative news and comment oriented to socially and politically engaged groups and individuals. After 2014, Indymedia faced state clampdowns in several countries and reduced participation. This coincided with a decline in global justice activism, but also local citizen journalists increasingly published independently (Giraud 2014). It is also the case that right-wing platforms, such as Breitbart, have become much more prominent as new manifestations of this practice, exploiting the potential of skewed political narratives to generate reactionary political following.

claiming to provide digital news and comment along similar lines to traditional media but with greater flexibility.⁸⁷ Some seek major capital investment to upscale operations, thus taking them into the mainstream media market place.⁸⁸ In contrast, other portals seek to preserve their independence and develop forms of critical journalism, but with politically militancy. This includes coverage of social movements, but not the participatory approach taken by alternative media. This area of independent media has yet to face significant academic research outside western democracies (Carlson et al. 2016).⁸⁹

Chadwick notes how the diversity of online and offline media platforms means that expressive and instrumental political activity is increasingly enacted and represented across platforms with great fluidity, creating a form of hybridized media culture which skilled activists can take advantage of to influence institutional political practice (Chadwick 2013). This hybridization, including the increasing popularity of alternative, independent and international portals, has also reduced some of the gatekeeper power of traditionally dominant local or national mainstream news media at domestic level.

In this increasingly diverse media environment, social movements deal with multiple actors, ranging from global media corporations, mainstream national broadcasters, print and internet media, various forms of independent news portals, web based global social media platforms, alternative activist information producers, and internet platforms facilitating citizen actions.⁹⁰ This provides the opportunity to try to springboard information between one platform and another to create feedback loops and amplify attention and participation (Chadwick 2013; Wessels 2017) providing new

⁸⁷ However, these new actors often use recycled news from other sources or commentary on news flows, with limited resources to report directly or conduct investigative journalism compared to large media companies (Couldry 2010).

⁸⁸ For example, the Huffington Post or Breitbart.

⁸⁹ In addition to these processes, mainstream news media platforms have rapidly digitalised to try to overcome the disruption to their business models and the migration of audiences and advertising revenues to social media platforms, particularly Facebook. The latter is playing an increasingly dominate role in the global news media environment as its algorithms determine which particular news information reaches different audiences on its platform (Allcott et al. 2017).

⁹⁰ For example, change.org and avaaz.org.

opportunities for social movements such as the case studies in this research.⁹¹ However, social movement media actions are not limited to strategic engagement with news-based media, but also involve a wider range of communications practices with diverse implications for movements and activists (Treré 2014). The following section examines theoretical and empirical approaches to digitally networked mobilization which are of particular relevance to the case study movements.

2.6 Digital and social media in social movements practice

2.6.1 Reducing resource costs of organizing protest

Despite early deterministic claims that digital networks enabled virtual deliberative publics (Rheingold 2000; Benkler 2006; Castells 2009a), facilitating democratic citizenship and social mobilization, social movement scholars were sceptical, invoking traditional social movement theories. They argued that online activism substituted and weakened offline participation, excluding those without access to the internet (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2004). However, as the digital divide has declined more empirical studies have gradually indicated that digital media communications tend to support offline activism (Harlow et al. 2012). In addition, the spread of digital media increased the opportunity to reduce resource costs and time spent on organizational and information sharing activities (Shirky 2009; Earl et al. 2011). This finding challenged Resource Mobilization Theory that movements depend on resource rich professional SMOs/NGOs to overcome the rational reluctance of individuals to engage in collective mobilization (Bimber et al. 2005a), making small flexible resource-poor mobilizations more possible.⁹²

2.6.2 Social media as interactive emancipatory technology

In 2011 the Arab Spring, Occupy, and 15-M in Spain seemed to confirm that social media enabled looser non-hierarchical movements, with emancipatory democratic

⁹¹ Cammaerts refers to this as the new 'media opportunity structure' (Cammaerts 2012).

⁹² However, this conclusion, still based on theoretical models using utilitarian decision-making of participants, also implied that these movements were not particularly 'new' or radical (Earl et al. 2002). This contrasts with idealised theoretical claims that digitally enabled activism was leading to new forms of protest, public engagement and social movement culture.

potential (Alhindi et al. 2012; Tufekci et al. 2012; Castells 2013), apparently confirming the potential of digital networks to enact forms of leaderless ‘collective intelligence’ (Johnson 2001) as part of the mobilization process.⁹³ However, others argued that this was Western media hype which overlooked, a) the underlying weakness of ‘clicktivism’ which prevented the development of strong ties (Granovetter 1973) of trust sufficient to sustain dangerous social mobilization (Gladwell 2010) and b), the risks of the technology being used by repressive authorities against protesters (Morozov 2012). Fuchs (2014) and (Gerbaudo 2012) claimed the euphoric emancipatory theorising was not supported by empirical research which in fact demonstrated the underlying importance of traditional face-to-face contacts and organizing over the interactive dimensions of social media in protest practice. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring protests, particularly the failure to sustain movements or consolidate public space or democracy (Salem 2014), there has been a more measured focus on the particular social and political contexts of protest, and how these relate to online and offline movement practices (Van Laer et al. 2010). This includes attention to the ways that media connectivity can help transmit key movement sentiments facilitating participation in protest.

2.6.3 Digital and social media and emotional engagement

As the earlier discussion in section 2.4 illustrated, non-institutional collective action has gradually come to be understood neither as primarily irrational (Blumer 1951; Smelser 1962) nor wholly utilitarian (Olson 1965; McCarthy et al. 1977) as it involves culturally shaped intuitive practice (Crossley 2002), including important emotional and affective dimensions (Goodwin et al. 2009).

According to Hoggett and Thompson (2012), affect is the more ‘embodied, unformed and less conscious dimension of human feeling, whereas emotions concern the feelings which are more conscious since they are more anchored in language and meaning’ (p2).

⁹³ Activist scholars like Hardt and Negri (2004) and Juris suggested that the “cultural logic” (Juris 2012) of digitally enabled networking was crucial to horizontal forms of plural activism, including the potential for decentred swarm-like collective actions, but also important was the accumulation of people protesting in offline public space to forge identity.

This distinction represents the different ways that affect is felt and communicated more viscerally, while emotion is more consciously negotiated and interpreted in response to events and the process of developing understanding, meaning and decisions. These aspects of sentiment are shaped through social relations, recognition of feelings in others, and feature in individual and collective motivations to participate in protest, particularly in response to the 'moral shocks' and anger provoked by of trigger events and the sense of agency felt through taking self-directed actions.

Papacharssi (2015) argues that the emotional connectedness that social media can facilitate is crucial to new forms of open digitally enabled protest. This activates what she refers to as 'the in-between bond of publics' (p9) by sharing expressive information, including the developing movement narrative, with potential or actual recruits to 'liberate the individual and collective imaginations' (p71).⁹⁴ She maintains that sharing, adding, reworking and commenting on material and the unfolding narrative through distributed individualised networks can constitute 'affective publics' which are less reliant on traditional ideological formation to mobilize and more open to personal interpretation in the construction of meaning:

'Unlike collectively rendered signifiers that summon specific publics to ideological alignment, connectively rendered signifiers remain open; their appeal depends on their ability to invite and contain personalized manifestos for action rather than dictate a single one.' (Ibid, p71-72).

It is useful to note here the important role she also attributes to 'open signifiers' in the mobilization process. This echoes the potential role of human rights discourse (see section 2.3.3) to facilitate the articulation of ideological plural social actors. However, Papacharssi's argument is that the looser connectivity and personal interpretation that digital and social media can facilitate in distributed publics enables this type of plural affective participation.

⁹⁴ In the Arab Spring, social media platforms were used to share visual images and video. This was widely recognised as helping arouse and share emotional responses with others (Lim 2013; Salem 2014).

Perhaps inevitably, her account of affective engagement is somewhat opaque and almost metaphysical given its attempt to describe collective emotional connectivity, with less attention paid to other features or potential limitations of open 'affective publics'. These include questions of resilience and vulnerability to instrumental manipulation, intimidation, deactivation and misdirection. Nevertheless, her analysis highlights the importance of creating and contributing to rooted collective narratives of movements through the connectedness of social media communication. This is a feature of the mobilization process examined in relation to the case study movements.

2.6.4 Connective vs collective action

The increased connectedness and flexibility afforded by digital and social media networking also appears to suggest different dynamics of movement organization. Bennet & Segerberg (2013; 2012) argue that digital networks enable contentious action on the basis of 'personalized action frames' (p202) which constitute forms of 'connective action'. They also suggest that this makes them less reliant on mobilizing conditions of social movement theory requirements of resources, leadership or collective identity. In effect, self-communicating individualised digital engagement affords new 'logics' of mobilization and political participation.⁹⁵ Bennet & Segerberg also challenge traditional assumptions that SMO brokered movement coalitions have more discursive and political impact, suggesting that while more hybrid and crowd-enabled mobilizations manifest different 'configurations of power' (p160), they can have equally important outcomes.

Despite these claims, they recognise that very loosely networked 'connective' mobilizations face greater difficulty in sustaining action over time, particularly in unconducive political environments.⁹⁶ Their analysis of hybrid mobilizations, involving

⁹⁵ They do not argue that all new movements are of this sort, proposing a continuum of analytical movement types to reflect these varying practices: a) traditional SMO brokered movements, to b), looser hybrid forms of organizationally enabled mobilization but which encourage autonomous individualised participation, and c), loose "crowd-enabled" movements in which digital networks are the most visible organizational forms.

⁹⁶ Despite acknowledging the particular "opportunity structure" in which movements emerge, the authors do not address implications of movements operating in partial democratic contexts. The

digital networks and face-to-face brokered coalitions, illustrate the complex movement practices emerging in response to the opportunities and constraints of digitally supported mobilizations operating alongside traditional protest repertoires. As such, this approach provides an important template for interrogating some of the practices of the case study movements, particularly in relation to aspects of the political opportunity structure of mobilizing in partial democratic contexts. This includes the role of digital communications in threats to movement activists.

2.6.5 Security threats

Early theoretical assumptions about the democratizing effects of digital media tended to overlook how technology could serve powerholders to demobilize social movements and target protesters and activists (Morozov 2012). The debate has since evolved in relation to the practices of liberal democracies and authoritarian states, but has not focused on the specific features of partial democracies. In such contexts, regulation is weak and routinely ignored by the state agents and other powerholders, enabling social activists to be the target of orchestrated digital harassment, threats and smear campaigns.⁹⁷

In recent years, authoritarian states, such as Russia and China, have increasingly developed their digital capacity to filter, limit and shape information circulating domestically online to maintain their social and political control as well as to contribute to foreign policy objectives (King et al. 2013). The Snowden case and others have highlighted how Western democratic governments are also engaged in various forms of covert digital surveillance without clear accountability, often with the discreet co-operations of tech corporations (Poell et al. 2016; Trottier 2016).⁹⁸ The manipulation of information circulated on digital platforms and covert methods used to influence virality either by government, corporations or other powerful actors has also come

movements they analyse remain focused on limited political objectives in Western democracies, rather than more transformative and autonomous movements.

⁹⁷ As opposed to more disorganized or random acts of trolling or uncivil social media activity constituting bully and threatening behaviour common in liberal democracies as elsewhere.

⁹⁸ These companies manage their platforms to advance their commercial interests. They also lobby to preserve a favourable regulatory regime as well as relative discretion to handle user-data and content.

under increasing scrutiny (Cook et al. 2014; Tufekci 2015; Howard et al. 2016). These already form part of the practices of powerful interests in liberal democracies as well as more authoritarian states (Bradshaw & Howard 2017; Faith & Prieto-Martin 2016). There has also been increasing concern at the use of social media by terrorist organizations (Gabriel Weimann 2014), criminals and right wing vigilante gangs (Ekman 2018).

As a result, the complex uses and contradictory implications of digital and social media adopted by different institutional and non-institutional actors is increasingly evident (Gayo-Avello 2016). This includes recognition that the threats posed by powerholder uses of digital media against social activists can result in changes in practice, such as the ways that activists use digital and social media and particular platforms (Tréré 2012). However, these studies have not taken into account the particular features of partial democracies, where threats to life and liberty are more diffuse than in authoritarian regimes and less often carried out, but are nonetheless real. The difficulty for citizens to reliably assess this security climate is also an important factor shaping practices of activists and journalist, modifying levels of connectivity and openness in public sphere deliberations and engagement. This, as the three case studies, show has implications for social movement practice.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined analytical and empirical literature addressing some of the tensions in democratic state formation, particularly the lack of attention paid to collective citizen action oriented toward participation, accountability and social transformation in contexts of partial democracy. This includes exploring the increasingly important but diverse role played by human rights discourse as a globalised system of values and law which straddles the legitimating power of modern sovereign states and grassroots claims-making of ordinary people suffering injustice. The analysis has identified how democratic theory is often reduced to electoral proceduralism and market theory, marginalizing the role of non-institutional struggles for more profound democratic governance, whether through the development of

deliberative consensus or political contention of plural actors in the public sphere. It also illustrates how human rights discourse has often been considered primarily as a system of cosmopolitan values 'socialised' to developing countries by international human rights networks. This points to a lack of attention paid to how human rights discourse is understood and mobilized in rooted national contexts struggling for social change, enabling but also constraining the configuration of mobilizations and their demands. My research addresses this aspect of human rights practice.

The second half of the chapter explored different theoretical approaches to understanding collective action. This included consideration of internal resources and external opportunities, the meaningfulness of grievances and mobilizing narratives, emotional connection and reasoned justification, and the role collective plural identity and individual agency as part of the adaptive practices of activists and movements. These form a rich set of tools to analyse complex processes involved in social mobilizations. They are referred to in the course of the research to examine and understand the dynamics of the case study movements.

The last section examined debates in relation to social networks and digital communications in terms of their role in social movements and the pluralization of the news media environment. This contrasted some radical democratising claims with more empirical studies illustrating the complex, but not always emancipatory ways that digital and social media have become embedded in social activism. In particular, I examined claims that digital and social media reduce costs, facilitate sharing of emotions and increase individually connective dimensions of mobilization. These potentially contributed new logics to social movement practice. However, these ideas have not been adequately examined in relation to the particular features of partial democracies, including the implications of digital security threats for activist practice. This research takes up that challenge.

The importance of the different ideas presented in this chapter emerge concretely in the analysis of the context and the three case studies. This results in a fully developed

thematic framework in the discussion chapter. However, to orient this unfolding analysis it is necessary to signpost the six thematic categories. These are:

1. Understanding the socio-political context as the opportunity structure of partial democracy. In particular this relates to how violations of grave human rights form the basis for structured grievances and also the communicative possibilities of a rapidly changing media environment.
2. The role of symbolic 'trigger events' as the pivot moment when fragmented social grievances are transformed into collective emotional and reasoned responses to a crisis which the event makes manifest.
3. The orienting resource of skilled networked actors connecting and reconfiguring to shape collective action through their adaptive practice.
4. The meaning and emotional resonance of mobilizing narrative frames for the identity and significance of the movement.
5. The role of personal and collective agency in an enduring mobilization process.
6. The dynamics of articulating plural actors to sustain the cohesive unity of purpose of a movement against entrenched powerholders.

But before exploring these categories in relation to the uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media in each case study, it is necessary to analyse features of the socio-political context out of which the movements emerged.

Chapter 3

Socio-political context

3.1 Introduction

A key dimension of the research project is to analyse the practices and meanings of the movements as rooted mobilizations oriented toward their particular social and political context. This requires close examination of the political, social and media opportunity structures (Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 2003; Cammaerts 2012) out of which the movements emerged. These played an important part in the interpretative understanding of participants, helping to motivate their involvement and influencing their practice.

This chapter discusses Mexico's political development in the 20th century leading to its long democratic transition. It addresses the central role of the PRI and its relation to increasingly assertive and diverse forms of popular mobilization and civil society practice demanding democratization and human rights. It also examines key failures of the transition governments after 2000, particularly spiralling criminal violence, corruption and militarization, which resulted in a major human rights crisis. It examines how human rights discourse has featured as part of state legitimation, but also as part of victims' claims-making, NGO activism and democratization. Lastly, it considers the shifting media landscape in which dominant media interests aligned with political and economic elites have been disrupted as the adoption of digital and social media has increased. It considers the wider global influences on these processes, but also the particular features of the media environment in Mexico in relation to forms of digital journalism and activism, including the vulnerability of activists to threats.

3.2 Socio-political context and consolidation of a partial and violent democracy

Mexico is a federal republic made up of the federal government and 32 states. It has more than 124 million inhabitants⁹⁹, at least 6.5% of speak one or more indigenous

⁹⁹ Consejo Nacional de Población, Indicador demográfico de México de 1990 a 2050, *CONAPO* <http://www.conapo.gob.mx/work/models/CONAPO/Mapa_Ind_Dem/index_2.html#> [12 March 2018]

languages.¹⁰⁰ Over the last 30 years, GDP grew annually by approximately 2.58%¹⁰¹, keeping only slightly ahead of population growth, and primarily advantaging wealthier elites (Esquivel Hernández 2015).¹⁰² In 2015, more than 55 million people continued to live in poverty or extreme poverty.¹⁰³ Criminal violence, which was on a downward trajectory during the 1990s and early 2000s, dramatically rose after 2007. In 2015 and 2016 the murder rate was 17 and 20 per 100,000 inhabitants respectively (compared to the UK which was 1 per 100,000).¹⁰⁴ Only 7% of crime was reported and 95% of recorded crime did not lead to a conviction, as a result the level of impunity for all crime was over 99%.¹⁰⁵ In 2016, Mexico was rated 123rd most corrupt country out of 176.¹⁰⁶

As these indicators suggest, despite the transition to competitive electoral democracy since 2000, Mexico has failed to develop accountable and responsive institutions capable of fostering broad-based prosperity, safety and social justice for the growing population. Nevertheless, the political and economic system, which has adhered to neoliberal orthodoxy for the last 35 years, has remained relatively stable. The democratic transition, which ended more than 70 years of PRI dominance, has ultimately been stunted by political parties and economic elites determined to preserve their power (Espinoza Valle et al. 2012). The political system, including the

¹⁰⁰ Consejo Nacional de Población, Población Indígena 2015, *CONAPO* < <https://www.gob.mx/conapo/documentos/infografia-de-la-poblacion-indigena-2015>> [12 March 2018]

¹⁰¹ United Nations Data, Country Profiles 1985-2015, < <http://data.un.org/default.aspx> > [12 March 2018].

¹⁰² According to the Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality, economic inequality marginally declined during this period, but remained the highest of all OECD countries. Source: Inequality in Mexico, World Economic Association, < <https://www.worldeconomicsassociation.org/newsletterarticles/inequality-in-mexico/>> [13 March 2018].

¹⁰³ CONEVAL informa los resultados de la medición de Pobreza 2014, Consejo Nacional de la Política de Desarrollo Social, < https://www.coneval.org.mx/Medicion/MP/Paginas/Pobreza_2014.aspx> [13 March 2018].

¹⁰⁴ Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía (INEGI), Datos preliminares revelan que en 2016 se registraron 23 mil 953 homicidios, < http://www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/boletines/2017/homicidios/homicidios2017_07.pdf> [13 March 2018].

¹⁰⁵ Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, Índice Global de impunidad México igi-MEX 2016, < <http://www.udlap.mx/igimex/>> [13 March 2018].

¹⁰⁶ Transparency International, Corruption Perception 2016 < http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016> [13 March 2018].

PAN the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD)¹⁰⁷, and more recently the *Movimiento Regeneración Nacional* (MORENA)¹⁰⁸ have frequently relied on traditional practices of corruption, clientalism and coercion at federal, state and municipal level to further their interests (Bartra 2013). After 2000, there was no substantial transitional justice process to hold to account those responsible for gross human rights violations or corruption. This entrenched a culture of abuse and violence in which formal and informal powerholders have operated with almost complete impunity.¹⁰⁹ As corruption, violence and impunity have grown so have doubts about whether these are temporary phenomena in the process of democratic consolidation, or are, in fact, structural features of Mexico's particular configuration of neoliberalism and electoral democracy (Goldstein & Arias 2010).¹¹⁰

As with many countries, distrust of and alienation from party politics is a feature of Mexico's democracy, but not generally to the extent of widespread demands for major political change. Opinion polls have reflected a fluctuating but relatively constant dissatisfaction with actual democracy since 2000. More than 75% of respondents generally expressed dissatisfaction compared to 20% satisfaction, with slightly increasing dissatisfaction in recent years (Latinobarómetro 2016). Yet, those regarding democracy as preferable to alternatives have also remained relatively constant, just short of 50%, with a regular 30% considering the nature of the political system irrelevant to their lives. This mixed picture indicated increasing dissatisfaction with existing democracy, particularly the high levels of insecurity and corruption (Olvera 2015), but also grudging passivity toward the political culture, particularly when alternatives appeared worse. So, while before 2018, there was no groundswell of popular opinion against the actual political settlement, there was a significant pool of

¹⁰⁷ Party of the Democratic Revolution

¹⁰⁸ Movement for National Regeneration

¹⁰⁹ As a result, the political, economic, administrative and public security systems have become locked in complex illicit relations with different vested interests at national and local level, including with organized crime networks (Buscaglia 2013).

¹¹⁰ In July 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador and his party, MORENA, won a landslide victory in the elections, promising to sweep away the dominance and corruption of the traditional political parties, to respect human rights and develop a more socially just society. At the time of writing it remains to be seen how far these radical goals will be achieved.

dissatisfaction which can be traced to the many failures of the transition, which the social movements in this research expressed and mobilized.

3.3 PRI corporatism, the neoliberal turn, civil society and partial transition

The enduring success of the PRI owed much to the post-revolutionary coalition of interests which successfully contained violence and promoted national development under the banner of revolutionary nationalism. In practice, this meant entrenching powerful societal groups, such as the military, business sector, state elites, labour organizations, peasant and popular movements within the umbrella of the party and the corporatist State. During the years of economic growth and state-led industrialisation and until the late 60s, PRI governments had resources to negotiate settlements between factional interests. The ruling party maintained its legitimacy through a mixture of economic success, national pride, redistribution and authoritarian coercion. As a result, civil society and social movements enjoyed little independence and those that did were not tolerated for long (Levy & Bruhn 2006). In addition, the state's domination of social organizations, such as trade unions or community associations, enabled the PRI to exert its authority into micro levels of social and economic life. Thus it ensured loyalty by the distribution or denial of resources and favours (Ackerman 2018). This practice of instrumentalising civil society and social movements remains a feature of institutional approaches to social actors – it is also matched by suspicion and distrust felt by independent civil society toward institutional actors.

The first major challenge to PRI domination by a mass independent social movement occurred in 1968, when a student mobilization demanded greater political openness (Aguayo 2015). The government violently repressed the students, resulting in emblematic abuses such as the Tlatelolco square massacre before the Mexico Olympics. In response, small left-wing armed insurgent groups emerged, but these were in turn repressed by PRI governments. This 'dirty war' featured the widespread use of torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention of suspected political and social activists (FEMOSPP 2006). Ironically, while eliminating

domestic left-wing opposition, the PRI maintained its political discourse of revolutionary nationalism, particularly abroad. This increasingly alienating progressive sympathisers and independent social activists.¹¹¹

The credibility of PRI governments also deteriorated as the policy of import substitution developmentalism faltered amidst the debt crisis of the 70s and 80s. The decision of political elites to adopt liberal capitalism in 1980s promoted by the 'Washington consensus' meant a new ideology that opposed state-directed growth and redistribution. This reduced the loyalty of worker and peasant-based movements to the PRI. But the influence of these sectors declined as power definitively shifted to political and economic elites whose connections served to exploit the privatization of state monopolies and commercial regulation to capture large sections of the economy (Esquivel Hernández 2015). As a result, administrations, particularly at subnational level, increasingly relied on violence and corruption to preserve PRI dominance and contain independent social or political mobilizations challenging the new orthodoxies. In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) marked Mexico's symbolic integration into the system of global capitalism. However, it also announced the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas and resistance to the PRI, exposing continuing economic and social inequality, particularly suffered by indigenous communities. This further undermined the PRI's claim to be represent inclusive national development.

In 1977, the PRI allowed the first tentative reforms to the electoral process which would ultimately lead to the PAN victory in 2000. However, this process was not smooth or willingly undertaken, it was the result of waves of social mobilization, gradual international pressure, tactical concessions, rigged elections, splits in the ruling party, cycles of repression and maintenance of the corporatist party machine to sustain

¹¹¹ The ideological contradictions of the PRI nation-building project were evident throughout its history. The 1917 revolutionary Constitution enshrined vanguard civil and social rights, promising a democratic and socially just society. However, there was always a large gap between this vision and the political priorities chosen by the governing party, particularly after the high-water mark of corporatist left-wing radicalism of the Cardenas presidency (1934-1940). However, the PRI managed to contain the ideological debate about the nature of revolutionary nationalism within the broad church of the party, avoiding major splits until the 1980s.

the PRI vote (Bartra 2013).¹¹² Despite the role of opposition political parties, grassroots social and political movements, NGOs, public intellectuals, academics and some parts of the press, the slow political transition is usually characterised according to the O'Donnell's model (O'Donnell et al. 1986) of splits and pacts in the ruling elites, with the role of civil society relegated to the side-lines (Olvera 2010). This approach tends to regard the 2000 election as the culmination of the transition to full democracy (Al Camp 2007). However, this ignores other key indicators of democratic governance, such as effective protection of human rights, media plurality, participation, accountability, social justice and the rule of law.¹¹³

3.4 The failures of the PAN transition governments

The PAN governments between 2000 and 2012 continued the neoliberal economic policies of the latter PRI years, ensuring increasing integration into the global economic system, but also social dislocation and inequality. It failed to introduce major political reforms to tackle the corporatist and clientelist political culture (Bartra 2013). As a result political corruption and cronyism increased, exposing the political system to ever greater influence of organized crime (Hernández 2012; Buscaglia 2013).¹¹⁴ In addition, the PAN continued to rely on the police and the military, ingrained with authoritarian and abusive practices (Davis 2010) and a criminal justice system that ensured impunity for most crimes, particularly those implicating powerholders (Amnesty International 2007b).¹¹⁵

¹¹² The party first lost full control of election processes in 1988. Realising that the official PRI candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, was about to lose against a left-wing coalition candidate, the election results were falsified to preserve PRI hegemony. This moment of democratic betrayal by the PRI, which it has never officially acknowledged, continues to mark attitudes and doubts about election processes and results.

¹¹³ This narrow electoral interpretation of democratic transition also ignored the fact that despite the peaceful transition of the federal executive to the PAN in 2000, the PRI retained control of most state and municipal governments as well as sufficient representation in the federal Congress to block legislation. The PRI was not defeated, but prepared to return to national power without reform or answering for past abuses which it did in 2012.

¹¹⁴ The PAN reduced the authoritarian practices of the federal government, but these continued unchanged in most subnational state governments. It also allowed greater media freedom at national level. Freedom of Information legislation and public access to the national archives for the first time allowed journalists and civil society to gather sensitive state information and facilitated greater scrutiny of federal official actions by civil society.

¹¹⁵ The 2008 judicial reforms to introduce accusatory criminal procedure system modelled on the US and Chile was still not implemented until 2018. It has yet to improve judicial outcomes.

Competitive elections changed the party in power, but institutional routes for citizens and civil society to effectively claim justice and promote wider change remained confined or subject to processes of negotiation, co-optation and privileged access in the mould of PRI governments. The traditions of non-institutional claims-making in the form of contentious social mobilizations continued but were primarily focused on local grievances at subnational level (Stolle-McAllister 2005). The PAN governments did not repress these social movements to the same extent as former PRI administrations, but where repression and grave abuses occurred, such as in San Salvador Atenco in Mexico State and Oaxaca City in 2006, the perpetrators and political authorities responsible were not held to account (Amnesty International 2006, 2007b).¹¹⁶ These new instances of repression and human rights violations committed under the transition governments also called into question the nature of Mexico's political parties and democracy, particularly for social actors demanding greater forms of social transformation.¹¹⁷ However, perhaps the greatest threat to democratic transition and improved protection of human rights was the increasing criminal violence related to drug-trafficking and other forms of organized crime.

3.5 The 'war on drugs', violence and political process

Historically, organized crime had deep links with institutions and political parties, particularly the PRI which had managed different regional criminal groups for mutual benefit (Hernández 2012; Watt et al. 2012).¹¹⁸ However, from the 1990s, drug cartels benefited from trade liberalisation and shifts in cocaine trafficking routes to generate huge profits. These in turn facilitated widespread corruption of politicians, businesses, public security and criminal justice institutions, undermining formal and informal

¹¹⁶ The reliance of the PAN government on PRI support, particularly from increasingly powerful PRI governors, effectively ensured wide leeway for PRI State governors to act against local opposition to maintain party domination and impunity.

¹¹⁷ They also illustrated that social mobilizations remained focused on street power and unruly protest (Khanna et al. 2013), in which violent police and protest practices were the theatre for forms of transactional contention to secure particular concessions or drive through powerholder actions.

¹¹⁸ The notorious rule applied by the PRI to ensure control of the drug trade was called 'plata o plomo', which meant drug-traffickers either agreeing to pay off political masters and submitting to their overall authority or face being killed. Ironically, this has now been reversed to explain the control imposed by the cartels on public officials.

controls. As part of the 'War on Drugs', the US increasingly pressured the Mexican government to use the Armed Forces in counter-cartel operations - despite their consistent record of committing human rights violations (Human Rights Watch 2009).¹¹⁹ The security situation deteriorated under the PAN transition governments as the informal arrangements managed through the PRI hierarchy broke down. This created power vacuums and economic opportunities, which cartels and other criminal networks competed to exploit (Serrano 2017). As violence spread to new regions in dispute, so did other crimes such as kidnapping, extortion and human trafficking. This affected ever greater civilian populations which had traditionally been able to ignore or co-exist with politically managed drug-trafficking activities. Across newly democratized Latin America, crime and insecurity became an explosive political issues, with local politicians often proposing populist hard-line anti-crime measures (Arias et al. 2010b) and sections of civil society mobilizing to demand improved security (Placencia 2016). However, these initiatives usually ignored the underlying institutional weaknesses and corruption that ensured impunity for 99% of crimes and allowed political parties to receive financing from organized crime (Buscaglia 2013).

In 2006, Felipe Calderón became president after a contentious and polarized election. In order to assert his authority, he announced a '*guerra contra el narcotráfico*' (Bartra 2013). He greatly expanded the role of the armed forces, deploying 50,000 troops to reclaim control in regions dominated by criminal gangs. As a result, civilian populations were frequently caught between feuding criminal gangs and security forces, resulting in killings, disappearances and forced displacement.¹²⁰ Pervasive institutional corruption meant civilians could rarely trust the security forces or criminal justice officials; to seek official assistance risked reprisals or, at best, the disinterest of investigating authorities (Amnesty International 2013). Violence, crime and human rights violations spiralled in States such as Michoacán, Guerrero, Chihuahua, Coahuila,

¹¹⁹ The framing of organized crime as an alien threat to the State facilitated the representation of criminal violence as an attack on national security, justifying the intervention of the armed forces. It also conveniently presented organized crime as separate from society, inhuman and, most importantly, unconnected to the institutional and political order.

¹²⁰ In 2016 the Open Society issued a report documenting instances of crimes against humanity by government forces and the Zeta cartel in the preceding years (Open Society Foundation 2016).

Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Veracruz (Amnesty International 2009; Human Rights Watch 2011).

The PAN transition governments had failed to address fundamental democratic deficits, including corruption and insecurity, leaving the political system permeated by vested criminal and economic interests and a growing human rights crisis (Espinoza Valle et al. 2012; Tuckman 2012a; Meyer 2015).¹²¹

3.6 The return of the PRI and gathering indignation

In 2012, the PRI returned to power with President Enrique Peña Nieto, the former governor of the State of Mexico (2005-2011). Peña Nieto promised economic continuity, competence and modernization. The PRI argued, with the support of key media allies, that it was no longer authoritarian and would use its political experience to exercise power efficiently after the fragmentation of authority under the PAN, suggesting this would reduce violence and insecurity (Bartra 2013). However, the candidate was also identified with authoritarian and abusive practices during his governorship in the State of Mexico (Centro Prodh 2011). This included violent police repression in San Salvador Atenco, control over local media and intolerance of independent civil society. As a result, for some people the return of the PRI promised administrative efficiency and possibly less violence. For others, it confirmed the continuing power of political and economic elites to shape the political process in Mexico for their own interests.

The new PRI government negotiated liberal economic reforms and initially achieving a slight reduction in violence.¹²² However, the reforms failed to produce promised economic benefits and the security strategy was primarily focused on discouraging

¹²¹ In 2010, journalist Anibal Hernández (2012) exposed corruption and links between politicians, police and security forces and drug cartels. She argued that Mexico's democratic transition had largely been hijacked by corrupt business and political elites along with security officials operating in alliance with powerful cartels.

¹²² This was received with great international fanfare by Western media and governments. For example, Time's front cover of Peña Nieto above the title, "Saving Mexico" (Crowley 2014).

media attention.¹²³ The decline in violence rapidly went into reverse as organized crime morphed and spread despite the continuing deployment of the military. Killings and disappearances spiralled, dramatically represented by the enforced disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students and multiplying groups of victims demanding justice.¹²⁴ In addition, reports of corruption, authoritarianism and impunity multiplied at every level of government.¹²⁵ By 2015, the credibility of the PRI administration was in tatters, confirming once again the failure of political system to consolidate a deeper rights-protective democracy.

3.7 Human rights crisis and the victims

Despite efforts by PAN and PRI governments to deny and conceal the scale of the crisis of violence and human rights violations since 2006, the evidence is compelling. Between 2007 and 2017, there were more than 199,958 killings¹²⁶, criminal gangs or the police and security forces were suspected of at least 32,000 ongoing disappearances¹²⁷, several hundred thousand people were forcibly displaced¹²⁸ and annually there were thousands of reports of torture and ill-treatment committed by federal and state level police and security forces.¹²⁹ Ninety-six journalists, many

¹²³ Other reforms, such as that to the education sector, faced concerted resistance from trade unions.

¹²⁴ In 2017, the highest murder rate for 20 years was recorded with 29,168 killings (24 per 100,000) (Aristeguinoticias, En 2017, más de 29 mil asesinatos en México; 671 fueron feminicidios < <https://aristeguinoticias.com/2101/mexico/en-2017-mas-de-29-mil-asesinatos-en-mexico-671-fueron-feminicidios/>> [14 March 2018]).

¹²⁵ In November 2014, independent journalist and national radio presenter, Carmen Aristegui published evidence implicating Peña Nieto's family in corrupt financial dealings. Aristeguinoticias, 'La casa blanca de Enrique Peña Nieto (investigación especial)' aristeguinoticias.com < <https://aristeguinoticias.com/0911/mexico/la-casa-blanca-de-enrique-pena-nieto/>> [14 March 2018].

¹²⁶ Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, 'Cifras de homicidio doloso, secuestro, extorsión y robo de vehículos 1997-2016, secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx <http://secretariadoejecutivo.gob.mx/docs/pdfs/cifras%20de%20homicidio%20doloso%20secuestro%20etc/HDSECEXTRV_012016.pdf> [30 May 2018].

¹²⁷ Consulta Publica, 'Registro Nacional de Datos de Personas Extraviadas o Desaparecidas', <<https://rnped.segob.gob.mx>>, [14 March 2018].

¹²⁸ Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos, 'Desplazamiento interno inducido por la violencia, una experiencia global una realidad mexicana', cmdpdh.org, <<http://cmdpdh.org/project/desplazamiento-interno-inducido-por-la-violencia-una-experiencia-global-una-realidad-mexicana/>> [14 March 2018].

¹²⁹ Amnesty International, 'Surviving death: Police and military torture of women in Mexico (AMR 41/4237/2016)', amnesty.org, < <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/4237/2016/en/>> [14 March 2018].

covering issues of corruption and violence, were killed between 2006 and 2017.¹³⁰ While some areas, such as central Mexico City, remained relatively unaffected by the violence, in other areas violence reached levels of an internal armed conflict.¹³¹

As the violence escalated after 2006, relatives of the disappeared or killed frequently faced social stigma due to the assumption that anyone who was targeted by organized crime or the security forces must themselves have been involved in crime. Despite the absence of evidence or investigations to support this belief, it was often encouraged by the authorities and sections of the media (Amnesty International 2013).¹³² Public sympathy for victims, including relatives of the killed or disappeared, was often lacking.¹³³ This had the advantage for the authorities of reducing pressure to investigate disappearances or killings.¹³⁴ As a result, in the early Calderón years, the rising number of relatives of victims of the violence were rendered socially invisible, compounding their isolation and the denial of access to justice.

In fact, Calderón used human rights discourse to validate his militarized public security policy, claiming the state was defending the human rights of citizens being violated by criminals. This instrumental use of human rights discourse for state legitimation purposes, ignored or dismissed allegations of abuses committed by state agents and growing evidence of the systematic collusion of state actors with criminal networks to

¹³⁰ Article 19 , ‘[Periodistas asesinados en México](https://articulo19.org/periodistas-asesinados-mexico/)’, [articulo19.org](https://articulo19.org/periodistas-asesinados-mexico/), <<https://articulo19.org/periodistas-asesinados-mexico/>> 18 March 2018].

¹³¹ The human rights crisis was not restricted to drug-related violence, but also included widespread gender-based killings, discrimination and marginalization of indigenous communities, attacks on human rights defenders, criminalization of social protest, economic investment projects that ran roughshod over local community rights, widespread abuses against irregular migrants and asylum seekers as well as vast social and economic inequalities (Amnesty International, Report 2017/18, [amnesty.org](https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/mexico/report-mexico/) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/mexico/report-mexico/>> [14 March 2018].

¹³² Even if these assumption were proven to be true, it would not entitle the State to deny the rights of the victims and relatives.

¹³³ As a human rights researcher with AI, I interviewed scores of relatives during several visits to regions of Mexico. I documented how they experienced this stigmatization and negative attitude of the State, including threats to deter them from pressing the authorities to locate their loved ones and to establish the truth. This often left families no alternative than to carry out their own investigations at great personal risk.

¹³⁴ Even when evidence showed ‘uninvolved’ civilians had been killed in public security operations they were often treated as “collateral damage” (Ballinas 2010) or military authorities falsely presented them as members of criminal gangs (Campos Garza 2016).

commit and cover-up killings and disappearances. Despite the evidence presented by IGO monitoring bodies (Inter American Commission on Human Rights 2015), the Peña Nieto government also refused to recognise the increasing scale of the human rights crisis affecting the country under his government. This represented the PRI government's growing rejection of the validity of independent human rights indicators (Guzmán Vergara 2017). As such, it was a symptom of the frustration that it could no longer control the media narrative around human rights, the crisis of violence and impunity.

However, it is also important to recognise that features of the human rights crisis also challenged traditional understandings of human rights discourse. These had often been associated with democratic struggles to protect civil and political rights against government repression of dissent. In the new context, the primary perpetrators of killings and disappearances were understood to be non-state actor gangs pursuing their criminal interests - albeit with the collusion in some cases of state actors. Despite this, the situation did not appear to equate with traditional understandings of centralised state power used to implement a policy of political repression against opponents, such as had occurred in the 'dirty war' of the 1970s and 80s.

Even as evidence implicating state actors in many crimes emerged, including military and police involvement, the situation remained complex. The abuses were not politically motivated, and in some cases were committed as part of anti-crime operations against violent gangs. This distanced them from popular and traditional ideas of those deserving human rights protections. This context of criminal violence also challenged the relevance and application of traditionally state centric international human rights law (Anaya Muñoz 2015).¹³⁵ As such, the victims of the violence and their relatives were isolated and stigmatised as were human rights defenders and journalists

¹³⁵ As my field experience with AI demonstrated, it was the painstaking and dangerous work of relatives and human rights NGOs that was necessary to demonstrate the complicity and acquiescence of state actors, regardless of their motives, in many of these supposed non-state actor abuses. As a result, human rights law could be invoked to challenge impunity either in terms of direct state responsibility or in terms of the wider state responsibility to protect citizens and investigate abuses committed by third parties.

who spoke out in support their demands for justice and appealed to human rights standards.¹³⁶ In this context, the violence was not treated or recognised by the government or the mainstream media as a human rights crisis.

3.8 The role of international human rights discourse in the transition process

In the political culture of PRI governments, until the 1980s, international human rights treaties were the exclusive preserve of the Mexican foreign ministry, with little application or meaning domestically (Saltalamacchia et al. 2011). This gradually changed during the long transition as the international community began to pay more attention to domestic human rights contexts, particularly of developing countries, as promoted by IGOs and INGOs. As President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) sought closer economic relations with Mexico's northern neighbours and in response to military repression of the Zapatista uprising in 1994, respect for human rights in Mexico became a significant international concern. This pressure gradually led to more measures to recognise the writ of international human rights standards in domestic law.¹³⁷

In 2000, Fox's transition government took the process of institutionalising human rights norms to the next stage, establishing what Risse (1999; 2013) calls the 'prescriptive status' (p29) of human rights norms. This involved ratifying most international treaties; inviting UN and IACHR human rights experts to visit the country; promising to implement their recommendations; and facilitating the establishment of an office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the country. According to the then Foreign Minister, Mexico's new democracy was to be built not just on competitive elections, but also respect and protection of international human rights norms (Castañeda 2002). However, as my experience researching human rights violations for AI repeatedly demonstrated (Amnesty International 2006, 2007a, 2009, 2010, 2014),

¹³⁶ Relatives or human rights activist denouncing such violations have often been represented by the media and public officials as defending the rights of criminals over and above the rights of victims of criminals. In the context of high criminal violence, this has often encouraged the association of human rights discourse with protecting criminals rather than ensuring fair and just treatment for all.

¹³⁷ This included, for example, the Zedillo government (1994-2000) accepting international human rights monitoring and the jurisdiction of the Inter American Court of Human Rights in 1998.

the transition governments did not move to Risse's fifth and crucial stage, of 'rule-consistent behaviour' (1999 p31; 2013). The rhetorical pledge to comply with human rights norms was not matched by actions across government, particularly at the state and municipal level (Anaya Muñoz 2014).¹³⁸

After 9/11, the change in global geopolitical priorities also reduced external human rights attention on Mexico. Despite this, the UN and transnational and local human rights NGOs campaigned to exert pressure on the Mexican government to comply with commitments (Anaya Muñoz 2009), but these efforts were of limited success, focusing primarily on institutional and legal reform, but not implementation.¹³⁹ In contrast, international financial institutions and foreign governments preferred to view Mexico's democratic transition in model terms, particularly its adherence to neoliberal economic orthodoxies, which facilitated foreign investment and, it was presumed, would necessarily produce liberal democratic consolidation. In this context, external pressure on Mexico primarily focused on US security demands (Serrano 2017) and technical assistance for institution building. Underlying this approach of second governments was the assumption that political repression, excluding supposedly isolated subnational level incidents, was no longer a major factor in Mexico's human rights situation.¹⁴⁰ However, this approach ignored continuing repressive uses of the

¹³⁸ It is important to note that commitments to comply with international human rights law often only reinforced many existing guarantees in the Mexican Constitution, many dating from the Revolution and before. This included, for example, the right not to be tortured, killed or arbitrarily deprived of liberty; and the *amparo* legal recourse to remedy abuses of State power as well as recognition of many social rights. Yet, these vanguard constitutional guarantees were frequently ineffective due to a formalistic and selective application of the law at the service of political and economic elites and corrupt police forces (Amnesty International 2007b).

¹³⁹ Between 2001 and 2014, the author represented Amnesty International in numerous meetings with Mexican government officials at all levels. If officials acknowledged a failure to meet human rights commitments, they invariably denied the absence of political will to push through real change. Instead, they usually argued that the failures of implementation were due to legacy issues of former governments, the complex layers of institutional responsibility in a federal system, lack of resources and training and the weak status of international human rights treaties in relation to the Constitution and domestic law. While these arguments had some merit, the underlying drivers to human rights violations and obstacles to compliance, such as impunity, corruption, inequality and an unaccountable political and business elites and security forces, were rarely acknowledged.

¹⁴⁰ This also illustrates how second government approaches to human rights discourse also reflected this traditional liberal understanding of human rights primarily in terms of political repression. In the absence of political repression, progress on human rights issues was deemed to be a matter of technical solutions not political will.

judicial and public security system, but above all, the absence of significant political will to transform the practices of institutions or hold perpetrators, whether state actors or non-state actors, to account for abuses. In this context, diverse sectors of civil society came to regard the institutionalisation of human rights as merely simulation; serving the purpose of state legitimation to deflect national and international criticism, but lacking substantive enforcement or concern for wider social justice (Human Rights Watch 2006; Estévez López 2008; Centro Prodh 2013).¹⁴¹

Despite this, there were some important measures over this period to improve legal protection of human rights in domestic law.¹⁴² In particular, in 2011, after 20 years of advocacy by human rights activists and international organizations, Constitutional reforms established the legal obligation to comply with international human rights law (Juárez 2011). As a result, victims of human rights violations had an increasing number of potential avenues to pursue legal remedies, even if these remedies were rarely forthcoming.¹⁴³ This changed the political opportunity structure of the judicial field, increasing the potential impact of judicial-oriented human rights activism.

In this context, the various uses of human rights discourse reflected the tensions in consolidating and deepening Mexico's democratic transition. On the one hand, after 2003 governments predominantly used human rights discourse for purposes of state legitimation. This focused on the state-centric paradigm of human right discourse and technical assistance, downplaying or ignoring continuing abuses and impunity. On the other hand, diverse civil society actors continued to push for human rights discourse to have real teeth in domestic legal and administrative practice on a range of social and political issues.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Many NGOs engaged in sustained consultation with the PAN governments in the hope of securing real institutional change in the approach to human rights, but increasingly found these were bureaucratic processes with little impact on institutional policy or practice.

¹⁴² This included ground-breaking legislation to combat violence against women and criminal justice reforms. Unfortunately, like so much of the legislation of the transition years, progressive laws were rarely enforced effectively to change institutional practice

¹⁴³ This remained hypothetical in the vast majority of cases and particularly dependent on the committed support of lawyers conversant with international human rights law.

¹⁴⁴ This shift also reflected the increasing status of many NGOs from the Global South in the international human rights movement demanding that issues of social justice, gender violence, economic inequality

3.9 Plural civil Society, social movements and human rights NGOs¹⁴⁵

Mexico has a long tradition of diverse civil society and plural social movements, with a range of ideological positions and practices.¹⁴⁶ Human rights groups came to occupy an important role in exposing state abuses and promoting human rights discourse, but there are other traditions and practices, more focused on political resistance and expressive values aspiring to radical bottom-up transformation.¹⁴⁷ These approaches to human rights discourse have often struggled to reconcile institutional, emancipatory and legal defence strategies of different NGOs and social actors in the transition process.

In the early 70s and 80s some social activists began adopting human rights discourse in response to domestic political repression and the growing relevance of human rights norms in regional and international relations, promoted by the emerging international human rights movement (Saltalamacchia Ziccardi 2009).¹⁴⁸ Prior to this, repression of

and cultural rights be treated with equal importance to civil and political rights which had been the traditional focus of the international human rights movement. It was during this period that, for example, Amnesty International extended its mandate to work on the full spectrum of human rights. This also reflected the debate within the human rights movement between those advocating traditional liberal conceptions of limited “defensive” rights, focused on political liberty, versus more progressive visions of human rights addressing complex social, economic and cultural conditions preventing individuals and communities being able to enjoy a dignified life.

¹⁴⁵ In Mexico, there is often a distinction made between ‘organized’ civil society and ‘unorganized’ civil society. However, I have chosen not to use this distinction as it tends to be rather arbitrarily assigned and reflect a certain hierarchical self-asserted legitimacy by parts of civil society with more organizational structure and resources.

¹⁴⁶ This includes independent NGOs, associations, neighbourhood committees, local grassroots movements, social movements, feminist networks, independent social activist collectives, faith-based groups, identity-focused groups, alternative media platforms as well as some trade unions and think-tank advocacy organizations. They represent a host of interests and political ideologies (Olvera 2003). There are also ‘unruly’ groups (Khanna et al. 2013), such as less formally organized collectives of anarchists and other radical political groupings engaged in direct, not necessarily ‘civic’, action. These different actors represent the hybrid nature of civil society and also how it shades into various forms of institutional and non-institutional political practice (Edwards 2011). There are also thousands of clientelist organizations delivering services and social programmes on behalf of the neoliberal state and political parties, but these are not the focus of this research.

¹⁴⁷ As Olvera (2003) points out, there is also a long tradition of right-wing catholic civil society associations and in recent years economic elites have also increasingly financed new more technocratic associations focused of advocacy around government policy and administrative efficiency, including issues of corruption, transparency and public security.

¹⁴⁸ The civil wars in Central America and the abuses committed by the US-backed regimes and the Contras were increasingly framed in terms of human rights violations and social demands of the poor

internal opposition was challenged in terms of PRI authoritarianism, betrayal of revolutionary nationalism and commitment to ideological political struggles of the Left. These new groups began to formulate claims in terms of universal human rights, particularly respect for civil and political rights of those suffering persecution, but also increasingly in terms of wider democratic reform (Olvera et al. 2003).¹⁴⁹

In the same period, as the economic crisis took hold, small rural and urban popular movements emerged to demand access to housing and services which the state was no longer delivering. These organizations did not adopt human rights discourse, but frames of popular class struggle (Munck 2013). They often faced selective repression and/or co-optation. In 1985, the Mexico City earthquake resulted in a host of community groups and popular associations forming to demand housing and other social rights (Alvarez et al. 1992). This experience of autonomous self-organizing social mobilization was crucial for developing ideas of grassroots participatory democracy as well as independent civil society demanding social as well as political rights (Camp 2007).¹⁵⁰

In 1994, the Zapatista rebellion drew on Mexico's revolutionary traditions, but also advocated horizontal and plural engagement with civil society to develop new forms of political organization and contestation to challenge the prevailing order without advocating armed revolution to seize power.¹⁵¹ The protection of human rights had initially featured as a means of attracting international support to prevent the

and the excluded. This was often inspired by the work of activist priests committed to liberation theology.

¹⁴⁹ Estévez López (2008) argues that the initial adoption of human rights discourse reflected liberation theology and a focus on the social rights of the poor, not just political and civil rights.

¹⁵⁰ Olvera (2003) identifies the emergence of three types of independent civil society organizations during this period: a) loose open associations promoting democratic processes such as Alianza Cívica, b) closed professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) narrowly focused on a human rights agenda, c) popular resistance movements often emerging from localised demands for services.

¹⁵¹ This echoed the reworking of Marxism by such thinkers as Ernesto Laclau, who also visited the Zapatista communities. The Zapatistas maintained an ambiguous relation to the armed struggle, using images of armed rebellion and assertion of indigenous self-determination to attract support, but also aware that its use of arms during the uprising was largely symbolic to gain world attention and not viable as a sustained option to challenge the state.

repression of indigenous communities involved in the uprising (Bob 2005).¹⁵² However, as negotiations with the government ended in disillusionment¹⁵³, the Zapatists increasingly focused on autonomy and self-organization as an alternative form of praxis rather than engaging with the state in pursuit of reform (Dinerstein 2014). This process also entailed reframing human rights discourse, rooting it in the practice and culture of the communities involved as the basis of self-asserting legitimacy rather than appealing to the machinery of international human rights law or NGOs to legitimise their claims (Speed 2007). This contributed to the self-exclusion of the Zapatistas from mainstream political currents in Mexico. Despite this, their long-term autonomous and non-violent resistance to political parties and state power (Baker 2002), based in part on emancipatory rather than institutionalised conceptions of human rights, inspired progressive social activists and academics in Mexico as well as globally.

In the late 80s and early 90s, Mexico's integration into the world economy also supported greater space for more professional civil society organizations, including human rights NGOs.¹⁵⁴ International funding agencies supported the boom in human rights NGOs, enabling key NGOs, such as Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez and Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, to develop their institutional and political status promoting human rights discourse in the agenda of democratization (Aguayo et al. 1997). However, the adoption of this internationally legitimised, apparently non-political and technocratic discourse also distanced some NGOs from more grassroots social mobilizations.¹⁵⁵ The latter were often focused on

¹⁵² In Mexico, the rebellion received support from progressive political and civil society activists, independent associations, NGOs and local popular movements. This resulted in massive public demonstrations to stop the military counter-offensive – some of the largest protests in Mexico since 1968.

¹⁵³ The *Acuerdos de San Andrés* signed with the Zedillo government to strengthen the rights of indigenous communities were never fulfilled according to the Zapatistas.

¹⁵⁴ The retreat of the state from social programmes as part of neoliberal reforms also fuelled expansion of 'third sector' civil society organizations to provide services. However, these organizations were often clientelist, receiving and disbursing resources in line with the political interests of the financing state institutions and political parties. As such, despite numerically outnumbering independent NGOs, they rarely engaged with concerted or contentious human rights advocacy.

¹⁵⁵ Estévez López (2008) argues that this professionalization of human rights activism in the 1990s resulted in the fragmentation of the human rights agenda as social justice causes were sidelined in favour of a more limited civil and political rights demands aligned with Western funders pursuing a narrow liberal democratization agenda (López Pacheco 2015a).

more overt political resistance to neoliberal reforms in order to improve access to services, challenge local powerholders and address social injustices. Social mobilization processes tended to look more to Mexico's revolutionary traditions and experiences of resistance as exemplified by the Zapatistas. As a result, effective cooperation with more technical and institutionally oriented human rights NGOs was weak (López Pacheco et al. 2015).¹⁵⁶ NGOs were seen as more focused on national or transnational institutional processes which treated human rights as an impartial, non-political discourse of international law, rather than the language of local political struggle.¹⁵⁷

After 2000 this tendency increased as many human rights NGOs, particularly in central Mexico, engaged in protracted consultation with the Federal and Federal District transition governments to integrate human rights law into the public administration in the new democratic setting (López Pacheco 2015a).¹⁵⁸ Estévez López (2015) argues this was a process of the state capturing human rights NGOs, distracting them from the task of defending the rights of communities under attack in the neoliberal democratic settlement. This delegitimised human rights as a discourse of grassroots struggle (Arias Marín et al. 2015). However, scholars have also argued this was a more complex process, involving specialization and pluralization of NGOs to take advantage of the new opportunity structure and the diversity of human rights contexts and resources in subnational settings (López Pacheco 2015a) as well as an increasing societal

¹⁵⁶ The recognition that these divides of ideology, practice and culture have often limited the articulation of grassroots social and political mobilizations, social activist collectives and the professional human rights NGOs is reflected in the emergence of organizations like Services and Advice for Peace (Servicios y Asesoría para Paz, SERAPAZ) and National Centre for Social Communication (Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social, CENCOS). These NGOs focus on bridging these divides by supporting communication and articulation between different social actors, particularly grassroots social movements not necessarily conversant with human rights discourse.

¹⁵⁷ As a representative of an INGO, I was aware of this tension between the requirements of impartial evaluation of particular social contexts in relation to international human rights standards and the particular political dynamics shaping local struggles. The impartial application of international human rights standards was key to building credibility to engage external actors, but it also tended to marginalize the position of structural political drivers leading to violations and their role in fomenting the determination of victims and communities to demand justice.

¹⁵⁸ In addition, Mexico's apparent democratic consolidation and the post 9/11 world had the effect of redirecting international resources and attention away from Mexico's national and local human rights NGOs, leaving many too weakened to develop a strong national public agenda on human rights (Anaya Muñoz 2009) and ill-equipped to deal with the challenge of sustained negotiation with institutions.

recognition of the importance of local human rights NGOs (Ron et al. 2014).¹⁵⁹ This was a process of modernization of civil society, responding to changing social, institutional and political context of the transition, leading to an increasingly heterogenous ecology of civil society actors adopting human rights discourse in different ways (Lavalle et al. 2011). As a result, this hybrid context differed from the traditional IR conception international human rights law 'socialised' to peripheral states as much as from the ideas of radical grassroots activism self-asserting human rights claims referred to in the chapter two (Section 2.3.2).

In fact, after 2006 it was subnational NGOs, close to communities affected by violence and other human rights violations, and distant from the institutional relationships of Mexico City, which began to provide consistent accompaniment to victims (López Pacheco 2015b) and publicly denounce the a growing human rights crisis.¹⁶⁰ In the new context of spiralling criminal violence and militarization, relatives of victims were not political activists with network connections to political and social movements as had been the case in the 1970s and 80s. As a result, the processes of understanding the context of violence in each region and for relatives to recognise themselves as victims with the right to demand action from the authorities was complex (and frequently dangerous). This often required creative responses of small human rights NGOs to develop new networks and skills to apply human rights discourse to their context.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ It is also important to note that the range of civil society organizations widened considerably during the transition years as crime and violence deteriorated. These include organizations such as Stop Kidnapping (*Alto al Secuestro*) which received funding from the business sector and were close to the government. These organizations usually advocated tougher public security approaches on crime, dismissing human rights concerns. The government and its allies in the media frequently adopted the anti-crime organizations as the primary representatives of civil society, seeking to marginalize more inconvenient independent human rights NGOs. This also happened during negotiations with the MPJD.

¹⁶⁰ As part of my work with AI over this period, I personally experienced how local human rights activists worked with victims and communities in states such as Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Baja California, Guerrero, Morelos and Veracruz. Among these subnational NGOs were *Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos Fray Juan Larios* and *Fuerzas Unidas de Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila (FUNDEC)* in Coahuila state and *Ciudadanos en Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos (CADHAC)* in Nuevo León state (Ciudadanos en Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos A. C 2010; Fuerzas Unidas por Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila (FUUNDEC) 2010).

¹⁶¹ I relate my own experiences of witnessing victims of violence coming together in Chihuahua in 2010 with the support of local human rights NGOs to recount, often for the first time, the disappearance or killing of their loved ones as part of a wider processes of recognition, organization and debate about human rights amidst the spiralling violence between 2007 and 2010 (Knox 2017).

The increasing number of victims coming forward also outstripped the capacity of human rights NGOs to accompany cases, which in turn also created tensions between and within NGOs and groups of victims.¹⁶² Despite this, the process of subnational NGOs working with the victims refocused contentious repertoires on mobilization to challenge injustice and the role of the state (López Pacheco 2017). This also contributed to re-legitimizing human rights discourse in grassroots claims-making, reclaiming it from seemingly co-opted technical institutional negotiation which NGOs engaged in during the early transition years (Arias Marín et al. 2015). Nevertheless, as the case studies indicate, tensions continue between plural civil society actors about how human rights discourse is understood and used in Mexico's partial democracy to communicate and challenge injustice and pursue social change agendas.

I now turn to the changing communications environment in Mexico and the adoption of digital and social media. In particular, I examine how these new technologies have become embedded in social relations, including in diverse forms of critical social activism (Flores-Márquez 2017) and disrupting the wider media landscape.

3.10 Media and new media environment

A longstanding feature of Mexico's media environment has been the dominance of certain mainstream media outlets closely linked to the political establishment, ensuring favourable coverage of elite agendas and limiting public access to alternative critical narratives. The emergence of independent internet-based and social media information portals, as well as increased networked connectivity of citizens and activists, has altered patterns of access, production, diversity and circulation of information, creating new opportunities but also risks.

The media environment is dominated by a duopoly of private TV corporations, *Televisa* and *TV Azteca* (Open Society 2010) in what Brambila calls a 'hyper-commercialization

¹⁶² This remains a central dilemma of human rights NGOs focusing on strategic litigation or comprehensive accompaniment of victims, where a range of factors, including limited resources and institutional priorities, usually result in the selection of particular cases for litigation and advocacy. This leaves other cases with less or without accompaniment, creating tension in NGOs and among victims.

offering of news' (Brambila 2017, p400). Between 1995 and 2010, *Televisa* and TV Azteca captured at least 96.5% of national television audience (Huerta-Wong, 2013). In 2012, 93% of homes in Mexico had a television, with 76% of the population primarily obtaining their information on politics from TV news programmes (SEGOB 2012). In contrast, 9% of the population used radio and only 5% the press as their primary information source on politics. *Televisa* news coverage in particular dominated how political, social and economic issues were framed for the majority of the population, limiting plurality, impartiality and quality of information (Trejo Delarbre 2011b). These media corporations played an important part in sustaining the limited nature of Mexico's democratic transition and creating a distorted narrative around the violence of the 'war' on drugs (Escalante Gonzalbo 2012).

In election periods, coverage has been strongly aligned with favoured candidates (Tuckman 2012a; Escalante 2013). Both corporations owe their foundation, growth and continued market domination to political elites who have benefited from positive media coverage. The PRI presidents initially controlled this relationship. However, gradual democratization and fragmentation of power centres, as well as the growing dominance of TV to shape subnational and national political agendas, enabled *Televisa* and *TV Azteca* to manage transactional relationships with different political parties. This ensured a weak regulatory environment and continued revenues from government advertising at federal and state level as well as power to promote political candidates favourable to their interests (Trejo Delarbre 2014). In the 2012 presidential elections, when both channels promoted the Peña Nieto candidacy, this raised increasing public concern about media diversity and the capacity of political, economic and media elites to subvert the democratic process (Tuckman 2012b).¹⁶³

During the years of PRI hegemony, the press, radio and TV were controlled, with a few rare exceptions, by the use of economic favours, monopoly of newsprint paper, discretionary government advertising, preferential treatment, bribes and, when

¹⁶³ The 2013 Telecommunications law reforms potentially weakened the stranglehold of these dominant media companies by allowing increased competition and strengthened regulation (Esteinou Madrid 2013). However, secondary legislation weakened this regulatory framework.

necessary, violent coercion (Rodríguez Munguía 2007). Some independent newspapers were allowed to operate in later years, such as *La Jornada* and *El Proceso*, but their readership remained small compared to the dominant reach of radio, then TV. During the transition years, government publicity budgets continued to operate as levers of influence, but there was also increased competition and less direct state intervention, leading some academics to conclude that quality of journalism and plurality of media coverage improved (Lawson, 2002). However, media ownership remained relatively concentrated and aligned with local elites, particularly at state level.

A number of critical independent investigative journalists, amongst them Carmen Aristegui and Anabel Hernández, emerged during the transition years.¹⁶⁴ However, the constant attacks on reporters posed a serious threat to freedom of expression and access to information. This was particularly the case at subnational level in high crime areas. In some states, such as Tamaulipas, the chilling effect of attacks on journalists and outlets meant news reporting on contentious issues disappeared.¹⁶⁵ Research also pointed to a mixed picture in terms of quality and plurality of media reporting (Reyna García 2016) and the continued dominance of unchallenged official narratives and deficient journalism in many media outlets, particularly in television (Martínez Garza et al. 2015).¹⁶⁶

In contrast to the dominant role of private TV networks, which enjoy national reach, there are no truly national newspapers. There are important titles, such as *El Universal*, *Milenio*, *La Jornada* and *Reforma*. These claim the status of national newspapers but frequently have limited circulation beyond major urban centres. Outside Mexico City,

¹⁶⁴ There are also journalist-led initiatives to improve professionalism, such as *Periodistas a Pie*, a journalists' collective to train and share experiences for independent investigative reporting founded in 2007

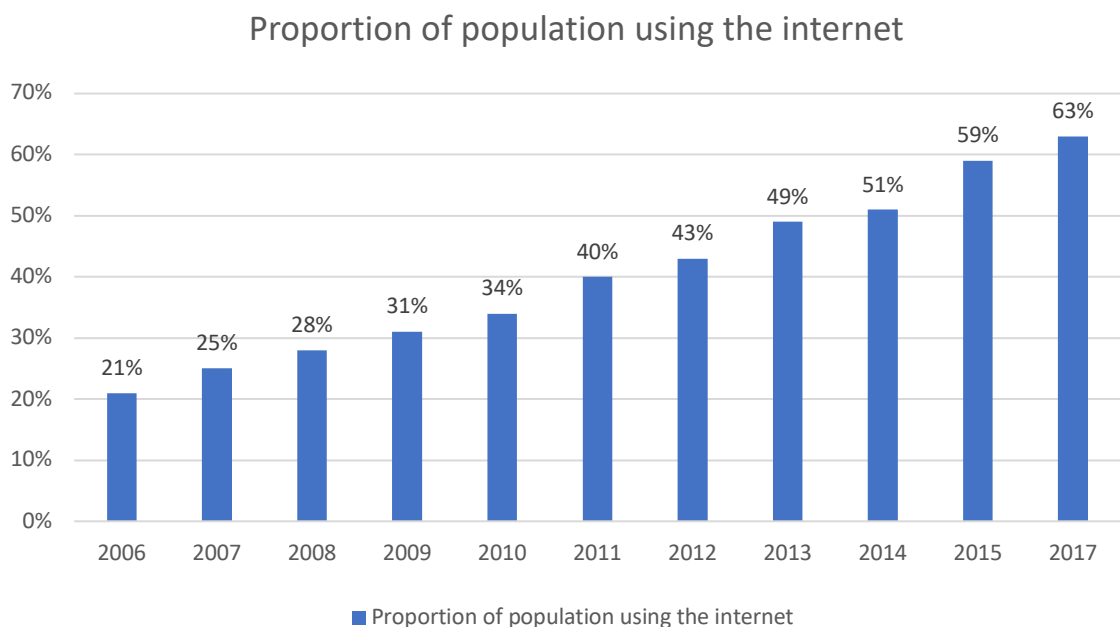
¹⁶⁵ In 2018 the World Press Freedom Index placed Mexico at 147 out of 180 countries. World Press Freedom Index, 2018, Reporters without Borders, available at: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>.

¹⁶⁶ This can be explained by the continued financial dependence of many media outlets on state or federal governments. When Peña Nieto became president, he adopted the practices he had employed during his tenure as governor of the State of Mexico, which - like many state governors - meant ensuring media solvency and thus loyalty through the use of government publicity contracts. For example, in the first two years of Peña Nieto's presidency (2013 and 2014), federal expenditure on publicity was over 14,000 billion MXN (US\$1 billion) (Fundar & Art 19 2015; 64).

regional papers enjoy far wider readership and influence.¹⁶⁷ Many states are home to various local media outlets, which are frequently paid for by state governments' publicity contracts. Thus, while there is often an impression of multiple news sources, there is frequently a lack of diversity of voices, particularly as independent-minded journalists and editors have faced threats and attacks (Brambila 2017).

Above all, the domination of television as the primary source of news information for the majority of the population, guaranteed the political and economic power of the private TV networks, particularly *Televisa*. This ensured political contention was largely framed according to its commercial and political interests. Such a bias in shaping the political agenda led progressive social activists to identify *Televisa's* dominance of the media landscape as an obstacle to Mexico's democratic development. However, the rapid and increasing adoption of digitally networked communications gradually disrupted features of this dominance.

3.11 Internet access, social media and information plurality



¹⁶⁷ For example, the network of 70 regional papers of the *Organización Editorial Mexicana* (OEM), closely linked to the PRI since its foundation in the 1970s, is the most widely sold in Mexico. It also controls 20 radio stations and a TV channel.

Use of Internet and social media platforms has grown steadily in Mexico. In 2010, 40.6 million people were accessing the internet, 34% of the population, this had risen to 70 million, 63% of the population by 2017 (Asociación de internet.mx 2018). Female and male users were equally represented, but young people under 35 years-old were the majority. In 2010, 60% of users connected to social media platforms, by 2015 this had risen to over 90%. In 2011 there were 27 million Facebook members and 4 million Twitter users. In 2016, this had grown to 63 million and 9.6 million respectively. Facebook was the most popular social media site, but Whatsapp was more regularly accessed via Smartphones. By 2016 smartphones accounted for 77% of the means of accessing the internet. As with many other countries, Internet access was concentrated amongst the educated middle class and in urban areas, reflecting economic and social inequalities. However, the digital divide was changing as, despite relatively high costs of access, users were increasingly represented in less socio-economically advantaged sections of society.¹⁶⁸ The increasing use of social media as a source of news information was also represented by 9 out of 10 Internet users showing interest in following the 2018 election process by accessing social media (Asociación de internet.mx 2018).

The dominant TV networks and other mainstream information and entertainment providers were slow to respond to increasing choice available through digital platforms and the threat to their business model.¹⁶⁹ TV and radio networks as well as newsprint media have attempted to reclaim market share via their own web platforms, but international sites like CNN and new digital native news information sites have also grown rapidly. In Mexico, these include, *SDPNoticias*, *SinEmbargo*, *Animal Politico*, *Aristeguinoticias* or youth-oriented sites such as *Sopitas*.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Access to the internet remained just below other comparable countries in the region, such as Brazil, Colombia and Argentina (Miniwatts Marketing Group 2018).

¹⁶⁹ The resulting shift in advertising revenues to the online environment also made some companies even more susceptible to government influence through the de facto subsidy of government advertising.

¹⁷⁰ Despite these changes in the communications environment, the federal government continued to limit the summary of the official daily news items circulated to public officials and civil servants to sources in the traditional mainstream media, apparently keen to restrict the influence of media to those over which it had greatest leverage (interview with journalist in March 2016).

A range of other new independent online news and opinion platforms, known as alternative or *medios libres* (free media), emerged in recent years providing more radical views and socially committed reporting. These included platforms such as *Desinformémonos*, *Subversiones*, *Horizontal* as well as online TV platforms, such as *RompevientoTV*, offering more overtly left-wing information and comment. They made a virtue out of the social causes they promoted, arguing these were not adequately represented in the mainstream offline or online media (Rovira Sancho 2013).¹⁷¹ These platforms encouraged interaction and dialogue with their audiences. This had the advantage of developing a community inside Mexico and beyond, but also risked reaching only those members of the public who already subscribed to the political outlook of the platform, the ‘echo chamber’ or ‘bias confirmation’ effect. Many of these new platforms were either only beginning to take shape in 2011 or emerged as part of the evolving digital environment. They reflected the determination to exploit new media opportunities to provide alternative news information at low cost to an audience increasingly aware that it no longer had to settle for the limited narrative provided by much of the mainstream media (Downing 2001). These alternative media platforms also provided an opportunity for social activists to challenge some of the dubious journalistic practices of mainstream media. These included prejudiced framing of social movements in line with government interests and failure to cover the experience of victims and other marginalized communities whose rights were denied.

The increasingly globalized nature of digital information also meant that international news networks began to play an increasingly important role in national media stories. For example, when reporting on Mexican issues, if the New York Times or BBC referenced independent information circulated on social media, this could force national media to follow suit. This facilitated an increasingly hybrid news environment where information moved rapidly between media platforms (Chadwick 2013). In effect, international media attention could rapidly push a contentious issue ignored by national media onto the news agenda. As a result, while the private TV networks

¹⁷¹ On the basis of interviews with journalists conducted in March 2016.

maintained their dominant role in framing national political debate (Brambila 2017), digitally networked communications began to significantly widen the potential to disrupt and challenge this influence.

3.12 Digitally networked activism

By 2010, networked digital communication increasingly featured in the repertoire of practices of autonomous social mobilizations. Since the Zapatistas, email and the internet had been widely used by political and social activists to disseminate and share information throughout support networks and coordinate actions (Rovira Sancho 2007). However, the interactive and autonomous creative potential of social media networking, whose potential Castells and others (1997; Hardt et al. 2005) had pointed to, remained incipient. This began to change in 2009 as internet access and social media adoption accelerated.¹⁷²

The changing global political opportunity structure also influenced local activists. In early 2011, the Arab Spring and Western media claims that social media was the decisive factor enabling protests, provided an inspiration to diverse social movements. Later in 2011, 15-M and Occupy began their protests, using social media as both expressive performance and enabling tool to bring people onto the streets (Gerbaudo 2012). This inspired a range of political and digitally oriented activists in Mexico, some of whom forged links with activists in Spain and the US, seeking to learn from and replicate their experiences. One dimension of this influence was the potential to develop identity and participation in street protests against neoliberalism, the second,

¹⁷² For example, in 2009 a wide range of citizens participated online in the '*voto nulo*' campaign to promote the spoiling of votes as a protest in the mid-term elections. Also, ContingenteMX appeared on Twitter, a loose collective promoting digital activism on social and political rights issues. Some NGOs began to develop social media capacity from training videos disseminated by international NGOs promoting online activism (Harlow 2013). Other activists also point to the 2009 swine flu outbreak in Mexico leading to rapid take up of Twitter as a means of obtaining "live" information on the situation due to the dearth of reliable official communication (interview with digital activist in March 2016). The deteriorating security environment in high violence regions and the absence of information on threats also encouraged citizens to adopt social media to share news on local dangers. In 2010, social media became an important platform to support the campaign for justice of the families of the 49 children killed in 2009 in the ABC nursery fire in Hermosillo, Sonora state. These experiences often linked networks of activists, who shared their know-how, increasing awareness of the potential of digital activism and reducing the technical skills deficit.

focused on the apparently spontaneous and expressive cultural revolt through the use of social media, energizing plural networks of resistance-oriented activists. These experiences encouraged a small but growing number of social activists in Mexico to adopt social media practices to further their causes and make links across different forms of social activism. Professional human rights NGOs were also gradually incorporating social media practices into their information dissemination and campaigning (Harlow 2013), but these remained largely advocacy tools rather than oriented to networked contentious social mobilization.

Despite these changes, Internet access and social media adoption in 2011 remained relatively narrow and unaligned with traditions of grassroots political mobilization practices by socially marginalized communities. Many traditional social activists promoting forms of contentious grassroots mobilization believed the digital divide excluded and disempowered communities already disadvantaged by the currents of neoliberal globalization.¹⁷³ At the same time, growing numbers of younger activists used digital and social media in their daily lives, networks and political activities. As a result, they experienced how this could contribute to rather than replace offline collective action (Harlow 2014). In this rapidly evolving context, digital and social media increasingly featured in the communications practices of diverse activists (Treré 2011, 2012; Treré et al. 2013), but tensions remained about its relative role in progressive activism in Mexico.

The potential of digital and social media was also apparent to institutional actors. This not only included for purposes of political party activism, but also as a means to undermine and attack opponents (Meneses 2013).

3.13 Digital threats

The threats to activism on digital networks and social media have become increasingly evident in Mexico, particularly the openness of platforms to manipulation by well-

¹⁷³ Interview social movement activist March 2016

resourced powerholders to delegitimize and harass journalists, political opponents and social activists (Treré 2016; O’Carroll et al. 2017).¹⁷⁴

Several important cases have been documented of digital surveillance and politically sponsored digital smear campaigns.¹⁷⁵ This has gradually increased the awareness of activists to some of the potential risks of using digital communications as part of their practices as these tools can be used against them by powerholders (Morozov 2012).

¹⁷⁴ Several digital activists have been subject to sustained digital death threat campaigns on multiple platforms suggesting a measure of organization and coordination behind the threats. The authorities have failed to conduct full investigations, leaving activists in fear of their lives. These cases have a chilling effect on other activists seeking to exercise their right to freedom of expression and participate in collective action (Fernando García et al. 2016). On occasions social media users and citizen journalists posting information on organized crime and insecurity have been detained by the authorities (Martinez 2011; Zires 2014) and killed by organized crime (Proceso 2014).

¹⁷⁵ These include: a) In 2016, Bloomberg Businessweek published a detailed investigation into the activities of professional hacker, Andrés Sepúlveda, who allegedly played a key off-book role in the 2012 election campaign of Peña Nieto (Robertson et al. 2016). The report provided evidence that Sepúlveda had been given wide latitude to carry out an online “dirty tricks” strategy. This included providing false information about opponents, using automated software attacks (BOTS) on opponents’ web profiles as well as espionage. The Peña Nieto government denied the allegations. From the start of Peña Nieto’s election campaign in 2011, young largely anonymous online PRI supporters, known as Ectivistas, were mobilized to support their candidate and drown out critical voices with concerted trolling. The media also reported that these actions included the use of BOTS to manufacture the appearance of massive online support for twitter hashtags favoring the PRI candidate (Montalvo 2012).

b) On 18 June 2012, when the YoSoy132 was most active, one of the organizers, Manuel Cossío, leaked footage to the media showing a movement spokesperson, Saúl Alvérez, recognizing his links to the campaign of the presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The information was used to discredit the movement by appearing to show that, as the PRI had alleged, the movement was aligned to the campaign of the left-wing candidate. However, in 2013 media investigations showed that Manuel Cossío had in fact been acting for the intelligence services, Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional (CISEN), as part of sting operation against YoSoy132, which included harvesting names and email addresses of sympathizers from a movement database (Villamil 2013).

c) In 2015, the media revealed that Mexican government agencies had been the largest client of Hacking Team, an Italian company supplying cyber-surveillance technology to governments around the world. The company was paid more than US\$ 6 million, which included contracts with the civilian intelligence agency (CISEN) (Fernando García et al. 2016). These agencies had targeted social activists in the past (Fundar Centro de Análisis e Investigación 2014). In 2017, an investigation, including independent international technology experts, demonstrated that spyware, Pegasus, developed by an Israeli tech-company solely for States to carry out digital surveillance, was sold to the PGR, CISEN and the Ministry of Defence. Despite its use being contractually limited to national security purposes, the investigation demonstrated that it had been used to target journalists, opposition politicians and civil society activists as well as international experts investigating the Ayotzinapa case (Article 19 et al. 2017; Ahmed 2017). The malware was used to try and access and monitor all smart phone communications of the targets. To date no official responsible for the misuse of the technology has been held to account and President Peña Nieto publicly dismissed the importance of such surveillance. In February 2018 the New York Times reported that the FBI had refused to collaborate with the official Mexican investigation on the basis that it was a sham, designed to avoid clarifying institutional responsibility for the illegal surveillance operation (Ahmed 2018).

The cases also illustrate some of the covert digital tactics adopted by powerholders to undermine political opponents and social movements. However, these may only represent a small number of the actual practices. This uncertainty is an important dynamic affecting how social activists struggle to assess and respond to their vulnerability (Garcia et al. 2014) creating a form of what Treré calls ‘social media paranoia’ (2015, p175).

A key aspect of both offline and online threats is the state’s constant failure to identify and effectively prosecute those responsible. This pervasive impunity encourages new bouts of harassment and attacks. It also makes it very difficult for activists or journalists to determine the origin of threats and assess the scale of risk or reduce their insecurity while continuing their engagement with the public sphere and contentious activism.¹⁷⁶

This impunity is reinforced by the lack of effective oversight and legal accountability of police, security and military agencies in the use of digital technology in Mexico’s partial democracy. This means formal challenges to misuse of digital communications are extremely difficult. In addition, the weak international regulatory system of digital and social media platforms means it is also difficult for citizens to obtain information from capitalist corporations about the misuse of digital and social media to target social and political activists.

However, it is also important to remember that social activists and independent journalists in Mexico regularly face the most severe threats in their offline activities. This includes physical attack, disappearance and murder in reprisal for their lawful activities (UN Human Rights Council 2017). As such digital threats are part of a wider context of targeted harassment. Those engaged in grassroots activism, including relatives of victims and human rights activists, often have to overcome or ignore fear and uncertainty about the nature and severity of the threats they face to continue their claims-making. This uncertainty, suspicion and sometimes disregard of threats, is a

¹⁷⁶ A protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalists was established by the Mexican government in 2012, but it remains weak and largely ineffective (UN Human Rights Council 2017).

feature of participating, particularly in a high-profile role, in protests or other contentious public actions which impact economic, political or criminal interests.¹⁷⁷ Trying to understand and manage these uncertainties is an unwelcome aspect of participation in contentious social movements and human rights activism.

In this context, digital communications facilitate new possibilities for activism, but also generate new vulnerabilities and dynamics of risk which affect how activists regard and practice online activism.¹⁷⁸ These issues are explored in more detail in relation to each case study.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter has examined key aspects of Mexico's political and social development, particularly the legacy of corporatist authoritarianism in the partial transition to democracy. This process frustrated the construction of rights-protective governance, greater social justice and space for effective civic participation. Instead, it fuelled corruption, impunity, violence and an increasing number of stigmatised victims. Despite this, plural forms of autonomous and contentious civil society activism developed, including grassroots mobilizations and diverse human rights NGOs. The transition governments used the institutionalisation of human rights discourse for the purposes of state-legitimation, but only simulated implementation. This more or less cynical appropriation of human rights discourse, particularly its treatment as a non-political technical legal discourse, exclusively the domain of experts, alienated some social actors who perceived it as divorced from the more political dimensions of grassroots social mobilization. However, other actors regarded this situation as increasing the legitimacy of human rights claims-making, strengthening international

¹⁷⁷ As a human rights researcher, I investigated numerous cases of threats and attacks against activists in Mexico. This included deliberations about security measures and risk reduction. The approach taken often depended on the personality and approach of the particular human rights defender and their determination not to give into the logic of those behind the threats seeking to deter their activism.

¹⁷⁸ International and regional NGOs, such as Access Now and Socialtic, focused on digital communications, increasingly collaborate with local organizations in networks to strengthen analysis, training and understanding of the security dimensions of digital communications for civil society activism.

solidarity networks and facilitating articulation of plural social actors in domestic mobilizations.

The changing media and communications landscape ushered in by the increasing social adoption of digital and social media weakened the mass media's grip on the political agenda. This included enabling new independent media actors to emerge, lending communicative visibility to different voices and more diverse social actors. Digital social networking also impacted interpersonal communications as it became more embedded in social practice. This enabled new forms of interaction, sharing and distribution of information, reducing the dominant role of mainstream media in shaping news narratives. However, this connectivity also produced new types of threat and risk for those involved in activism or independent journalism.

This contextual chapter provides an essential road map to locate each movement clearly within a rapidly reconfiguring landscape of political, social and media opportunities. This complex and dynamic context played an important role in shaping the initial emergence of the movements, but did not determine them. This required the interpretation of their significance by multiple participants involved in different forms of critical deliberation and adaptive social activism. However, before exploring the cases in more detail, it is also important to present the methodology adopted which underpins the case research and grounds the findings in well-established social science research practices.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology developed to investigate and analyse plural civil society contentious mobilizations in a partial, and sometimes hostile, democratic setting. My research questions address the uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media as central elements in movement dynamics and in wider social relations. The methodology adopted to explore these issues is based on my constructivist outlook which understands social practices, such as the uses of human rights discourse and digital social media, as bound up with the meaning and significance negotiated and disputed by those involved. I also analyse my reflexive position in relation to this sensitive area of research, the actors involved and my past experience; setting out how this positively contributed to the research but also the measures taken to avoid bias. I account for the use of qualitative interviewing and how I recruited participants to generate positive, safe and productive interviews which yielded multi-layered ‘thick’ data. The process of data organization and analysis is explained, including checks and controls to strengthen the trustworthiness of my analytical approach and findings. Lastly, I explain the ethical considerations and safeguards in the design and implementation of the research to ensure its quality and integrity.

4.2 Philosophical outlook: Ontology and epistemology

In this section, I discuss my philosophical approach to the world and social relations as part of the underlying theoretical framework for addressing the research questions. This is key to understanding the particular methodology applied to gather the data and the epistemological claims of my research findings.

Guba (1990) refers to our 'basic beliefs' about the world shaping our research processes and our knowledge claims.¹⁷⁹ These beliefs generally lie on a spectrum between realist and constructivist ontologies.¹⁸⁰ The first views the external world in positivist terms, as an objective reality independent of our experience, about which generalizable knowledge can be deduced as definitively true or false. The second does not view the external world as independent of us, as it is meaningful to us through our subjective experiences, which are intrinsically related to our orienting beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, reality is constructed through our individual and collective experiences and processes of meaning-making. According to this more constructivist outlook, knowledge of the social world is about meaningfulness subjectively constructed through inductive interpretation of complex processes and relations. This approach to knowledge does not ignore empirical concepts such as validity and reliability, but these are justified in terms of the quality of interpretation, which is gauged by evidence of consistency, coherence and accuracy. As such, knowledge-claims are more open-ended and context contingent, without aspiring to epistemological certitude. This outlook locates the researcher, as interpreting subject, as central to the process of meaning-making. In consequence, it necessarily introduces reflexivity and instability to knowledge-claims about the social world (Giddens 1990), as the researcher's own beliefs and orientations shape the approach to the research field and the process of interpretation.

My basic beliefs about reality are constructivist in which knowledge of the social world derives from inductive interpretation. This outlook is particularly relevant in research examining complex social and political phenomena such as the social movements in this thesis. The three movements involve multiple individual and collective actors shaped by and responding to structuring social forces operating in their particular society, but also increasingly as part of global cultural dynamics. The meanings these

¹⁷⁹ Other scholars addressing methodological principles also point to the importance of recognizing this stance toward the social world and knowledge, with expressions such as philosophical "position" (Mason 2002), "orientation" (Patton 2002) or "worldview" (Creswell 2009).

¹⁸⁰ Guba also points to critical theory approaches which draw on both viewpoints to develop an emancipatory methodology oriented to exposing domination in the world and changing it by enabling subject liberation.

actors ascribe to their environment and other actors is key to understanding motivations, intentions and actions in a constantly unfolding process. But the meaning of their actions is not bounded by their particular intentions, as actions have unforeseen results and are constantly open to varied interpretation by others, producing rippling consequences for the beliefs and actions of others. These cycles of actions, interactions and interpretations fan out and overlap, influencing other actors who respond to or reflect on their meaning and significance. This in turn shapes and motivates a new series of actions and reactions (Giddens 1984). These processes are in constant flux and open to different interpretations which are not reducible to a single external realist truth, rather they are dynamic meaning-making processes, often contradictory and multi-dimensional. However, an approach to gaining greater insight and understanding of these processes is through the empirical evidence of participants. That is through their reconstructed accounts, reflecting on meaning, beliefs and orientations toward the collective social processes they are or were engaged in.¹⁸¹ My interpretivist epistemology based on a constructivist outlook is the starting point for developing a research methodology to address my research questions exploring the complex dynamics of the social movements and their practices.¹⁸²

In order to get at the meaning understood by actors operating in complex social contexts such as social movements engaged in political contention and making human rights demands against powerholders, I adopt Geertz's (1973) approach to interpretation of culture based on 'thick description'. This is the close study of the symbols of culture and their meaning as understood by those involved and bound up with contextual events: '[W]e begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up and then systematize those' (Ibid., p15). This approach leads to careful, defensible interpretation of context specific data, not

¹⁸¹ However, as Giddens suggests, there reasoned retrospective accounts of motivation are not necessarily consistent with the "practical consciousness" involved in individuals responding and acting in real-time on a more intuitive basis drawing on routine and Bourdieu's 'habitus'.

¹⁸² My constructivism does not dismiss the reality of the external world. Hammersley (1992) suggests a form of "subtle realism", which recognises the separate existence of the world, but also the mediating function of meaning and interpretation. This undercuts epistemological certainty, but enables a practical engagement with the shared world as individuals experience it and act.

totalizing theory. Nonetheless, the aim is still to 'draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts' (Ibid., p28). This is consistent with more ethnographic and anthropological social science methods which examine how ideas and meanings of human rights are constructed locally or are understood and made meaningful in concrete social contexts (Short 2009). Richard Wilson calls this the 'social life of rights' (Wilson 1996, p3). This implies 'exploring their meaning and use' and conducting 'detailed studies of human rights according to the actions and intentions of social actors within wider historical constraints of institutionalised power' (Ibid., p4). This research draws on this approach to examine how human rights discourse was used and understood as part of each movement's mobilization process.

A similar approach is also applied to uses of digital and social media in the context of the social mobilizations. By examining how communications technologies feature in movement practice and are made meaningful by and to movement participants and potential recruits, this enables a nuanced understanding of their role in the 'social drama' (Wessels 2010, p40). This means engaging with movement actors and their reflections and understanding of communications practices in the cycles of social movement mobilization and technological change.

In order to examine the complex meaning of these practices, they also have to be considered in the context of the wider social relations in which they are rooted. In Mexico, this relates directly, on the one hand, to the contested democratic transition, multidimensional violence, impunity, corruption and extreme social inequalities, but also, on the other hand, to non-institutional forces such as civil society, independent media and international solidarity. These different historical, social, political and economic elements are interwoven into the context, constraining and enabling social actors. However, the meaning attributed to them by actors is key to understanding the motivations and forms of participation in collective contentious action.

In addressing the different dimensions of social practice and socio-political context, I draw on various disciplines. This includes political science, history, sociology, communications and philosophy. Relevant aspects of these different fields were

discussed in chapter two and contribute to the interpretation and analysis of the data, supporting the empirical research with theoretical insights (Della Porta 2014).

4.2.1 Reflexivity

A feature of qualitative research is the position of the researcher in relation to the field of study and the steps taken by the researcher to reflect on the subjectivist implications for the study and the findings (Mason 2002). On the one hand this is a process of identifying potential bias and limiting its influence, but on the other, it is recognising how the researcher's biography may contribute positively to the quality of the research (Berger 2015). In this section, I reflect on the dimensions of my biography, beliefs and orientations in relation to the study, their shaping influence, but also the measures take to limit and recognise their impacts to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research.

In relation to research method, reflexivity is understood as the 'the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome' (Berger 2015, p220). Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p2) argue that while qualitative research necessarily has subjective elements, reflexivity is part of striving toward greater 'objectivity and neutrality'; a methodological approach whose ultimate goal may be unobtainable, but which is important to strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of research findings.

4.2.2 Identity position

I am a white male middle-class academic from the Global North. I am a fluent Spanish speaker as a second language. These identity attributes make me an outsider to the Mexican social movements under investigation and potentially create a perceived power imbalance between me and some interviewees.¹⁸³ This outsider status arguably

¹⁸³ Insider/outsider status of the researcher can influence the quality and type of research. An insider status can provide insight into the feelings and experiences and willingness to share more openly on the part of the interviewee. On the other hand, outsider status can facilitate a more detached view on processes that an insider may be too immersed in to recognise. On occasions distance from a community

makes it more difficult for me to appreciate the nuances of activist beliefs and actions in Mexico and also perhaps to unconsciously assume certain cultural attitudes about democracy and social activism which an insider researcher might not do.¹⁸⁴ However, my biography also includes important insider dimensions which significantly contributed to the research process.

4.2.3 Biography

Prior to undertaking this doctoral research, I worked as a human rights activist and researcher for Amnesty International (AI). Between 1996 and 2014, I was involved in research and campaign work on most Latin America countries. Between 2001 and 2014, I was responsible for the organisation's research work and advocacy strategy on Mexico. I carried out regular visits to different regions of Mexico and developed close relationships with human rights NGOs, activists, victims, lawyers and academics as part of my activities to advocate Mexico's compliance with international human rights norms. This work also included documenting the repression of collective social actors in different regions confronting local powerholders and involved interviewing victims, relatives, witnesses, observers, experts and authorities to understand and report on specific contexts. As part of these activities I also followed the emergence of the three social movements in this research.

As a human rights researcher-advocate, I also engaged in forms of reflexive practice. This included reflecting on my own privileged status as international human rights activist, identifying with social actors to gain trust and understanding, but also preserving detachment in order to analyse evidence impartially. This approach implied commitment to human rights and victims, as well as abiding by such principles as

with conflictive dimensions may also facilitate greater openness in discussion with an outsider (Merriam 2009).

¹⁸⁴ I was aware that potential power imbalances and identity disparities could affect my communication with interviewees and the research. However, I concluded that most interviewees belonged to urban educated groups with active political consciousness. As such they were used to engaging in social-political discussion with a range of actors. As a result, they were not intimidated by or particularly closed-off to me in terms of identity differences. In addition, the research was not focused on particular identity features of movement practice relating to such issues as gender or class - though it is possible to argue that the status of victim and student were identity features of the MPJD/Ayotzinapa and YoSoy132 movements respectively, but this was not an approach that my research was focused on.

honesty, respect and 'do no harm'. Despite being an outsider from the Global North, my work with AI enabled me to develop credibility and recognition with a range of actors in the field of human rights. This afforded a degree of insider understanding, while preserving my status as a critical observer. This parallels Patton's qualitative research recommendation to developing rapport with interviewees, but maintain neutrality toward the content of the interview (Patton 2002, p365) - an approach which I adopted in this research project.

These biographical experiences enabled me to develop a well-grounded and practical understanding of Mexico's socio-political context, including knowledge of the diverse actors involved in contentious social mobilizations. It also enabled me to build a network of contacts embedded in the fabric of Mexico's human rights activist community, which in turn overlaps with many other networks of social and political activists. In undertaking this academic research, I drew on these contacts to identify and recruit relevant actors in each social movement. My status as credible, serious and respectful researcher helped secure access with diverse movement actors, often with the assistance of contacts. My experience in Mexico on human rights also facilitated an important level of trust and openness on the part of participants which would not have been possible for someone without my biography. However, I was also aware that my previous advocacy work might create expectations which would affect the interviews and my research data. Therefore, I took care to clarify the difference between my previous role as researcher focused on human rights advocacy and my new role as academic social science researcher; taking time to explain the difference in methodology and approach to the interviews. This enabled the interviewees to gradually settle into the more relaxed and open discussion of the semi-structured interview. Nonetheless, my knowledge of human rights and social movement practice in Mexico, including sensitivity to complex movement relations, also facilitated a level of detailed discussion. This allowed me to explore unresolved and contradictory feelings about the mobilization processes, which participants would otherwise not have been willing to share; for example, the successes and failures of the movement and their individual contributions, the challenges of sustaining plural alliances, the stresses of intense activism as well as the disappointments of demobilization and

fragmentation. As a result, my biographical experience was key to facilitating access to interviewees and ensuring the quality of the interviews, contributing to the ‘thick’ description in the data as well as insights in the analysis stage.

4.2.4 Beliefs and worldview

My orientation towards human rights, democracy and contentious civil society collective action are shaped by personal beliefs and also my professional experiences as a human rights advocate. In the introduction (section 1.8), I explained how these experiences contributed to the development of this project, particularly in relation to globally networked activism promoting the socialization of human rights standards versus more domestic processes of social mobilization embedded in local political cultures. My commitment to human rights principles could be perceived as a potentially bias, imposing a narrative on these social movements. However, my experiences and reflexive practice have also facilitated a nuanced and open understanding of human rights rooted in observing the complex ways in which they are used by different actors – not always positively. As a result, in this research I have guarded against making simple assumptions about the role of human rights discourse and what it means for social movement actors.

In contrast to these more structured human rights orientations, my outlook on digital and social media is less defined or subject to potential biographical bias. My experience relates to uses of digital and social media in my private and professional life. The latter primarily concerned with using digital and social media for strategic campaigning purposes to raise the profile of AI’s concerns on cases and issues. I understood this as the pragmatic use of new communications technology to support AI’s objectives. However, on occasions I also felt concern that some digital and social media campaigning on human rights tended to oversimplify or personalise issues excessively to instrumentally attract interest. I was also aware of wider media and academic debates about the role of social media in facilitating protest and democratic engagement, for example in media coverage of the Arab Spring and public sphere debate between Clay Shirky and Malcom Gladwell (2010). However, I remained open

to exploring different uses and meanings of digital and social media without subscribing to a particular position. But I also remained aware of the importance of reflecting on received wisdoms and unconscious assumptions on my part and those of participant interviewees. This meant addressing positive and negative perspectives and beliefs about digital and social media and interrogating these in relation to the particular practices of the movements and the wider communications environment in Mexico.

4.2.5 Reflexive practice

There are different approaches to acknowledging and working with reflexivity. However, these are usually based on transparency and documentation. Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln et al. 1985) propose a detailed research diary to develop thought processes and reflections, including analysis of assumptions, to show how ideas develop and how possible bias is addressed. Strauss and Corbin (1967) recommend creating memos as part of the research process in grounded theory to transparently develop concepts which are subject to iterative revision in developing theory. However, Cutcliffe (2003) suggests these documenting processes in themselves cannot account for the 'magic' of insight of the researcher and should not become so burdensome as to inhibit 'intellectual entrepreneurship' (p136).

As part of my research methodology, reflecting on my own assumptions and how I might be influencing the research and analysis process, I kept a field research diary. I started this before going to Mexico, then made entries on a nightly basis in order to facilitate my thinking processes, record my responses to interviews and interrogate my assumptions. I also engaged in frequent conversations with my supervisors to check my ideas, often discussing distinctions between the types of research practice and thinking I was engaged in. These routines provided an important means of considering my responses to the information I was gathering and reflecting on my own attitudes in the process of understanding and interpreting their meaning. For example, this included reassessing an initial assumption that human rights discourse was being devalued for social activists in Mexico's partial democracy. This type of reflection

indicates my efforts to engage with the content of the interviews and challenge my beliefs, ensuring my analysis was based on the interview data.

In addition to the fieldwork diary, I also kept a digital research journal throughout the research project. This provided a forum for reflecting on reading, research data, new information, assumptions and analytical frameworks. This included examining my position in relation to these developing thought processes underlying the research.

Another means of reappraising interviews to increase neutrality toward the content, was in the process of transcribing and translating. As part of this process I exhaustively scrutinised the audio recordings of the interviews and transcriptions. This also revealed instances where my interventions in the interviews were overly leading or where I failed to pick up and follow-up on an issue that the interviewee raised. It was generally not possible to revisit these issues with interviewees given the constraints of field research timetable, but this systematic review of the material enabled a more detached reading of the interviews in the process of detecting key themes and associations. This was also reinforced with writing memos or short texts to explore and explain themes. These memos also included reflections on my assumptions and expectations in relation to the interviews and issues.

In conclusion, the awareness of my identity, biography and outlook, not only prevented these dimensions shaping the project unwittingly, but positively contributed to the quality of the research. They facilitated access to a range of participants and ensured a rigorous but sensitive approach to gathering data. In addition, they helped stimulate reflexive practices to interrogate my assumptions and biases, contributing to the development of a robust analysis and conclusions.

4.3 Research design and implementation

The objective of the research project was to inductively explore the roles of human rights discourse and digital and social media practices in the dynamic social processes of three social movements engaged in political challenges to institutional powerholders. The research method was designed to engage with the plural

experiences and perspectives of those involved in the movements. I wanted to understand how movement actors interpreted and made meaningful their practices as part of collective political contestation and how human rights discourse and digital and social media featured in this process. Despite not seeking to develop a grounded theory to account for these processes (Glaser et al. 1967), it was important to ensure the data gathered was rooted in the context and addressed how different actors understood these complex social processes and their roles in contributing to mobilization.

To do this I chose qualitative semi-structured interviews of a selected sample of participants in each social movement and close observers to explore the subjective understandings and interpretations of the movement practices and how they related to the wider context.¹⁸⁵ The table below provides a brief description and rationale for the selection of the three cases in relation to the research questions and the field of study.

Social Movement	Participants in movements	Primary locations	Social media platform	Human rights Discourse	Rational
Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (MPJD) (March 2011 – 2013)	Relatives of disappeared and killed, human rights activists, social activists, Faith based groups, trade	Mexico City Morelos Chihuahua Coahuila Nuevo León Guerrero Michoacán USA	Facebook, YouTube Twitter Limited but incipient use of social media.	Demands for justice victims of violence and peace.	First major grass roots movement of victims of violence enjoying mass support and targeting government's on 'war on drugs'. Aimed

¹⁸⁵ Patton (1999) suggests the most important issue is ensuring an appropriate fit between field of study, research questions and method.

	unions, independent journalists, network of national and global solidarity.				to legitimize the status of victims and their struggle for justice.
Yosoy132 (May- Dec 2012)	Students and young social activists.	Mexico City, university students across Mexico, international student network and activist diaspora.	Twitter YouTube Facebook Creative use of social media.	Protest against biased electoral and media processes. Human rights in background.	First full social media facilitated movement promoting participation and challenging institutional settlement.
Ayotzinapa 43 (Sept 2014 – present)	Parents of 43 disappeared student teachers and survivors. Human rights activists, local social movements, trade unions, national and	Guerrero, Mexico City, International solidarity actions.	Twitter, YouTube Facebook Instagram Integral use of social media in multiple movement actions.	Demand for truth and justice and resisting government efforts to misdirect and close the case.	National and international solidarity. The case exposed State involvement in violence and impunity. The movement united diverse groups in support of families

	global solidarity support.				challenging powerholders.
--	----------------------------------	--	--	--	------------------------------

Table 1: Primary features of the social movements and reasons for selection.

This case study approach was adopted to enable ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin 2003, p13). This allowed me to examine not only how individuals and groups used human rights discourse and digital and social media but also how they understood these practices and the meaning for the movements in relation to the socio-political context. This exploration of subjective meaning is also crucial to understanding how and why human beings interpret facilitating and constraining social relations to motivate or demotivate their actions, including taking part in collective contentious mobilization.¹⁸⁶

I used purposive sampling to select interviewees. Identifying and recruiting participants was initially through my existing network of contacts and facilitating intermediaries. This process was also supported by use of data analytics of movement related Twitter activity to identify some bridging actors in movement networks who I approached through my network contacts. In some instances, I also used snowball or chain sampling (Merriam 2009) to recruit new participants performing different roles in the

¹⁸⁶ Another reason for using qualitative interviews is that primary data is not available from other sources (Mason 2002). In this case, social movements rarely maintain records about internal processes, particularly in relation to decision-making, strategic practice and shifting alliances. The primary events under investigation in relation to the three movements had taken place previously to the field research. As a result, other methods of gathering data on public events, such as participant observation were not available. The exception to this was the Ayotzinapa 43 movement which remained relatively active in March 2016 enabling observation of the monthly protest in Mexico City involving family members and supporters. However, this isolated event did not allow a more generalized use of the method. I also examined the possibility of using internet data sources and social media platforms to carry out digital social network analysis and other digital data analysis tools on the patterns of social media use relating to the movement networks. However, after evaluating these approaches I concluded that these more quantitative methods focused on digital traces of social media activity would not probe how users understood and reflected on the social media practices.

movements.¹⁸⁷ My biography and recognition among relevant actors also encouraged trust among new contacts and potential participants, enabling me to secure consent and involvement in the project.

In general, I selected participants with a mid-range level of movement involvement, rather than movement leaders. This was to limit the risk of more reductive self-validating reflections of those responsible for strategic movement decision-making. It also enabled me to interview participants with more activist outlooks, engaged with diverse communicative and strategic practices, but less implicated in the specific public profile of the movement. I also selected close observers who had followed the movements, mainly as journalists and academics. This provided a more critical outsider perspective to check against the movement insider views. However, I did not seek out directly hostile perspectives toward the movements as this would have shifted the research away from understanding the dynamics of meaning-making within the movements and independent civil society.

I grouped the participants into different categories depending on the roles they performed in relation to the movements:

Abbreviation	Role
A	Academic
CSS	Civil society solidarity supporter
DA	Digital activist
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) observer
IMJ	Independent media journalist
J	Journalist
NGOP	Human rights NGO professional
NGOCP	Human rights NGO communications professional
PA	Political or social activist

¹⁸⁷ Despite concerns that snowballing can lead to the recruitment of likeminded interviewees, two recruits I reached through this process expressed surprise that they had been recommended by the previous interviewee given their difficult relationship and contrasting perspectives.

S	Student
SA	Student activist
V	Victim/relative/survivor

In some instances, these roles changed, particularly when actors were involved in different movements.¹⁸⁸ However, this enriched the quality of the interviews as participants could reflect on their experiences and perspectives developed over time and in relation to the practices of different movements.

The 30 qualitative interviews involved 33 participants (21 men and 12 women), all but one was conducted in Mexico City. Each lasted between 1.30 to 2 hours. They were oriented to get at the participants ‘knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions’ (Mason 2002, p63). In the process of developing my research questions, I identified key issues to address, preparing a list of themes and questions in line with Patton’s ‘interview guide’ (2002, p343). However, I remained flexible to facilitate open-ended fluid responses and discussion of emerging issues. This allowed a detailed exploration of the social processes involved from the subjective point of view of the interviewee, enabling evaluations, contradictions, misgivings, hopes and disappointments to be aired and examined but not necessarily resolved. This included participants who had invested emotional, moral and physical energy into the mobilizations, but who had also come to recognize inconsistencies and flaws in the processes. These did not invalidate the experiences, but they added an important level of reflection about the movement dynamics. As Mason (2002) observes, qualitative interviewing is about gathering data with an ‘emphasis on depth, nuance, complexity and roundness’ (p66).

In the preparations for interviews, I built trust through preparatory email and phone conversations. This was partly to assist a smooth and fully informed consent process,

¹⁸⁸ In the data chapters, a code of two or three letters is used to anonymise the identity of the interviewee responsible for the particular quote. This code is then followed by an abbreviation for the particular role or roles of the interviewee. For example, (LT/PA/IMJ) refers to the anonymised author of the quote and then his/her roles as Political Activist and Independent Media Journalist.

but also to ensure clarity about the interview and confidence in me as a researcher. This included explaining the nature of the research, the reasons for the interview, my knowledge and experience of Mexico, the differences to my previous role as human rights researcher-advocate, the procedures to ensure safe handling of data gathered and the hoped-for outcomes of the interview and the overall project. In addition, I demonstrated awareness of security concerns that some social activists face in Mexico. This included evaluating interview locations and times to ensure that they were compatible with the safety criteria of the interviewees as well as my own fieldwork security protocols. The upfront and open discussion of these consent, ethics and security issues helped the process of developing confidence and quality of the interviews.

An important feature of qualitative interviewing from a constructivist outlook is that meanings and understandings are generated through the interaction between researcher and participant in a co-production process rather than simply disclosing pre-existing reflections.¹⁸⁹ To generate this climate, there needs to be respect, trust and rapport between interviewer and interviewee/s (Patton 2002). As observed above, in this regard my fluent Spanish, biography and knowledge of contexts facilitated positive connections which enriched the interviews and the quality of the data. I was also sensitive to dynamics when an interviewee lost this confidence, enabling me to take measures to rebuild trust. For example, when an interviewee became slightly agitated about some of my questions, I detected this was due to suspicions about my motives for exploring issues related to the internal dynamics of a movement. I was aware of the sensitivity of these issues for movement participants and was able to reassure him that I was not seeking details or identities, but rather general reflections which would not harm him or the movement. This enabled the interview to continue productively.

It is also important to note that during the course of fieldwork, as I settled into the rhythm and style of academic qualitative interviews, I gained confidence in my own

¹⁸⁹ However, I do not subscribe to a radical constructivist approach which constrains the limits of knowledge to the interview itself, rather than illuminating the wider social relations referred to in the interview (Miller et al. 2001).

approach.¹⁹⁰ This included appreciating the differences between the advocacy-oriented interviews conducted for AI, compared to a social science approach to qualitative interviewing. In particular, this allowed for a nuanced exploration of experience and beliefs, encouraging interviewees to reflect on aspects of activism that were contradictory or not necessarily central to their strategic outlooks or expectations. This also strengthened my own reflexive practice, facilitating consideration of my position in relation to the interviewee and in the co-production process of qualitative interviewing, rather than the more fact-finding mind-set of advocacy research.

I documented the interviews with a digital audio recorder and took written contemporaneous notes. I used both to type up my notes onto a laptop in the evening which facilitated initial thinking about the content of the interview as well as my own interview technique, encouraging a flexibility grounded in the experience of the interviews and the emerging patterns of information.¹⁹¹ This process fed into subsequent interviews, both in terms of issues and ideas to address, but also methods to successfully building rapport. This was also supported by entries in my fieldwork diary.

¹⁹¹ This also helped me adjust my approach to emerging patterns in the data. For example, my initial expectation was that digital and social media practices would be seen in terms of making movement human rights claims. Instead, interviewees regarded these as separate processes contributing to the movement in different respects and only converging at particular points. This led me to adjust the research questions to maintain a separation between understanding the meaning of human rights discourse for the movement and ways in which digital and social media was meaningful in the mobilization process, and only looking in the latter stages of the interviews to reflect on the points of convergence. Another shift in my approach in response to the interviews and initial analysis was to change from an exclusive focus on social media to one including other forms of digital media. This reflected the outlook of most interviewees who regarded social media platforms, messenger services, webpages, blogs, email and other forms of digital communication as a continuum, where social media interaction was one feature of practice but did not reflect the integrated way that many activists used the technology in the mobilization process.

Reflecting on potential bias in the case selection and recruitment process, the choice of the three social movements was based on their relevance to the national political agenda and differing uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media. However, the dissimilarity of the YoSoy132 movement with regard to the other two movements also constituted a form 'deviant case analysis' (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, p275), enabling features of the two other movements to emerge more clearly. The recruitment of interviewees was not based exclusively on specialisation in human rights or social media as I also sought the perspective of others who observed these processes with more detachment. While acknowledging that the sample group of 30 interviews could have been more extensive, I also found that in the latter stages of the fieldwork, interviewee contributions and attitudes were repeated. This suggested a level of 'data saturation', a marker to indicate a full dataset (Bryman 2012, p425).

In addition to qualitative interviews during fieldwork, I gathered supporting data through qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2012) of specific texts and audio-visual documents produced by the social movements online or circulated in the media. I also examined selected online media and social media coverage of specific movement events, particularly those referred to during qualitative interviews, for example in relation to MPJD marches and caravans, YoSoy132 public protests and Ayotzinapa actions, such as 'Fue El Estado' and #yamecanse. This provided supplementary text and audio-visual information to triangulate with data gathered during the interviews.

4.3.1 Data analysis and framework method

My approach to analysis of the data was to systematise the information, including an intense process of familiarization and classification. This gradually facilitated the detection of patterns and associations which in turn yielded a framework for understanding different and shared aspects of the movements. This section examines this process, highlighting those elements that demonstrate how the analytical

approach and findings were grounded in the data and developed on the basis of methodical analysis.¹⁹²

The process of familiarization and systematization involved transcribing 30 audio files of the interviews into written Spanish. This ensured the accuracy of the transcriptions and facilitated a deepening understanding of the content. The process of revision and checking against my original notes, enabled me to detect initial mishearings or false assumptions. This allowed me to pick up more clearly on the tone as well as content of the interviews.

In order to categorise the interview transcripts, I developed a basic handwritten list of issues covered in each interview. I then used computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), Nvivo 11.4.1, to support this process, extending and refining the coding categories to reflect the different aspects of the interview content. The software facilitated the sifting and labelling of research material, including the flexible alterations to the classification index – which ultimately resulted in more than 100 classification codes. This enabled the transcripts to be rapidly and dynamically regrouped according to themes to assist the process of making comparisons and distinctions, but also ensuring my analysis remained rooted in the detail of the research data. This also facilitated reflection on possible alternative interpretation of the data to check its correspondence with the research material (Yin 2009). For example, I considered the extent to which YoSoy132 was a human rights-focused movement and how this fitted with the evidence I had gathered from participants. The rapid grouping of coded text on this issue meant I could check how far it was reflected in interviewee

¹⁹² The extent to which classic criteria of quantitative research methods, particularly validity, reliability and generalizability should or can be applied to qualitative research has been widely debated (Hammersley 1992). Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that a better approach is establishing trustworthiness of research constituted through credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (p43). Mason (2002) sticks as close as possible to the standards of validity, reliability and generalizability, while Lewis and Ritchie (2003) suggest slightly broader evaluating categories of “sustainable” and “well-grounded” (p270-272), proposing questions for researchers to check the reliability of their research. These include: a) Was the sample selection without bias and did it adequately reflect the target population? b) Was the fieldwork consistent? c) Was the analysis systematic and comprehensive? d) Are interpretations supported by the evidence? and, e) Did the design allow equal opportunities for different perspectives to emerge?

responses. The thematic reorganization of data enabled ideas and assumption to be challenged and verified in relation to aggregated evidence in the data. This facilitated a consistency in the treatment of emerging ideas and ensured they were grounded in the data.

I am aware that using CAQDAS to support analysis is not without critiques.¹⁹³ However, I found Nvivo facilitated making connections across a wide range of texts while ensuring each micro section of text was immediately visible within its original setting. I was aware of concerns that CAQDAS could have shaping influences in the research process, but found that the labelling and sorting functions did not impose a particular mind-set. By enabling rapid regrouping of data, it facilitated the process of seeing patterns and associations, but did not determine those comparisons and distinctions. It increased the flexibility of data configuration, facilitating the rethinking of categories.

It is also important to note that I maintained my research journal throughout the process to reflect on the classification and analysis stages. I also used A4 and A3 paper to jot down ideas, possible connections, pictorial mind maps and alternative thematic matrices to facilitate the process of analysis alongside Nvivo. This enabled me to try out, visualise and test ideas which were not constrained by the design of the software package. These dual processes contributed to the development of my categories of analysis which remained rooted in a sensitive and thoughtful interpretation of the qualitative interviews.

Framework method (Ritchie et al. 2003) includes summarizing or synthesizing the classified or grouped data in order to distil its main features. Using digital and handwritten memos and notes, this enabled me to methodically identify and formulate

¹⁹³ Mason (2002) points to the risks of CAQDAS imposing quantitative type approaches on the treatment of the data, undermining some of the complex, context-based interpretive nuance of qualitative research. Bryman (2012) also notes that CAQDAS software has been criticized for excessively fragmenting research data and delinking it from its context, jeopardizing key attributes of qualitative research. However, he also notes that developments in software flexibility have also enabled these links not to be lost and also that the capacity to make new cross-sectional links can facilitate the identification of patterns and associations.

categories which corresponded to particular features of the movement dynamics as reflected in the participant interviews. This use of framework method did not seek to resolve the plurality of perspectives, but reflected the diverse ways human rights discourse and digital and social media were understood in the unfolding movement mobilization process. This restricted the development of more abstracted analytical models to interpret the movements, but it kept analysis and findings on the movements grounded in the plural dynamics of the mobilization and its context.

My initial approach to classifying data was to label references to human rights discourse and digital and social media according to how different societal fields related to the mobilization processes. This meant labelling sections of transcripts in relation to four dimensions: a) wider society, b) in the news media environment, c) in institutional attitudes, and d) in internal social movement approaches. I then considered these features in terms of how they were understood as enabling and constraining mobilization according to uses of human right discourse and digital and social media.

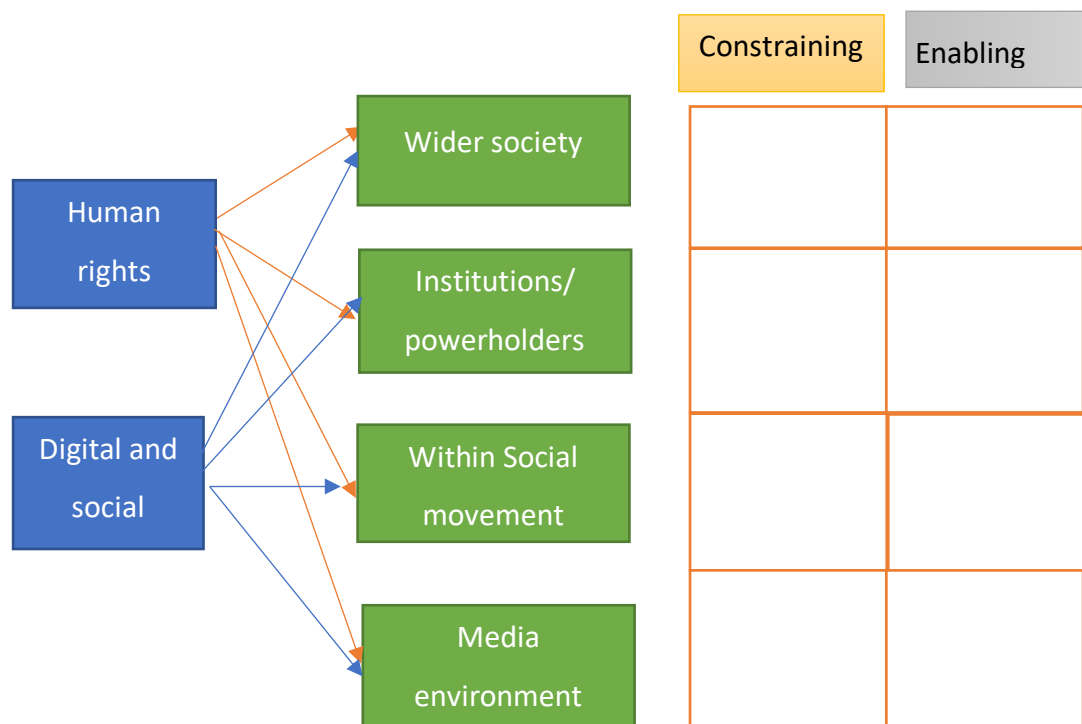


Table 2: Initial framework for organizing research data.

This allowed the context of the mobilization, particularly the constraining and facilitating features to emerge more strongly in relation to human rights and digital and social media. However, this classification system gradually evolved with the iterative process of reading and rereading interviews to identify what the interviewee was trying to say in relation to the research questions. This led to a gradual shift away from this more structural view of the constraining and enabling features of the context to an analysis focuses on the narrative or sequential processes involved in the mobilization and the contributing/limiting features of human rights discourse and digital and social media. This reflected how participants understood the emerging meaning and significance of the movements as they engaged with the world and coalesced into a political force. It also revealed how human rights discourse and digital and social media were understood as particular but not defining features of this process.

This analysis developed on the basis an organic process, with several false steps in which ideas for interpretive schema failed to adequately reflect the data. For example, at one point I focused on dimensions of the emancipatory potential of human rights discourse and compared these to emancipatory ideas in relation to digital and social media, but the data showed that interviewees did not consider human rights or digital and social media in these more theoretical or idealised terms. They were much more engaged with their practical uses and implications and how these related to the day-to-day of the contentious politics of the movements.

As a result, the narrative analysis of the movements was better suited to reflect how movements engaged with human rights discourse and digital and social media. The seven categories in the table below are the cross-sectional themes adopted to analyse the movements' practices in the subsequent data chapters. These are then developed fully in discussion chapter nine.

	Human Rights discourse	Digitally networked communications environment, particularly social media
Context		
Trigger event		
Movement Networks		
Movement mobilizing narrative/frames		
Participant agency		
Articulation of plural movement actors		
Challenges and threats		

Table 3: Thematic framework to analyse features of social movement mobilizations.

4.3.2 Transcription and data management

I managed the research data according to the Policy on Good Research and Innovation Practices (GRIP) to ensure its integrity and security during fieldwork in Mexico and in the UK.

The digital audio recordings and typed-up notes of interviews were stored on a password protected laptop and google drive storage provided by University of Sheffield. The identities of the participants were anonymised by use of coded abbreviations. Other digital materials gathered during the course of research, such as relevant media and social media outputs, were also held in password protected storage.

The interviews were transcribed in full on my return from Mexico, but not translated into English. The transcriptions were stored digitally on password protected laptop and in the cloud. I kept a fieldwork journal in note form which I referred to throughout the process of data analysis. The laptop and journal were stored at my home in a secure location.

I have ensured that all data is preserved in digital format and is available for peer review. The University of Sheffield will receive all research data in digital form as stipulated in GRIP guidelines and abiding by the UK Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). All data related to the project will be destroyed after 10 years.

4.4 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations underpinned the research. I followed the guidelines and policies of the University of Sheffield: 'Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue' and 'Policy on good Research and Innovative practice' (GRIP). I consulted closely with my supervisors in preparations for and during my fieldwork in relation to ethical practice. I also drew on my own experience in Mexico and as a human rights researcher to assess safety and security issues as well as maintaining respectful relations with contacts and participants in the research.

I was particularly sensitive to the importance of ensuring that my activities did not cause harm, albeit unintended, to potential participants or myself as a result of participating in research. I chose not to approach potentially vulnerable participants

who were direct victims or relatives of victims of grave human rights violations in order to avoid possible re-traumatization or misunderstanding about the scope of my research – given my previous activist research role. The few exceptions to this rule were based on an assessment that their status as activists had reduced their vulnerability to re-traumatization as victims or survivors, and that that they were not at risk of misunderstanding my role. This decision-making involved consultation with trusted NGO experts who had long relationships with the potential participants and who understood their process of reintegration after the trauma of becoming victims and their experiences as activists.

In all cases where I felt that interviewees either knew me in my previous role with AI or might have known of me, I was careful to explain the difference in the research I was undertaking and asked to be informed of any concerns that occurred to the participant resulting from their involvement in the research. I have not so far received any negative or concerning feedback.

In order to ensure the prior informed consent of participants I prepared an information sheet and consent form in Spanish which I shared and discussed before the meeting. We then arranged to conduct the meeting in a safe and convenient place and time for the participant, usually a public space such as a café or the offices of an NGO in daylight hours. Prior to starting, I presented the information sheet and consent letter in detail, checking to ensure that participants understood the nature of the research, their role, the confidentiality of information obtained and how it would be used. The information sheet explained the commitment to anonymise all contributions with the exception that should I wish to make any direct quotes I would seek further authorization (I subsequently determined that I would maintain all quotes as anonymous for consistency and to avoid unnecessary identification of particular participants). I also informed them of the audio recording and their right to halt and withdraw from the meeting at any point and for materials obtained thus far to be destroyed. In the event, this was never necessary. On this basis, they granted their written consent, signing the form provided.

All but one of the interviews during the fieldwork were carried out in Mexico City – the other took place in Puebla. Due to my previous experience of working in Mexico, I was aware that violent crime is a feature of daily life. However, many parts of Mexico City remain relatively safe and interviews were only conducted in those areas participants and researcher considered were sufficiently safe. I considered travelling to Guerrero state to interview participants involved at local level in the Ayotzinapa 43 movement, but given the serious violence affecting the state and potential risks for those involved in human rights defence work or political activism, I decided to conduct interviews in Mexico City when available participants were visiting the city. I travelled to Puebla for an overnight stay to interview one participant, but this raised no additional security concerns.

My experience as human rights research also ensured I was aware of and took precautions to avoid risks to my personal safety during the fieldwork. For example, I avoided taking taxis on the street, being out unnecessarily at night and kept away from more unsafe neighbourhoods. I remained in regular email and skype contact with my supervisors throughout the fieldwork, updating and consulting with them on my activities, plans and precautions.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how the methodology adopted was consistent with my constructivist outlook and the research questions. This involved an interpretative approach to knowledge about the social world, particularly the contested and negotiated dynamics of meaning-making in and around social movements. I acknowledge my reflexive position in relation to the research, but also point out how this positively contributed to the quality of the research practice and data. The qualitative design was based on 30 semi-structured interviews exploring different participant practices and perspectives, probing their subjective feelings and thoughts which rooted the data in their intersubjective understanding of the socio-political context. The selection of movements forms a nexus of contention around features of Mexico's flawed democratic transition, and root the data in the meaning of these challenges to powerholders. The range of recruits also represented diverse forms of

participation in and observation of these social processes. However, I also acknowledge that the constraints of a single researcher with limited resources and time inevitably restricts the scope of the data gathering. The process of transcription, rereading and organization of data enabled familiarization. This was the basis for developing a flexible inductive analysis to address my research questions, keeping close to the thick descriptions of the data and the meaning-making of the movements. I also repeatedly checked back against the data to ensure the coherence and correspondence of the analysis and was also challenged by my supervisors. These measures ensured a systematic and reflective methodology to develop a framework analysis attuned to the qualities of the data. As a result, the findings of this research remain rooted in the context and the experiences of participation in the three social movements.

Chapter 5 Chapter

The social movement case studies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes in more detail the cycle of contention and repertoire of actions (McAdam et al. 2003; Tilly 2004) of each movement, locating these within the socio-political context and reflecting on some of their significance and impacts in Mexico's partial democracy.¹⁹⁴ It looks at the multiple contextual uses and understandings of human rights discourse in relation to each movement. This includes serving as a normative aspiration; as a critical tool for understanding and recognising abuses of power and neglect; as an orienting set of skills and practices; as legitimised legal framework for engaging state responsibilities and attracting international solidarity, as a grassroots self-asserting claim to challenge injustice, but also as a co-opted technocratic and expert discourse to simulate institutional compliance and steer movements into demobilizing negotiation.

In relation to digital a social media, the chapter outlines particular features of the news environment and practices involved in each movement. This includes the process of rapid mobilization, dissemination of alternative narratives, leverage of mainstream media and the development of emotional and connective engagement of participants (Bennett et al. 2013; Papacharissi 2015), but also the growing range of counter uses of digital media to undermine the movements.

5.2 Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad (MPJD)

The MPJD emerged April 2011 to challenge the crisis of violence and human rights violations which had spread across the country as a result of Calderón's 'war on drug trafficking'. It was a solidaristic response triggered by a personal tragedy caused by the violence. This turned into a collective effort to reassert democratic and civic values of

¹⁹⁴ The accounts of each movement are based on contemporary media reports, fieldwork interviews, the movement materials available on line as well as academic and human rights literature.

human rights through networked support for the thousands of stigmatised victims abandoned by the state. The movement changed the national political dynamic, asserting the victims' claims for respect and dignity. However, it struggled to develop an organizational and strategic cohesion to reflect the more transformative aspirations of the diverse movement elements as well as resist the demobilizing effects of institutional engagement.

On 28 March 2011, the bodies of six murdered men and a woman were found in a car in Temixco, a town near Cuernavaca, Morelos state. The authorities routinely suggested such killings were the result of turf wars between rival drug gangs, with little further information to contest this assumption of criminal involvement of the dead or disappeared. However, in this instance news rapidly spread in the media that one of the victims was 24-year-old Juan Francisco Sicilia Ortega, son of national poet and public intellectual, Javier Sicilia. He was a regular contributor to the left-wing daily *La Jornada* and weekly *Proceso* magazine. Friends and sympathisers spontaneously established a memorial shrine (*ofrenda*) to his son in Cuernavaca on the same day and held a 500 strong candle-lit march the next day demanding justice and an end to the violence. This was an instinctive response based on latent outrage and civic impotence at the spreading violence, human rights violations and omission of the authorities, which seemed to rely on stigmatising the victims rather than holding perpetrators to account.

These early improvised responses, including expressions of outrage on social media, gained a visible direction and leadership on 1 April when Javier Sicilia called Mexicans onto the streets to demand justice and an end to the violence.¹⁹⁵ On 3 April, *Proceso* magazine published a Javier Sicilia article, 'Estamos Hasta La Madre (We've had it up to here), and declaring, 'Ya Basta!' (Enough!), echoing the slogan of the 1994 Zapatista

¹⁹⁵ Javier Sicilia had been out of the country at the time of his son's killing, with the initial actions mounted in his absence. On his return, he established a protest presence in central Cuernavaca refusing to leave until the authorities made advances in the investigation. He also publicly stated that he could no longer write poetry, symbolically silenced by the tragedy, but also an act of resistance against impunity.

rebellion.¹⁹⁶ He called for a march of National Emergency on 6 April and for citizens to unite in a Network for Peace and Justice (*Red por la Paz y Justicia*). On 6 April, 9 days after the discovery of the Juan Francisco's body, 40,000 people protested on the streets of 20 Mexican cities and in various locations around the world. Digitally networked connectivity played an important role in organizing these initiatives and recruiting widely distributed participants.

The group of supporters around Javier Sicilia, such as Pietro Ameglio, were leading advocates of progressive grassroots catholic social activism. However, they were not digitally adept, but they encouraged wide participation, including of younger activists and sympathisers to use digital skills to promote the incipient movement and create the basic infrastructure of digital support.¹⁹⁷ As Treré & Cargnelutti (2014) have noted, digital networking assisted recruitment, coordination and information sharing, which reinforced the mobilizing sentiments of the movement. However, use of interactive web 2.0 features, including deliberative practices, associated with new forms of digital counter-power movements (Castells 2009a) did not feature strongly in the practices of MPJD.

Online and offline network connections widened as Javier Sicilia's street protest gained media and social media attention. Other relatives of the killed and disappeared as well as activist sympathisers, artists and public intellectuals travelled to Cuernavaca to show their support. This included well-known human rights activists such as Emilio Álvarez Icaza, who was the former Human Rights Ombudsman for Mexico City. Human rights NGOs with links to these activists and Javier Sicilia, such as Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (CENCOS) and Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz (SERAPAZ), also became involved. Trade Unions in dispute with the government provided support as did progressive students, some religious representatives and faith-groups. In line with resource mobilization theory, these actors contributed organizational and resource

¹⁹⁶ He received support from scores of artists in a public letter in *La Jornada* newspaper. Subcomandante Marcos, a Zapatista leader, also published a public letter of support.

¹⁹⁷ For example, Javier Sicilia was assisted in posting YouTube messages critiquing the 'war' and calling for civil society mobilization.

capacity as well as mobilization and communications skills to enable a small spontaneous show of solidarity to develop into a movement with national scope and impact.

In May, taking inspiration from the peaceful civic resistance repertoire of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Javier Sicilia and the Network for Peace and Justice led a three-day National March for Peace to Mexico City. This symbolically translated the provincial protest onto the national stage. In front of approximately 100,000 people in Mexico City's Zócalo, Sicilia made a passionate call for civil society to unite to renew the nation:

‘hagamos un silencio más de 5 minutos en memoria de nuestros muertos, de la sociedad cercada por la delincuencia y un Estado omiso, y como una señal de la unidad y de la dignidad de nuestros corazones que llama a todos a refundar la Nación. Hagámoslo así porque el silencio es el lugar en donde se recoge y brota la palabra verdadera, es la hondura profunda del sentido, es lo que nos hermana en medio de nuestros dolores, es esa tierra interior y común que nadie tiene en propiedad y de la que, si sabemos escuchar, puede nacer la palabra que nos permita decir otra vez con dignidad y una paz justa el nombre de nuestra casa: México’ (Sicilia 2011a).¹⁹⁸

This poetic and emotive discourse can be interpreted in terms of Gamson's (1992) framing elements for a mobilizing narrative: 1) naming the injustice of society under attack leading to the death of loved ones 2) labelling criminals and the state as responsible, 3) invoking the 'we' consciousness of unified suffering of ordinary citizen victims and civil society, and, 4) identifying the solution as re-founding society on the basis of peace and dignity (Johnston et al. 2005). The spiritual intensity of his language

¹⁹⁸ 'let's be silent for 5 minutes in memory of our dead, of a society besieged by criminals and a negligent State, and as a sign of the unity and of the dignity of our hearts that calls on everyone to refound the nation. Let's be like that because the silence is a place which gathers and produces the word of truth, it is the deep depths of emotion, it is what makes us brothers and sisters in the midst of our pain, it is that interior mutual ground that is no one's property, and which if we know how to listen, can give birth to the word that allows us to say once again with dignity and a just peace, the name of our house: Mexico'

strived to engage his audience beyond the traditional discourse of politics, invoking the normative aspiration of peace and respect and making civil society, not the institutional order, the active agent of transformation.

This was articulated in a National Pact for Peace and Justice which focused demands on the immediate needs of victims, but also a range of structural deficits of Mexico's violent and partial democracy.¹⁹⁹ This broader agenda addressing the causes, not just the consequences of the violence. This encouraged diverse actors to participate directly, including solidarity activists hoping for structural change not only justice for the victims.

The next stage of the movement was to physically connect diverse networks and show to the wider public those regions and people most affected by the violence: where victims had no voice and were made invisible to the rest of society due to the violence and media self-censorship. On 4 June, a civil society convoy of coaches and cars set off from Cuernavaca on the 'Caravana del Consuelo'²⁰⁰ following the 'ruta de dolor y de horror'²⁰¹ (Sicilia 2011c) across the north of Mexico. This was part of the process of reframing the idea of the victims and forging links between them and with solidarity groups and human rights NGOs such as CADHAC and FUNDEC.²⁰² A coach of journalists also accompanied the convoy to ensure national and international media coverage. The caravan was both expressive performance as well as strategic movement network building exercise, focusing public attention on the experience of the victims but also bringing multiple new actors into the movement and showing the potential of civic activism.²⁰³ Social media was used to keep the convoy's activities in the public eye and

¹⁹⁹ These were the six-points of the National Pact for Peace and Justice: 1) truth and justice for the victims; 2) replace the 'war' strategy with a focus on citizen security; 3) combat corruption and impunity; 4) target money laundering and financial infrastructure of organized crime; 5) implement measures to address youth crisis and steps to reconstitute social cohesion; 6) strengthen participatory democracy and democratization of the media (Sicilia 2011a).

²⁰⁰ Caravan of Consolation

²⁰¹ 'Route of pain and of horror'

²⁰² See section 2.9 for reference to these NGOs. In movement network terms, this process was a bridging and brokering exercise (Gallagher 2012)

²⁰³ Later there were other caravans. This included one in September 2011 to Mexico's southern states and one in August 2012 to the USA, which engaged in "citizen diplomacy" in coordination with a wide range of partner organizations to highlight the different dimensions of the US support for Mexico's

also help as a deterrent from potential attack. During stops, relatives of the disappeared and killed presented their cases to the caravan volunteers and some spoke on public platforms. They recounted emotional testimony of the personal impact of the violence, including refusal of public officials to investigate and, in some cases, of state agents directly implicated in abuses.²⁰⁴ In this dramatic process, the diverse range of victims and their demands for justice became the increasingly central frame of the movement narrative.

Besides the mainstream media coverage of the caravan, digital activists updated Twitter Facebook including with links to YouTube footage of events and the testimony of leading movement victim-activists. Despite this innovative use of new media in some actions, the MPJD, with the support of CENCOS which assumed the primary external communications function of the mobilization, adopted a relatively traditional media strategy. It focused on securing positive mainstream media coverage to advance its strategy. As such, webpages and official social media platforms primarily served to drive information to the mainstream media and to provide a resource of movement audio-visual materials.

As networks of human rights activists and lawyers became increasingly involved in the movement, including the caravans, human rights discourse served to make specific claims against the state. This appeal to human rights discourse served to identify the responsibility of the state for police and military abuses, but also the acquiescence or negligence of the state in failing to prevent or investigate abuses committed by non-state actor criminals. This had the effect of treating victims of both sorts of abuse as human rights victims through the state's denial of their right to protection, truth, access to justice and remedy (MPJD et al. 2011).²⁰⁵ This strengthened the relatives'

"drugs war" and its impact on the civilian population, enacting dramatic artistic performances to represent the violence and the collusion of US institutions.

²⁰⁴ The caravan to the north struggled to register and process more than 700 reports of abuses it received from family members

²⁰⁵ Most previous civil society responses to crime and violence focused on insecurity, advocating traditional hard-line anti-crime measures by the state (Villagrín 2013), but did not adopt a human rights approach. An exception to this were campaigns against gender-based violence by feminists and human

right to demand justice not solely on behalf of their family member who was the direct victim. As a result, victims of diverse forms of violence could invoke the same rights to make their claims, regardless of the suspected perpetrator.²⁰⁶ Human rights NGOs participating in the MPJD used this approach to engage Mexico's international responsibilities and reframe the violence to encourage international actors to better understand the state's role. This increased pressure on the authorities to rethink their policy as well as to address the individual justice needs of the victims, particularly the right to truth and remedy. The latter became increasingly central to the movement as it demanded a General Law on Victims to instantiate the rights of victims of the violence.²⁰⁷

However, this increasing focus on the victims also implied a narrowing of the MPJD identity, agenda and strategy. This raised unresolved tensions in the deliberations of the plural actors and groups which had initially participated in the movement coalition. These tensions led Javier Sicilia and Emilio Álvarez to assert a relatively narrow strategic leadership to commit the movement to early negotiations with the government. This quite traditional leadership was at odds with more horizontal, participatory and autonomist ideas of some of the movement participants.²⁰⁸ However, the primary

rights NGOs which focused on discrimination and the state's lack of due diligence in terms of prevention and punishment of crimes.

²⁰⁶ This largely avoided privileging one group of victims over another which had often divided groups of victims and approaches to justice and the state. It resisted the institutional logic that blamed the violence solely on unidentified criminal forces opposed to the state, which in turn legitimated militarised public security responses which produced new cycles of violence and human rights violations.

²⁰⁷ The Calderón government resisted recognising human rights standards in relation to victims of criminals established in the proposed General Law on Victims. It considered this would imply the state was liable to some extent for crimes committed by non-state actors. But in many respects, this was precisely the point of the MPJD due to the state's almost complete failure to prevent or punish either non-state actor or state actor violations. The reality for most victims, regardless of the perpetrator, was that they were denied truth, justice and reparations by the negligence or collusion of the state. Recognising their legal status as victims of human rights violations, in theory, instantiated the state's responsibility to guarantee a range of rights which had previously not been recognised in relation to relatives of victims of non-state actor criminal violence. In addition, recognising the state's liability also highlighted the interpenetration of criminal and state-actor interests which underlay much denial of access to justice. However, recognising this reality of intertwined relationships of criminal networks with a range of state actors called into question the very basis and wisdom of Calderon's policy of militarised 'war'.

²⁰⁸ These horizontal organizational features appeared more clearly in the Arab Spring, 15-M and Occupy movements, often facilitated by digital and social media practices of activists, but also ideological commitment to participatory practices (Castells 2013).

constituency of the MPJD were ordinary, usually older, citizens, both victims and solidarity activists, often with strong religious convictions. Most were not, at least initially, embedded in wider activist networks or practiced in digital and social media communications or focused on self-consciously developing new forms of political subjectivity to challenge the partial democracy. Their priority remained their cases not the configuration of the movement or its wider ideological orientation.

On 23 June 2011, the Government of Felipe Calderón held high level Peace Dialogues with the MPJD, including several victims and diverse civil society participants in the movement.²⁰⁹ For the first time victims took centre stage in the national debate about the violence. The talks established four working groups covering the range of issues in the MPJD agenda, but only the victims-focused working groups made progress resulting in some government commitments.²¹⁰

Three months later, despite the government's failure to fulfil its promises, the MPJD leadership agreed to new talks. However, on this occasion the government unilaterally invited representatives of civil society organizations allied to its own public security strategy, such as 'Alto al Secuestro'. The government attempted to steer the public debate away from the MPJD's agenda and re-legitimize the traditional crime fighting strategy of the 'war'. Many MPJD relatives condemned the talks as a government public relations exercise. There were also increasing indications that the administration was trying to divide the movement by providing support to certain groups of victims and not others.

²⁰⁹ The Dialogues were held at the symbolic venue of Chapultepec National Palace under intense media attention.

²¹⁰ Refer to footnote 199 for the Pact for Peace. The other two structural working groups focused on the wide range of complex factors contributing to the violence, including democratic deficits, failed to make substantial progress.

On 28 November 2011, the danger faced by relatives seeking justice was illustrated when one of the MPJD's most vocal activists, Nepomuceno Moreno, was gunned down. He had participated in many high profile public platforms, including the Peace Dialogues, to demand justice for his disappeared son.

In response to the government's divide and rule tactics, refusal to recognise the rights of all victims, and the urgent need to secure concrete results for the relatives, the MPJD focused on lobbying the federal legislature to approve the proposed General Law on Victims. In April 2012, the campaign resulted in Congress approving the draft bill. Despite this, President Calderón refused to enact it, but in January 2013 the newly inaugurated PRI president, Peña Nieto, signed the bill into law.²¹¹ However, the wider political demands of the movement to address the drivers to the violence had been sidelined and the plurality of participating actors declined. Unlike some social movements, rather than tear itself apart, the MPJD gradually lost organic momentum. This allowed many of its key actors, such as regional groups of victims and relatives of the disappeared, to emerge. They increasingly adopting digital and social media in their own right to raise their profile. They continued to mobilize to press their particular demands against powerholders and coordinate with other groups and NGOs.²¹²

Some scholars have argued that the MPJD advocacy resulted in important and unprecedented public sphere deliberations with public policy outcomes, particularly in relation to the Peace Dialogues (Monsiváis Carrillo et al. 2014), citizen security and the General Law on Victims (Garza 2015). However, others argue that these institutional gains were illusory, drawing victims into a labyrinthine bureaucracy and weakening the

²¹¹ In 2013, the MPJD began to lose momentum for a variety of reasons. These included: a) personal and organizational exhaustion after two years relentless activism, b) the apparent success at securing its legislative objective, but also doubts about the impact of the new legislation, c) a new political agenda under the Peña Nieto government which avoided the polarizing language of "war" and superficially acceded to victims' demands, d) victims' need to focus attention on their own cases and the psycho-social, judicial and economic situations, and e) increasing fragmentation of the movement and the difficulties of sustaining the coalition of different groups.

²¹² From 2016, many of these groups participated in the Movement for our Disappeared in Mexico (*Movimiento por Nuestros Desaparecidos en Mexico*) which in 2017 successfully secured congressional approval for a new law on enforced disappearance (Diario Oficial de la Federación 2017).

movement's contentious and agonistic demand for justice and social change (Estévez López 2015). Movement leaders have also reflected on these dynamics. For example, Pietro Ameglio (Ameglio 2016) highlighting the moral strength of the movement, but also some of its organizational and tactical weaknesses, particularly the lack of more horizontal decision-making and its unconditional engagement with the state. However, Javier Sicilia while stressing the moral force of the victims' voice, has also pointed to the dilemma of peaceful social movements in Mexico's partial democracy; in particular, the unavoidable trap of engaging with a legal system manipulated to serve elite interests and an electoral game that never delivers: 'sólo tenemos esa ley para enfrentar el desastre. Es ella o nada'²¹³ (Sicilia 2016, p17). The subsequent data chapter explores some of these complex dimensions in relation to the movement's uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media.

5.3 YoSoy132

The YoSoy132 student movement was a different type of mobilization. It irrupted in the middle of Mexico's presidential election race in May 2012, challenging the seemingly predetermined return to power of the PRI. The movement has been analyzed as part of a global explosion in horizontal social media practices, facilitating participatory democratic protest (González Villarreal 2013; Rovira Sancho 2014). This is recognized as having a significant, but not decisive, impact on the presidential elections and on subsequent media legislation (Garcia et al. 2014). Its emergence was facilitated by increasingly embedded social media practices (Treré 2013), connecting a distributed and socially stratified student generation. This in turn enabled the rapid organization of actions online and offline (Meneses Rocha 2015) as well as the development of a collective identity (Garcia & Treré 2014, Treré 2015). The movement passed through several different stages, from its initial spontaneous outpouring of indignation at the political and media establishment, to expressive online and offline connective political performance, to mass deliberative experiment, to targeted public actions to increase the fairness of the elections, to efforts to construct a transformational national popular movement, and finally to becoming the object of

²¹³ 'we only have the law to stop the disaster. It is that or nothing'.

police repression and fractious fragmentation (Estrada 2014; Olivier et al. 2015). Above all, the movement was a convergence of young adults, enthused by the enactment of dynamic and creative protest, trying to transform how to do politics (Fernández Poncela 2014; Rovira Sancho 2014) in Mexico's partial democracy as a post-Zapatista (Modonesi 2014) deliberative mobilization (Puyosa 2017).

Scholarly focus has addressed its innovative digital media practices and the shifting political dynamics of an ideologically plural student movement. However, it has paid less attention to the role of human rights discourse in the mobilization process and also how uses of digital media constrained as well as facilitated the mobilization process. I selected YoSoy132 to explore these dimensions in more detail, particularly in contrast to the other two movements which are more clearly focused on victims of grave human rights violations. However, YoSoy132 can also be seen as an important element in the longer cycle of contention challenging democratic deficits. This was facilitated by interconnected networks of activists who participated in all three movements, learning new adaptive skills and practices in the process. In addition, like the other mobilizations, the trigger event and context are crucial to understanding its emergence. They are also key to understanding the mobilizing narrative and the focus on deliberative engagement aspiring to forms of political and social change beyond the traditional realm of human rights claims-making.

YoSoy132's trigger event occurred on 11 May 2012 when the PRI presidential candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, held a hustings event at a major private catholic university in Mexico City, la Universidad Iberoamericana (henceforth, *La Ibero*). During the meeting, the candidate was heckled by members of the student audience. Banners included calls for him to face justice for human rights violations committed during his governorship of the State of Mexico (2005-2011). Rather than ignore the taunts, the candidate decided to respond, vigorously justifying the 2006 police operation in San Salvador Atenco which resulted in the sexual torture of women detainees.²¹⁴ As the

²¹⁴ The sexual violence was committed as part of a police operation under the governor's authority and repeatedly covered up (Amnesty International 2006). As of 2018, the case was awaiting judgement before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

chants against him increased, Peña Nieto left the hall. The university radio covering the event live, claimed (incorrectly) that he had fled humiliatingly into the toilets. Students used smart phones and social media to inform friendship groups. As Peña Nieto left hurriedly, a large crowd chanted: 'Atenco no se olvida', which was filmed by scores of mobile phone users and immediately posted and circulated via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. The footage was also rapidly broadcast on independent digital media outlets, such as *Aristeguinoticias*, raising the incident to national news item.

The Peña Nieto candidacy and his public image had been choreographed during several years by sympathetic media coverage, particularly by *Televisa* and *TV Azteca* (Tuckman 2012a), in preparation for his candidacy for the presidency. This had successfully secured him a 20-point lead in the polls with less than 2 months till the election. However, the humiliating audio-visual footage from the *Ibero* for the first time publicly exposed his brittle vulnerability and inability to cope with a routine hustings protest.²¹⁵ This was then compounded by an authoritarian and inept response by PRI party officials and allied media. The officials were given prominent airtime on TV and radio to smear the protesters not as legitimate *Ibero* students, but as external political agitators who should face criminal investigations. PRI newspaper networks published articles reporting that Peña Nieto's visit to the *Ibero* was a 'success' despite an 'intento orquestado de boicot' by thugs.²¹⁶ Young PRI social media activists, known as *Ectivistas*, then posted social media messages attacking the *Ibero* students. However, this counter-framing strategy inadvertently confirmed the PRI's online and offline efforts to discredit legitimate protests through its traditional authoritarian manipulation of the media.

²¹⁵ An important additional element was that the protest took place at one of Mexico's elite private universities, whose students were mainly upper- and middle-class children of the elite, popularly presumed to be unpolitical or sympathetic to the PRI candidate. This also suggested that support for Peña Nieto was not as strong as his media allies routinely portrayed.

²¹⁶ This is a quote from the largest selling newspaper network across the country, *Organización Editorial Mexicana* (OEM): 'Y en la imagen del día... el "Éxito de Peña Nieto en la Ibero", según OEM', *Sopitas.com*, 12 May 2012
<http://www.sopitas.com/158068-y-en-la-imagen-del-dia-el-exito-de-pena-nieto-en-la-ibero-segun-oem/> [Accessed 8 June 2018].

Taking advantage of this PRI misrepresentation of the student protest, *Ibero* activists used social media to post a counter-video on YouTube: '131 alumnos de la Ibero responden'.²¹⁷ This asserted their right to reply against the delegitimization of the protest by the PRI and the media. The students identified themselves and displayed their *Ibero* student ID cards. The video was circulated in student social media networks and retweeted in solidarity. The student activists also deliberately directed it via Twitter to high profile journalists and political commentators whose retweets urged followers to support the *Ibero* students.²¹⁸ The hashtag, #YoSoy132, was born as Twitter users around the country and internationally identified themselves personally with the 131 students, symbolically joining the *Ibero* students by identifying themselves as the 132nd student, asserting their right to freedom of expression against PRI authoritarianism. The #YoSoy132 hashtag went viral becoming a global trending topic for 6 days on Twitter (Mauleón 2012), creating a wider sense that something significant was happening among digital and social media users.

On 16 May, *Ibero* students met with peers from other private universities, establishing the Coordinadora Interuniversitaria (Interuniversity Coordination Group). They announced a street protest on social media to take place on 18 May from different campuses to demonstrate against *Televisa*. The protest attracted only a few hundred mainly private university students, but it was livestreamed on the web by participants enabling students around the country to watch the unusual protest targeting the media rather than the state or government.

On 19 May, an 'Anti-Peña' march took place in Mexico City involving a host of different groups and individuals.²¹⁹ It had originally been announced on Twitter in early May, but

²¹⁷ R3CR3O, 2012, *131 alumnos de la Ibero responden* [Online video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=P7XbocXsFkl> [Accessed 30 May 2018].

²¹⁸ For example, well know political commentator, Denise Dresser, retweeted a link to the film to her 250,000 followers.

²¹⁹ Earlier in May 2011, using the hashtag #MarchaAntiEPN, calls had circulated on Twitter for an 'Anti-Peña' street demonstrations to take place on 19 May. This had received only limited attention prior to the *Ibero* protest. Afterwards, the 'Anti-Peña' march hashtag was increasingly retweeted (González Villarreal 2013) becoming the first major street event of diverse groups to publicly demonstrate rejection of the PRI candidate.

the upsurge of YoSoy132 provided an extra impetus to participate and publicly show rejection of the PRI. Many individuals and groups self-identified as YoSoy132 in the march, creating social media feedback loops confirming growing collective participation under the banner of YoSoy132. The march featured an exciting and carnivalesque protest repertoire.

On 23 May, YoSoy132 supporters gathered in central Mexico City for an act of cultural exchange on the basis of a social media invite. The number of young people from public and private universities as well as schools rapidly grew into a mass spontaneous demonstration. It was a euphoric encounter of a diverse generation recognizing its own shared identity and interest in acting collectively, in spite of class and other social differences.

At the event, a representative of the Coordinadora Interuniversitaria read out the first statement of the movement, listing demands and calling on young people to build a new Mexico. It rejected the political and economic status quo and affirmed the movement was not aligned to any political party.²²⁰ It also framed its initial demands in terms of respect for the right to information and freedom of expression as well as political rights in terms of an effective democratic vote. However, as the movement expanded, incorporating diverse ideological positions, a fuller human rights framework and analysis was not developed as part of the movement narrative.²²¹ The increasingly heterogeneous demands of the movement reflected a wide range of interests and beliefs (Salazar Villava et al. 2013). Human rights issues were a reference, but primarily in relation to impunity for past abuses and to denounce new acts of harassment against activists.²²² However, the mobilizing narrative of the movement, with the exception of

²²⁰ Animal Político. 2012. “Yo soy 132”: Declaratoria y pliego petitorio’. Available at <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/05/declaratoria-y-pliego-petitorio-de-yo-soy-132/> [30 May 2018]. Annex 1.

²²¹ Particular human right claims were included as part of a range of demands such as the right to health. The presidential candidates were also asked about their approach to human rights during the webcast debate, but this was in relation to a dimension of policy rather than a central demand.

²²² Some YoSoy132 activists, particularly at state level, suffered harassment and on occasions were attacked by PRI supporters. These incidents were documented and denounced by the Comité Jurídico y de Derechos Humanos of YoSoy132.

the right to freedom of expression, was not an appeal to human rights discourse to legitimize claims-making. In fact, as the YoSoy132 aspired to become a radical transformative movement after the elections, human rights virtually disappeared from the movement discourse. This ambivalence towards human rights discourse is addressed in more detailed in chapter seven.

On 26 May, the students met in the symbolic Tlatelolco square, where their predecessors had been repressed in 1968, to debate the movement.²²³ Deliberations included widening participation to include students of the much larger public university sector. On 30 May, a mass meeting was held at the public *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), the traditional centre of student activism. Student representatives from universities around the country attended. This established the basic agreements of the wider student movement, including representation and organizational processes such as the formation of the Asamblea Nacional Interuniversitaria (ANI).²²⁴ It included one brief explicit reference to human rights only in terms of the right to reply and the right to health.²²⁵ The UNAM, due to the size of each of its faculties, was granted weighted representation on the ANI, shifting the internal balance of power toward the student corpus in Mexico's largest public university, including its various left-wing activist groupings. The ANI confirmed the movement was horizontal, plural, peaceful and participatory; without leaders, but rather rotating spokespeople chosen in the student assemblies of individual colleges and faculties.²²⁶ The ANI established 15 working groups to deliberate on the increasingly wide range of social and cultural issues, activities and demands.²²⁷

²²³ A feature of the movement from the outset was deliberative and participatory democratic processes. These included spontaneous or rapidly convened meetings in public parks to debate the situation and forge agreements about the movement's meaning, organization, identity, objectives and tactics.

²²⁴ National Interuniversity Assembly

²²⁵ Grupo Fórmula., (2012). 'Presenta #YoSoy132 resolutivos de primera Asamblea Nacional, Grupo Formula [online], 31 de mayo. [viewed 18 June 2018] Available from: <http://www.radioformula.com.mx/notasimp.asp?Idn=247039&idFC=2012> (See Annex 2).

²²⁶ Local grassroots social movements from around the country also sought support from the ANI for their causes.

²²⁷ Amongst these were working groups on media plurality and the participation of Mexican co-nationals living abroad as well as the formation of brigades of students to work the streets explaining the movement and its concerns about the election process and media manipulation.

Social media facilitated groups sprang up in towns and cities across the country and abroad, self-identifying as YoSoy132. This process supported coordination of state level and international public protests, formulation of region-specific demands and selection of delegates to attend assembly meetings. Using digital and social media, activists shared documents and audio-visual materials of protest actions, events, posters and other initiatives, feeding into the sense of a dynamic and creative movement engaged in a form of politics that defied the traditional party system as well as the factionalism of usual left-wing political activism.

The movement's daily actions, including production of myriad online materials, interviews with articulate spokespeople, street performances, road blocks and other creative public space actions.²²⁸ As a result, even national media sympathetic to the PRI candidate covered the movement. However, this frequently included counter-framing criticisms, such as the movement's refusal to name leaders, accusations of being a front for the left-wing presidential candidate's campaign and criticizing the satirical attacks on Peña Nieto as lacking the seriousness of proper political debate.²²⁹

YoSoy132's exciting intervention in the election campaign dented the dominant and dull media narrative shaped by the mainstream media, opening up debate about Mexico's democracy, the candidate and the role of the media itself. It contributed to a significant reduction in support for Peña Nieto (Díaz-Domínguez et al. 2014; Garcia et al. 2014). However, it did not prevent his victory in the 1st July election. This caused

²²⁸ In the international media, this was often represented as "Mexico's Spring", mirroring the Arab Spring, 15-M in Spain and Occupy Wall Street

²²⁹ In fact, YoSoy132 activists were engaged in range of activities. This included meeting with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior to demand that TV networks broadcast presidential debates, which at least one network had so far declined to do. The movement also demanded the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) allow another debate involving the movement. The IFE refused, but a second debate was broadcast by the networks due to the pressure generated by the movement. Also, YoSoy132 set about organizing its own presidential debate, which was broadcast live on the web on 19 June. All the candidates took part, except Peña Nieto who refused the invitation. The movement was unable to secure agreement from TV networks to broadcast the event. However, this direct participation in the election process was criticized within the movement, particularly by those elements in the UNAM which pursued autonomist strategies and rejected electoral politics (Gun Cuninghame 2017). In addition, on election day thousands of YoSoy132 volunteers acted as polling station monitors, registering irregularities and recording video footage which was uploaded in submissions to the electoral authority.

consternation and disillusionment among many YoSoy132 activists who had been convinced of the movement's power to transform the outcome of the elections.²³⁰

Afterwards, the movement attempted to consolidate its national organization and incorporate other local social movements and agendas in order to develop into a transformational national popular movement. However, the political opportunity context which had facilitated its creation had changed with the impending return of the PRI to power. The wide and fragmented demands of the movement sought to address multiple social, political and economic issues and contexts, but this lacked the focus the elections had provided or the optimistic sense of contributing to an unfolding political drama. Digital and social media had provided both the means and form for agile reactive protest in the electoral context, enabling a plural chaotic dynamism which contrasted with the conservative mainstream media. However, digital technology was less useful with efforts to develop a more structured political and social movement based on shared identity and objectives. In addition, the increasingly bureaucratic and closed culture of the ANI and disagreements between different left-wing groups consumed its energy, alienating the less ideologically committed, who saw the resurgence of sectarianism and 'asambleísmo'²³¹ associated with traditional student politics. The plural dynamism, perhaps its articulating spirit, that featured in much of its online and offline repertoire, began to dissipate and lose momentum.²³²

On 1 December 2012, YoSoy132 activists as well as many other social and political groups protested against the inauguration of Peña Nieto. The massive police operation resulted in violence and the arrest of over 100 protesters. Despite evidence of police

²³⁰ The apparent failure of the election strategy strengthened the case of the more autonomist wing of the movement that rejected engaging with the election as a trap (Gun Cuninghame 2017).

²³¹ This is the dominant form of participation and decision-making based on long meetings to discuss and agree issues, but which can also become increasingly time consuming and dominated by skilled political operators.

²³² The defections of spokespeople to the media establishment and distrust provoked by actual and suspected dirty tricks operations by the intelligence services to undermine the movement also had their impact on movement moral (Villamil 2013).²³² More practically, the end of university holidays also meant less time to spend in long assembly meetings and activism. In fact, YoSoy132 organizational meetings carried on into 2013, but failed to overcome internal disputes, leading to the collapse of the national level structure. However, individual groups across the country continued to operate under the logo of YoSoy132.

abuses, the new government, and much of the mainstream media, used the violent incidents to promote counter-framing narratives to discredit the movement.²³³ In the following months, many YoSoy132 activists focused on human rights issues related to the detainees, including gathering evidence of their innocence to secure their release.²³⁴

Despite the rapid demobilization of YoSoy132 at national level, in 2013 the new government enacted a telecommunications reform bill increasing media plurality. YoSoy132 had contributed to this process by successfully focusing public attention on media diversity and democratic accountability (Treré 2013).²³⁵ The movement's wider ambitions had failed but it had made a significant impact on the elections, shaking Mexico's partial democracy through its dynamic and iconoclastic use of digital and social media as well as street protest in which human rights discourse was embedded but rarely explicit. In addition, the networks of YoSoy132 activists at home and abroad which had fragmented in the cycle of demobilization, continued to support diverse social and political issues or passed into a period of public latency (Della Porta et al. 2006) and small group discussion (Treré 2015a). However, these were submerged networks of activists with a political consciousness formed in the YoSoy132 mobilization and adept in digital and social media activism. As such, they formed part of the political opportunity structure and culture of adaptive practice, that rapidly reconfigured in response to the Ayotzinapa disappearances.

²³³ The instrumental use of the public security and justice system to detain leaders or activists of movements on the basis of fabricated evidence was a feature of PRI governance which continued during the transition years, particularly at subnational level, including in the State of Mexico under the governorship of Peña Nieto. The prolonged detention of activists frequently forced movements to focus on securing their release in protracted and unfair judicial proceedings rather than pursue their original demands. The authorities have frequently used the detainees as bargaining chips to engage in covert political negotiations to demobilize protests, sometimes co-opting leaders with official posts and resources and also agreeing to lesser demands (Amnesty International 2007b).

²³⁴ For example, establishing a website to collect mobile phone footage taken by protesters and other witnesses of evidence of police abuses committed during the detentions, including arbitrary arrests and excessive force.

²³⁵ Several YoSoy132 participants went on to be active on digital rights, playing an important role in civil society lobbying to improve the draft legislation.

5.4 Ayotzinapa 43

The enforced disappearance of 43 young men in the town of Iguala, Guerrero state, in September 2014 caused national and international outrage and was a critical moment in exposing the institutional and democratic deficits of the Peña Nieto government as well as the wider political system. The crime and subsequent social mobilization has been analysed in terms of a 'social drama' changing Mexican's understanding of their country (Santos Díaz et al. 2015) and as a crisis in political representation (Navarro 2015). The crime confirmed the worsening national humanitarian and human rights crisis (Gómez 2015) as well as shining a light on the individual lives of the victims and the struggle for justice (Paula Mónaco Felipe 2015). Roberto Gonzalez Villarreal (2015, p170) invokes Negri and Hardt's 'collective intelligence' of the 'multitude' (Hardt et al. 2005), facilitated by digital and social media, to account for the seemingly spontaneous contagion of outrage that fuelled collective mobilization. Sergio Tamayo (2015a; 2015b) considers the collective civil society response to Ayotzinapa - in contrast to the institutional and political crisis it exposed – as a sign of a renewed of political culture and civic engagement, but which also challenged the capacity to sustain non-violent protest. The movement enjoyed wide support beyond activist networks, particularly in Mexico City (Fernández Poncela 2015) and its development nationally and internationally owed much to the hybrid use of the internet and social media (Gutiérrez 2015), including increasingly plural independent and alternative digital media outlets (Observatorio estudiantil de medios de Comunicación 2014). But these dynamics also revealed the vulnerability of digital and social media to new threats intended to undermine activism (Finley 2015). Despite this variety of approaches to the movement, none have addressed the complex movement dynamics in relation to the role of human rights discourse alongside digital and social media practices.

The trigger event for the social mobilization was the dramatic and brutal enforced disappearance of the 43 young men studying at a rural teacher training college, 'Raul Isidro Burgos', in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero state.²³⁶ On the night of 26 September 2014, a

²³⁶ The rural teacher training college (*normal rural*) is located in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero state, one of the poorest regions of Mexico. It is among the few remaining rural teacher training colleges which date from the Revolution and its ideals. They maintain an ethos of educating young men from poor, often

group of the students teachers had travelled to the town of Iguala in the same state, where they were repeatedly attacked by municipal police operating with a criminal gang, *Guerreros Unidos*. The police and gunmen detained and disappeared 43 young men, shot and killed six other civilians - including three more students - and wounded a further 40. These events took place despite the heavy presence of Federal Police and the military in the town who were aware of the attacks. In the aftermath, more than a hundred suspects were detained, but the reasons for the attack, the failure of federal forces to stop it and the fate of the disappeared has not been clarified. The Federal government repeatedly claimed to have resolved the case arguing students were mistakenly caught in a turf war between rival drug gangs; that they were killed and their bodies burnt, and only local corrupt officials were implicated along with gang members. However, international experts (GIEI 2015a, 2015b; OACNUDH 2018), NGO lawyers and journalists demonstrated that these conclusions were not supported by the evidence. The reason for this cover-up has not been established but has fuelled suspicions of wider collusion between drug-traffickers and federal institutions (Hernández 2017). Despite the efforts of the Peña Nieto government to distance itself from the crimes, the narrative of state responsibility was a key element in the collapse in the administration's public credibility (Meneses Rocha et al. 2016).

A feature of the Iguala events was the complex and hybrid ways that information filtered into the public sphere of the attack and the role of diverse actors in reporting

indigenous, peasant backgrounds, to serve in local rural communities as teachers. This model of committed socialist education has been increasingly marginalized and underfunded as Mexico has adopted market driven economic reforms. In colleges like "Raul Isidro Burgos", left-wing ideology and collective action are nurtured by a strong student committee and their union, the Federation of Socialist Peasant Students of Mexico (FECSM). The college is also associated with Mexico's tradition of radical insurgents; for example, in the 1960s and 70s Lucio Cabañas, was a former student and teacher, who went on to lead an armed opposition group, Party of the Poor (*Partido de los Pobres*). In recent years, there have often been clashes with the authorities over their poor-treatment, lack of funding and other social causes. Commandeering private buses to mount protests - which was the purpose of the visit to Iguala on 26 September - and make road blocks as well as fundraising at motorway toll booths are part of the routine practices of *normalista* students in Guerrero to exert pressure on the authorities and sustain the impoverished college and students. The authorities and bus companies grudgingly endure these activities. However, in 2011 police shot and killed two Ayotzinapa students during a protest, increasing tensions and demands for justice. The college students have frequently been demonised in local and national mainstream media as retrograde and rebellious troublemakers (*revoltosos*) (Padilla 2009).

and framing them in terms the crisis of violence and human rights violations which the Peña Nieto government had attempted to exclude from the political agenda. Confused reports from residents, surviving students, and local journalists began to circulate on radio and social media, including audio and visual footage of the night of the attack. By the next day, tweets and posts, were circulating denouncing the involvement of police. State and national media began to report the killings and that more than 50 students had disappeared. The hashtags #Iguala, #Ayotzinapa and #TodosSomosAyotzinapa enabled information to circulate rapidly among media and solidarity networks. Independent and alternative media portals covered the emerging news, ensuring diversity of coverage and undercutting the federal government's attempt to shape the narrative. International correspondents were also quick to focus on the drama. This range of coverage helped provoke shock and indignation. This tapped into the wider sense of a human rights crisis.²³⁷

On 27 September, relatives of the disappeared students travelled to Iguala and Ayotzinapa to look for their sons. These were victims themselves struggling to understand what had happened. Lawyers from a local human rights NGOs, Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña 'Tlachinollan' gathered information, particularly to identify which students remained disappeared. The Centro Tlachinollan had worked with the Ayotzinapa students previously and enjoyed their trust.²³⁸ It took several days to clarify that 43 students had been detained and disappeared by police. National human rights NGO, Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Centro PRODH), supported this process, disseminating independent information of the attacks and disappearances.²³⁹ These respected civil society organizations ensured early challenges to the federal government's efforts to keep the issue at local level. They also

²³⁷ The visual image of one of the murdered victims whose disfigured body displayed horrific signs of torture caused widespread shock.

²³⁸ As a human rights researcher I visited the Ayotzinapa college in 2011 with Centro Tlachinollan human rights defenders. We gathered testimonies from student teachers who had been attacked during street protests in the state capital, Chilpancingo, which resulted in the two students being shot dead and more than 20 others suffering torture and other ill-treatment.

²³⁹ The international renowned Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) also assisted in the process of exhumation and identification of remains of bodies discovered in clandestine graves around Iguala.

distributed credible information to their pre-existing national and international human rights networks. Above all, the relationship they developed with the parents of the disappeared students enabled them to work together to sustain human rights demands.

The mobilizations began almost immediately, based on pre-existing network relations with local social and political groups in Guerrero and teaching unions. From 27 September relatives, students and unions carried out street protests, occupations of local radio stations, roadblocks and strikes across Guerrero state demanding the return alive of the disappeared.²⁴⁰ On 30 September in Mexico City, trade unions in a dispute at the National Polytechnic Institute adopted the parents' demands. On 2 October, the commemoration of 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre in Mexico City enabled surviving Ayotzinapa students to network directly with counterparts in the student movement in the capital.²⁴¹ This led to a Day of National Action on 8 October called by the parents and the Ayotzinapa student committee. Calls for the protest were circulated among rapidly reconfiguring digital activist networks, many of which had participated in YoSoy132. The appeal was also taken up by a broad range of unions, collectives, human rights NGOs, grassroots groups as well as the Zapatistas and their networks (González Villarreal 2015). The need for coordination of efforts to support the parents led more than fifty NGOs and groups to form a solidarity platform based in Mexico City. On 8 October there were coordinated protests in more than 64 towns and cities across the country and globally, with parents of the victims the focus of attention. The protests attracted significant international media interest at the scale of mass civic challenge to the authorities.

The central focus of the mobilization was on the parents and their disappeared students. These victims were ordinary poor indigenous people from heartland Mexico, who had become victims of the violence gripping the country because of the collusion

²⁴⁰ There were more than 25 demonstrations in six cities across Guerrero before 2 October.

²⁴¹ The Ayotzinapa delegation of students that had travelled to Iguala on 26 September were tasked with commandeering buses to enable the student cohort to travel to Mexico City for the annual commemoration the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre on 2 October.

between the authorities and drug gangs. In terms of framing analysis (Gamson 1992; Johnston et al. 2005), the 'we' were ordinary people; students, young people and parents. This was set against the 'them' of the corrupt and abusive state in collusion with criminal gangs. At the head of the state was Peña Nieto, whose efforts to limit culpability to local officials only suggested a deeper evasion of responsibility.²⁴² The movement demanded the return alive of the disappeared, and the full investigation of the crime, including the dignified treatment of the parents. Digital and social media helped promote and share this emotive narrative, capturing the diversity of the global mobilization, but also the dignified resistance of the parents (Meneses Rocha et al. 2016).

The infrastructure of coordination of the mobilization developed various strands which reflected the plural participation and internal movement debates, but also the challenges of articulation. On 10 October an Interuniversity Assembly was formed in Mexico City as a student platform to coordinate solidarity actions distinct from the NGO solidary platform. On 15 and 24 October, the *Asamblea Nacional Popular*, (ANP)²⁴³ was convened in the Ayotzinapa college to bring together traditional left-wing political and social organizations and trade unions, predominantly in Guerrero, to lead protests.²⁴⁴ Digital and social media uses were less embedded in ANP activists practices, which were more aligned with the radical contentious political culture of Guerrero, including assembly decision-making and protest practices of strikes, road blocks and occupations of municipal town halls, and sometime clashes with the police.²⁴⁵ Some actors in the ANP also aspired to a more radical agenda against the Peña Nieto structural reforms, hoping to use the mobilization as an opportunity to

²⁴² By November 2014 there was a rapid accumulation of other scandals affecting the government, particularly the 'Casa Blanca' case which implicated the president and his family in corruption. These reinforced the narrative of a PRI administration engaged in traditional graft, protection of vested interests and impunity, fatally damaging the its public relations image of national renewal and modernization.

²⁴³ Popular National Assembly

²⁴⁴ Acuerdos de la II Asamblea Nacional Popular en Tixtla, Guerrero. 2014. Available at: <http://mexico.indymedia.org/spip.php?article3409> [Accessed 4 June 2018].

²⁴⁵ The included incidents involving violence; for example, on 13 October some protesters set on fire government offices in Chilpancingo, Guerrero.

force concessions and potentially the fall of the government. Despite these differences, the parents remained the unifying focus of the mobilization.

On 22 October the first 'Global Action Day' involved more than 100,000 people marching in Mexico City and tens of thousands more in Guerrero and in other states as well as in 30 different countries. A series of Global Action Days followed in which protests were led by the parents and involved mass student strikes as well as solidarity actions in cities around the world.

On 7 November, the Federal Attorney General held a press conference to present the government's 'historic truth' of the official investigation. The conclusions were that the students had been detained by municipal police, handed over to criminals, then shot and their bodies burnt at a rubbish dump in Cocula, near Iguala. This version of events was based on testimony obtained from detainees. However, the official version received a sceptical response, particularly the reliability of the testimony and the absence of other evidence.²⁴⁶ Under questioning, the Federal Attorney General abruptly ended the press conference, saying 'ya me cansé' (I am tired). This expression was rapidly converted into a graffiti slogan and a hashtag #yamecanse ridiculing the government and its investigation. The hashtag was promoted on Twitter by activists, quickly turning it viral. This resulted in anonymous BOT attacks seeking to undermine the hashtag's trending status which was attracting international media attention as an expression of popular rejection of the government's handling of the case (Verkamp et al. 2013; Alberto Nájar 2015; Finley 2015; Suárez-Serrato et al. 2016).²⁴⁷ The Twitter battle became part of the contentious struggle to shape the narrative and resist obscure forces using cyberwarfare tactics to support the government.

²⁴⁶ Mexico's investigative authorities have a long tradition of using torture to extract false confessions from suspects in order to prosecute cases and secure unreliable convictions. Despite repeated calls for an end to these practices, they persist (Amnesty International 2014; UN Human Rights Council 2014a). Independent forensic investigations also demonstrated that the mass incineration of the victims was not scientifically possible in the manner claimed in the government's 'historic truth'.

²⁴⁷ These various studies have not proven the origin of the BOT attacks, but they illustrate the intentional strategy of contaminating the hashtag with BOTs, resulting in Twitter removing it from its trending lists. However, activists simply created a new hashtag, #yamecanse2, for example, which was also then attacked. Interestingly, this game of cat and mouse itself gained media attention, as activists reported on the process of BOTs seeking to undermine the online protest.

The attempt to present the investigation as concluded also increased street protests. These different pressures propelled the government to accept the technical support of the IACHR. On 18 November, the Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes (GIEI) was formed to assist the search for the students and to scrutinise the official investigation.²⁴⁸

Government allied media outlets and commentators strongly promoted its 'historic truth' and other counter-framing narratives attacking the Ayotzinapa students. Peña Nieto suggested that incidents of violence in some demonstration were intended to destabilise the country.²⁴⁹ In December, the increasing levels of protester and police violence and two months of constant street protests gradually led to reduced participation in protests.²⁵⁰ In addition, the growing presumption in public opinion, fostered by the government's 'historic truth', was that the 43 had been killed. This made it more difficult to sustain the urgency of the mobilizing demand for their return alive.²⁵¹

This also coincided with the ANP exercising increasing hierarchical control over the national and international protest movement from Guerrero. The ANP provided a vital base of committed social movement activists. However, this sidelined many participants and groups who were less militant, but had been involved informally and organically through the NGO Coordination platform or Interuniversity Assembly,

²⁴⁸ CIDH. (2014). 'CIDH oficializa acuerdo de cooperación técnica sobre estudiantes de Ayotzinapa, México'. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/prensa/comunicados/2014/136.asp> [Accessed 4 June 2018].

²⁴⁹ Palomec. J (2014). 'Peña Nieto denuncia "afán orquestado para desestabilizar al país'. Animal Político, Available at: <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/11/pena-nieto-advierte-de-afan-de-desestabilizar/> [Accessed 5 June 2018].

²⁵⁰ The largest Global Action Day took place on 20 November. As the demonstration ended, a small group of masked men attacked the national palace leading to more than 30 arrests. On 1 December, another march also involved violent incidents. Despite the parents disassociating themselves from the violence, the incident was widely reported in the mainstream media threatening to delegitimise protests in wider public opinion.

²⁵¹ For political, social and human rights activists, as well as the families, this remains a key demand to hold the authorities to account, but for ordinary citizens the likelihood that the 43 students were dead reduced the urgency or meaning of participating in the protests.

including more digitally oriented activists. In 2015, protests continued in Guerrero, but participation in the Global Action Days on 26th of each month declined. Nevertheless, a permanent protest encampment remained outside the offices of the PGR and other limited street and online actions kept the case visible.²⁵²

In the course of 2015 and 2016 the federal government negotiated on separate issues to demobilize several social organizations and trade unions which had participated in the movement. This reduced the organizational capacity to mount large scale protests. It also contributed to a reduced radicalism and diminished transformational ambitions as protests reduced in scale. Yet, this also re-centred attention on the particular demands of the families.

These demands were focused on supporting the work of the GIEI to enable an impartial and substantiated critique of the official investigation. In 2015 the GIEI published two reports which identified grave flaws in the official investigation, including the scientific impossibility of aspects of the government's 'historic truth'. The experts proposed continued lines of enquiry which official investigators had not followed or had dropped. These included clarifying the role of the army, a renewed search for the disappeared, investigation of allegations of torture of suspects and an enquiry into the manipulation of the investigation by senior officials (GIEI 2015b, 2015a). In response, the international experts came under increasing attack from government supporting newspapers and commentators, including personalised smear campaigns to undermine their professional credibility and demands for their mandate not to be renewed.²⁵³ Human rights defenders working with the parents and students were also subject to smear campaigns in the media and threats. The Federal Government refused to repudiate the attacks, in effect tacitly endorsing them as part of a strategy to delegitimise the GIEI's critical findings. In spite of the government's public promise to

²⁵² As part of my field research I observed a street demonstration outside the Supreme Court to mark 26 March 2016 as well as the encampment outside the PGR offices.

²⁵³ It also subsequently emerged that the experts and human rights lawyers working on the case had also been subject to digital surveillance using the government bought Pegasus software (Article 19 et al. 2017).

act on the GIEI findings, it repeatedly failed to ensure a full investigation of the disappearances, including the involvement of federal authorities (Villegas et al. 2016).²⁵⁴

Despite these obstacles, in 2018 the parents continued to demand truth and justice with the support of NGO partners and the coalition of national and international solidarity groups.²⁵⁵ The movement was smaller, organized around the legal strategy of the human rights NGOs and the mobilizing support of grassroots social movement activists and networked student and Zapatista support groups. There were also multiple artistic projects supporting the parents' struggle for justice that travelled nationally and internationally, engaging the public imagination and keeping attention on the case. There was no longer the capacity to mount mass protests, but there was sufficient support to enact smaller coordinated protests on key dates as part of the ongoing advocacy strategy. In this context, digital and social media was used more strategically to activate networks when necessary and maintain information flows on the struggle of the families. In addition, the parents of the 43, some of whom had taken up social media to promote their continuing demands, also increasingly took part in joint activities with other groups of families searching for their disappeared, including those that emerged from MPJD. The families of the Ayotzinapa 43 also played an important role in supporting wider demands for a national law on enforced disappearances and a national search mechanism to locate the thousands of disappeared. In September 2018, the families also entered into discussion with AMLO's transition team regarding the establishment of a Truth Commission for the case.

The Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization passed through several different stages; from raw spontaneous emotional response to the crisis of violence and human rights violations

²⁵⁴ In March 2018, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a highly critical report of the official investigation of the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), endorsing the findings of the GIEI (OACNUDH 2018). In June 2018, a federal Mexican court took the unprecedented step of ordering a Truth Commission to reinvestigate the case as the investigation by the PGR had not been prompt, effective, independent or impartial.

²⁵⁵ However, developing a mobilizing narrative to include dimensions of the GIEI technical legal recommendations was also complex, making it more difficult to foster broad based participation beyond the more visceral appeal of the parents and their struggle.

embodied in the enforced disappearance of 43 young men; to mass horizontal collective mobilization in solidarity with families and demanding the transformation of the State; and then to smaller more vertically organized political mobilization supporting the legal strategy of the human rights NGOs. Digital and social media featured as part of the mobilization process and the wider media environment. Throughout the families remained central to the cohesion and identity of the movement. While the movement's aims have still to be fulfilled, the case and the social mobilization had a profound impact on the credibility of the PRI government, contributing to its electoral defeat in July 2018, and evidencing the capacity of civil society actors to challenge the institutions of Mexico's partial democracy. It is these dynamics, and the particular understanding of the uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media that is explored in the case study chapter.

5.5 Conclusion

The three movements all emerged in the aftermath of human rights violations, manipulative responses by powerholders and shared public indignation. They relied on organizing actors reaching out to sympathetically oriented networks, generating protest and solidarity actions online and offline challenging the conduct of institutional actors and demanding forms of social transformation. This cycle of plural independent civic action in the face of injustice, violence and powerholder impunity did not necessarily achieve the specific objectives of each movement, but significantly impacted the public sphere through political contention. Different academic studies have examined aspects of each movement, particularly in relation to the organizational configuration and political impacts. However, this research argues each represented a plural assertion of citizenship based on the moral legitimacy of civil society to resist the 'legitimation crisis' and abuses of Mexico's partial democracy. Intrinsic to this process, though not necessarily explicit or central, was the mobilization of human rights discourse and digital and social media as part of the repertoire of collective action whose dynamics and meaning are explored in the following case study chapters.

Chapter 6

Movement for Peace and Justice with Dignity (MPJD): data analysis and findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative data gathered in interviews with participants in the MPJD, other social activists who collaborated with the movement and journalists who followed it closely. The first section of the chapter analyses how increasing embeddedness of human rights discourse enabled widespread recognition of the national crisis as well as shaping the movement orientation through the involvement of networked human rights activists. It also explores how human rights discourse was mobilized to reinforce the concrete claims-making and agency of victims. However, the findings suggest that human rights discourse was not understood as the primary mobilizing frame or narrative (Gamson et al. 1996; Della Porta et al. 2006) of the movement. In addition, human rights discourse only facilitated an initial and inadequate articulation of plural actors in the movement. The human rights strategy adopted helped to secure institutional concessions around greater recognition of the rights of victims, but not to sustain the plural engagement of civil society actors in the struggle for more substantive social and political transformation to address the violence and underlying democratic deficits.

The second section examines the media and social media environment in which the MPJD emerged, struggled to forge a collective identity and secure change through collective action. This finds that digital media disruptions of the media ecology by 2011 were enabling more diverse voices to reach growing audiences which could no longer be ignored by mainstream media (Couldry et al. 2003). The MPJD was a relatively traditional movement reliant on central leadership and SMO support to secure mainstream media coverage. However, the strategic use of digital and social media significantly contributed to lowering communications costs (Earl et al. 2011) and to rapid extension of networks. Social media platforms also helped communicate and

share the expressive aspects of the movement narrative and identity focused on the victims (Papacharissi 2015). Despite the increasing potential for individualised horizontal digital participation in counter-publics, the MPJD social media practices did not reflect widespread digital deliberative or connective action features (Bennett et al. 2013) more associated with subsequent movements. Activists also struggled to appreciate and quantify potential threats posed by digital media, but there was increasing awareness of the importance of digital and social media skills in contentious social mobilizations.

In the case of both human rights discourse and social media uses, the evidence indicates how practices were rooted in the social and political context, with activists using adaptive approaches, including critical self-reflection, to enhance the mobilization and understand its different dimensions.

6.2 Context and trigger event

The increasing recognition of the crisis of violence and human rights violations affecting the country predated the trigger event, but this enabled Javier Sicilia's initial response to find a receptive national audience. Human rights discourse featured as part of this diagnostic, but was not its main frame of reference.

For all those interviewed, by early 2011, the escalating crisis provoked by Calderon's 'war on the cartels' was increasingly visible. The 'war' was not only not reducing criminality, but militarization had spread violence to many regions. There were local civil society efforts to denounce disappearances in Chihuahua, Coahuila and Nuevo Leon, student mobilizations against militarization, demands for communities displaced by the violence to receive support in cities like Ciudad Juarez and calls for investigations into killings of journalists and human rights activists. These initiatives were fragmented, reflecting the challenges of civil society actors to find routes to collectively challenge the multidimensional violence in a partial democracy.

In most parts of the country the victims of the violence, including relatives, were unheard and stigmatised. However, interviewees recognised how the killing of Juan Francisco Sicilia proved different. In part, as it immediately resulted in spontaneous local community expressions of grief and solidarity. But above all, as Javier Sicilia used his status as a trusted national figure and public intellectual to act as a figurehead for a national civil society movement. In this context, the crisis affecting the country was already visible in the form of widespread criminal violence and human rights violations by police and military. The trigger event enabled these latent and fragmented critical perspectives to find a collective form and take shape in the MPJD. This was focused on the positive message of rebuilding dignity and accountability on the basis of the normative aspiration of human rights, not populist demands for more hard-line security measures.²⁵⁶

Three interviewees felt that the incipient MPJD attracted wide support as it was the first organized civil society attempt to draw together different critical interpretations of the violence and democratic deficits underlying the crisis into something like a coherent grievance analysis: 'había varias movilizaciones en momentos importantes de las víctimas pero fue hasta el Movimiento por la Paz con Javier Sicilia que se logró colocar una mirada más del origen del problema'.²⁵⁷ But this was not only a rational critique of the violence but one imbued with emotional and moral resonance of a 'moral shock' (Jasper 1997). Javier Sicilia's personal protest included a wider plea to civil society to rebuild democracy: he called for the people to restore: 'el amor, la paz, la justicia, la dignidad y la balbuciente democracia que estamos perdiendo' (Sicilia 2011b). This explicitly pointed to the failures of the democratic transition and the crisis of values that the war had produced. Human rights discourse featured as a legitimised and recognised marker for understanding the failure of the democratic transition, and projecting the idealised society that collective action could build. However, he spoke in terms rooted in national spiritual renewal and the moral qualities of the people and

²⁵⁶ In 2008 there had been anti-crime mobilizations supported by civil society groups allied to the federal government, promoting even harder-line security policies.

²⁵⁷ 'There had been earlier protests by victims at important moments, but it was the MPJD with Javier Sicilia that managed to publicly position an analysis more about the origin of the problem'(LT/PA/IMJ).

civil society (in contrast with the failures of institutions and abuses by powerholders), not the discourse of human rights. This motivating ideal only changed partly with the emergence of the support networks and SMOs rooted in the national human rights movement which shaped the movement's nascent infrastructure and orienting practices.

6.3 Orienting networks and human rights discourse

Different networked actors and social movement traditions, which included important human rights dimensions, had a shaping influence on the MPJD. Human rights discourse was adapted to more clearly address the situation of victims of the violence, but it only remained one dimension of the plural networks which participated in the movement.

When Juan Francisco Sicilia was killed, his father was out of the country. The initial public actions were organized by the network of family, friends, associates, artists and sympathizers with longstanding activist traditions: 'Cuernavaca es muy coyuntural... tiene una tradición de lucha social muy vieja... con asesinato de Juan Francisco Sicilia se reactivan muchas cosas'.²⁵⁸ Personal ties played an important role in the recruitment process: 'mi compañera y mi jefa, son de las que llevan flores... lo que se convirtió en una ofrenda y ahora es una memorial de víctimas... y eso es mi involucramiento inicial'.²⁵⁹ Local activists also had links to a wide range of other networks, including human rights activists but also church-based progressives. For example, Pietro Ameglio, activated his network of students and contacts: 'recibí una llamada de Pietro Ameglio, un catedrático que conocía. Había atendido uno de sus talleres sobre la no-violencia. Me invitó a participar'.²⁶⁰ Simultaneous, to these traditional face-to-face, phone and email networked contacts, the internet and social media rapidly facilitated contact between diverse distributed actors concerned at the violence in Mexico and

²⁵⁸ 'Cuernavaca is very receptive to the political climate... it has a very long history of social struggles... with the murder of Juan Francisco Sicilia many things were reactivated'(IK/CSS/NGOCP).

²⁵⁹ 'my partner and boss were among those who laid flowers... which became a memorial and which is now a victims' memorial... that was my first involvement'(IK/CSS/NGOCP).

²⁶⁰ 'I received a call from Pietro Ameglio, a professor I knew. I had been in one of his workshops on non-violent resistance. He invited me to participate' (RG/CSS). For previous reference to Pietro Ameglio, see section 5.2.

inspired by Javier Sicilia's call. This process forged new contacts as well as enabling coordination and feedback on actions, involving citizens across Mexico but also in the US, Europe, Japan and other parts of Latin America to participate in the first large demonstrations.

When Javier Sicilia started his protest, he was joined by friends, victims and supporters from Mexico City and beyond. This included Emilio Álvarez Icaza and the human rights NGOs, CENCOS and SERAPAZ. All were embedded in the national human rights movement, but also had links to grassroots social movement activism. This increased the MPJD brokerage²⁶¹ capacity with other human rights and diverse social activist networks, including transnational actors and groups. They also brought the movement material resources, as well as the organizational and communications skills; acting as social movement organizations (SMOs) (McCarthy et al. 1977). This rapid inclusion of skilled and well-known human rights activists provided the resources necessary to facilitated mobilization, but also oriented the movement towards human rights discourse, which Javier Sicilia had only referred to in general terms in his early statements.

However, human rights discourse was not a simple fit for the increasingly plural participants in the movement. For example, most of the rapidly incorporating victims into the network had limited knowledge and experience of human rights discourse. Their priority was the return of their abducted relatives and for the perpetrators of killings and disappearances to be held to account by whatever means. This was sometimes expressed more in terms of revenge: 'recuerdo mucho la radicalidad en el discurso de [xxxx]... Es brutal... no pasa por los derechos humanos, sino agarrarlos [los sospechosos]... más la lógica de linchamiento'.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Brokerage is "the capacity to connect sectors of a movement who hold different stances and world views" (Diani & McAdam 2003, p14).

²⁶² 'I really remember how radical XXXX's discourse was. Brutal... it wasn't really human rights, rather just seize them (the suspects)... it was more a logic of lynching'(MP/NGOCP).

This reflected popular sentiment that endorsed violent action against criminal suspects without regard to human rights, particularly given the state's routine failure to detain, prosecute and convict perpetrators. This was also a sentiment fostered in parts of the popular media. In this context, human rights protections were frequently perceived as an obstacle to making criminals 'pay'. As a result, the demands of victims of non-political 'ordinary' crime, as opposed to victims of human rights violations committed by state agents, had often not seemed to coincide with state-centric focus of traditional NGO approaches to human rights claims-making. The MPJD faced the challenge of overcoming these different perspectives, which included innovating and reorienting human rights discourse to more clearly integrate the experience of all victims of violent crime. This implied not only focusing on the state as perpetrator, but also invoking the state's responsibility to protect through the effective prevention, investigation and punishment of non-state actor criminals.²⁶³ Nevertheless, tensions continued between human rights discourse and the approach of some victims.

Another feature of the complex set of network connections of the movement was how the solidarity supporters were drawn from a wide range of contexts and struggles. These included diverse political activists and collectives, such as the Zapatistas, students mobilized against militarization and left-wing anti-system activists. Some of these actors were ambivalent about human rights discourse. There were also many faith-oriented individuals or groups who identified with Javier Sicilia's catholic humanist activism. These networks also enjoyed multiple connections to international solidarity networks, including the global human rights movement, trade union sector, church activists as well as the Mexican student and migrant diasporas. These plural national and international groups shared solidarity with the victims and a rejection of

²⁶³ Such approaches existed, including regional efforts to rearticulate human rights protections as a means to better uphold citizen security in the context of widespread criminal violence (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) 2009). However, human rights NGOs and the international human rights movement remained more actively focused on cases in which state agents or their proxies were implicated in violations, rather than the failure of the state to protect citizens from abuses by third parties. Work on gender-based violence gradually changed this outlook and NGOs such FUNDEC and CADHAC increasingly adopted this approach by 2009 in relation to the wider violence.

the 'war', but did not necessarily hold the same political beliefs or tactical vision, including about the role of human rights.

As a result, while key network actors around Javier Sicilia were embedded in the human rights movement with a range of experiences and skills orienting the mobilization, many other actors, particularly the victims, were not straightforwardly committed to human rights approaches beyond their immediate usefulness. As a result, human rights discourse was only one dimension of the mobilization process.

6.4 Framing peace, injustice, dignity for victims

This section examines collective action frames (Della Porta & Diani 2006; Snow et al. 1986; Gamson & Meyer 1996) adopted by the MPJD. These were primarily based on the raw experience of the victims, rather than human rights discourse. As such, they facilitated a direct emotional connection and solidarity. It also enabled different dimensions of the human crisis affecting the country to receive public attention in a language rooted in domestic reality. Human rights discourse provided an underlying support for this narrative, but it was not the primary mobilizing frame.

Despite the orientation of several key movement actors toward human rights discourse, most participants and observers did not view it as a human rights movement. They did not consider the movement's collective action frames as human rights focused, either in terms of developing identity for recruitment or to target public opinion to 'mobilize consensus' (Tarrow 1998: p6). Instead, the injustice and ill-treatment suffered by the victims and the need for all parties to stop the violence was the primary mobilizing narrative of the movement. The movement appealed to the moral legitimacy generated by the suffering of the victims and their individual cases in order to highlight how the violence was affecting ordinary people and how the state was either involved or not fulfilling its duties and stigmatising victims.

As one volunteer activist, who became an SMO digital communications staffer, observed: 'Todo ese lenguaje de derechos humanos lo teníamos en la cabeza... Pero lo

que caracterizó el movimiento fue el cambio del discurso, porque no era el discurso de una ONG tradicional. Era el discurso de las víctimas'.²⁶⁴

This approach also reflected a different quality of the movement; that it was primarily focused on the subjective experience of the victims in their own voices. This facilitated emotional identification in terms of sympathy with victims but also a sense of shared anger at their treatment. The emotional expressiveness of these frames (Jasper 1998; Flam et al. 2007; Goodwin et al. 2009) was important for movement recruitment among victims and solidarity supporters as well as for developing credibility with the wider public and a practical sense of addressing the violence:

‘ese discurso no se conocía en México. Era difícil responder, porque le dio una superioridad moral al discurso del movimiento. Que no se estaba hablando de lo que es correcto o incorrecto; o del teórico... establecido en algún tratado...Era hablar de la experiencia... Justamente este discurso de derechos humanos, lo teníamos consciente... Pero salió influido por el dolor de las víctimas. No se decía que el gobierno mexicano está obligado respetar los derechos humanos. Es que hay un problema de violencia, y en el caso de María Herrera es tal, tal y tal’.²⁶⁵

Victims spoke in their own words, including Javier Sicilia in his poetically charged language, expressing their own pain and anger. This more direct representation of the experience of victims became a key feature of the movement; a form of ‘bearing witness’ (Kurasawa 2009) to validate and communicate their claims - much of these testimonies were available and circulated on social media. For many of those participating in various roles in the movement, they understood this as different from the traditional human rights NGOs engaged in advocacy campaigns or litigation. The latter frequently involve activists and lawyers speaking on behalf of victims of

²⁶⁴ ‘All that language of human rights we had in our heads... but what characterised the movement was the change in discourse, because it was not the discourse of the traditional NGOs. It was the discourse of the victims’(EG/CSS/NGOCP).

²⁶⁵ ‘that discourse was not known in Mexico. It was difficult to respond to, because it gave a moral superiority to the movement discourse. It was not speaking about what was correct or incorrect; or about theory... established in some treaty... It was speaking about experience... yes we were conscious of that humans rights discourse... But what emerged was influenced by the pain of the victims. It wasn’t about saying that the Mexican government didn’t respect human rights... more that there is a problem of violence, and in María Herrera’s case it is this, this and that’ (EG/CSS/NGOCP).

violations or focusing on law or institutional reform, deploying technical legal terms about the obligation of the state to uphold international human rights law. This was viewed as the typical use of human rights discourse to frame a narrative as part of strategic lobbying or case work.

The sense of innovation and culturally rooted moral superiority of the discourse of victims contrasts with negative views of MPJD participants and journalists that I interviewed toward the explicit and centre-stage use of human rights discourse to mobilize support. This was regarded as technical, legalistic and alienating for most ordinary people: 'El tema de derechos humanos no es muy atractivo' and 'a la mayoría gruesa de la gente no tiene una noción de que son los derechos humanos y para que sirvan'.²⁶⁶ However, interviewees also acknowledged the role played by Emilio Álvarez Icaza as the movement figure most identified with the public framing of movement concerns in terms of human rights discourse, which was particularly targeted at international human rights bodies and institutional actors.

Another aspect of centre-staging the experience of victims of the violence, regardless of whether they were victims of state violations or non-state actor criminal gangs, was to expose the similarities in their experiences. This included the discrimination, humiliation and abandonment they suffered at the hands of the state. Framing the struggle by and for the victims in terms of truth and access to justice, the movement overcame some of the divisions that had previously hindered relations between different groups of victims.

The caravans of victims and activists also engaged the movement with a wide range of victims and contexts. This brought to public attention a hidden reality affecting ordinary people in neglected regions besieged by violence. The caravans also provided a dramatic setting in which victims from many different walks of life could spontaneously come forward to recount their cases and seek support:

²⁶⁶ 'The issue of human rights is not very attractive' and 'a large majority of people don't have any idea of what human rights are and what they are for' (XK/J).

‘En las caravanas, instalaban mesas y llegaba gente y empezaba a decir, nuestro desaparecido se llama tal, lo desaparecieron tal día, lo vi la última vez... es decir llegaba cualquier ciudadano’.²⁶⁷

This also illustrated how victims were different from traditional conception of victims of human rights violations, who were usually associated with state repression of political or social activists. These victims were drawn from a wide cross-section of society, not usually involved political activism. In this context, focus on the experience and identity of the victims as ordinary people resonated culturally in a way that human rights discourse did not. The caravans shifted the focus of the movement strongly behind ordinary non-political victims and reframed the reality of the violence as a national emergency: ‘el MPJD logró colocarlo como tragedia nacional... lo más importante que logró... dar las víctimas voz... empoderarles’.²⁶⁸

This does not mean that human rights talk was excluded from the public discourse and actions of the MPJD, particularly those focused on international and institutional fora. However, it was not understood as a central feature of the collective identity or mobilizing narrative. In particular, the movement wanted to avoid the narrow legalistic and elite approach often identified with the practices of some human rights NGOs.

6.5 Human rights and victim agency

‘I think that is where we had impact... empowering victims... giving them knowledge to understand how their rights were violated so they could argue with the government which of their rights it was violating’²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ ‘During the caravans, they put up tables, people would arrive and would begin to say, our disappeared relative is called such and such, he was disappeared on this day, I saw him for the last time... that is, just ordinary citizens’ (RM/J).

²⁶⁸ ‘the MPJD managed to frame it as a national tragedy... the most important thing it achieved... was to give voice to the victims... empower them’ (VX/CSS).

²⁶⁹ Original in English (TV/SA/NGOP).

Despite human rights not featuring as the primary narrative of the movement, according to many participants, human rights approaches facilitated the analysis by victims of their cases and their treatment by the state. This enabled victims themselves to formulate concrete claims in terms of the state's failure to fulfil its obligations.

The engagement with different types of victims, particularly during the caravans, enabled many to come into contact for the first time with social activists and NGOs as well as other victims already actively working on their own cases. This has parallels with Merry's (2006b) process of 'vernacularization' of international human rights to local contexts. Human rights discourse can facilitate victims understanding their cases and what they can legitimately demand from the authorities, enabling them to look beyond what police, prosecutors and judges say they are doing to carry out domestic law – assertions which victims often feel powerless to challenge. Instead, human rights discourse establishes a universal standard with which to challenge the conduct of local officials. In the MPJD's case, this facilitated an analysis of cases that identified specific failings in the duty to protect and investigate as well as search for the disappeared – even when there was no evidence that perpetrators were state agents. This did not guarantee results, but it re-enforced the status of demands of relatives for official action and to expose non-compliance. This gave a more concrete dimension to the claims against the authorities and reduced the relative inequality of power between public official and petitioning citizen.²⁷⁰

A solidarity activist who participated in the caravans observed how the movement played an important role promoting: 'otra mentalidad entre las víctimas, no de venganza pero de justicia, y de que se acabe la impunidad... que realmente pague por su delito... de la justicia retributiva y a la justicia restaurativa'.²⁷¹ However, this process was not necessarily smooth or universal: 'es una batalla interna de estos tipos de

²⁷⁰ As a human rights researcher, I observed on several occasions the transformation of victims from passive traumatized petitioners of the justice system to active and demanding rights-holders vocally claiming their rights from state officials who were unaccustomed to answering for their actions or inaction.

²⁷¹ 'a different mentality among the victims, not of vengeance but of justice, to end impunity... so that those really responsible pay for their crime... from a retributive justice to a restorative justice' (VK/SCC).

espacios ...es de tratar de convencerles que los derechos humanos son algo positiva en la vida'.²⁷²

Despite these challenges, many victims vocal in the movement went on to form their own groups and collectives, becoming vigorous advocates of the rights of victims and the search for the disappeared. This suggests the 'translation' or 'socialization' process played an important role in making human rights relevant and useful to the victims as well as helping develop their own political subjectivity as part of their long-term struggle.²⁷³

Interestingly, the strengthened agency and confidence of these groups of victims has also frequently challenged traditional approaches to human rights. For example, in the face of continual official resistance to carry out timely and effective searches and exhumations to locate and identify the disappeared, many victims' groups have developed their own autonomous practices of citizens' search parties to locate and expose clandestine graves. This proactive approach not only exposes the state's negligence and misconduct, but also challenges the typical logic of international human rights law which is focused on state action to fulfil legal obligations, not citizens fulfilling those functions. Victims' groups decided they could not wait for a complicit state to act. This innovative approach to citizen agency is indicative of how victims groups have developed into active agents challenging both the state and human rights experts to make human rights meaningful in the context of a negligent or captured (although apparently democratic) state.²⁷⁴

²⁷² 'It is an internal battle in those spaces... it's about trying to convince them that human rights are something positive in life' (AS/NGOP).

²⁷³ However, it is important to stress that this was not socialization by elite international human rights lawyers, rather local activists sharing their knowledge and relatives engaging directly with the process of demanding to review their case files with the authorities and supported by local NGO activists.

²⁷⁴ This example is important as it illustrates that socialization is not necessarily in one direction as human rights experts are also forced to incorporate these citizen-led initiatives into demands for measures to improve access to truth and justice which take into account the configuration of a 'captured' State.

Despite human rights discourse not being foregrounded in the movement framing narrative, its adoption as part of claims making processes by victims was felt by most interviewees to be one of the lasting contributions of the MPJD. This also reflects how human rights discourse can have expressive and value functions for movement participants, which cannot be reduced to instrumental purposes targeted at powerholders. However, its role in enabling the articulation of plural movement actors was more ambiguous.

6.6 Human rights discourse in movement articulation

Among interviewees there was a range of understandings about the role played by human rights discourse in the movement, particularly in relation to strategic objectives. On the one hand, this reflected its function as legitimized discourse enabling a minimum level of consensus between the separate elements of the movement coalition, but on the other, the trap implied by a focus on institution-building inherent in human rights advocacy strategies.

According to interviewees, the MPJD coalition was made up, at least initially, of these different groupings: a) victims (including direct and indirect victims), b) social movement activists committed to grass roots autonomous social mobilization processes, c) human rights activists and human rights NGO staff, d) left-wing political activists of various hues, e) individual or small group civil society solidarity sympathizers, including faith-based supporters, academics, artists, public intellectuals etc.

These different groups of actors represented various interests, beliefs and outlooks, many overlapping. The victims were primarily focused on the securing advances in their individual cases, confronting the authorities in order to achieve these ends. The more ideologically left-wing political activists understood the movement as an opportunity to confront the neoliberal Calderon government, particularly its 'war against the cartels' and militarization. Social movement activists shared much of this political analysis, but were more concerned with constructing a broad movement capable of

mobilizing citizens in agency affirming contentious collective action. This sector also recognized the importance of taking up the cause of the victims of the 'war' while also demanding the structural transformation of Mexico's captured democracy. Human rights activists tended to focus on those aspects of the conflict which generated specific human rights violations, such as disappearances and the use of the armed forces in policing functions. The few local human rights NGOs in regions affected by violence were focused on accompanying relatives in their truth and justice demands. Solidarity activists were also committed to the struggle of the victims for truth and justice, but were less ideological and more focused on symbolic support in protests and other expressive events.²⁷⁵ The range of these actors and interests challenged the capacity of strategic coordination, cohesive identity and sustaining a minimum common agenda - Jasper's 'dilemma of movement extension' (2014).

In April 2011, Javier Sicilia's call to action raised great expectations among social activist participants:

'ese momento fue de la mayor confluencia... se juntaron las expectativas de un movimiento contra la guerra... con lo que estaba generando entorno al Movimiento por la Paz y encima de eso, la agenda de la situación nacional, por eso los 6 puntos que sacó Javier Sicilia en el Zócolo llegaron a crear de pronto expectativas muy altas, porque esos 6 puntos se asumió como la agenda de todo el mundo... como esa primera gran expectativa que esto iba a cargar, el gran movimiento, hablaba de movimiento de movimientos.²⁷⁶

The six points of the Pact for Peace served as the basis for the agenda of the Peace Dialogues with the government, which some have argued were a deliberative civil society engagement with democratic process (Azola 2012).²⁷⁷ However, the agenda

²⁷⁵ The emergence of the movement also led to the adherence of other groups not directly related to Calderon's 'war', but focused on different forms of abuse of power and impunity, such as the families of the 49 children killed in the ABC nursery fire in 2009 and the Huichol indigenous community protest about extractive industry threats to their ancestral Wirikuta site.

²⁷⁶ 'That was the moment of greatest confluence... expectations of a movement against the war joined together... with what was being generated around the movement for peace, and above all, an agenda for the national situation, for that reason the 6 points that Javier Sicilia announced in the zocalo began to create high expectations, because those 6 points were taken up as the agenda of everyone... as the first great hope that this agenda was going to forge a great movement, a movement of movements' (EX/NGOP).

²⁷⁷ Refer to footnote 199 for details of the six points.

soon narrowed to limited human rights reforms focused on institution building, marginalizing efforts to address structural causes of the 'violence'. As a result, the more transformative agenda proved difficult to ground in the political reality, particularly the urgent need to obtain results for desperate victims, the lack of internal movement consensus and government demobilization tactics. In the face of unresolved discussion between different movement actors, movement leaders exercised executive control over the objectives, strategy and tactics of the movement. According to three interviewees, this style of hierarchical decision-making dissatisfied more radical social movement and political activists, and ultimately some victims' groups. As a result, various more left-wing political groups and social activists stepped back from the movement. However, the leadership decision also ensured a pragmatic focus on the needs of victims, the core movement constituency, resulting in the prioritization of institutional human rights demands.

Many of the participants in the movement had differing views on these choices and their implications. For example:

'la puesta de Javier y Emilio, en esa conducción siempre fue por el dialogo... hablaban con todo el mundo, con las autoridades, con la gente de derecha... para posicionar el tema de las víctimas'.²⁷⁸

'No one said it was going to be democratic and the poet has a very particular way of doing his own thing. It was very centralised around the poet. A lot of things were discussed but eventually things had to go'.²⁷⁹

'Creo que ese debate no existía, y constantemente podías notar como había incomodidades, como que se notaba que era un debate que se tiene que dar, pero que no existía... en el contenido de que significa hablar de derechos, que significa luchar... esa reflexión no se dio, sino se resolvió en el día a día y las formas de organización'.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ 'Javier and Emilio's bet, in their leadership, was always for dialogue... they talked to everyone, with the authorities, with the people on the right... in order to position the issue of the victims' (FX/NGOCP).

²⁷⁹ Original in English (TV/CSS/NGOCP).

²⁸⁰ 'I don't think the debate really existed, you could constantly sense discomfort, as if it was a debate that you knew there should be but which didn't happen... what it meant to talk about human rights, what it meant to be in the struggle... there wasn't really that reflection... instead things were just resolved in the day to day activity of the movement and the organizational practice' (QT/NGOCP).

This suggests that many of these tensions, particularly around approaches to human rights and other agenda issues, were not openly addressed in the movement, despite being unresolved and contentious. They remained just below the surface, secondary to the constant daily pressure to generate and sustain the mobilization.

This led to an increasingly pragmatic focus on the needs of victims in terms of human rights: ‘cuando ya se traduce en exigir cuentas, investigaciones... tiene que entrar necesariamente... los derechos humanos’.²⁸¹ The focus on human rights came to the fore in the roundtable discussions of the Peace Dialogue with the government, then in the drive to secure the General Law on Victims:

‘estratégicamente se terminó colocando (las exigencias) en derechos humanos, porque cuando tienes que hablar con el Subsecretario de Gobernación terminas hablando de derechos humanos, al final es el discurso políticamente correcto para entablar un diálogo.’²⁸²

However, interviewees with more political and social activist backgrounds in the MPJD remained sceptical about this narrowing focus on human rights to articulate the movement’s demands. These concerns appeared on several levels. Firstly, human rights discourse was perceived as technical and legal. From this perspective, a human rights focus tended to result in legal disputes involving lawyers and professional NGOs, marginalising the claims-making and the agency of victims themselves and social activists committed to grassroots collective action.²⁸³ Secondly, the advocacy of formal legal protection of human rights often seemed to ignore the underlying political realities which meant such legal protections would not be upheld by institutions

²⁸¹ ‘when it comes to translating into demands for accountability, investigations... human rights necessarily have to enter’ (XK/J).

²⁸² ‘Strategically they ended up using human rights to frame demands, because when you have to speak to the Deputy Interior Minister you end up speaking about human rights, in the end it is the politically correct discourse for entering into dialogue’ (QT/NGOCP).

²⁸³ In the case of the MPJD, the hundreds of individual cases gathered during and after the caravans challenged the very principle of individual case accompaniment as neither the movement nor local or national NGOs had the capacity to take on all cases, and the selection of individual test cases also risked privileging certain victims to the exclusion of others, increasing movement divisions. The MPJD leadership sought to avoid becoming a traditional NGO which implied legally representing certain victims and not others.

captured by vested interests. This reflected the risk of focusing on legal instantiation to the exclusion of the political struggle necessary to ensure the actual enforcement of human rights (Goodhart 2013). Thirdly, the technical human rights approach had the virtue of appearing politically neutral, especially for attracting international NGO support (Bob 2005) and appealing to the media: ‘para hacer que los medios de comunicación no nos tachan de rojillos’.²⁸⁴ However, it also hindered a more politically integrated critique of the underlying drivers to human rights violations, such as inequality, poverty, corruption and the unaccountable power of political and economic elites.

‘lograron al interior armar muy bien con todas las organizaciones de derechos humanos... entonces las organizaciones de derechos humanos pudieron hacer clic muy rápido, ...podrían participar de forma más clara en el Movimiento por la paz. Pero al momento de hacer una reflexión más estructural acerca de lo que estaba pasando con la violencia en México, y cuáles eran las relaciones entre narco y el Estado y la impunidad y tal, yo siento que el lenguaje de los derechos humanos fue una traba’.²⁸⁵

However, another participant understood that human rights discourse enabled the movement to specify concrete objectives in favour of victims that avoided more nebulous and unrealistic political demands. In discussions with the government, ‘todo era derechos humanos’.²⁸⁶ However, even those who believed that human rights discourse offered the most effective means of advancing the movement’s commitment to victims were concerned when proposals under discussion in the Peace Dialogue working groups became embroiled in technical legal discussions about institutional reforms.

Two interviewees considered that the Dialogues’ process unwittingly allowed the agenda to be shaped by the government. The primary political pressure of the

²⁸⁴ ‘ensure that the media did not smear us as lefties’ (QT/NGOCP)

²⁸⁵ ‘Internally they managed to organize it well with all the human rights NGOs... so that the human rights NGOs could “click-in” really quickly... so that they could participate in a clear way in the MPJD. But on making a more structural reflection about what was happening with the violence in Mexico, what were the connections between the narcos and the State, and impunity etc, I felt that the language of human rights was a hinderance’ (QT/NGOCP).

²⁸⁶ ‘everything was human rights’ (FX/NGOCP).

movement was generated by and through the victims, therefore the government's priority was focused on providing 'administrative' responses to their demands or by trying to co-opt subgroups of victims to weaken the movement. In retrospect, one interviewee observed how this also changed the plural transformative identity of the movement: 'Poco a poco, todas esas agendas se iban centralizando, y al final el MPJD se volvió en un movimiento de víctimas'.²⁸⁷

Human rights discourse provided a degree of internal consensus among diverse social actors, encouraging victims' agency through legitimised claims-making against the state and enabling the movement to promote a model of institution building in the General Law on Victims. However, as technical legal expertise increasingly came to the fore in this institutionalisation process, so the mobilization focused on law reform and advocacy strategies at the cost of more contentious collective action. It could be argued that the result was a successfully approved law, but insufficient civil society mobilization to sustain contentious pressure on the authorities to invest the political will and resources to ensure its effective implementation.

Exhaustion and increasing internal divisions reduced the mobilization after the success of the law. An SMO participant interviewee summarised some of these tensions, including around the purpose and natural life-span of the movement:

'Me pregunta era que es un movimiento social... te conviertes en una ONG y trabajas en la agenda o desapareces. Si tú contribución es haber dejado la discusión de la situación de las víctimas, de la ley, de la guerra contra las drogas, haber visibilizado la desaparición, eso es tu contribución. Me parece que nadie lo tenía claro entre los movimientos y los familiares que a veces no se encontraba, porque el familiar busca su familiar y quiere justicia, y los otros estaban reflexionando sobre la política pública'.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ 'Bit by bit, all the agendas were centralizing, and in the end the movement became a victims' movement' (EX/NGOP).

²⁸⁸ 'My question was what is a social movement for... you become an NGO and work the agenda or you disappear. If your contribution is to establish discussion about the situation of victims, about the law, about the "war on drugs", to make visible disappearances, that is your contribution. It seems to me that no one had that clear in the movement and among the families which sometimes fell out, because a

Another SMO activist reflected on the challenges of focusing exclusively on the rights of victims without recognising the broader political dimensions of the struggle and the role of solidarity activists: 'Siento una falta de politización y que de pronto es insostenible frente al actor-movimiento donde poco a poco se fue excluyendo con ese lógica a todos aquellos que no eran víctimas y no sentían parte del proceso'.²⁸⁹ According to this perspective, the focus on victims which had been the primary frame and driving force of the movement, also began to contribute to its fragmentation as the empowered victims' groups began to exert their own agendas.

Javier Sicilia and Emilio Álvarez Icaza's control over the political and communicative strategy of the movement ensuring its coherence and consistency. However, it also limited the capacity of emerging actors to participate more fully in the decision-making and representational roles, including other victims: 'El poder concentrado mucho de la imagen en Javier y Emilio hizo difícil la segunda etapa del movimiento, que era que las víctimas tuvieron mayor poder'.²⁹⁰ The movement structure and the focus on human rights strategies formed part of this centralised approach, which ensured short-term effectiveness, but also contributed to longer-term instability as movement actors evolved and ceased to be satisfied with these constraints.

This section has shown how human rights discourse served to bridge some of the competing perspectives of different movement actors and ensured a practical set of demands to negotiate with the state focused on the needs of victims. However, this also narrowed the scope of the movement's contentious mobilization to challenge the status quo, reducing it to legitimised political negotiation in which human rights expertise and law played an increasingly dominant role. This approach neither

family is looking for their loved one and want justice in their case and the other (parts of the movement) are focusing on public policy' (FX/NGOP).

²⁸⁹ 'I feel there was a lack of political consciousness which suddenly became unsustainable for movement activists - little by little they were being excluded with the logic that anyone who was not a victim no longer felt part of the process' (GL/NGOP/CSS).

²⁹⁰ 'The power concentration in the image of Javier Sicilia y Emilio Alvarez Icaza, made the second stage of the movement difficult, that was that the victims should have more power' (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

reflected the ideal of deliberative consensus or ‘agonistic’ pluralism, but a more pragmatic and reactive movement agenda shaped by the movement’s leadership and the political opportunities. In this context human rights discourse only provided a minimum articulating axis, which struggled to meet the expectations and hopes of the plural movement actors. This only increased as the movement prioritised human rights oriented institution-building, rather than more structural causes to the violence and democratic deficits. These are part of the dilemmas that many social movements confront, but it also suggests particular limits to the use of human rights discourse as a ‘lingua franca’ for movement articulation and political strategy.

6.7 Digital disruptions of media environment

This section examines the media and social media context at the time of the emergence of the MPJD which helped foster receptivity in sections of the public toward the movement. It then explains how the configuration of the movement was focused on traditional influencing strategies in relation to mainstream media, rather than engaging with the pluralising digital news sphere or promoting more horizontal and deliberative practices of movement participants. Nonetheless, digital and social media practices were recognised as significantly contributing to the rapid circulation of information, coordination and emotional expressiveness. However, these practices remained a relatively low priority for the movement leadership as did digital security issues.

6.8 Trigger event in a pluralising and critical environment

In 2011, the disruptive effects of digital and social media uses were only beginning to make themselves felt on the mass media environment in Mexico. Interviewees believed that the mainstream media, particularly the TV and radio, continued to present the government’s simplistic narrative of the violence which frequently stigmatised victims. However, rising levels of violence and reports of human rights violations were leading to increasing coverage by international and independent domestic media outlets on the impacts of the violence, particularly the growing number of relatives and victims whose testimonies did not tally with the official representation of the situation. There were also an increasing number of alternative digital news platforms and blogs, as well as community-based social networking

activity, providing alternative information on the security situation and reports of human rights violations. In addition, there were some limited civil society initiatives questioning the government's policy, such as the 'No más sangre' protest and slogan by political cartoonists in January 2011 (Proceso 2011) which gained media attention.

This changing political and media opportunity structure media (Tarrow 1998; Cammaerts 2012) increased the potential for alternative critical voices to access coverage (Couldry 2010). The greater plurality in the media environment, fostered by access to and availability of a variety of independent and critical digital information sources, facilitated a growing sense that the government's 'war' was causing, not solving a national crisis. Interviewees from the movement and the media considered that the development of this interpretative frame, and the need to find ways for civil society to challenge the government's policy, did not originate with narrative framing of the MPJD. Rather, that it had pre-figuratively taken shape in the months prior to March 2011, creating a latent receptivity to the 'moral shock' (Jasper et al. 1995) of the MPJD trigger event. As a result, news about the killing of Juan Francisco Sicilia, the swift solidarity of local networks and the public response of Javier Sicilia, rapidly spread across media and social media platforms, resonating with a receptive and primed audience.

6.9 Strategic approach to the media

Despite emerging at the time the Arab Spring, the MPJD did not reflect the more distributed leadership and horizontal communications practices evident in aspects of these movements (Gerbaudo 2012; Castells 2013). Its leadership and SMO support were closely linked to the national human rights movement, reflecting a pragmatic and strategic approach to resource allocation to maximise mainstream coverage to influence national and international public opinion (Bob 2005; Brysk 2013). Digital and social media uses supported this strategy and García González (2016) argues this helped develop and sustain the movements collective identity, including among distributed sympathisers. However, there is less evidence of more expressive and

value-oriented practices reflecting the potential of digital and social media to facilitate participation and deliberation to develop and sustain movement identity.

Javier Sicilia's national stature also meant that unlike most victims he immediately attracted mainstream media attention. As a poet and trusted public intellectual, he was also able to articulate expressively his family's personal tragedy and the demand for moral renewal through collective action. His privileged position with national and international media, was also strengthened by the involvement of Emilio Alvarez Icaza – one of only a handful of human rights activist with a national media profile. This provided an opportunity to overcome traditional mainstream media's negative coverage of social activism and the routine stigmatization of victims of the violence. In this wider media context, digital and social media practices were seen primarily as a means of increasing the information flows to leverage mainstream coverage:

‘Éramos muy consciente que existía un cerco mediático, por muchas causas, por falta de interés o falta de sensibilidad de reporteros y redacciones hasta bloqueos específicos directamente del gobierno federal o gobiernos locales. Pero bueno, en los hechos había una limitación que la información del movimiento llegara a medios nacionales. Era muy difícil. Tenía que ser a través de estrategias de CENCOS, que era el contacto con medios, o a través de desbordar la información, que fuera de tal magnitud ese desbordamiento de información, que los medios nacionales fueron obligados a hacernos caso. Si los medios internacionales se volteaban hacia el movimiento, entonces los medios nacionales se verían obligados. Bueno, eso pasa en México desde los 60s. Entonces las redes sociales, yo siempre fui muy atento a quienes seguían la red, los medios internacionales, sabían que los medios nacionales no hablaban del tema, entonces por buscar información, seguían las redes sociales del movimiento’.²⁹¹

²⁹¹ ‘We were very aware that there was a media barrier, for many causes, because of a lack of interest or lack of sensibility on the part of journalists and outlets, but also due to specific embargos imposed directly by the federal or local governments. So, in reality there was a limit on the information of the movement that would be covered by the national media. It is really difficult. It had to be via strategies of CENCOS, which was the point of contact with the media, or by producing an information overload, that it was of such magnitude that the national media felt obliged to pay attention to us. Well, that is how it has been in Mexico since the 60s. So, in social media, and I was always really aware of who was following the networks (of activists), the international media knew that the national media would not talk about the issue, so to get information they followed the movement networks on social media’ (EG/CSS/NGOCP).

Movement organizers also understood the strategic importance of obtaining diverse media attention; not just from traditionally sympathetic left-wing newspapers, but also from conservative print media and government supporting TV and radio networks. Alternative digital media outlets were not considered a priority as they remained small and their audience presumed to be already drawn from the activist support base of the MPJD. In part, this approach was based on the assumption that alternative media would cover the movement anyway, without needing to be courted like mainstream journalists, but also because of the risk of ‘preaching to the choir’ associated with alternative media. An SMO media worker observed: ‘Pensaba que si llegamos a hacer cosas con los medios alternativos, nadie nos iba a ver... en eso fui super claro. Hubo una persona... que preguntaba... “y los medios alternativos?” y yo lo que le dije fue, pues, “organícense”’.²⁹²

Despite this approach, other less senior SMO activists involved in movement communications, acknowledged the struggle to sustain a balance between overwhelming demands of mainstream media while trying to give space to develop and sustain movement identity with social media networks and alternative news platforms:

‘Había una comunicación que era complicado y muy estratégico. Por un lado, tienes que crear comunidad en redes sociales o apuntando a los medios libres, y por el otro, el acoso de la prensa oficial, la Televisora, medios nacionales’.²⁹³

However, the strategic attention on the mainstream media, particularly by the movement leadership, also created tensions with alternative media outlets and journalists who sometimes felt their role was undervalued. This encouraged some of these journalist-activists to view the traditional political strategy and hierarchy of the MPJD as incompatible with more radical emancipatory practices of autonomous social movement activism. Nevertheless, these outlets and independent digital media

²⁹² ‘I thought that if we did stuff with the alternative media, no one would see... in that I was really clear. There was a person... who asked... “What about the alternative media?” And I said to him, well, they should organize it themselves’ (FX/NGOCP).

²⁹³ ‘Communications were complicated and very strategic. On the one hand, you have to create community in social media or directed at alternative media, and on the other, the relentless hassle of the official press, television and national media’ (MP/NGOCP).

platforms provided important coverage of the movement, particularly focusing on the personal journey of victims, from marginalised isolation to the agency of rights-demanding citizens. The experience of covering this organic social movement activity also contributed to alternative media practices; stimulating and rooting their critical narrative of the violence affecting the country in the experience of ordinary people not hitherto involved in social or political activism. As such, working with the MPJD, particularly with victims, was an important validation and spur for the process of developing and diversifying the alternative digital media field to support grassroots mobilization processes, which itself contributed to the subsequent movements.

The primary use of digital and social media to increase impact with mainstream media was not only due to a lack of appreciation by the leadership of its other potential, but also reasonable doubts about its effectiveness. This was particularly so given the then still limited adoption of social media platforms nationally in 2011. For example, Twitter use was relatively exclusive and its influence difficult to gauge. This required a cautious approach: 'nuestro público era... bastante limitado. No podía permitirnos de tener fe en la herramienta'.²⁹⁴ It was not strategic to overinvest scarce resources in these platforms.

These internal debates about the value and meaning of social media were reflected in ambivalent leadership attitudes. For example, Javier Sicilia reportedly dismissed Twitter as a 'cacophony of voices', but at the same time was persuaded to recognize that it was a tool that the movement should not ignore. He authorized a trusted associate to Tweet in his name on the *@mxhastalamadre* account.

So, while the use of digital and social media featured in movement communications with an official website, Facebook page and movement linked Twitter accounts as well as YouTube channel, the resources to maintain and regularly update these platforms was never a priority (The exception to this was shortly before and during major

²⁹⁴ 'our audience [on Twitter] was... pretty limited. We couldn't allow ourselves to trust it as a tool' (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

strategic movement public actions, such as the caravans). As a result, with the multiple pressures of sustaining the movement and doing myriad tasks, SMO staff never had capacity to adequately curate these digital platforms. At one point there was a proposal to allow volunteer '*punks*' to update the pages and posts to enable CENCOS staff to focus on other pressing movement work, but this failed. This was partly due to the apparent lack of technical and professional capacity, but also movement leaders' unwillingness to cede operational control to volunteer groups who were not sufficiently trusted to maintain strategic coherence or protect the reputation of the movement.

This lack of autonomy or decentralized decision-making hindered a more connective or hybrid social media practices, but this was also consistent with a traditional communications strategy focused on positioning movement messages in the mainstream media:

'Con la mayoría de las decisiones entorno a la comunicación, intentábamos que no salieran a la discusión general. Como es esta cosa de querer evitar la participación... pero sí hay ciertos temas si logras mantenerlos más cerrados puede ser más efectivo'.²⁹⁵

However, these were not the only media and social media practices involved in the movement.

6.10 Mobilizing networks and emotional engagement

The use of social media by social movements to lower costs of and accelerate information sharing with distributed networks to coordinate activities and amplify offline and online actions was discussed in section 2.6 (Shirky 2009; Earl et al. 2011; Treré et al. 2014) This featured in the MPJD. Early movement organizers I interviewed confirmed the importance of social media platforms for spontaneous linking up of different groups and individuals who located each other through online reactions to Juan Francisco's killing and Javier Sicilia's call to action:

²⁹⁵ 'The majority of decisions around communications, we tried to avoid putting out for general discussion. It is that thing of wanting to limit participation... but there are certain issues that if you manage to keep them closed you can be more effective' (MP/NGOCP).

‘A partir de mi enojo [en Twitter] mi ubican otras personas, comenzamos a organizar la primera gran marcha... entre otros tuiteros y yo... logramos coordinar y convocar a marchar a nivel nacional. Hicimos un blog. Bueno yo no lo hice sino lo referenciaba... en el que llamábamos para que nos mandaran la información de su ciudad, donde iba a ser la marcha, desde donde a donde, a qué hora. Y la gente comenzó a escribirnos como si fuéramos convocantes, pero en realidad solo intentamos coordinar. Entonces hicimos una tabla con la información que nos iban dando. Y hubo marchas en prácticamente en todo el país, comenzó a haber gente que nos decía que vamos a marchar en Japón, en Francia, en Canadá en el sur de EE.UU., en Argentina en Brasil. Fue el germen de lo que volvería a ser la gran Red por la Paz (y Justicia)’.²⁹⁶

This capacity to reach out and create networks took less digitally attuned activists by surprise. But they rapidly learnt in the process of participating some of the particular features of digital social networking that could support mobilization, particularly helping to identify like-minded others through emotional expression:

‘Yo no había encontrado mucho sentido en Twitter en un inicio. No se me hacía atractivo. Con el asesinato de Juan Francisco me enojé. Me enojé mucho... y pues mi enojo no tenía donde sacarlo, entonces lo saqué a través de Twitter, es cuando encontré el sentido. Este sentido visceral de Twitter... a partir de mi enojo mi ubican otras personas’.²⁹⁷

These more personal, expressive uses of social media were at odds with the purely instrumental and institutional approaches which SMO activists adopted as part of the movement’s communications strategy. As a result of this changing sensibility, three interviewees felt the official movement webpage, Facebook and Twitter accounts were inadequate as they failed to exploit the more personal, informal and spontaneous features of the medium:

²⁹⁶ ‘From my anger [on Twitter], various people located me, we started to organize the big march... between other Twitterers and me... we managed to coordinate and call a march at national level. We did a blog, well, I didn’t do it but I referenced it... in which we called for people to send information on activities in the city, where the march was going to be, from where to where, at what time. And people began to write us as if we were the conveners, but in reality we were just trying to coordinate. And there were marches in practically the whole country, and then there were people saying there was going to be marches in Japan, France, Canada and the south of the USA, Argentina, Brazil. It was the seed of what would be become the great Network for Peace (and Justice)’ (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

²⁹⁷ ‘In the beginning Twitter hadn’t made much sense to me, it didn’t attract me. With Juan Francisco’s murder I got angry. I got very angry... but my anger had no release, so then I started putting it out on Twitter, that is when it started to make sense to me. That visceral sense of tweeting... from that people began to find me on Twitter’ (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

‘un trabajo casi de robot... publicamos un boletín y publicamos el enlace en Twitter. Pero al ser una cuenta medio institucional... no teníamos esa frescura de estar opinando... era pegar un título, pegar un enlace y un hashtag’.²⁹⁸

Given the inflexibility of official pages and accounts, activists working on organizational communications preferred to use their own individual accounts to express more spontaneous and unconstrained ideas in relation to the movement, including to moderate and respond to feedback directed at the movement accounts. These more intuitive emotional approaches to social media practice and adaptive skills learning remained largely on the fringe of movement communications activities.

However, all interviewees recognised the important contribution of different digital and social media platforms to the movement, particularly as the different uses of these platforms were beginning to be better understood. For example, YouTube served as an important platform and archive for victims to ‘bear witness’ to their experiences. These clips served mainstream media outlets, but also acted as a resource for individuals and groups to experience and share this emotionally charged testimony, without needing to rely on traditional media outlets for the editorial framing and dissemination. The increasing adoption of Twitter also made this a useful means to follow in real time MPJD events and Javier Sicilia:

‘Twitter fue fundamental. Era uno de los momentos de explosión de Twitter. Siento que Twitter es una herramienta muy centrada sobre personajes, entonces el Twitter de Javier Sicilia (@mxhastalamadre) fue una explosión.’²⁹⁹

In contrast to the official movement account, @mxlapazmx, the account associated with Javier Sicilia could be used by the designated activist to be much more expressive in line with his poetic and emotional discourse:

‘mi principal, en esa primera etapa, fue un poco traducir a Javier... intenté decir lo que quiso decir Javier... en 140 caracteres... @mxhastalamadre, fue muy

²⁹⁸ ‘it was almost robotic work.. we published a press release, published the link in Twitter. But being a semi-institutional account... we didn’t have the freshness to be posting comment... it was paste a title, paste a link and hashtag’ (QT/NGOCP).

²⁹⁹ ‘Twitter was fundamental. It was the moment of the explosion of Twitter. I feel that Twitter is a tool which focused on personalities, so Javier Sicilia’s account exploded’(QT/NGOCP).

humano y comprensible, y que permitiera ver ese dolor.... y que permitiera una conexión con la realidad'.³⁰⁰

Those involved in this type of social media practice often learned from more experienced digitally adept activists, for example from activists with *ContingenteMX*.³⁰¹ They showed the importance of more spontaneous and raw expressiveness to engage users and encourage participation.

The projection of the movement's narrative and identity, based around the experience and demands of victims, was focused on the mainstream media, but social media platforms provided an important means of reinforcing this strategy. They also more directly engaged the growing number of social media users domestically and internationally in a plural support network. This strong emotional narrative, not primarily based on human rights discourse, appears to have suited to the expressive potential of social media, leading to an increasing awareness of the importance of affective dialogue and individual engagement of potential participants among more digitally-minded activists.

6.11 Connective action and agency

Connective action features were present to a limited extent in the movement practice, but the increasing adoption of social media gradually facilitated more autonomous types of involvement, and enabled victims to develop their own agency and practice.

The MPJD's traditional organizational structure, age-group of its core constituency and strategic prioritization of mainstream media probably contributed to the lack of more horizontal deliberative communicative practices (Castells 2013; Juris et al. 2013) or connective action features (Bennett et al. 2012). However, these types of practice were

³⁰⁰ 'My principle at the start was to translate Javier... I tried to say what Javier wanted to say... in 140 characters... @mxhastalamadre, it was very human and understandable, it allowed you to see that suffering... and enabled a connection with the reality' (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

³⁰¹ *ContingenteMX* is a diverse group of digital activists in Mexico who were early adopters of social media, particularly Twitter, as a tool of non-institutional political and social activism. They encouraged the wider use of social media platforms as part of the repertoire of actions of civil society engagement with political and human rights issues.

not completely absent, particularly during the initial emergence of the movement and major events, such as the Caravans, when social media use was at its most effervescent, but still considerably less than the subsequent movements.

According to interviewees, the weakness of the movement's internal deliberations and information sharing, particularly for those distant from Mexico City, was discussed as an obstacle to more fluid internal dialogue. There were plans to establish an internal communications network, but this never materialized, partly due to lack of resources, expertise and priorities, but also because of distrust of the commercial networking platforms and lack of knowledge about other possibilities.³⁰² As a result, victims and activists outside Mexico City sometimes felt themselves to be insufficiently represented in the movement, reproducing a traditional social and political tension in Mexico between the centre and regions.

Interviewees involved in movement communications also reflected on the lack of focus on developing the communicative agency of many of the victims who had been empowered in the movement-building and rights-claiming stages described earlier. Some victims adopted social media practices as they became increasingly aware of its potential, but this was an ad hoc process of association with younger activists:

‘al principio él no entendía lo que pasaba con las redes sociales, yo lo mostraba y lo mostraba, y luego decía “eso lo mandas a Tuitter”... desde el desconocimiento, pero apreciando la importancia del fenómeno, me decía, “eso súbelo”, y yo lo decía “súbelo tú”. Luego se hizo gran tuittero’.³⁰³

However, the digital profile of victim activists and collectives of victims began to appear more strongly as the movement itself began to subside: ‘fue hasta que se vieron

³⁰² For example, Facebook was considered too insecure for potentially sensitive internal communications and other more secure closed platforms such as Whatsapp or Telegram were either not widely used or were not yet available.

³⁰³ ‘In the beginning he didn't know what social media was about. I showed him again and again, and then he used to say, “send that to Twitter”... From a total lack of understanding, but appreciating its importance, he used to say, “post that”, and I would say, “you post it”. In the end, he became a great tweeter’ (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

obligadas y quedaron solas, empezaron'.³⁰⁴ As distinct victims' groups emerged from the shadow of the movement, they gradually adapted to the need to use digital and social media to project their own cases and strategic demands, learning from others how it could benefit their actions and develop their networks.

Despite the limited deliberative and connective action features of MPJD digital and social media practice, there was an increasing awareness of their importance as organizational tools to develop the mobilization, and also as part of individual and small group contributions to the collective endeavour.

6.12 Insecurity and social movement activism

MPJD participants faced serious threats to their security, particularly relatives seeking information on the fate of their loved ones. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of digital and social media for the movement - including increased adoption of social media by victims - the MPJD largely avoided addressing the security implications of such digital activism.

In spite of concerns about the potential security vulnerabilities of digital communications - as a medium of surveillance against activists or to channel threats and instigate harassment - the MPJD did not develop movement practices for raising awareness or limiting exposure to digital threats. Interviewees from SMOs and volunteer activists reflected on the measures they adopted individually to reduce overall risks, particularly physical dangers. However, there were no specific considerations given to digital threats. Only longstanding NGOs had pre-existing basic cybersecurity measures as part of their human rights work. As with most forms of contentious activism in Mexico, activists assumed they would be subject to forms of surveillance from the outset, but with little clarity about how to evaluate or respond to particularities of digital vulnerability.

³⁰⁴ 'It wasn't until they were forced to, when they were on their own, they began to [use social media]' (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

This very limited concern is in part explained by scarce resources and the lack of technical means to quantify risk. But mainly movement leaders faced more immediate threats than those posed by digital and social media use – for example, Javier Sicilia was accompanied by official bodyguards to protect him from physical attack during most MPJD actions. In this context, the mixture of pragmatism and determined commitment of many activists meant that digital security issues were largely ignored – though as observed previously, measures were taken to restrict the type of internal information communicated on commercial platforms, particularly in relation to specific security-sensitive cases. In addition, the movement leaders were not directly active on social media as others acted in their name.

However, social media was used to reduce imminent physical security threats, rapidly alerting activists, the media and key officials in specific situations. For instance, during the caravan to the north, police escorts failed to materialise leaving the convoy exposed to attack in one of the country's most dangerous regions. Social media activists on the caravan alerted their national and global networks via Twitter to pressure the authorities to provide immediate protection. This reactive and improvised use of social media to raise security concerns reflects how social media has often been used by human right NGOs globally in advocacy activities.

The limited attention paid by the MPJD activists to the vulnerabilities of digital communications, also reflected the leadership focus on communications purely in terms of reaching mainstream media to influence the public sphere. As interviewees observed, this left other features of digital and social media practice relatively undeveloped. However, they also recognised this reflected the particular stage of adoption of social and digital media in Mexico which was in a process of rapid change: 'sí creo que desaprovechamos oportunidades a nivel de redes... esto es relativo porque

el mundo de tuitear era muy pequeño, entonces no había tanta oportunidad de usar ciertas técnicas que se dieron luego, como con YoSoy132'.³⁰⁵

6.13 Conclusion

The interviews with MPJD and observers show the different ways that human rights and digital and social media were mobilized as part of the collective action process and how these were understood to contribute to the movement. These reflections often did not place human rights discourse or digital and social media as central to the movement's meaning or practice, but as contributing important dimensions to the contestatory challenge to powerholders.

On the part of human rights discourse, the widely shared sense that the 'war' was resulting in a human rights crisis provided a pre-figurative receptivity to the trigger event and Javier Sicilia's call to civil society. This also enabled the rapid incorporation of skilled and resourced human rights practitioners to support the logistics and human rights analysis of the crisis, which in turn shaped the subsequent development of the movement. However, the mobilizing narrative that made the movement compelling and meaningfully nationally was the focus on the victims and their experiences, rather than human rights discourse. Nevertheless, the latter played an important role in legitimising the claims of victims and enhancing their agency in relation to the State. Human rights discourse also served as a minimum framework of convergence for plural solidarity support. Yet this function also contributed to a gradual decline in the plurality of the movement participants as it prioritised human rights oriented institution-building negotiations with the authorities, marginalizing more transformative agenda aspirations.

The MPJD communications practices were primarily focused on strategically influencing the mainstream media. However, there was also increasing recognition of

³⁰⁵ 'I think we didn't take advantage of opportunities at the level of social media... but it is relative, because the world of Twitter was really small then, so there was not so much opportunity to use certain techniques as happened later, like with YoSoy132' (IK/CSS/NGOCP).

the importance of digital and social media, not just to lever mainstream media but also to support movement-building processes. These included facilitating movement recruitment and coordination, as well as projecting the movement's key emotional and identity dimensions to distributed digital networks. However, the MPJD did not develop wider participatory or dynamic connective practices featured in the subsequent movements nor did participants reflect widely on security aspects of social media activism. Above all, the increasing engagement with diverse independent digital media platforms gradually facilitated the emergence of a range of voices of victims to challenge the official narrative of the conflict and the invisibility of the victims.

Chapter 7

YoSoy132: data analysis and findings

7.1 Introduction

YoSoy132 was selected as a sample case, in part, because it was not a human rights movement in a traditional sense. By that I mean focused on defending the rights of victims of grave abuses. However, like the other two movements, it emerged in the specific socio-political context of discontent with Mexico's democracy and governance, but was particularly characterised by its use of digital and social media communications in its expressive and strategic repertoire of online and offline actions. These features of practice provide important contrasts and comparisons with the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43.

Scholars have analysed YoSoy132 in terms of digitally enabled communication facilitating social mobilization (Rovira Sancho 2012; Garcia et al. 2014; Meneses Rocha 2015) and plural and critical voices challenging the dominant narratives of the mainstream media (Rovira Sancho 2014) and deficient democracy (Salazar Villava et al. 2013). The chapter examines how participants understood some of these practices, particularly as the movement evolved into a more traditional social mobilization in which human rights discourse only featured in the background. It also considers aspects of digital communications practices in relation to reducing coordination costs (Earl et al. 2011), transmitting emotion (Papacharissi 2015) and facilitating connective action (Bennett et al. 2013), but also how some of these dynamics were temporary and increased security concerns.

7.2 Democratic discontent and human rights discourse in trigger event

Human rights discourse featured strongly in the emergence of YoSoy132 as a reference point for refocused attention on the PRI's record of authoritarianism and lack of accountability for human rights abuses. It also served as the initial rallying cry for the mobilization to protect such rights as freedom of expression, association and access to information.

The 2012 presidential election campaign appeared to interviewees to have been pre-programmed by political and economic elites to ensure the victory of the PRI candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto. For many sections of the population critical of the political establishment, these elites took for granted their ability to dictate the outcome of the election due to their control of the mass media, including the carefully crafted media-friendly image of the PRI candidate (Tuckman 2012a). This assumption also appeared to be premised on the anticipated passivity of the majority of the electorate. The media airbrushing of the PRI's image seemed designed to encourage forgetfulness, to lull the populace to vote the PRI back into power or induce demobilizing resignation. One YoSoy132 participant felt this assumption of passivity was particularly used to frame and patronise the youth or student generation, so-called millennials, facing their first presidential election process: 'el mensaje muy posicionado [en los medios]... que en México la juventud era apática... no tenía interesa en la política, no le interesaba el futuro'.³⁰⁶ However, this also appears to have reinforced feelings that the mainstream media was manipulating the political process by trying to frame the supposedly self-regarding qualities of a generation to ensure its lack of participation.

The return of the PRI meant the return of the hegemonic political party responsible for among other wrongs, gross human rights violations for which it had never been held accountable. As three interviewees observed, their parents had told them about the PRI's long period of authoritarian rule and human rights violations, such as the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre. However, there were also more recent emblematic instances of gross human rights violations and impunity by PRI administrations during the democratic period under state level governors, particularly the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto in the State of Mexico.³⁰⁷ For many, Enrique Peña Nieto becoming

³⁰⁶ 'the strong message [in the media]... that in Mexico the youth were apathetic... that they weren't interested in politics, that they weren't interested in the future' (GF/S).

³⁰⁷ For instance, the repression of a peasant movement in San Salvador Atenco in 2006 which resulted in the sexual torture of 31 women detainees (Amnesty International 2006; Centro Prodh 2017). Peña Nieto's state level administration was also notorious for failing to prevent and punish gender-based violence, particularly disappearances and killings of women (Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos 2012).

president represented the worst of the PRI and thus an even greater threat to Mexico's partial democracy: 'En derechos humanos, ya había un discurso fuerte de lo que significaba el PRI... fue uno de los principales motivos de la protesta contra Peña, fue el germen'.³⁰⁸ Human rights discourse was a widely recognised and legitimated critical analysis of the abuses committed by state officials, particularly the PRI.

On hearing of the planned visit of the PRI candidate to the *Ibero*, small groups of students discussed in person or via Facebook and Whatsapp groups possible protest actions. When wider student networks witnessed the protest online, on radio, then on TV, it chimed strongly with the sentiments of others who had until then been relatively isolated or silent about their concerns regarding the electoral process and the return of the PRI:

'lo que hizo esos chicos no es más que muchos queríamos hacer, mostrar rechazo, "no queremos esto". Porque en ese momento, la idea de manifestar el rechazo contra un candidato, una elección, era muy novedosa, es decir rechazo organizado, rechazo masivo'.³⁰⁹

The crass response to the protest by PRI officials and allied media to delegitimise the student demonstrators only increased the sense of outrage and solidarity with the protesters. It also highlighted the biased role of the mainstream media in the PRI campaign. This provided the opportunity for agile tech savvy students among the protesters to rapidly organize the digital video response on YouTube and promote it on Twitter. This 'David vs Goliath' response demonstrated renewed youthful resistance to PRI efforts to suffocate freedom of expression and association in the online medium. This also enabled online supporters to express their sympathy by promoting the video, which as it went viral became a news story covered by independent and alternative media, then mainstream media. Throughout this process different aspects of human

³⁰⁸ 'human rights already provided a strong discourse about what the PRI really meant... it was one of the principle motives for the protest against Peña [Nieto], it was the seed' (ES/S).

³⁰⁹ What those guys did is nothing more than what most of us wanted to do, to show rejection, "we don't want this". Because in that moment, the idea of demonstrating rejection of the candidate, the election, was really new, that is organized rejection, massive rejection' (GF/S).

rights discourse featured in the iconography of the initial protest, but also in the first articulated demands against the manipulation of the political process:

‘Lo que detona la protesta es recordarle a Peña el caso de Atenco... En particular la brutalidad... fueron cuestiones transversales en el movimiento... ‘Atenco no más represión’... Acteal, Aguas Blancas y otros casos que fueron invisibilidades y otra parte empezaron a tratar el derecho a la información y la democratización de medios, cuestión importante para los derechos humanos, como un derecho importante... el derecho al voto libre, a la democracia... todo en pro de un país más justo’.³¹⁰

Reawakening recognition of the PRI and Peña Nieto’s responsibility for past human rights violations as well as the PRI alliance with the mainstream media, particularly TV and radio, to limit protest and freedom of expression tapped into discontent and frustration with Mexico’s democratic process. This was an opportunity for young people who felt powerless and taken-for-granted by the political establishment to assert their political identity. Despite human rights discourse featuring strongly in the context and interpretation of the trigger event, it did not develop as a central narrative, partly due to the experience and orientation of the underlying movement networks.

7.3 Networks orientation and skills

A feature of the initial networks that coalesced in the nascent YoSoy132 was the role of friendship or affinity groups among students as well as the relative inexperience of many of these individuals and groups in terms of political and social activism. Unlike the MPJD, there was limited contact with traditional human rights NGOs. However, this distance from established political and social activist networks enabled early innovation, particularly in the free flowing use of digital and social media embedded in urban youth networks (Treré 2013; Meneses Rocha 2015). The students drew inspiration from the horizontal, more leaderless, models of plural grassroots participatory mobilizations of Occupy and 15-M, the anti-authoritarian inspiration of

³¹⁰ ‘What detonates the protest reminding Peña about Atenco... in particular the brutality... these were transversal questions for the movement... “Atenco - No more repression”... Acteal, Aguas Blancas and other cases made invisible.. and another dimension was addressing the right to information and the democratization of the media, an important question for human rights, like other important rights... the right to a free vote, democracy... all in favour of a more just country’ (MS/S/DA).

the Arab spring and autonomist resistance of the Zapatistas. As with these movements, human rights discourse featured as a-taken-for-granted set of principles, but was not the driver to network connectivity or the primary focus of their demands.

Pre-existing digital social activists, such as those in *ContingenteMX*, also showed immediate support for the student protest and video response, spreading it across their digital activist networks and contributing to the viralization of #YoSoy132. These activists also supported efforts to turn initial online solidarity into street protest. Key progressive journalists also profiled the *Ibero* protest and subsequent video online, acting as network bridges to wider youth networks nationally and internationally. These were actions focused on profiling the protest and encouraging participation, not concerned with articulating a technical human rights discourse.

Interviewees also believed the embeddedness of digital communications in the social friendship networks facilitated a smooth transition between online to offline public action for students who had never been involved in activism before but wanted to support the *Ibero* students and show their rejection of the PRI candidate:

‘Yo veía que la gente que quería participar prácticamente nunca había estado en una manifestación. Vi que mucha gente de mi escuela... dijo yo quiero ir, quiero ir. Estudiantes del Tec. de Monterrey, queriendo ir a una marcha contra Peña Nieto era totalmente inédito para mí.’³¹¹

The political inexperience of the initial organizing networks based in the private universities of the *Ibero*, Tecnológico de Monterrey, ITAM and others, appears to have been an advantage, facilitating an enthusiastic, technologically adept, and politically open mobilization.

³¹¹ ‘I saw that the people who wanted to participate, had practically never been on a demonstration. I saw that many people in my faculty... said “I want to go, I want to go”. Students from the Tec[nológico] de Monterrey (an elite private university) wanting to go on a march against Peña Nieto was totally unprecedented for me’ (GF/S).

Two interviewees with more experience of street protesting acknowledged feeling sceptical when seeing the first street demonstration against *Televisa*. In particular the use of a loud hailer by protesters to keep participants on the pavement while marching rather than in the road was considered laughable and indicative of the middleclass naivety of the organizers. A routine conservative accusation made against demonstrators was that they violated the rights of road users. This was frequently utilized to justify police use of force and arrests. For more experienced activists, this precautionary approach seemed like fruitless pandering to a hard-line tactic to delegitimise democratic protest. However, these sceptics also noted that the innovation of the protest style also attracted participation from wider student networks. As a result, even among more experienced left-wing activists, there was recognition of the value in enacting different styles of protests to reach new networks and participants. This also had the advantage of avoiding mainstream media ignoring the protests or framing them as the usual marginal political trouble-makers.

Many initial network links were with social activists involved in the global justice or 'alter-globalization' movements, particularly Spain's 15-M movement:

'Se vincula al 15-M internacional por varias razones. Yo tenía varios amigos de 15-M que habían vivido en México, pero habían regresado a Barcelona y resulta chateando por Twitter no sabía que eran mis amigos que contactaron a 132 internacional. Por otro lado, Barcelona y Madrid tenían grupos de 132, la gente de Barcelona asistió a varias reuniones de Indignados... se hizo más fuerte... reunión 15-M internacional y 132 Barcelona y con nosotros de acá.³¹²

These contacts, including with Occupy Wall Street, helped shape the early movement, particularly its pursuit of plural, horizontal, autonomous and participatory democratic processes and an aversion to leadership figures and organizational hierarchies – such as featured in the MPJD and other more traditional social movements. It also chimed

³¹² 'For various reasons we linked up with 15-M international. I had friends in 15-M that had lived in Mexico then returned to Barcelona and it turns out, while chatting on Twitter, I didn't know it, that my friends had contacted 132international. Also, Barcelona and Madrid had 132 groups. The people from the Barcelona group participated in Indignados meetings... that made them stronger... meeting with 15-Minternational and 132 Barcelona and us here [in Mexico]' (CQ/S).

with disillusionment at Mexico's superficial representative democracy in which civil society participation and deliberation were marginalised or co-opted by an electoral system dominated by self-serving political parties.

Another reason for human rights discourse not featuring strongly in the YoSoy132 network relations, was that the initial protest had not resulted in grave human rights violations, so activists were not focused on exposing serious abuses or demanding justice for victims – the traditional basis for adopting human rights demands and seeking the support of human rights NGOs. As a result, organic connections with human rights NGOs to document abuses and seek redress were not a priority.

An exception to this was when YoSoy132 later established the *Comité Jurídico y de Derechos Humanos*³¹³ to document reports of harassment and attacks against activists around the country. The Committee was set up with the support of the *Comité Cerezo*, a human rights NGO based in Mexico City with links to student activism. However, this NGO focused on technical support rather than facilitating wider network links to human rights NGOs or promoting the adoption of human rights discourse to articulate the movement agenda and demands. In fact, activists I interviewed considered the world of social movements and human rights to be separate spheres of activism; the former engaged in political contention and aspiring to social transformation, the other depoliticised, legal and technical, not the discourse of social mobilization.

In the second stage of YoSoy132, large numbers of public university students joined and the Asamblea Nacional Interuniversitaria (ANI) became the complex deliberative sphere of movement decision making. In this process, the networks of traditional left-wing student activists, particularly from the UNAM, exerted greater influence in terms of practice and ideology. These networks of political activists were more closely associated with autonomist anti-capitalist activism, focused on grassroots assembly practices. The plurality of the movement continued, but its identity became more clearly a counter-hegemonic project of anti-neoliberal national transformation. This

³¹³ Law and Human Rights Committee

moved the demands of the movement beyond the initial call for respect for freedom of expression, information and association and a fair electoral process. In fact, more radical autonomist participants rejected the focus on the elections (Gun Cuninghame 2017). In this context, of increasingly transformative social agenda, the more institutionally oriented understanding of human rights discourse was not relevant: 'La verdad es que ni siquiera nos sentamos en algún momento para que se dio [el debate sobre derechos humanos]... creo que mucha era por presentir... que [el movimiento] era más amplio'.³¹⁴

Interestingly, in this transition, anti-PRI liberal and conservative activists on the right who had also participated in the early loose networks, ceased to participate as the movement articulated a more clearly anti-neoliberal autonomist position.

In summary, the mobilizing movement networks were not human rights oriented. Instead the individuals, friendship groups and collectives had multiple motivations, but shared the desire to manifest a high-spirited political rebellion against the PRI and the media in which human rights provided a launch pad but not the primary connection across networks.

7.4 Mobilizing frames and collective identity

A reason human rights discourse did not develop as the primary mobilizing narrative or identity basis of the movement was in part due to the politically engaged focus of the movement on elections. The political neutrality claimed by human rights discourse was not seen as useful in the challenge to the Peña Nieto candidacy and the fairness of the electoral process. Above all human rights discourse did not seem to reflect the exuberant iconoclastic rejection of the political establishment or demands for social transformation.

³¹⁴ 'The truth is we never sat down at any time to [debate about adopting human rights]... I think we sensed... that [the movement] was much wider (XV/S).

Framing analysis often suggests an instrumental use of discourse by movement leaders to motivate participation and influence public opinion (Gamson & Meyer 1996; Snow et al. 1986). In the case of YoSoy132, this appears clearly in the promotion of the *Ibero* YouTube video, which drew on human rights discourse to frame the threat to freedom of expression and association by an assertion of these rights by students themselves. However, as the collective identity of the movement took shape, this narrative was replaced by a more emotional proactive process of mutual recognition (Melucci 1996) based on a shared rejection of the status quo and commitment of plural actors to enact political participation, deliberation and protest.

Like Occupy and 15-M, part of the ideology of YoSoy132 was as a plural movement made up of individuals, groups and collectives; a deliberative space that enabled diverse ideological positions and interests to express themselves and resist a reductive identity or narrow set of strategic institutional demands. For two interviewees, the process of participating was almost spiritual, a form of pre-figurative politics (Polletta 2002), transforming the self as political subject to transform society.

Unlike the Occupy movement which adopted a classic collective identity frame 'we are the 99%' implicitly identifying the 'us' against the 1% 'them' (Johnston & Noakes 2005,) of global capitalism, YoSoy132's narrative frames were rooted in local solidarity and the national political context. The name of the movement, YoSoy132, asserted an individual and collective solidarity and desire to act with others in a rather vague but determined rejection of local political and economic domination.

For the participants I interviewed, there was little consensus about YoSoy132's main framing narrative, collective identity or meaning. For two, it was an 'anti-Peña' movement. However, there were debates about adopting an explicit anti-Peña position which some felt risked undermining the movement's claims not be aligned with any particular political party. This position was expressed most clearly in a public statement on 23 May 2011 proclaiming that the movement neither supported nor rejected

particular presidential candidates.³¹⁵ Despite this public assertion, all interviewees felt that at the centre of the movement's identity was opposition to what the PRI candidate represented.

In relation to human rights, participants more closely connected with the initial protest actions, saw the movement as adopting aspects of a rights-based discourse: 'La agenda era casi protestar. Contra la manipulación mediática, entonces cambio la agenda de la memoria de todo lo que había hecho el PRI, de Atenco... evolucionó al derecho a la comunicación, la información veraz'.³¹⁶ This concept of democratisation of the media was an important and popular movement demand. In effect, it meant ensuring the right to access a diverse and plural media responsive to public sphere concerns. However, the formulation of a non-coercive regulatory framework to ensure such a media environment remains a major challenge in all forms of democratic governance, including in the discourse of human rights.³¹⁷ It is in this context, that there is no readily translatable and legitimated set of human rights demands to break up dominant media

³¹⁵ "Yo soy 132": Declaratoria y pliego petitorio', Animal Politico, 23 mayo 2012, available at: <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/05/declaratoria-y-pliego-petitorio-de-yo-soy-132/>. Accessed on 20 February 2018. See annex 1.

³¹⁶ 'The agenda was almost just to protest. Against media manipulation, then it changed from the memory of all of what the PRI had done, such as Atenco ... it evolved into the right to communication, to correct information...' (ES/S).

³¹⁷ The traditional liberal conception of rights discourse restricts state control of media flows, while assuming the competitive market will ensure plurality and diversity (see Lawson 2001) rather than becoming dominated by monopoly economic interests. International human rights standards struggle to frame obligations that overcome these imbalances, for example Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) affirms, 'this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice'. In 1993 the UN established the Special Rapporteurship on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression to monitor and report on freedom expression worldwide. The rapporteur gradually developed work on the principles of access to information and the public's right to know. Another United Nations agency, UNESCO has also developed standards on freedom of expression, but addressed access to information and media ownership and plurality more directly, particularly in relation to Latin America (UNESCO 2017). Regionally, the American Convention of Human Rights (1969) mirrors the ICCPR obligations as does the work of the regional Special Rapporteur. However, the IACHR Declaration on the Principles of Freedom of Expression (2000) and accompanying interpretations address the issue of media ownership more directly, explicitly requiring regulation to prevent monopolist practices and ensure media "diversity and plurality" which is not subject to coercive pressure of state advertising. The IACHR has also established principles on diversity, including in relation to state responsibility to ensure availability of community radios. However, these regulatory safeguards are not sufficient to guarantee diversity and plurality, so others have argued that the minimum framework of rights based on freedom of expression is insufficient to establish and maintain a democratic media (Martens et al. 2014).

corporate power other than through effective and impartial regulation. However, formulating the demand in such technical and institutional terms was not the basis of a mobilizing narrative to inspire participation in collective contentious action. This was particularly so when the limitations of partial democracy meant the apparatus to decide and implement regulations lacked credibility.³¹⁸ Instead YoSoy132, rather than adopting a rights discourse in relation to the media concentration, focused on enacting media democratization, raucously affirming the right to freedom of expression, using digital and social media as well as theatrical street protest to ridicule corporate media power and its alliance with political elites.

The majority of interviewees felt that while some aspects of the human rights framework featured in the movement discourse, it was never a comfortable fit; neither sufficiently user-friendly nor representative of the iconoclastic political thrust of the movement:

‘Para mí fue más que íbamos más allá de los derechos humanos. Sí se hizo uso de las herramientas, de ciertas cosas, dentro del discurso del movimiento... pero no fue un discurso tan manejable para nosotros, más por el lado técnico. Y más por la visión, era un movimiento anti-Pena, no encajaba tanto.’³¹⁹

Human rights discourse was seen by interviewees to either occupy or claimed to occupy according to human rights NGOs a terrain beyond political struggle. As a result, this apparent political neutrality seemed less relevant for engaging in politicised contentious collective action - even if it was not aligned with particular political parties. This points to understandings of human rights discourse as a technical legal tool to assert justice claims against the state, but of limited relevance in more explicitly political struggles about the character of democratic culture. In the case of YoSoy132, the targets of the movement were powerholders, such as political parties, politicians

³¹⁸ Despite this, several YoSoy132 activists went on to become skilled civil society digital rights advocates and played a role in lobbying around media regulation in 2013 and 2014.

³¹⁹ ‘For me it is because we went further than human rights. Yes, we made use of the tools, of certain things, within the movement discourse... but it wasn’t really a discourse that was easy for us to use, mainly because of its technical side... and above all because of the vision... it was an anti-Peña movement, so it didn’t really fit (XV/S).

and the media, and their role in undermining the democratic process. This contrasted with the traditional perceived use of human rights discourse to target the state and its institutions as responsible for repressive abuses or failing to protect citizens.

This also suggests that there are risks to the strategy of the human rights movement arguing that universal human rights are neutral non-political standards (Ignatieff 2003), above political ideologies or interests. They can be seen as less relevant in domestic political struggles for democratic consolidation, the very terrain where human rights need to be meaningful if they are to take root. This is discussed further in chapter 9.

On the other hand, one interviewee considered that human rights discourse, though not a collective action frame, formed part of the internal dialogue and the underlying direction of the movement, including featuring in specific election actions such as in questions to presidential candidates about human rights issues:

‘fue una discusión siempre presente... democracia y derechos humanos...con discursos más refinados, menos refinados... de pensar en el largo plazo pensamos en derechos humanos... La agenda que 132 llevó para el debate presidencial, para mí, es el debate presidencial que más ha abordado los derechos humanos.’³²⁰

However, two interviewees felt there was a strong reluctance to adopt a more explicit human rights focused agenda as this would have resulted in a process of institutionalisation and negotiations with authorities which would have destroyed the movement:

‘ese sentimiento que vamos a acabar sentado en una mesa, dialogando si nos cumple una petición específica... creo que hubiera quedado allí, roto uno más... nos damos cuenta de que no, que nuestra participación era otra, que no requería necesariamente tenerlo como interlocutor, sino que íbamos a construir algo, mucho más nuestro, más de las calles además’.³²¹

³²⁰ ‘It was a discussion that was always present – democracy and human rights... with more or less refined discourses... thinking in the long term we thought about human rights... the agenda that 132 took to the presidential debate... for me it was the presidential debate that most addressed human rights’ (GF/S).

³²¹ ‘the feeling that we were going to end up seated at a table, dialoguing with [the authorities] about fulfilling a specific petition... I think we would have got no further, leaving another movement broken... we realised that, no, ours was a different type of participation... we didn’t need to have the [authorities]

Modonesi (2014) refers to YoSoy132 as ‘postzapatismo’, but the Zapatistas were a key, if challenging, inspiration for many participants: ‘El zapatismo era como referente... como máximo... pero como podemos... pues está bien el zapatismo en la montaña pero aquí estamos en la ciudad, era un constante reflexionar, no lo teníamos claro’.³²²

These ideological and identity struggles occurred within the movement, but interviewees felt the key mobilizing identity frames were about exciting, emancipatory shared participation, online and offline; as part of developing individual and collective political subjectivities:

‘El elemento de cohesión más importante era la alegría tal cual de saber que había gente que sentía como tú... como co-procesar... estas preocupaciones diferentes ...pero era una alegría muy fuerte de ver tanto jóvenes en la calle, haciendo una marcha como quiso’.³²³

In many parts of the country outside Mexico City, the risks of organizing were real as PRI activists were an intimidating threat, particularly in PRI dominated states. So, breaking the isolation of individuals or small groups by participating in shared online and offline activism was an important feature of the movement. Interviewees believed the expression adopted by 15-M, ‘no estás solo en tu indignación’, resonated widely in Mexico, motivating those who rejected the PRI and the status quo of partial democracy to act across the country and internationally. The idea of self-recognition of a generation, waking from slumber and inspired by the legacy of past student struggles, was also part of this narrative.

as an interlocutor, instead we were going to construct something, much more ours, also more in the streets’ (XV/S).

³²² ‘Zapatism was the main reference point... the maximum... but how could we... well, Zapatism was fine in the mountains, but here we are in the city, that was a constant point of reflection... we didn’t have it clear’ (XV/S).

³²³ ‘The most important element of cohesion was the actual happiness knowing there were people that felt like you... co-processing... these different concerns... but it was also a joy to see so many young people in the streets, demonstrating in the way they wanted to’ (GF/S).

However, two interviewees also acknowledged that another motivating aspect of participation was less high-minded. The social melting-pot of class and gender visible on digital media coverage of demonstrations raised the possibility of meeting affluent and attractive young men and women from private universities. Like other social movements, the liberating social and cultural atmosphere played a not insignificant role in attracting participants less concerned with collective identity or deliberating the movement's political project.

This suggests that despite the initial trigger event drawing on embedded understandings of human rights discourse in student generations, these were not developed explicitly as part of YoSoy132's collective identity and mobilizing frames. Human rights frames served to position and legitimise initial demands, but were seen as too technical and limiting to reflect the more transformational, plural and political identity of the movement. As one interviewee observed: 'un movimiento social va más allá de los derechos humanos, lo que busca es una transformación de la sociedad'.³²⁴

7.5 Participant Agency

The act of participating in public demonstrations, which sought to invoke but also break with the traditional protest repertoire, particularly through the use of digital media, drew more people than expected and reinforced the sense of participating in something different and important. This participation was not based on individualised adherence to a collective identity, but small groups of friends or collectives joining in an explicitly plural mobilization process. The protests were a mass dynamic assertion of the right to freedom of expression, not a technical legal claim for justice. Contributing to these early unscripted events, meant to 'meterse en una conversación'³²⁵ with new people and groups from different social and political circles. There was excitement at becoming politically conscious through a sense of collective engagement and creating new forms of collective action.

³²⁴ 'A social movement goes beyond human rights, what it is looking for is a societal transformation' (XV/S).

³²⁵ 'get involved in a conversation' (XV/S).

When speaking in movement forums or to the media, the horizontal plural and participatory nature of much of the practice felt empowering to participants, enabling some to speak and define what they wanted to say in their own terms but under the inclusive banner of YoSoy132. Echoing Melucci's (1996) understanding of the dynamics of New Social movements, this focused on strengthening a sense of personal autonomy and shared values as an integral part of a common idealistic project bringing diverse social sectors together:

Decíamos, las cosas tienen que cambiar, desde la manera que nos relacionamos, que construimos nuevas cosas, tal era mucho la utopía, mucho romanticismo, era mucho romper con el discurso del líder que va a venir para hacer algo para que cambie todo. Dijimos, no, esto tiene que ser de todos, todos tenemos que vincular, es así en la primera asamblea en las Islas de la UNAM... pues gente de todos los movimientos.³²⁶

As a learning environment, for many movement participants it was a new way of 'doing politics'; they felt it to be a personally transformative process, impacting their decision-making and future life choices. One interviewee cited a friend's characterisation of the psychological process of struggling 'contra el pequeño Peña Nieto que todos nosotros llevamos dentro'.³²⁷ For interviewees, even recognising in retrospect the limitations of YoSoy132 and its subsequent demobilization, there was unanimous appreciation of the contribution that their involvement played in their personal development and political consciousness. Several YoSoy132 activists ultimately formed or joined human rights NGOs, alternative media platforms and other forms of collective social activism as a direct result of their experiences in the movement. These in turn would contribute to the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization. This suggests that while human rights claims-making or demands were not central to the movement's identity, the awareness of and actively

³²⁶ 'We used to say, things have got to change, from the way we relate to each other, the way we construct new things, there was a lot of utopianism, much romanticism... it was about breaking with the discourse of the leader that will come and change everything. We said, no, this has got to be done by everyone, we have all got to join together, it was like that in the first assembly in the UNAM, people from all the different movements' (XV/S).

³²⁷ 'against the little Peña Nieto that we all carry inside' (XV/S).

exercising of rights through participation was a key aspect of feelings of agency and personal political development.

7.6 Movement articulation

The configuration of the YoSoy132 coalition shifted in the course of the mobilization. There was a transition away from an initial articulating discourse of freedom of expression and media democratization to a more radical emancipatory left-wing agenda aspiring to social and political transformation (González Villarreal 2013; Gun Cuninghame 2017). In part, this move reflected the distrust and perceived limitations of human rights discourse felt by many radical activists as well as the desire to unite disparate social actors around a radical pluralist transformative agenda.

All interviewees recognised the movement as plural and as changing in character over time. In chronological order, these specific periods included: 1, online viral protest; 2, private university led street demonstrations; 3, unified university deliberative movement; 4, nationwide student movement; 5, broad-based popular movement seeking to include various different social actors and agendas; and lastly, 6, the reduced movement in defence of detainees. The rapidly changing profile also reflected the participation at different stages of different ideological groups:

‘Yo digo que eran varios movimientos porque teníamos mucha gente adentro con motivos distinto para estar presentes... objetivos distintos... mecanismos distintos para alcanzarlos... Por eso la diversidad... lo pro-violencia... los no-violencia... los pragmáticos... los electorales... los de la izquierda... los liberales... de derecha... de centro... libertarios anti-estado... anarco-comunista.³²⁸

The deliberations between these different actors were extremely challenging. Participants spent many hours in public parks, ‘sin baños, luces y internet’ (BS/S), then in university buildings, debating and deliberating to establish minimum common

³²⁸ ‘I would say that it was various movements because there were people inside with different reasons for participating... different objectives... different methods of achieving them.. that was the diversity... those in favour of violence... those against violence... the pragmatists... the electoralists... those on the left... the liberals... the right... the centre... the anti-state libertarians... anarcho-communists (BS/S).

agendas which adequately reflected the growing diversity of the movement and sustain its mobilizing momentum and identity.

On 23 May 2012, some of the early activists issued a limited declaration which stated: ‘nuestros deseos y exigencias se centran en la defensa de la libertad de expresión y del derecho de información’.³²⁹ However, by 30 May, the accords reached in the first ANI meeting focused on the electoral process, education policy and commitment to develop the movement to address a range of social justice issues.³³⁰

Interviewees felt that the shift in discourse reflected the increasing influence of student activist groups of the UNAM promoting a more structural left-wing critique of the socio-economic and political injustices in Mexican society. Many of these groups distrusted rights discourse as a neo-liberal or neo-imperial ideology (Marx 1844; Douzinas 2007) or, at best, too institutional to overcome the concentration of power in Mexico’s partial democracy. Human rights oriented activism was seen as superficial, emotional and transient, lacking ideological rigour and commitment:

‘Los derechos humanos depende del ánimo del movimiento... muchas de las personas que se suman a estos movimientos no quieren ser militantes, pero se conmueven... son expresiones muy infantiles para mi gusto de la política popular: “participo pero solamente un ratito”’.³³¹

In this context, anti-neoliberal Zapatism provided a more important lingua franca and model to bridge ideological divides as well as to maintain plural and participatory involvement.³³² However, this also implied commitment to participate in long deliberative assemblies, where those most accustomed to such practices, gained

³²⁹. ‘Our desire and demands are focused on the defence of freedom of expression and right to information’, See Annex 1.

³³⁰ See annex 2.

³³¹ ‘Human rights depend on the mood of the movement... many of the people who join those movements don’t want to be real activists, they are just excited by it... I think they are just childish expressions of popular politics: “I am participating, but just for a bit”’ (MS/SA).

³³² These deliberations also reflected divisions in relation to engaging with the electoral process as part of democratic participation or seeing this as an electoral trap which would undermine the movement’s radicalism (Gun Cuninghame 2017).

greater influence. Two interviewees acknowledged feeling bewildered and detachment from the arduous practices of student 'asambleismo': 'Había procesos que no entendíamos de todo, y para los de la UNAM eran muy naturales. De toda la larga tradición que tienen de colectivos, de luchas estudiantiles'.³³³

This structured deliberative stage seemed relatively divorced from the dynamic and agile activism of the initial mobilization and which continued to some extent in tandem. On the other hand, there was also respect for these hard-earned participatory democratic processes of student activism and the hope of participants that the traditional factionalism of left-wing activism could be avoided.

It is also important to note that the plural and horizontal character of the movement, including multiple committees, individual college assemblies and associated collectives, meant that many participants and groups carried out actions online and offline with only limited reference to the extensive deliberative processes of the movement assemblies. These activities included mounting the presidential debate, election monitoring, disseminating information in neighbourhoods, and developing state level agendas. Others focused on a range of issues, including socio-cultural ideas and policy agendas, still others worked on coordinating actions globally with the spreading network of adherents. As a result, the ideological discussions to articulate the movement identity and project were not necessarily at the centre of anti-Peña actions undertaken autonomously by many activists and groups. This plurality of action forms was perhaps a stronger feature of the movement practice than the deliberative processes to articulate a radical agenda, including ambitions to establish a national movement of movements in the post electoral climate.

Despite descriptions of the movement as post-Zapatista, deliberative and human-rights based (Puyosa 2017), these do not adequately reflect the evolving mixed identity and practice of the movement. Human rights demands expressed some of the initial

³³³ 'there were processes we didn't really understand, and for the UNAM they were completely natural... from their long history of political collectives, of student struggles' (ES/S).

concerns of the movement, but these were rapidly displaced by a more radical horizontal counter-hegemonic agenda. In this context, human rights discourse was taken for granted, but backgrounded as insufficiently transformative and too neutral for a movement contesting the meaningfulness of the political process. As such human rights discourse only supported the initial emergence of the movement, but did not facilitate the articulation of its heterodox participants. The deliberative process of the assemblies played an important role in this process, yet they also remained secondary to the autonomous plural online and offline actions and political debate that participants engaged in as part of the mobilization and developing political consciousness. In effect, human rights discourse was taken-for granted as a bare minimum, but not considered sufficiently radical or transformative to express the cultural and social change the movement sought to enact.

In contrast to this backgrounded role of human rights discourse, digital and social media practices were key to YoSoy132's mobilization process.

7.7 Disrupting the media

An innovative feature of YoSoy132 was its attack on the dominance of private media corporations accused of moulding Mexico's political culture (Tuckman 2012a), particularly during the election cycle. The movement sought to highlight and disrupt this dominance through networked social media mobilization and street protest demanding freedom of expression and media democratization. Its multiple forms of activism also promoted, reinforced and contributed to developing alternative digital news platforms, increasing the range of voices covered.

YoSoy132 emerged in direct reaction to the perceived role played by national media corporations, particularly *Televisa* and *TV Azteca*, in shaping the political narrative around the elections, shepherding the return of the PRI to power. Activists felt a strong sense of breaking free of this elite imposed news narrative and using digital and social media to expose a more complex reality: 'es romper con el discurso monolítico, puedo

enterarme de lo que está pasando en mi realidad, no lo que pinta los medios... es una realidad mucho más compleja'.³³⁴

Part of this process of making the movement visible beyond the private universities was through online livestream coverage of participants, circumventing the exclusion or mediation of TV news networks (Cammaerts 2012). This enabled a form of dynamic unfiltered citizen reportage capturing the drama of the protests:

‘El hecho de que rompieron con la forma clásica de hacer activismo fue trascendente... pero lo más trascendental fue que todo el mundo lo vio... sin la edición de nadie... esos chicos que reportaron en vivo - andaba en bici – tenía su canal – se dedicaba a ser reportero... su forma de hacer reportaje no profesional... era interesante... no era el clásico reportaje... aquí vemos... simplemente pone la imagen... “ven los que estoy viendo”, nada más’.³³⁵

This direct unmediated contact with the early movement actions seems to have enabled a range of social media and internet users to witness the events live online, experiencing the protest from the perspective of someone participating, not as framed by mainstream media. As observed above, the response of more seasoned activists was not uniformly positive to these protest practices, but they attracted interest among a university generation at ease with smart phone enabled social networking which in turn facilitated participation in public space events.

However, the extended participation was not achieved solely through student social networks. It was also brokered by independent progressive journalists with an increasing public profile and large online followings whose retweets extended participation and transfer of coverage to mainstream media. This hybrid (Chadwick

³³⁴ ‘It’s about breaking with the monolithic discourse, I can find out what is happening in my reality, not what the media presents... it is a much more complex reality’ (KQ/S).

³³⁵ ‘The fact that they broke with the classic form of doing activism was really important... but the most important thing was that everyone saw it... without anyone editing... those guys that reported live... one went around on his bicycle... he had his own [livestream] channel... he made himself a reporter... his way of doing non-professional reporting was interesting... it wasn’t classic reporting.. “here we see” ... he just put up the image... “see what I am seeing” nothing else’ (MS/SA).

2013) shift between media platforms and networks enabled a small online protest to rapidly reach multiple networks and audiences.

The early street protests against mainstream TV channels also gained international media interest, focusing on the quality of Mexico's democracy and the role of large media corporations. This coincided with international media excitement over social media enabled protest, as exemplified by the Occupy and 15-M movements. The attention also forced mainstream Mexican media corporations, albeit reluctantly and dismissively, to cover the emerging movement, allowing student representatives to voice their criticisms. For activists who took on spokesperson roles, social media was crucial in opening up this coverage by mainstream media which was an exciting and unsettling experience:

'Y también cuando los medios tradicionales comenzaron a retomar, cuando te buscan, te piden en la Tele entrevistas... hay interés en ver lo que está pasando... chistoso... después de tantos años de... toda una campaña de Peña Nieto, y luego tu eres la voz que están buscando para escuchar o para saber y allí me parece fue en lo que ayudaron las redes sociales'.³³⁶

However, the relationship with the traditional media was frequently tense. Participants observed how some: 'medios buscaban crear liderazgos para luego criticar y exponer que no había proyecto'.³³⁷ At the same time, the movement's suspicion of the mass media in general and the claim not to have leaders - despite the high visibility of certain spokespersons - created friction even with sympathetic journalists trying to cover the story.

Movement participants argued that the mainstream media was arrogant; believing itself entitled to be courted by those seeking to promote a political message, while

³³⁶ 'When the traditional media started to cover the story, when they looked for you, when they asked for TV interviews... there is interest in what is happening... it was funny... after so many years... the whole Peña Nieto campaign... and then you are the voice that they are looking for, to listen to and to find out... that is where I think social media helped' (XV/S).

³³⁷ 'the media tried to create movement leaders in order to then criticise them and ridicule them for not having a political project' (HS/J).

imposing a negative editorial frame to undermine independent social mobilizations. YoSoy132 attacked this process as undemocratic, using social media and creative protests to generate an alternative narrative outside the framing control of the mainstream media. In this narrative, the legitimacy of the media, particularly private TV networks and PRI aligned news and radio, was called into question. Some activists drew self-consciously on the theory of self-communicating networked individuals (Castells 2007) challenging centralised mass media production to shape the views of a passive consumer society.³³⁸

By challenging these traditional media practices, activists felt a sense of emotional engagement, innovation and agency as autonomous political subjects:

‘la parte de democratización de los medios relacionada con la forma de hacer política y hacer narrativas, creo que allí es una de las cosas con que yo más me quedo... pusimos sobre la mesa una narrativa distinta, una narrativa que nos nació de la alma, del enojo, del sentimiento de escucharnos, frente una narrativa completamente impuesta, creada como muy de formato, ... , una obra de teatro ya creada, y tu estas allí como espectador y de repente reventamos esa posibilidad’.³³⁹

The student movement was also widely covered by emerging alternative digital media platforms, reinforcing the sense of an increasingly diverse and disrupted media environment. In addition, the experience of movement participants, particularly their role in developing a critical stance toward the political and media establishment, legitimated and contributed to the growing ecology of independent and alternative digital news platforms which the movement explicitly supported.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ Despite its relatively small viewing figures and technical glitches, the student organized debate between presidential candidates, enabled the creative use of livestreamed internet and participatory questioning of candidates. This showed the potential for independent activists to use digital media to produce and transmit complex issues in a highly managed electoral media climate.

³³⁹ ‘the part of media democratization related to the means of doing politics and of constructing narratives, I think those are the most important things I am left with... we put a different narrative out there, a narrative that was born in the soul, of anger, of the feeling of needing to be listened to, as opposed to a completely imposed narrative, a format... a piece of scripted theatre in which you are the audience, and suddenly we blew that up’ (XV/S).

³⁴⁰ For example, the collective of students in the *Ibero* involved in the 11 May 2011 developed an alternative digital news portal, Masde131 which accompanied social mobilization processes, such as the

7.8 Social media, reducing costs and developing identity

YoSoy132 interviewees believed digitally enabled networking via social media platforms enabled the free flow of information, coordination and recruitment in line with literature on cost reducing affordances of digital and social media (Shirky 2009; Earl et al. 2011). This included facilitating the rapid shift from online to street protests. However, the dynamics of social media use by activists also reflected social divisions. This initially favoured the social capital of middleclass activists with developed media skills and resources, rather than political commitment to contentious mobilization. The range of frequently chaotic and creative activities which newly emerging YoSoy132 groups engaged in did not necessarily contribute to the movement's public actions or objectives, but played an important role in fostering participation and identity. This in turn contributed to a legacy of skilled adaptive activists and networks versed in the use of social media to promote social causes, including human rights issues.

All interviewees shared surprise at the rapid shift from spontaneous online protest in support of the 131 YouTube video to enthusiastic street action: 'nadie pensaba que iba a saltar de las redes a las calles'.³⁴¹ However, many also recognised that this surprise was due to not realising quite how embedded digital social networking on multiple platforms had become in the lives of the student generation of 2012. In fact, social media platforms, particularly in the economically advantaged private universities, simply provided the most obvious means of sharing information and interest in participating in protests as part of their online and offline social networks.

For longer standing student activists, the rapid shift from online protest to street collective action was also a surprise, because efforts to use social media strategically to promote protests on political and social issues had never previously resulted in such interest and participation. However, activists also noted the freshness of the YoSoy132

families of Ayotzinapa, seeking to develop alternative information narratives allied to social causes and human rights issues.

³⁴¹ 'Nobody thought it was going to jump from social media to the streets' (XV/S).

online and offline protests. These were novelly focused on media power and involved students who didn't look like the usual left-wing activists of the UNAM. There were imaginative and funny protest slogans and memes, such as: '*Televisa te idiotiza, TV Azteca te apendeja*'.³⁴² Social media provided an obvious medium to make visible this different approach and then for those interested to make contact with organizers or just simply show up with their friends at the next announced demonstration.

'Las convocatorias estuvieron días ahí arriba, lo que generó visibilidad y la posibilidad de participación. Había gente que preparaba sus propias asambleas sin preguntar a nadie, luego llegan con sus preocupaciones, y luego nos buscaban gente de Jalapa, Querétaro, así. En redes lo veían todo, la protesta del 11 de mayo, las marchas en el DF y estábamos en comunicación... pero por pasos. Un # visibiliza pero te comunicas por Facebook, te enteras, te llegas y estás. Hay otra forma de comunicación. Si ayudó extender la convocatoria a casi todo el país, donde surge 132 en lugares que no imaginarías, luego siguieron trabajando. Eso fue debido a la visibilización en redes, no en TV. Esa gente genera sus colectivos y su trabajo, vienen de allí las convocatorias y luego llegan a las asambleas'.³⁴³

Social media use enabled information to circulate rapidly across the country and internationally. The humorous and iconoclastic imagery of the early actions also enabled such use to embolden local organization and creativity to develop plural collectives and actions in tune with their own generation and locality, using the different forms of communication most suited to or available in their environment. This was not confined to social media use, but also turning from digital to analogue as part of street activities:

'la gente quiere tener identidad no lo que trae desde hace 50 años... pues ahí descargamos en CDs. de lo que estaba sacando 132, compilamos en DVD y folletos, para distribuir en físico... no necesitamos tener un diseñador

³⁴² 'Televisa makes you an idiot, Tv Azteca makes you stupid'

³⁴³ 'The protest announcements were online for days, which generated visibility and the possibility of participation. People organized their own assemblies without asking anyone, afterward they came along with their list of issues, people from Jalapa, Querétaro etc would look for us. They had seen everything on social media, the protest on 11 May, the marches in Mexico City and then we were in communication... bit by bit. A hashtag visibilises, but you communicate by Facebook. You find out, you get in touch, and there you go along, and you are involved. It's another way of communicating. Yes [social media] helped to extent the protest invites to almost the whole country, to where 132 sprung up in places you wouldn't believe, and then they kept up activism. That was due to the visibilization on social media, not the TV. Those people created their own collectives and work, it was the announcements that reached them, then they came to the assemblies' (GL/SA).

matándose... entramos a la red para ver lo que subían hoy... si no nos gustaba lo modificamos un poco pero no era hacerlo todo... mucha creatividad... para todos los gustos.³⁴⁴

The majority of interviewees felt that that the process of convening protests or activities changed radically to the extent that activists stopped producing physical information materials. However, one interviewee observed that the array of online announcements made it impossible to draw attention to their particular assembly activities. They decided that physical posters in the faculty were more effective. This indicates how social media formed part of the web of communicative practices, but did not end traditional organizational practices.

Another feature of social media use observed by interviewees, was how it tended to favour the better resourced and skilled middleclass students, who also benefitted from the confidence of their social and cultural capital. This enabled them to rapidly produce high quality audio-visual materials, to articulate the meaning and objectives of the movement in new and energizing terms and rapidly develop a wide social media following. Interviewees contrasted this agile and witty use of social media with some of the more ideologically-loaded and less tech-savvy productions of the traditional centres of student activism. As a result, these new digital and social media activists helped attract early and wide participation, beyond traditional student activism circles. It also perhaps reinforced the social advantages enjoyed by a certain sector of relatively privileged new activists. However, interviewees recognised that these skill-sets and the adaptive approach to the technology established a new benchmark in terms of the quality and appeal of action materials distributed by social activists on digital and social media as part of mobilization processes.

³⁴⁴ 'People want their own identity, not the same one as the last 50 years... So, we downloaded onto CDs what 132 was producing, then we made DVDs and pamphlets to physically distribute... we didn't need to have a designer working away.. we went online to see what had been produced that day... if we didn't like it we modified it a bit, but it wasn't the same as doing the whole thing... there was a lot of creativity... for all tastes' (MS/SA).

The facilitation of individual and group involvement in the mobilization by social media was a dynamic but also a chaotic process, much of which did not necessarily contribute concretely to movement actions, but seems to have fostered spaces of identity and agency where people felt that they were actively contributing to and developing their own collective actions:

‘era un desastre, era una locura... haciendo documentos... pero de verdad, esos documentos de los Path - salvo los que estaban en la Coordinadora Universitaria donde tenían reuniones presenciales - mezclaban las lógicas, era eso, el Whatsapp, el grupo de Facebook, el Path... teníamos un montón de grupos de Facebook, grupos por asamblea, por comisión, por tarea, por subcomisión de la comisión, por mesas de trabajo, teníamos 300 grupos de Facebook por persona, hicieron una locura. Eso era inmanejable, pero servía... por algunos servía para sentirse parte del movimiento, hacían su Path, su documento colaborativo, lo publicaron y ya tenían un posicionamiento público, pero para esos chavos eran las herramientas que les servían para su propio proceso organizativo. Sí juntaban las cosas y sí era muy distinto’.³⁴⁵

This climate of creative chaos facilitated by the ease and low cost of social media, was in line with the horizontal, democratic and plural ideology of the movement, enabling forms of individualised and small group participation and deliberation without the traditional requirements of organizational commitment and discipline. This served as an energising fluid space of expressive collective collaboration, sociality and movement identity, but did not necessarily contribute to concrete actions, strategic objectives or longer term movement cohesion. Nonetheless, the embeddedness of digital and social media, which the mobilization reinforced, facilitated the rapid participation in online and offline actions, particularly through the sharing of sentiments.

³⁴⁵ ‘it was a disaster, it was madness... making a document... the truth was that those Path documents - except for the ones that were done by the University Coordination Council where there were physical meetings - mixed different logics, it was like that, Whatsapp, Facebook groups, Path... there were loads of Facebook groups; groups for the assembly, for commissions, for tasks, for the sub-commission of the commission, for working groups, we had 300 Facebook groups per person, it was madness. It was unmanageable but it worked... for some it served to feel part of the movement, they did their Path, their collaborative document, then published it and they had a public position, for those guys the tools worked for their own organizing processes. Yes, it got things together and yes it was very different’ (GL/SA).

7.9 Affect transmission

Feeling and sharing anger played an important role in the mutual recognition of incipient movement actors reflecting the importance of shared emotions in the mobilizations (Gamson 1992; Jasper 1998). Interviewees recognised how important social media was in this process of engaging distributed actors, propelling them to come together in public spaces to meet and share:

‘Las redes sociales en el caso de 132 permitieron transferir esa indignación, tal vez experimentada de forma individual, en un fenómeno de movilización mucho más amplia. Y una cosa importante, cuando esa indignación individual, se identifica con otra indignación y otra, y eso nos lleva a encontrarnos, ya no es la mera indagación, sí está ocurriendo algo más. Gran parte de que la gente se fue a la calle fue por conocerse y disfrutar’.³⁴⁶

According interviewees with previous (and subsequent) experience in using social media for activism, digital communications platforms played an important role in transmitting shared outrage, solidarity, hope and humour. This emotional engagement was an important factor in spurring individuals and small groups to go onto the streets in large numbers and turn what had been a digitally networked experience into a physical coming together in public spaces (Gerbaudo 2012). The self-communication across networks between friendship and social groups, unmediated by mass media, appears to have helped validate the authenticity of this common sentiment shared by a generation refusing to submit to political apathy or media manipulation.

For one slightly older digital activist, who supported YoSoy132 on Twitter, and who had participated in online activities of the Arab Spring and 15-M, digitally networked social movements like YoSoy132 were necessarily emotional, effervescent and short-lived. However, this understanding of digitally enabled movements as almost uniquely emotional was the exception among interviewees. Other participants, while

³⁴⁶ ‘In the case of 132, social media permitted the transfer of that indignation, perhaps felt on an individual form, into the phenomenon of a much broader mobilization. And an important thing, when that individual indignation identifies with another indignation and another, that leads us to come together, now it is not just mere indignation, something more is happening. One of the main reasons why people went on to the streets was to get to know each other, to enjoy themselves’ (EL/HRNGO/DA).

recognising the importance of social media to share outrage, humour and other emotions, believed the experience of mobilization was more integrated between online and offline elements: a transformative political engagement and social experience with lasting impact on personal values as political actors. This reflected Melucci's (1996) ideas of the expressive collective identity of New Social Movements (see section 2.4.3) For example, one participant observed: 'una de las cosas más bonitas de 132, fue mucha también de relaciones afectivas, entender eso como una forma de hacer política... definitivamente transformó nuestras vidas'.³⁴⁷

Most interviewees recognised the importance of shared emotions and the expressive sentiments of the movement, but they did not attribute these to features specifically to social media – unlike the older cyberactivist. According to their view, the technology platforms were useful, powerful tools, which reduced barriers to communication, avoiding the mediation of mainstream media, but they did not intrinsically generate emotional empathy. Nonetheless, the accounts of involvement through social media networks, including following events on livestreaming platforms, strongly support Papacharissi's (2015) argument that digital and social media can strengthen the communication of affect and shared identity, supporting participation in online and public mobilization.

These processes are not necessarily related to facilitating the shared recognition of political sympathies. They can also be about encouraging increased expectation of possible of offline social relationships. For example, interviewees recognised that part of the power of social media communication was overcoming traditional barriers of social class and the potential to participate in wider social networks. One interviewee noted how the anonymity and glossiness of social media networking facilitated engagement, encouraging involvement because, 'en Facebook todo el mundo se ve mejor'.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ 'One of the most beautiful things about 132, was a lot about emotional relations, understanding this as a form of doing politics... it definitively transformed our lives' (XV/S).

³⁴⁸ 'Everyone looks better on Facebook' (MS/SA).

In summary, social media was widely regarded as having facilitated connections and motivation amongst those who had not previously been involved in protests. However, while activists often did not attribute this to particular affordances of social media, their accounts supported this feature of digitally enabled communication already embedded in fragmented social relations. In particular, the process of identification and sharing of emotions contributed to the excitement at the possibility of converting digitally mediated relationships into physical gatherings to enact protest but also human sociality. However, this also raised questions about the durability of emotional identification to sustain contentious struggle.

7.10 **Connective action**

This section considers YoSoy132's developing communicative culture, particularly the extent to which it represented individualised connective action (Bennett & Segerberg 2013) as opposed to reliance on more traditional collective identity (Gamson 1992; Melucci 1996) or social movement organizations (McCarthy et al. 1977; Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 2003). The analysis suggests that some connective action features were present, particularly during the early stages of mobilization, but these were gradually replaced by more hybrid approaches.

Among all interviewees, there was a feeling of surprise that the *Ibero* incident had turned into a social media event then mainstream media news. This rapidly turned into a sense of opportunity and potential, but without a clear collective identity or direction. This sense of spontaneous identification with and sharing of previously latent or unexpressed personal and/or small group sentiments, was echoed by four early movement participants. This included suddenly recognising the widespread shared interest, including from abroad: 'La verdad es que no nos habíamos dado cuenta del potencial hasta cuando abrimos ese lugar [Facebook page], porque nos empezó a escribir gente de todos lados... Ellos se habían enterrado por la misma forma que nosotros'.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ 'The truth is that we hadn't realised the potential until we opened that [social media] space, because people started to write to us from everywhere... They had heard about it in the same way as us' (CQ/SA).

Social media enabled the movement to rapidly and organically take shape via these individual or small group social network affiliations but also through distributed links brokered by online independent journalist. This facilitated multiple individualised or small group horizontal contacts and interactions, particularly attractive for a generation suspicious of hierarchical leaders and political organizations:

‘Primero, permitió una plataforma descentralizada de decisión, que tiene sus pros y sus contras, muchos movimientos con el mismo nombre... esa idea. Además, un movimiento, que cuando se escucha la palabra centralización se espanta, igual cuando escucha la palabra lideres la rechaza... la frase ‘formen un partido’, la rechaza... incluso cuando nos imponen métricas de éxito/fracaso, también las rechaza... las redes sociales fueron para dar... o generar... comunicación... contra-speech’.³⁵⁰

This suggests an open plural online sphere enabling decentred oppositional contributions and deliberations unconstrained by formal limitations of a defined and hierarchical organized movement. For interviewees, these features encouraged wide participation without requiring participants to share beliefs or values beyond the commitment to oppositional free speech. However, few interviewees identified these multiple online conversations as deliberative in the Habermas (1996) sense of establishing consensus through communicative rationality, rather they were more reflective of energised disputatious counter-publics (Fraser 1990), excited at sharing and discussing in an open action-oriented critical conversation.

In this context, social media contributors claimed self-asserted authority to articulate the meaning of the emerging movement. The test of the legitimacy of each contribution rested on peer approval or disapproval; The former leading to recirculation among networks, the later, to no recirculation: *‘veías carteles diciendo YoSoy132 movimiento a favor de la verdad. La persona que hizo eso no tenía que decirlo*

³⁵⁰ ‘Firstly, it enabled a decentralised decision-making platform, which has its pros and cons, many movements with the same name... that sort of idea. Also, a movement that when it hears the word leadership, rejects it... including when metrics of success and failure are imposed from outside, they are also rejected... social media gave... or generated... counter-speech’ (GF/S).

*a nadie, si eso era el concepto adecuado... Se detenía (sic) a soltar esa idea... a ver si moría o si tenía éxito.*³⁵¹

Bennett & Segerberg (2013) argue this is a form of individualised ‘connective action’. However, in the case of YoSoy132, participation was not necessarily individualised, but in many instances was also based on small groups of friends or collectives of activists, some of whom pre-existed the emergence of the movement and others who came together as part of the process. As Gerbaudo & Treré (2015) show, these micro groups often communicated between themselves on different social media platforms, such as closed messenger platforms like Whatsapp, as part of identity sustaining processes. They also participated more visibly as individuals in wider open movement networks on platforms like Facebook or Twitter. In addition, many of these social media practices were part of a wider communicative culture which included physical meetings and assemblies to discuss ideas and plans, as well as to validate the trustworthiness of new adherents.

Nonetheless, the rapidity and spontaneity with which participants could feel themselves part of the movement, particularly through the use of digital and social media, was understood by most interviewees as a feature of the movement. However, this was not always seen as positive, particularly for those with longer-standing commitment to social and political activism. These interviewees tended to question the underlying commitment of the neophyte social media participants: ‘*hacíamos broma: “Quiero hacer movimiento, abro mi grupo de Facebook, de Whatsapp luego un Path, luego manifiesto, y ya miembro” Eran como los pasos*’.³⁵²

³⁵¹ ‘you would see an online poster saying “YoSoy132 - a movement in favour of the truth”. The person that put it up didn’t have to seek permission from anyone about whether it was the right idea... they could just put the idea out there, ... to see if it flopped or had a successful response..’ (GF/S).

³⁵² ‘We used to joke about it: “I want do movement activism, I just open my Facebook group, then Whatsapp then a Path document, then I protest, and now I am a member”. That was how it was seen’ (GL/SA).

More long term political activists also noted that the enthusiasm of people participating in street actions through social media lacked the commitment to a longer term political project:

‘Pero también tuvo esta debilidad, la gente decía porque me organizo si veo lo que van a proponer en redes, entonces cuando termina la marcha y queríamos consolidar una estructura, la gente nos decía, “pues todo lo van a sacar en redes”, sí, pero la idea es juntar... “bueno, ya veo en redes”’.³⁵³

This appears to support some of Gladwell’s (2010) weak-tie slacktivism criticisms. However, the reluctance to get more involved in offline organizing may also indicate an unwillingness to become embroiled in procedural and ideologically debates frequently associated with student activism. In this context, digital and social media facilitated selective participation without excluding the less politically committed who might not have participated otherwise. Interviewees recognised social media networks enabled large numbers to join in public protests without necessarily sharing beliefs or identity values. This facilitated plural participation, enhancing the size and visibility of the movement, but also challenging its longer term viability.

Another feature of individualised or small group social media activism that participants recognised was the horizontal nature of communication. The anonymity of much communication and absence of defined leaders or dominant SMOs was a movement ideal facilitated by the social media networking. However, activists acknowledged that certain actors in the networks and assemblies had more influence. There was a continual tension between the need to guard against the creation of powerbrokers, while at the same time, to enable adept individuals to represent the movement effectively to communicate messages and reach wider networks. As one activist observed digital and social networking does not necessarily avoid traditional practices:

³⁵³ ‘It also had this weakness, people said why am I going to get involved in organizing if I can see what is being proposed on social media, so when we finished a march and we wanted to consolidate organizational structures, people would say to us, “well, everything is going to be on social media”, [we’d reply] yes, but the idea is to get together... [but they would respond], “well, I’ll just see on social media”’(MS/SA).

‘Pues hay muchas cosas, muchos vicios de los medios normales que pueden trasladarse a las redes – tiene que tenerlo en cuenta’.³⁵⁴

Interviewees working in the media and the majority of activist interviewees pointed to the run-up to the elections as the most effervescent and creative period of YoSoy132 activism, especially the use of social media. However, two activists involved in coordination and movement articulation, particularly with internationally distributed networks, observed that some of the network relations and systems to share information, report back on actions and plan new events became more organized and effective after Peña Nieto’s election victory when the network relations were more settled. This suggests that while the initial effervescence of connective action facilitated early participation and motivation, the more structured or hybrid approaches (Bennett et al. 2013) enabled the movement to sustain strategic practices. In the latter context, social media operated as a more conventional communications technology, reducing costs by facilitating information sharing and coordination to reinforce identity, but less charged with emotion and connective energy.

However, efforts to establish a more stable organizational culture also reflected the ANI’s attempt to create a national popular movement based on more traditional social movement practices. This meant making organizational decisions about procedures, structure, strategy, identity and objectives; all processes which sat less easily with the decentred and individualised or small group activism that characterised and inspired the early mobilization.

This attempt to consolidate a national movement with an organizational structure also reflects the difficult transition stage of a social mobilization in which SMOs were largely absent. It had emerged spontaneously in a specific political context, but struggled to develop ongoing contentious action around a broader identity in another political

³⁵⁴ ‘There are many thing, many vices in traditional forms of communication which transfer onto social media – you have got to keep it in mind’ (XV/S).

context, increasingly distant from the source of its upsurge and its original mobilizing networks.³⁵⁵

This evidence suggests that a form of digitally enabled connective action was present in the early spontaneous mobilizations. However, this was not necessarily based on individualised action frames, but also included small group participation, creating and sharing information across affinity sub-networks. This underlay the process of developing a loose collective 'we' based around a generation of students alienated by Mexico's partial democracy and media manipulations. However, this initial connective mobilization stage rapidly shifted to a hybrid formation, involving negotiations about the movement identity to reflect the plurality of ideologies, beliefs and aspirations of participants. This also reflected the challenge of developing an organizational practice and identity to carry the movement beyond the immediate electoral context and the return of the PRI to power.

7.11 Security

Security concerns for participants in YoSoy132, particularly those related to social media and other digital communications platforms, were a low priority for most activists. There was awareness and suspicion about possible surveillance and threats, but this did not lead to major changes in practices, at least until 1 December 2012: 'En general nos costó entender la protección. Siempre la poníamos en segundo plano. En digital, tres veces más. Todo ese discurso de que las redes son lo máximo, invisibiliza los riesgos o vicios'.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ It is also important to note that on and after 1 December 2012, when repression and fear of repression increased, social media communications once again featured strongly in defensive activist practice of those who continued to identify with the movement, particularly gathering and exposing evidence of police abuses against protesters. In this context, the reactive and more spontaneous communicative dimensions of social media and web platforms proved useful for activists to gather and disseminate evidence of human rights abuses from witnesses to challenge the official and mainstream media representation of the protesters.

³⁵⁶ 'In general, we found it difficult to understand the issue of protection. We always put it second. Three times more so in relation to digital security. All that discourse about social media being the maximum... it invisibilises the risks and the bad aspects' (XV/S).

This also appears to reflect a long standing tradition in Mexico, including in the democratic era, that social and political activists are subject to surveillance, intimidation and even attack by authorities or other powerholders. Therefore, the danger posed by digital surveillance of social media or other digital threats is only one dimension of a wider, often unquantifiable climate of pressure. Despite this, at least two interviewees took minimum precautions, mainly focused on limiting information flows on open networks to maintain tactical advantage: 'Es inútil intentar esconderse. Tomamos algunas medidas a nivel local para no te ganen en la preparación de eventos y acciones. Es decir, intentar evitar que los enemigos locales tienen toda la información'.³⁵⁷ Another interviewee working on international coordination recognised the challenges of working with networks of distributed activists with no direct contact. This included trying to distinguish between possible infiltrators, automated accounts and authentic activists.

Gómez and Treré (2014) suggest that the vague 'paranoia' expressed by some YoSoy132 activists in relation to security risks arising from use of social media confirms a purely emotional rather than rational response to threats of using commercial platforms (p505). However, this privileges a Rational Actor Theory account of decision-making, ignoring the complex interplay of reason and emotion involved in weighing up risks, particularly where reliable information on the nature and scale of the threat is unavailable. As a result, the more hedged and sometimes paranoid approach suggested by my interviewees reflects a not unreasonable, nor purely emotional, evaluative process, particularly for young people not schooled in political activism or cybersecurity.

After 1 December 2012, YoSoy131 and affiliated collectives became increasingly aware of their vulnerability and began to change their social media practices to protect against interception: 'El primero fue abandonar el Facebook para comunicarme. Queríamos tener un grupo de Facebook, pero cerrado. Empezamos a hacer la

³⁵⁷ 'It is useless to try and hide. We took some precautions at local level so they weren't forewarned about the preparation of events and actions. That is to say, trying to stop your local enemies having all the information' (MS/S).

comunicación encriptada. Todavía no entramos al software libre, pero la mirada es para allá. También hemos tenido que diseñar protocolos, por la represión que hubo'.³⁵⁸

This increasing sense of insecurity resulted in reflections on the balance between internal security and making information publicly available for mobilizations and other forms of public action. These considerations reflected a shift away from the more fluid spontaneous connective action of early YoSoy132, when social media's democratizing affordances were venerated over potential threats. Revelations of intelligence service infiltration and manipulation of the movement (Villamil 2013) contributed to this increased awareness.³⁵⁹ This vulnerability also had a chilling effect on more deliberative exchange of ideas on open social media platforms.

YoSoy132 activists who have continued activism have tried to ensure that security is strengthened through mutual support networks based on relations of trust and cooperation between a range of independent actors, which are not exclusively online:

‘Creemos que la parte importante de seguridad es la formación de redes, otra forma de relacionarse... volvemos al principio... aprender entre nosotros que tenemos que cuidarnos... no importa si eres medio libre o periodista tradicional o de movimiento social... todos estamos pendientes de todos... conformar estas redes, informando... o teniendo acuerdos si hay un ataque que pasa’.³⁶⁰

Despite frequent concerns expressed by some activists about their vulnerability to digital security threats, precautionary measures were limited and ad hoc. This appears due to lack of more visible digital security threats against activists at the time - excluding trolling and BOTs. The absence of solid information to adequately evaluate

³⁵⁸ ‘The first thing was to stop using Facebook to communicate. We wanted to have a Facebook group, but a closed one. We started to use encrypted communications. We are still not using Free Software programs, but we are heading in that direction. We have also had to design protocols as a consequence of the repression’(ES/S).

³⁵⁹ Refer to example b, in footnote 175.

³⁶⁰ ‘We believe that the important part of security is the formation of networks, another means of relating to each other... going back to basics... learning among ourselves that we have to protect each other... it doesn't matter if you are an independent media outlet, a traditional journalist or a social movement... we are all looking out for each other... making networks, providing information... making agreements about what to do in the case of an attack. (CQ/SA).

risk made it a lesser priority than keeping communication flows open as much as possible, particularly as information did not include unlawful content. After 1 December 2012, these attitudes changed. In effect, only when the vulnerability of social media became more evident and threatened its usefulness, did the development of security measure become a greater priority. This conclusion also suggests that in a context of semi-authoritarian practices against activists, measures to limit digital vulnerability may contribute to a reduction in fluid open networking and deliberative practice, in favour of more cautious strategic communications, thus reducing the connective action potential of digital and social media.

7.12 Conclusion

This research found that most participants and observers did not consider YoSoy132 be a human rights movement. In part this was because such movements were understood in terms of classic defensive mobilizations to demand justice from the state for victims of grave abuses. Nonetheless, human rights discourse and practice featured in various aspects of the mobilization. Firstly, YoSoy132 drew on human rights discourse to mount and interpret the trigger event, then affirm it through protest. However, the mobilizing narrative was not primarily human rights focused. In part, because human rights norms were a taken-for-granted standard in student generations, but also because more experienced human rights practitioners were not central to the movement networks to facilitate more creative interpretations. The commonly held view was that human rights discourse was a minimum, institutional and technical discourse, not adequate to reflect a plural movement with contentious political demands. This only increased as the movement developed its more counter-hegemonic transformational collective identity. In the democratic deliberation processes of the movement, human rights discourse served as a minimum point of reference for most plural coalition actors, but others considered it an ideology of liberal individualism and insufficiently radical or emancipatory. As such, it enabled initial convergence, but was insufficient to act as an articulating discourse to reflect or express the plurality of transformational aspirations of the movement. The one area where human rights discourse was seen to feature was in its traditional defensive mode to denounce civil and political rights abuses against activists. However,

participation in online and offline actions was itself seen as an affirmation of the right to freedom of expression; activists realising their agency and developing political consciousness without necessarily adopting the discourse of human rights.

YoSoy132 could not have emerged in its particular dynamic configuration without the increasingly embedded use of digital and social media among university students. This reflected and reinforced a growing plurality and hybridity of digital and social media information sources; enabling different critical voices and narratives to circulate and challenge dominant mainstream narratives. This digital environment provided a fertile terrain for activists to promote the movement trigger event. It also reduced costs and barriers to sharing materials and coordination as well as fostering identity through shared emotional responses and the desire to participate in the sociality of street actions. These more horizontal and connective features initially reduced the need for a more defined collective identity and allowed a plurality of interests and beliefs to co-exist. However, participation was not solely on the basis 'individualised action frames' (Papacharissi 2015, p71) or 'networked individualism' (Wellman 2004) but also through pre-existing small groups identities or collectives. However, the looser network formations which facilitated the initial mobilization were not sufficient to sustain the movement deliberations or development, particularly as more established political ideologies gained influence. The movement increasingly adopted more traditional offline organizational processes to engage in direct deliberations and identity formation, reducing the specifically digital dimensions of the mobilization; making their use more strategic and less spontaneously expressive. Reliance on digital and social media raised vague security concerns, but did not lead to major modifications in the open fluidity of activist communications until confronted with overtly repressive measures. In conclusion, the enabling features of social media were key to the explosive initial configuration of YoSoy132, but these were insufficient to establish a more organized mobilization. The process of organizational consolidation also then contributed to reducing some of the more mobilizing and expressive features of the movement which digital and social media activism had facilitated.

Chapter 8

Ayotzinapa 43: data analysis and findings

8.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data gathered in relation to the practices of the social mobilization in support of the families of 43 forcibly disappeared students from the Ayotzinapa teacher training college.

The Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization was selected as a case study due to several factors. Firstly, the crime and the subsequent movement exposed the scale of collusion between organized crime and all levels of the state. This reinforced human rights discourse as a meaningful critique of Mexico's partial democracy, but also exposed its limits in terms of its role in a plural mobilization process. Secondly, the contribution made by the 'networked opportunity structure' (Cammaerts 2012) which had developed during earlier social mobilizations, including the increasing embeddedness of digital communications in civil society activism. Thirdly, the evolving hybrid solidarity mobilization drew on new and old repertoires of collective action (Tilly 1978), but was primarily rooted in the particular social context. Lastly, the contribution made by increasingly diverse and hybrid digital and social media practices which facilitated aspects of contention, including the diversifying online news media environment. The chapter examines how movement participants and observers understood these elements; their significance for the movement's disruptive and transformative potential as well as the limiting effects of human rights discourse and digitally enabled mobilization in relation to social movement dynamics.

8.2 Human rights crisis made visible

In 2012, the new PRI government failed to seriously address violence and impunity, with the human rights situation and the role of security forces coming under increasing scrutiny. This facilitated the interpretation of the enforced disappearance of 43 Ayotzinapa students not only in terms of outrage at the crime, but also as a gross human rights violation implicating the state directly in the crisis. This combination of

moral shock and human rights discourse assisted a rapid shift from trigger event to mobilization. It also facilitated a focus on concrete human rights demands in support of the parents of the students which contrasted with the government's empty institutional human rights discourse.

Grave human rights violations, including killings, abductions and enforced disappearances involving state agents, took place under the Calderon and Peña Nieto administrations. The MPJD had partially undermined the government and media representation of the victims as involved in crime. National and international NGOs and IGOs had also evidenced the scale of disappearances and stigmatization of victims (Human Rights Watch 2011; Amnesty International 2013; Centro Prodh 2013; UN Human Rights Council 2014b). This information indicated a scale of hitherto unacknowledged abuses and threat to ordinary citizens arising from the violence and militarisation. However, interviewees felt the PRI had effectively imposed a national media agenda focused on its structural reforms and modernisation, marginalizing the significance of continuing violence. It also effectively demobilized potential early critical opposition from the MPJD by offering institutional concessions such as enacting the General Law on Victims. However, cases such as Tlatlaya (Human Rights Watch 2014) evidenced military extrajudicial killings and official collusion in the cover-up. This was also reflected in information available on independent and alternative digital media platforms indicating continued criminal violence and security force abuses. As a result, the events in Iguala were part of a recognisable pattern but on a scale that 'generó una especie de shock en la población'³⁶¹. This 'moral shock' (Jasper 2014b) was rapidly followed by other high profile cases exposing corruption and impunity at the heart of the PRI administration, shattering the veneer of democratic renewal crafted by the PRI and its media allies.³⁶²

This shift in attitude was not solely due to public appreciation of the scale of the crime and the responsibility of police agents, but also an emotional response to the victims,

³⁶¹ 'it generated a form of shock in the population' (GZ/NGOP)

³⁶² See footnote 125

particularly the parents. They represented blameless ordinary Mexicans, from extremely poor and indigenous backgrounds. They were victims of a predatory state indistinguishable from organized crime. The dignity and determination of the parents to find their sons and challenge the government was a quality noted by all interviews. This suggests Tilly's social movement mobilizing qualities of 'Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment' (Tilly 2004, p4).

However, the shock of the crime was also the threat it implied to ordinary citizens not involved in organized crime. The families of the victims stressed this point which contrasted with the official narrative of the violence, adding an additional urgency to the call for solidarity:

'me parece que uno de los grandes estímulos [para participar] fue la solidaridad, pero también fue el miedo que nos embargó, a decir, en medio de qué país estamos viviendo? De alguna manera se vieron amenazadas las personas'.³⁶³

The evident involvement of security forces also showed that insecurity did not only derive from criminal gangs targeting other gangs, but also state agents working with them; the agents that were supposed to be protecting citizens in fact also posed the greatest threat to them. In this context, human rights discourse clearly located responsibility with the state, rather than the odd 'rotten apple' of individually corrupt police:

'con Ayotzi es la parte de la responsabilidad del Estado, no nada más por no haber prevenido sino por participación directa... lo que sentía, más socialmente, antes había un rechazo al discurso de derechos humanos como en "seguro en algo estaba involucrado". Evidentemente va acompañado con todo una maquinaria mediática que lo impulsaba. Ese sentimiento social, me parece, que fue una de las cosas más fuertes que rompió Ayotzinapa, que fue darle por completo la vuelta. Después de eso había la presunción de que el Estado... como participante

³⁶³ '... I think solidarity was one of the great incentives [to participation in the mobilization] but it was also fear that seized us, that is to say, what kind of country are we living in? In some ways, people felt themselves threatened (GZ/NGOP).

activo, el empezar a ver la complejidad de estas relaciones y actores, crimen organizado, gobierno y lo demás, que nos da miedo.³⁶⁴

The significance of human rights discourse was confirmed in the aftermath of the crime as the complicity and/or collusion of municipal, state and federal authorities was evidenced by independent and international media, undercutting government efforts to shape the narrative. The humiliating treatment of the families and the official efforts to keep the blame at municipal level authorities, provided further ‘moral shocks’.³⁶⁵ In contrast to this conduct, local human rights NGOs documented in detail the case and respectfully accompanied the parents and surviving students.³⁶⁶ The International Interdisciplinary Group of Experts (GIEI) involvement ensured that the mobilization enjoyed technical and internationally legitimised human rights support grounded in multilateral institutions and focused on concrete human rights objectives such as the right to truth and justice.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ ‘With Ayotzi, it’s about the responsibility of the state [for the crime], not only by failing to prevent it but because of its direct participation... It felt like, before, socially speaking, there was a rejection of human rights as in [the often repeated phrase about the presumed criminality of victims] “he must’ve been involved in something”. Evidently that was promoted by the whole media machine. That social attitude, I think, was one of the strongest things that Ayotzinapa broke...it turned it completely round. Afterwards there was the presumption of the state... as a direct participant... of beginning to see the complexity of relations and actors, organized crime, government and the rest... that so frightens us’ (XV/NGOP).

³⁶⁵ An example of this was initial attempts of state authorities on 5 and 6 October 2014 to present bodies found in clandestine graves around Iguala as (incorrectly) belonging to the missing students. This information was rapidly circulated on digital and social media, provoking public outrage. This fuelled participation in first major demonstration in Mexico City on 8 October 2014.

³⁶⁶ This in turn facilitated the intervention of renowned international NGOs, such as the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), and IGOs, such as the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

³⁶⁷ As one interviewee observed: ‘El trabajo del GIGI es clave. La confianza que ha depositado ahí es única, hasta más que con algunos de nosotros... sobre todo por la variedad de las visiones de los padres... eso ha ayudado que la vía institucional de exigir a las instituciones... que ellos que tienen que dar respuesta... Todavía les hace sentido... es una pieza clave... Que ha logrado que sigan juntos... que está poniendo en línea de fuego su reputación’ (The work of the GIGI is key. The trust placed in them is exceptional, including more than in some of us [human rights activists]...above all because of the variety of perspectives of the parents.. it has helped to ensure an institutional path for making demands on the institutions... so that they have to give answers...[This process] still makes sense [to the parents]... it is a key element... it has ensured that [the parents] have remained united... that [the members of the GIEI] are putting their reputation on the line) (QE/NGOP).

The use of human rights discourse by legitimised actors increased recognition of the human rights crisis, facilitating the understanding underpinning the mobilization. It also ensured the mobilization was not limited to traditional social movement contentious practices – which were perceived as more political, with the potential to lead to physical clashes with the authorities as a means of securing concessions from powerholders. Interviewees from both traditions considered that these popular mobilization practices were often at odds with the more legalistic human rights strategies, but that the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization bridged some of this divide through an increased recognition of the relevance of human rights claims-making.

‘En México hace tiempo que no había tanta expresión de indignación y tanta movilización no corporativizada... y en la expresión de esta indignación, había más componentes de derechos humanos que antes. Pues eso puede ser que es más socializado el discurso de derechos humanos hacia sectores que antes no fraseaba en esos términos sus demandas de justicia’.³⁶⁸

In conclusion, despite government efforts to marginalize human rights concerns, these had increasingly featured in understanding the ongoing violence and its impact on the population. As information of the atrocity of Iguala circulated, including the role of the state, the trigger event was interpreted as both outrage against ordinary Mexicans but also in terms of the wider human rights crisis placing everyone at risk. The involvement of skilled national and international human rights practitioners provided substantive evidence to expose government efforts to close the case and helped sustain the mobilization, particularly its focus on concrete human rights demands. This process also further embedded human rights discourse as a critique the government and Mexico’s partial democracy.

³⁶⁸ ‘In Mexico, there hadn’t been such an expression of indignation for ages, of organic social mobilization... and in the expression of that indignation there were more human rights elements than before. That could be because human rights discourse had been more socialised with those sectors which previously would not have framed their justice claims in those terms’ (XE/NGOP).

8.3 Networked activists orienting action

The social mobilization in support of the Ayotzinapa 43 took shape rapidly, due in large part to the reconfiguration of supporting social networks. This was facilitated, but not determined by increasingly embedded use of digital communications. Many network actors had a range of skills and resources, some developed over decades of involvement in various political and social organizations and others more recently acquired as part of looser global justice and digital activism.

Networks overlapped at several different points but were primarily made up of: student activists; militants from trade union and socio-political organizations; human rights NGOs, global justice activists; independent civil society actors and international solidarity activists. Each of these contributed different sets of skills and ideological approaches but formed an ‘interconnected networked environment in which social movements operate’ (Cammaerts 2012, p.119). Human rights NGOs played an important, but not monopolizing role in orienting the response to the trigger event with the families. This included mobilizing their human rights associated networks and involving international actors to legitimise and strengthen the claims-making of the families.

One of the first networks to be activated in response to the Iguala attack was the trade union representing rural students teachers, FECSM. An organization with a radical resistance history with links across trade union and students networks, as well as socio-political organizations committed to left-wing causes, including the Zapatistas and their support networks. This was the early focus for the surviving students who saw human rights organizations as important but secondary in the networking and mobilization process:

‘[FECSM] tiene relaciones con los sindicatos, de todo tipo, allá en Guerrero y otros estados... por las relaciones también saliendo de 2011... además para el 2 de octubre se entablaron muchas relaciones con muchas organizaciones, incluso

obviamente con las de derechos humanos... que a su vez convocaron a sus contactos... de inmediata se formó una red amplia de información.³⁶⁹

The Iguala attack occurred during a period of intense mobilization of dissident teachers' unions in protests and strikes against reforms to the education sector. Some of the Guerrero chapters of the unions were at the forefront of militant opposition to federal government policy. This provided an opportunity for the convergence of plural interests: 'Esos mismos días estaban sesionando para el paro. Llegó esto, entonces lo incorpora como parte de su pliego... así fueron muchas cosas que lograron en paginarse'.³⁷⁰ The political and social grassroots organizations in Guerrero would gradually take on a primary role as part of the *Asamblea Nacional Popular* (ANP), which would assume the leadership and coordination of the movement.³⁷¹

In Guerrero, networks which emerged around the families were seen by interviewees as essential to providing a solid, but not monopolising human rights orientation to the movement. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, parents of the disappeared were invited by the surviving Ayotzinapa students to remain on the campus until their children were returned alive. A parents' committee was also established almost immediately. Local human rights NGOs, *Centro Tlachinollan* and *Centro de Derechos Humanos Morelos y Pavón*, had existing relationships of trust with college students. On this basis, parents were encouraged to trust *Centro Tlachinollan* to document the case and support their families' fight. *Centro Tlachinollan's* strong relationship with the Mexico City based NGO, *Centro PRODH* also enabled it to develop relationships with the students and parents as well as press the case at national and international level. These local contacts relied on sets of pre-existing networked relationships and direct

³⁶⁹ '[FECSM] has relations with trade unions of all types, there in Guerrero and other states... including relationships resulting from 2011 [when Ayotzinapa students were previously attacked by police]... additionally, on 2 October relations with many other organizations started up, including obviously human rights NGOs... which in turn called on their contacts... immediately a wide information network was formed' (SK/V/SA).

³⁷⁰ 'During those same days, [the unions] were meeting to organise the strike. [Ayotzinapa] happened, so they just incorporated it as part of their demands.. many things just came together in this way' (QE/NGOP). The protests in Mexico City also coincided with a major dispute at the National Polytechnic Institute, which initially adopted the demands of the Ayotzinapa families.

³⁷¹ See section 5.4 for more detail.

meetings to develop core movement agreements, rather than digital communications. *Centro Tlachinollan* and *Centro PRODH* both had resources and extensive experience in litigation at national and international level, including accompanying victims over many years in their struggles for justice. Both NGOs had developed national and international reputations as well as support and solidarity networks.³⁷² On the basis of these existing relations, the international human rights networks were rapidly activated in the immediate aftermath of the crime. These networks and their rootedness in existing relationships and localities were key to the rapid mobilization.

‘hubo muchos factores en como ese movimiento creció... en parte es porque al día siguiente, estaban [un representante de Tlachinollan y el Centro Morelos], documentando, lo que se podía documentar, pero acompañando los chavos en ese momento... salió la información desde el primer momento. La otra como tal, La Normal como tal asumió todo el ritmo... es que los padres vivían ahí y la mayoría siguen viviendo ahí, en La Normal o en las periferias de La Normal. Eso significa un nicho... que permitiera a todo el mundo llegara para conocer lo que estaba pasando y como están las familias’.³⁷³

But the solidarity mobilization drew on wider networks than human rights NGOs. In Guerrero, longstanding political and social activist organizations and unions quickly joined the movement, supporting the students and parents, but also pressing their own social and political agenda. In wider national and international networks, YoSoy132 activists were some of the first to respond to the call for action, reactivating latent capacity. The involvement of YoSoy132 activists and Zapatista supporters, with active or latent international networks, enabled the swift participation of allied international activist oriented toward counter-hegemonic global justice causes. This contributed to the rapid global participation in solidarity actions. These networks of activists also provided resources to disseminate information on actions and increase their visibility

³⁷² As an international human rights researcher and campaigner, I worked closely with both organizations over several years.

³⁷³ ‘There are many reasons why the movement grew... in part it is because the very next day [a representative of Tlachinollan] and the Morelos y Pavón Human rights centre were there documenting what they could, but also accompanying the students... the information got out from the first moment. The other thing, was that the Rural College, took on the whole rhythm... the parents were living there and the majority are still living there, in the college or nearby. That means a space... which enabled the whole world to go there to get to know what was happening and the situation of the families’ (QE/NGOP).

– a contribution not necessarily appreciated by nationally focused activists. As one former YoSoy132 activist observed:

‘creo que 132 Internacional logró un trabajo fuerte de red y de unión, que para mí fue importante porque... sin eso Ayotzinapa no hubiera sido tan movido... porque la red ya estaba hecha, si bien cuando ocurre Ayotzinapa las cuentas estaban en desuso... pero nunca las perdimos, cuando pasa Ayotzinapa activamos la cuenta, toda la gente todavía está ahí, para difundir y lo que hubo. En ese momento nosotros teníamos grupos 132, 132twiteros, 132traductores... Aunque aquí no se valoró, todo lo producida, boletines etc. fue traducida, página de Wikipedia. La base nos sirvió mucho para eso’.³⁷⁴

In early October the spontaneous involvement of different individuals, friendship groups, collectives, networks and NGOs in Mexico City led to the need for more coordination. A civil society *Plataforma de Solidaridad* was established. This enabled face-to-face debate amongst the different activists and organizations, action planning and initial contact with the parents. Collectives of artists and others approached the Platform to propose solidarity and cultural actions, seeking contact with and authorization from the parents. For example, a YoSoy132 activist observed:

‘Había confianza... con todo lo que habíamos hecho con 132 hasta Ayotzi, entonces fuéramos invitados a la plataforma de solidaridad... también hicimos iniciativas propias... la iniciativa Rexista... fundamentalmente es producto de 132’.³⁷⁵

This patchwork of plural spaces and organizational forms linking across multiple networks, assisted by the increasingly widespread use of social media platforms, enabled a relatively spontaneous and fluid response to the trigger event and ensuing

³⁷⁴ ‘I think 132 Internacional achieved strong action in terms of networks and unity, which was important for me because... without that Ayotzinapa wouldn’t have been so active... because the network was already there, even though when Ayotzinapa occurred the [social media] accounts were not being used..., we never lost them, but when Ayotzinapa happened we reactivated the accounts, and everyone was still there, to disseminate and everything else... At the time we had 132 groups, 132twitter, 132 translators....Even though it was never really appreciated here [in Mexico] everything that was produced: press releases etc was translated... the Wikipedia page. The base support helped us a lot with that’ (CQ/SA).

³⁷⁵ ‘there was trust... based on everything we had done with 132 until Ayotzi, so we were invited to the solidarity platform... we also had our own initiative... Rexista... fundamentally a product of 132’ (GF/SA).

public sphere debate.³⁷⁶ Human rights NGOs played an important role in supporting the families and students, and orienting an aspect of the actions toward human rights discourse. Despite this, most interviewees considered that the networks involved in the mobilization were not focused on human rights discourse and neither was this the primary mobilizing frame.

8.4 Framing injustice and human rights in a plural movement

This section examines the movement's primary framing narratives (Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1998; Brysk 2013). These were focused on the 43 missing students and emotional solidarity with the parents. The human rights framework contributed to targeting these demands at state responsibility, but human rights language has often been left implicit. The plural nature of the movement also meant other more political demands were at times incorporated into the agenda, widening the narrative frame. In this context, human rights NGO accompaniment played an important role in sustaining the focus of the movement.

All interviewees considered the parents were at the emotional centre of the social mobilization, eliciting a widely felt urge to share and identify with their suffering:

'lo que provocó Ayotzinapa en el corazón y la emoción de la sociedad mexicana fue radicalmente distinto con lo que pasó con los otros procesos. Lo que se veía era la empatía con el dolor, ver como sufrían los papas... me impresionaba en las primeras marchas, los papas iban caminando, y la gente se detenía para verlos y lloraban y lloraban, no lo había visto... Es tan fuerte lo que pasó que sienten una interpelación individual de su persona, y necesitan mostrar que están con los papas'.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ A national survey in November 2014 indicated that 98% of the population had heard of the demonstrations, 46% were in agreement with them, and 8% had participated (Paramétrica 2015).

³⁷⁷ 'what Ayotzinapa caused in the heart and emotions of Mexican society was radically different from other social processes. What you saw was an empathy with their grief, seeing how the parents suffered... the first marches left an impression on me, seeing the parents were walking, the people stopped to watch them and cried and cried. I hadn't seen anything like it... it is so terrible what happened that people feel an individual internalised questioning and need to show their support for the parents' (GL/SA/NGOP).

The rooted genuineness and suffering of the parents contrasted with negative perceptions of the government: 'le ganamos la narrativa a presidencia en ese momento porque la legitimidad de las papas es muchísimo'.³⁷⁸ This psychological and emotional response to the parents was identified by all interviewees as crucial to attracting participation beyond the usual social and human rights activist networks. On occasions this inspired participation in protests by middleclass office workers and solidarity actions by local working class neighbourhood groups.

Another key element was sustaining the belief in the responsibility of the state in the face of the authorities' constant efforts to steer public opinion toward the sole responsibility of criminal networks and isolated corrupt officials. The refusal to accept these evasions was expressed in the #yamecanse twitter battle (see page 150), and perhaps most succinctly in the hybrid public and social media 'Fue El Estado' action by the group, *Rexista* (a mixture of 'Banksy and Batman' according to a participant). Activists wrote 'Fue El Estado' (It was the State/the State did it), in huge letters across Mexico City's central square during a mass demonstration, then used social media to circulate the photo taken from an overlooking building.³⁷⁹ The choreographed event amplified a movement slogan, converting it into a subversive viral image of Mexico's iconic central square. It rapidly moved from social networks to national and international media and became graffiti and a chant used by protesters around the world. This provocative statement neatly drilled through the convoluted aspects of state responsibility in a federal political system - regularly used by government officials to dilute responsibility, excuse impunity and justify non-compliance with human rights obligations. In effect, it accused the whole institutional system of Mexico's democracy of the commission, omission and cover-up of the Iguala killings and disappearances.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ 'At that moment we won the narrative against the president's office because the legitimacy of the parents is so strong' (RX/NGOPC).

³⁷⁹ Rexista. 2014. Available at: <http://rexiste.org/post/107326632417/pinta-monumental-fue-el-estado-en-el-zócalo-de> [Accessed 5 June 2018].

³⁸⁰ It also infuriated government officials by accusing the whole State of responsibility.

Another important element of the framing narrative was the demand for the reappearance alive of the 43 students, represented in the chant and slogan of movement events, 'Vivos se los llevaron, vivos los queremos'.³⁸¹ On the one hand, this demand reflected the natural desire of the parents, but it also reinforced a key element of international human rights law in relation to enforced disappearances which considers such crimes as ongoing until the whereabouts and fate of the victims are reliably established. This has remained an important means of resisting the logic of the government's claim to have established the 'historic truth', which was used as a counter-frame to argue the young men were killed and the case resolved, thus ending the obligation to treat the crime as continuous and the investigation unfinished. Once again, human rights discourse was only implicit in this rallying movement demand, which instead was focused the raw emotional plea of the parents for the return of their loved ones.

Despite the relatively clear human rights justice dimension of these demands, at times during the movement, these were also coupled to wider political demands of partner organizations, such as trade unions in industrial disputes. These political objectives varied, but primarily focused on attacking the legitimacy of the government as well as making claims on other social issues. For some of the more traditional left-wing actors, human rights demands served as a means of heightening their political leverage in their disputes, focusing particularly on Peña Nieto and calling for his resignation. Two interviewees recognised this dimension in some of the protests, but argued that they were marginal compared to the bulk of those supporting the mobilization which remained focused on the parents' core demands. However, this also threw up contradictions between narrow human rights demands and more transformational political aspirations of the heterogenous protests:

Yo recuerdo en las marchas hubo gente que respondió al grito de fuera EPN, y [otros decían] que no eso, es política, lo que queremos son los 43. Los que tomaban postura de que el movimiento debe trascender los 43 eran los que tenían esa formación política de larga data en los movimientos históricos, el resto – los otros grupos: la sociedad civil no organizada o la organizada, con estas

³⁸¹ 'They took them alive, we want them back alive'.

nuevas maneras de ver estos procesos. Aquellos decían que no politicemos etc. Yo los entendía porque era difícil decir “Fue El Estado” al mismo tiempo de decir que no es un mensaje politizado. Necesitaba cuidado para explicar la complejidad de la situación’.³⁸²

Olvera argues that among the multiple actors participating in the Ayotzinapa 43 movement, some with radical aims, there were opportunists undermining the moral cause of the families and the broad mobilization (Olvera 2016). The ambiguity of some of these more political agendas, also left the movement exposed to counter-frames by the government and its media allies, presenting the families as manipulated by radical groups.³⁸³

Central to sustaining the underlying focus on human rights demands and avoiding more direct political confrontation was the continued accompaniment by national and international human rights organizations: ‘el hecho de que las familias se mantiene firmes, que trajéramos los forenses argentinos, luego los expertos de la Comisión Interamericana, le dio un tono distinto al movimiento, un movimiento que supo acompañarse’.³⁸⁴ However, this support of human rights NGOs and discourse did not act as the explicit mobilizing narrative, rather as a reinforcing element.

In summary, the movement’s mobilizing narrative focused on the families’ suffering and uncompromising search for their disappeared children, the responsibility of the state and the refusal to accept manipulation of the case. The families and students

³⁸² ‘I remember in the demonstrations that there were people calling for Peña Nieto to go, and [others said] no, that is political, what we want is the 43. Those that took a position that the movement should go beyond the 43 were those with a long standing political formation in the historic social movements, the rest – other groups, organized and unorganized civil society, with their new way of understanding these processes, they said, let’s not politicise this etc. I understood them both because it was difficult to say “It was the State” at the same time as saying that it wasn’t a politicised message. It needed care to explain the complexity of the situation’ (GZ/NGOP).

³⁸³ The violence in some demonstrations, which several interviewees believed to have been caused or provoked by government hired thugs/undercover security officials (a common practice over Mexico’s protest history) also contributed to this counter-framing strategy. According to some interviewees, this played a role in reduced participation in protests in 2015 and 2016.

³⁸⁴ ‘The fact that the families stayed strong, that we got the Argentine Forensic scientists involved, then the IACHR experts, that gave the movement a different tone, a movement that knew how to be accompanied’ (SK/SA).

framed their demands in their own rooted terms which helped mobilize support. This was reinforced by skilled use of human rights discourse, but the mobilization was not reduced to the parameters or meaning of this discourse and at times parts of the movement went beyond this to promote a wider transformative agenda.

8.5 Agency

This section examines how activists with expertise in human rights and social media supported the emerging agency of some parents and students developing complex sets of relationships. In this process the perceived usefulness of human rights and social media, both in strategic and expressive terms, were factors shaping the extent to which they were integrated into practice.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, the surviving students and relatives of the killed and abducted, demanded information, justice and the return of the disappeared. By 29 September, the parents of the victims had formed their own organizing committee at the Ayotzinapa college. Most of the families had little experience of political organizing or demanding action from the state, but drew on the culture of resistance present in the experience of indigenous and peasant farmers in rural Guerrero as well as the radical socialist activism of the college. Human rights approaches were initially alien, particularly in the midst of their immediate clamour to find the students. According to interviewees, *Centro Tlachinollan* played an important role in making human rights approaches meaningful for the families while respecting their autonomy and decision-making:

‘es diferente acompañar a los estudiantes que acompañar a los papas...entonces los padres de familia no conocían a Tlachi (sic), son de otras zonas del estado... el tema de derechos humanos no estaba en su agenda... era como un reto acompañar, fijar, organizar o ayudar a que se organizaran, pero también con toda la información que les llegó de 10,000 lados’.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁵ ‘It is different accompanying students to accompanying the parents... at that time the parents didn’t know [Tlachinollan], they are from different regions of the state... the issue of human rights was not on their agenda... it was a challenge to accompany, to organize or help them organize, but also because they were receiving information from 10,000 different sides’ (QE/NGOP).

Centro Tlachinollan representatives stayed at the college alongside the students and parents building trust and confidence. At least one was a lawyer who had grown up in the region and came from similar backgrounds to the students and victims. The human rights NGO representatives held ‘reunión tras reunión’³⁸⁶ with the families, encouraging them to organize themselves, explaining what was happening in legal terms and how they might be able to help with the authorities and human rights mechanisms. This process of ‘socializing’ human rights, according to two interviewees, was premised on providing the families with reliable information and explaining the value and limits of human rights approaches. This was also part of a process of the parents developing their own decision-making in relation to the case and the mobilization.

As noted in section 2.3.3, this process of ‘vernacularizing’ human rights is necessarily complex and ambiguous (Merry 2006b). There are differences of status, experience and knowledge between local activists with human rights expertise and those whose rights are affected from socially disadvantaged communities without prior knowledge of human rights discourse.³⁸⁷ Establishing a relationship based on trust and respect is essential to make human rights approaches meaningful and useful for those affected, enabling them to develop their own understanding and agency in the formulation of human rights claims³⁸⁸. It is also important for withstanding counter-framing strategies which seek to undermine the relationship. In the case of the parents of the Ayotzinapa 43 and the NGOs, *Centro Tlachinollan* and *Centro PRODH*, this relationship was key to the movement in instrumental and expressive terms. The NGOs remained conscious of

³⁸⁶ ‘meeting after meeting’

³⁸⁷ That is not to say that victims or communities are passive recipients of expert help, as local communities often develop human rights approaches and activism without necessarily relying on external experts (Speed 2007), but at some point in this process there is usually an information exchange with external actors with knowledge of human rights discourse which facilitates the interpretation of local grievances and injustices in the universalist terms human rights.

³⁸⁸ This is not always the case as human rights experts can also instrumentally abuse this relationship, undermining rather than strengthen victim/survivor agency, as such the ‘vernacularization’ of international human rights discourse can have ambiguous results (Goldstein 2012).

this complex relationship, ensuring the voices of the families and their demands were not usurped by the NGO experts:

‘en conferencias de prensa de Ayotzinapa, me encanta escuchar las familias – de hecho cada vez más ellos mismos usan los términos de derechos humanos... cuando es el lenguaje que escuchan, está bien... pero me gusta cuando hablan de lo que viven y más político... y por otro lado, cerrar con lo otro, del Prodh o Tlachi con las exigencias de derechos humanos. Me parece importante que existan las dos y no se subsumiera el uno por el otro, porque es la posibilidad de un reclamo más política, más social.’³⁸⁹

This study has not attempted to analyse these relations in depth as they remain sensitive and complex (see section 2.3.3). However, some features of the human rights NGO accompaniment of the parents indicate a continuing relationship of trust after more than four years. For example, one of the key human rights lawyers who has accompanied the parents from the outset remained at the college and close to the families, as do other representatives of *Centro Tlachinollan* and *Centro PRODH*. As a student survivor observed:

‘Sin los abogados no hubiéramos hecho nada. Sí hay ongs de derechos humanos de todo tipo. Estamos acompañados de organizaciones independientes que tienen reputación de estar con las personas, como Serapaz, el Prodh, Tlachi... asumen los retos que eso implica ... llevar el caso’.³⁹⁰

As the central focus of the mobilization, the parents and surviving students have played important roles in public events and advocacy. These are focused on engaging the mobilization narrative around the families and their struggle rather than adopting explicit human rights discourse – though after years of struggle families have gradually

³⁸⁹ ‘In press conferences on Ayotzinapa, I really like listening to the families – in fact, each time they use human rights terms more... when it’s the language they hear, well that is okay... but I like it when they talk about what they are living, when they are more political... and then finish with the other side, from the Prodh or Tlachinollan, with the human rights demands. I think it is important that there are both sides and that one isn’t subsumed into the other, because that is the possibility of making a more political, more social demand’ (XV/SA/NGOP).

³⁹⁰ ‘Without the lawyers we wouldn’t have done anything. Yes, there are human rights NGOs of all types. We are accompanied by independent NGOs with a reputation for standing with the people, like SERAPAZ, PRODH, Tlachinollan... they shoulder the challenges of what it really means... to take on the case’ (SK/V/SA).

incorporated aspects of human rights discourse into the narrative of their struggle. However, their agency is most clearly manifested in their public role in movement actions, using their own voice in domestic and international settings to sustain support and target powerholders. For example, meeting senior government officials and holding press conferences as well as solidarity tours to the USA and Europe to sustain global support and attention on the case. These activities have also included increasing use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to communicate directly with support networks and promote the ongoing actions of the movement.³⁹¹ Such processes have been relevant for keeping the voice of the parents at the centre of the struggle for justice.

These campaigning skills have often been developed with the assistance of other activists supporting the movement. For example, one of the students who survived the Iguala attack was assisted spontaneously by former YoSoy132 activists to develop an active social media profile on Twitter and Facebook. This has helped him play an important nodal role in circulating information on actions and responding to counter-frames, developing the identity of the solidarity support networks:

‘Antes [mi uso de redes sociales] era muy personal. Creo que fue diciembre 2014 que las organizaciones que se dedican a difundirme... se propusieron mi cuenta de Facebook y Twitter... me dieron ensayos como hacerlo. Era muy necesario... una pequeña capacitación... cuando me topaba con ellos’.³⁹²

He continued to receive support from other activists, enabling him to regularly update accounts. Human rights NGOs also supported him, helping filter mainstream media contacts and develop messages in line with demands of the parents. His social media profiles expressively represented his participation in the movement and relationship with the families as well as providing strategic support for the movement.

³⁹¹ For example, on Facebook: ‘Padres Y Madres De Ayotzinapa’ and on Twitter: ‘@DonMarioAyotzi’; @Omarel44.

³⁹² ‘Before [my use of social media] was just for personal stuff. I think it was in December 2014 that the organizations promoting information on me... suggested I get Facebook and Twitter accounts... They gave me lessons on how to do it. It was really necessary... a little training... whenever I bumped into them’(SK/SA).

In contrast to this visible role on social media of some of those directly affected, human rights lawyers working with the families have not used personalised social media profiles, preferring the official NGO social media accounts, press conferences and traditional media interviews to communicate strategic institutional positions and information in relation to the case. This reflects traditional NGO advocacy practices as well as concerns about resources, institutional messaging and security of more open and dynamic social media practices.

In summary, as part of the process of developing a national and international mobilization, key actors played roles in shaping the approach, actions and the messages. At the heart of this process were the parents and students of the college and human rights NGOs. According to interviewees, human rights NGOs respected the interests of the disappeared and their relatives and the organising processes of the students and families. These negotiated relationships contributed to the developing agency the parents and students, enabling a meaningful use of human rights discourse and social media to be integrated into the parents and student led contentious mobilization but without subsuming them into a narrow human right framing narrative.

8.6 Dynamics of the movement coalition and human rights discourse

This section examines some of the complex shifting dynamics of the movement coalition which facilitated and constrained the mobilization, particularly the extent to which human rights discourse enabled the articulation of the different actors involved.

When indignation turned to action at the beginning of October 2014, there was a wide range of different social and political groups, collectives and individuals that answered the call to protest:

‘La gran novedad de Ayotzi, fue de que ya no se pudo tener bajo una dirigencia sino fue una solidaridad desbordada de tal manera que todas las personas que participaban en las acciones no se preguntaron acerca de quien se convocaba o

no, sino se unificaban en torno de la exigencia primordial que fue la apariencia con vida'.³⁹³

This did not exclude intense discussion about strategy and movement identity in meetings. However, the spontaneous participation of multiple actors focused on the parents, ensured that potential divisions were set aside in favour of the demand for the return of the 43. At the same time, in Guerrero the parents' and Ayotzinapa students' committees were organizing and reaching out to different sectors to join the mobilization. This included more traditional interest based socio-political organizations with long traditions of militant grassroots left-wing struggle. Students, particularly in Mexico City, also joined the mobilization under their own assembly. Some students practiced YoSoy132 styles of political contention, while others pursued more traditional variations of Marxist and autonomist political activism, supporting the families but also aspiring to political and social transformation.

Two interviewees felt that there were in fact two movements: one based in the political culture of Guerrero and the other the loose configuration of organizations supporting the parents. For another interview it was more about understanding the character of traditional social movement organizations which were based on forms of popular counter-power political struggle in which human rights claims were valued in terms of their instrumental leverage:

'los movimientos sociales tienen una lógica de una disputa de un proyecto de relación de poder / contra poder, de hegemonía y contra hegemonía, entonces, por los movimientos sociales más allá de que son por la vía de los derechos humanos... los derechos humanos pueden ser una herramienta en todo caso, puede ser útil'.³⁹⁴

³⁹³ 'The really new thing about Ayotzi was that it wasn't possible to have it under a single leadership, instead the solidarity was overflowing to the extent everyone who was participating didn't bother to ask about who was convening [the actions], rather they just unified around the essential demand for the return alive of the young men' (GZ/NGOP).

³⁹⁴ 'social movements have a logic of dispute over a project in relation to power/ counter-power, of hegemony and counter-hegemony, so for social movements, beyond whether they are in favour of human rights or not ... it is that human rights can be a tool in a particular instance, they can be useful' (GL/SA/NGOP).

This tension between the wider political and social agenda of some actors and the more limited human rights demands focused on the enforced disappearances was a feature of the movement. At times this appeared to offer an opportunity of articulating a mass movement in favour of political and social transformation. However, as human rights activist observed, human rights discourse could not articulate or represent these different agendas:

‘Creo que parte de los aprendizajes de Ayotzinapa es que la agenda de derechos humanos es muy contra-mayoritaria, no es una agenda... es decir, no es la agenda que va a mover socialmente, que va a generar una cohesión social, un movimiento de transformación. Es un punto que entró en una agenda más amplia, más compleja de reivindicación social’.³⁹⁵

The complex nature of the movement coalition and the multiple actors involved was partly resolved when the parents’ committee named the Guerrero-based *Asamblea Nacional Popular* (ANP) as the coordinating body of the political solidarity movement. This had the advantage of strengthening the role of political organizations with long experience of organising and sustaining protest movements and contentious political struggle. The disadvantage was that the ANP was not an organic heterogenous organizing committee facilitating the involvement of plural actors and networks of civil society across the country and internationally. Initially, despite tensions, the coordination platform based in Mexico City co-existed with the ANP. However, by January 2015, the platform dissolved leaving the ANP responsible for the protest agenda.

‘Muchos de las organizaciones que lanzaron proyectos, pasaban [por la plataforma] porque nos hiciéramos el enlace con las papas... entonces, eso ayudaba... venían para la reunión con todo el mundo, una base mínima de

³⁹⁵ ‘I think part of the lessons of Ayotzinapa is that the human rights agenda is very counter-majoritarian, it is not an agenda... what I mean is it is not an agenda to generate social mobilization, that is, to generate social cohesion, a movement of transformation. It is one point that entered in a wider more complicated agenda of social demands’(QTX/NGOP).

participación. Pero cuando se fue la coordinación a la ANP... pues ahí se perdió totalmente... toda esa gente se fue desapareciendo'.³⁹⁶

The protest wave by this time was subsiding after the intense early months. Two interviewees with experience in national or Mexico City focused activism considered the role taken by the ANP as a step backwards. According to this perspective, the ANP undervalued the logistical complications of organizing national and global solidarity networks from Guerrero, but also undermined the plural identity of the mass mobilization in favour of a more ideological aligned and overtly anti-Peña Nieto political agenda.³⁹⁷ This chimed with the counter-framing strategy of the pro-government media and perhaps contributed to a reduced participation in public actions, particularly by those less politically aligned. The ANP also reflected a return to a more hierarchical leadership, in which the autonomous participation and creative contributions of individuals and collectives, whether offline or online, was subject to more bureaucratic control:

‘uno de los sentimientos que nos coincidimos con las nuevas generaciones es que no coincidimos con los caudillismos; sea autonomista o reformista. Es que hay una dirección que no satisface las nuevas generaciones. Eso fue algo que maduró mucho en el 132’.³⁹⁸

Nevertheless, as another interviewee with long experience in political and social activism observed, the traditional organizations were endorsed by the parents and they also provided a strength of organizational capacity, experience and commitment that the more agile, individualised and context inspired activists could not have sustained: ‘claro cuando no hay estructura no se puede sostener por mucho tiempo....

³⁹⁶ ‘Many of the organizations started projects [as part of the mobilization], they came via us [at the Platform] because we had contact with the parents... so it helped... they would come to the meeting with everyone else, a minimum of participation. But when the movement coordination went to the ANP... after that we lost that dimension completely... all those people began to drift away’ (GL/SA/NGOP).

³⁹⁷ However, another interviewee argued that this point of view also represented the traditional assumptions of Mexico City based social and political leadership.

³⁹⁸ ‘One of the feelings that we share with the new generation [of activists] is that we don’t accept autocratic leaderships, regardless of whether they promote autonomy or reform. That type of leadership doesn’t fit with the new generations. That is something that matured with YoSoy132’ (GZ/NGOP).

Ayotzi tiene más estructura... tiene cuadros políticos... gentes que se ha formado... Es distinto a los otros movimientos en ese sentido.³⁹⁹

The capacity to resist demobilizing pressures and continue the struggle, even on a reduced level, is a vital resource. This is particularly so in the context of a government skilled at weathering non-institutional public sphere pressures through a variety of co-optation and repressive measures. In the case of Ayotzinapa 43, after four years of struggle, there is a continuing capacity to endure and reinvigorate mobilization at strategic moments, which the other two movements in this study struggled to sustain. This is in part due to the continued commitment of longstanding political organizations as well as human rights NGOs, but particularly the parents.

A feature of building and sustaining of social movement coalitions is the balance between wider public appeal and ideological passion (Marx Ferree et al. 2000). In the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization, the plural non-partisan participation initially posed a real challenge to the authority of the government on the basis of concrete human rights demands. However, the more politicised agenda of socio-political organizations diminished this dynamic and reduced some of the plural features of the movement. On the other hand, the organizational capacity and political commitment of some of these political organizations also helped sustain the public actions of the movement in the long struggle against the powerholders of Mexico's partial democracy in pursuit of concrete human rights demands.

8.7 Disrupted media environment

By 2014, the diversifying and increasingly hybrid (Chadwick 2013) media environment made a range of different channels of information widely accessible and relevant to the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization; from individualised social media production to international news media portals. This facilitated the circulation of a variety of digital

³⁹⁹ 'Of course, when there isn't a structure you can't sustain [the movement] for long... Ayotzi has more structure... it has political militants... people with political knowledge... it is distinct from the other movements in that sense' (IP/PA/J).

materials in the immediate aftermath of the Iguala attack, forcing mainstream media to adjust its coverage, enabling different narratives to develop and official counter-framing strategies to be challenged in the increasingly plural coverage.

Despite different perspectives, interviewees shared an understanding that increasingly diverse and hybrid uses of digital and social media by various actors at local, national and international level, were important to prevent the government imposing its narrative on the events in Iguala: ‘el flujo de información creció y no hubo manera en que el estado pudo frenarlo y allí las redes sociales fueron vitales. Y a los medios de comunicación buscando credibilidad, o likes o views, no les quedó más remedio que cubrir todo’.⁴⁰⁰

The information posted on social media, recirculated and commented on, included citizens posting audio and visual footage of the events of 26 September and their aftermath. Among these were Ayotzinapa students using their smart phones to record and post moments of the attack; local journalists in Iguala posting early reports and images. The second wave of postings included human rights NGOs, unions and other solidarity actors distributing information to their networks not mediated by mainstream outlets. This encouraged international media to travel to Guerrero and report directly. The international attention fed back into national media reshaping mainstream coverage and facilitating the process of mobilization:

‘creo que los medios internacionales le dieron mucho más impulso, porque los medios locales, los guerrerenses ahí, al ver que estaba la prensa extranjera tuvieron que meterse. Si no hubiera cobertura de prensa internacional, los medios nacionales no hubieran hecho tanta difusión tampoco. Eso contribuyó a las redes sociales, a las convocatorias, al impacto en sí mismo’.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ ‘The flow of information grew and there was no way for the state to curb it and social media was vital. And the mainstream media seeking credibility or ‘likes’ or ‘views’ didn’t have any alternative than to cover everything’ (MG/NGOP).

⁴⁰¹ ‘I think that international media gave it a real push because the local media, those in Guerrero, on seeing the foreign press, felt they had to get involved. If it hadn’t been for the coverage of international press, the national media would not have focused on it so much. That contributed to social media attention, to the call to protest, to the impact [of the mobilization] itself’ (SK/SA).

Another feature of material generated and distributed on social media by activists and organizations accompanying the families as well as alternative media journalists, was the capacity to develop narratives focused on the lives of missing students and the parents. In the latter case, not simply as victims of human rights violations but also as protagonists in their own personal struggle against powerholders. Such narratives drew on Mexico's cultural and political traditions, including social solidarity and resistance. They were particularly useful for reaching less politicised sectors of the population or with little interest in human rights discourse: 'el plus era de ir ganando narrativas a las personas que no son politizadas, a las personas que no conocen ni siquiera de derechos humanos, pero además gente que hizo suya la lucha para Ayotzinapa a través de las redes sociales'.⁴⁰²

The increasing embeddedness of Twitter in the political news cycle also meant that this platform could be used rapidly with networks of followers to respond to misleading or incorrect governmental statements; rapidly contradicting official positions with direct information. This in turn was covered by independent and alternative news portals, and also reached parts of the independent print media. This limited the impact of institutional counter-framing tactics to undermine the parents' demands, the character of the movement and international experts: 'Se puede lograr con medios tradicionales, pero por un lado la inmediatez [de Twitter], y de que sea tal cual la voz de las familias y no tiene que estar allí luchando para que salga en un periódico el día siguiente. Ayuda mucho'.⁴⁰³

Another feature of the media coverage was the rapid attention given by new independent digital news sites, such as *Animal Politico* and *Aristeguinoticias*, with a record of investigative journalism. As an interviewee who worked with one such outlet observed, these media had developed less bureaucratic processes to ensure rapid

⁴⁰² 'An advantage was winning the narrative battle with people who were not politicised, people who didn't even know about human rights, but also people who took up the struggle for Ayotzinapa via social media' (RX/NGOCP).

⁴⁰³ 'You can manage to do it with the traditional media, but it is the immediacy [of Twitter] and it is actually the direct voice of the families, and at the same time you don't have to be battling away to try and get it covered in the next day's paper. It helps a lot' (XV/SA/NGOP).

publication of reports and a determination to cover stories in-depth which the uncritical mainstream media avoided. This included giving a voice to those directly involved, rather than relying on official government statements to represent events.

Alternative digital news platforms, such as *Desinformémenos* and *Subversiones*, also travelled to Guerrero to cover the story with first hand material. These alternative and independent digitally-based journalists avoided the approach of some traditional media which were widely regarded as lacking consideration for the victims or scruples about editorial manipulation to reduce damage to the government. As an NGO worker observed, a difference in the case of Ayotzinapa 43 was strong relations with some independent journalists: ‘muchas periodistas eran muy cercanos con las familias y estudiantes... ayudó mucho en distribuir información. Tienen una relación mucho más cordial que los tradicionales con los padres y estudiantes. Por eso lograron amplio contacto’.⁴⁰⁴

According to alternative media, this involved a change of approach: ‘nuestro cambio de estrategia se debe a que consideramos fundamental que alzamos la voz de las familias’.⁴⁰⁵ This included spending a long time in the Ayotzinapa college developing long-term relationships of trust.⁴⁰⁶ Participant Interviewees welcomed the explicit commitment of some alternative media outlets to redress imbalances of power of marginalized or vulnerable communities normally misrepresented or ignored by sections of the mainstream media.⁴⁰⁷ However this view was not always shared by some movement participants, particularly those working on the legal and advocacy aspects of the cases:

⁴⁰⁴ ‘Journalists, very close to the families and the students, helped a lot in the distribution of information. They have much warmer relations than the traditional media with the parents and the students so they got a wide range of coverage’ (QE/NGOP).

⁴⁰⁵ ‘Our change of strategy was due to believing that it was fundamental to amplify the voice of the families’ (LT/J).

⁴⁰⁶ Former YoSoy131 activists form the *Ibero* who had converted their group into an alternative media portal (www.masde131.com) also covered the story directly, building on their recognition as part of YoSoy132.

⁴⁰⁷ However, this view was not shared by some print journalists with a track-record of covering social and human rights issues, who considered that it was not possible to combine fact-finding and political positioning. They identified this as the weakness of the more politically committed alternative media portals.

‘es que los medios no convencionales han convertido en medios militantes. Y a nosotros que nos dedicamos a casos, no necesitamos medios militantes, sino medios no convencionales que cubran información con pautas de neutralidad. Es que no son un contrapeso en términos de incidencia comparados con los medios convencionales’.⁴⁰⁸

This reflected the understanding of those participants focused on strategic influence of political and judicial authorities where the mainstream media, particularly TV, remained the key to shaping a persuasive news narrative. These human rights experts were less focused on the role played by some alternative media in developing and reinforcing social movement identity. This illustrates the complex, and not necessarily harmonious processes of expressive movement building and technical legal advocacy. It also suggests that certain types of media in a plural environment perform different functions in relation to different aspects of social movement mobilization, which are not always recognised by the different movement actors.

This also reflected varying attitudes regarding the extent to which mainstream media continued to dominate the political agenda or whether alternative and independent media more closely connected to social movements had changed this dynamic. As one more positive activist observed regarding this informational struggle: ‘es un espacio que no lo tiene ganado allá ni ganado acá. Allá tiene capacidad económica, pero acá tenemos creatividad’.⁴⁰⁹

The media environment is in an ongoing process of reconfiguration, with increased diversity of informational flows. However, the dominant media interests remain powerful with a continued shaping influence over the political agenda. Nonetheless, the pluralizing media environment and hybrid practices resulting from increasing adoption of digital and social media, meant new media actors provided different

⁴⁰⁸ ‘there are non-conventional media which have become militant media. And those of us that work on cases, we don’t need militant media, rather non-conventional media which cover the information on the principles of neutrality. They are not a counterweight in terms of advocacy compared with the conventional media’ (QTX/NGOP).

⁴⁰⁹ ‘it is a space that hasn’t been won either by this side or theirs. There they have economic resources, but here we have creativity’ (XE/NGOP).

approaches to journalism, some of which strengthened the voices of Ayotzinapa 43, but not primarily through the discourse of human rights. Despite these changes, movement advocacy strategy remained focused on the mainstream media. There was tension between this instrumental approach and expressive movement building involved in engagement with alternative new media. The latter also relating to uses of digital and social media to sustain contentious collective mobilization.

8.8 Social media, organization, participation and contention

This section considers aspects of social media practices of the movement and how participants believed these contributed to mobilization and contention. It also reflects on how the increasingly embedded use of digitally networked communications reduces costs of information sharing and coordination, facilitating more individualised or small group participation. However, it also identifies how different approaches to digital and social media, particularly in relation to its more dynamic and spontaneous affordances, creates tensions around strategic and expressive practices.

The Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization drew on networks and skills developed in earlier mobilizations which used digital communications, including social media platforms, to reduce barriers and costs to information sharing and organizational coordination. This enabled disparate national and international actors to identify one another and carry out synchronised public protest events, uploading and recirculating audio-visual reportage of actions, demonstrating support and reinforcing mobilization, fostering a sense shared endeavour and collective identity (Treré et al. 2014).

However, the surviving Ayotzinapa students, parents, political organizations and some human rights NGOs were not initially attuned to the more fluid features of digital and social media to facilitate plural mobilization. The lessons of YoSoy132 were important to overcome this, enabling more individualised and small group spontaneous involvement in protest. For example, the adoption of web-based flyers on social media and other digital platforms, that did not identify the convening organizations in calls to participate in protest events:

‘ya entendimos cómo funciona la comunicación, porque nos dimos cuenta de que en años anteriores en las articulaciones había mucha discusión acerca de quien convocaba o no. Recuerdo que había veces que ayudaba poner quienes convocábamos, pero tanto en 132 como Ayotzi, aprendimos mucho, que no tiene que llevar el branding de quien convoca, sino sin branding todo el mundo se apropia, que la siente suya. En Ayotzi, no usar el branding ayudaba muchísimo para que las personas lo apropiaran de forma... más rápida’.⁴¹⁰

As different networks, groups and individuals decided to participate in the actions, the absence of an organizing entity convening the actions enabled collective offline and online participation to develop rapidly without implying endorsement or commitment to any particular organization.

‘Es no tener necesariamente un espacio que centralice, que tú lanzas información a las redes, que no llevan quienes convocan o lo hacen, porque... es una información que te ayuda a tomar postura, en el caso de Ayotzi, ayudaba para decir, “yo estoy participando”... participaré compartiendo esta información relacionado con las convocatorias de las acciones globales’.⁴¹¹

Other interviewees observed how this mobilization, not based on organizational affiliation, allowed a wider spectrum of social actors to feel part of the mobilization through social affiliations which encouraged others to join in:

‘por medio de las redes sociales se hizo un llamado a la comunidad en general... de ver las editoras de [revistas] sociales... marchando, y poniendo en su timeline e invitando la gente a la marcha. Ahí es cuando te das cuenta de que las redes sociales pueden ser la diferencia’.⁴¹²

⁴¹⁰ ‘by then we understood how communication worked, because we had realised in the previous years that when coordinating actions there was a lot of debate about who was convening or not. I remember there were times that it helped to say that we were calling for the action, but with 132 and Ayotzi we particularly learnt that the message didn’t have to carry branding about who was calling the protest, instead without branding everyone could appropriate it, they could feel it was theirs. In Ayotzi, not using branding really helped people appropriate it... much quicker’ (GZ/NGOP).

⁴¹¹ ‘It’s about not necessarily having a centralising space; that you can put information on the web which doesn’t state who is convening or who has made it, because... it is information that helps you take a stand... in the case of Ayotzi, it helped people say “I am participating”... I will participate sharing this information about the calls to take part in the global actions’ (GZ/NGOP).

⁴¹² ‘There was a call made via social media to the community in general to participate... to see editors of society magazines marching and putting it on their timelines, inviting people to join the march... That is when you realise that social media can make a difference’ (MG/NGOCP).

The distribution, creation and circulation of information about protests surpassed efforts to register the variety of solidarity actions, but this overflowing production and reproduction of audio-visual clips of actions around the globe encouraged further participation: ‘se generó la impresión de que estaba en todos lados y entonces eso hizo que hubo manifestaciones espontaneas con gente que quería hacer algo, manifestaciones en la comunidad...’.⁴¹³

For one activist, this risked participation becoming purely modish; only lasting as long as support for Ayotzinapa 43 protests remained fashionable. However, for two others, even if participants only joined in online activity, this swelled the sense of something important happening, providing diverse avenues to show authentic support and amplify the mobilization.

Interviewees also considered the integration of online and offline activity as another important lesson of Ayotzinapa 43. Previously some traditional social activists had been dismissive of digital protest and activism, but their combination in Ayotzinapa actions helped illustrate how they could be mutually reinforcing, not Gladwell’s (2010) dead-end ‘clicktivism’. This view was rooted in a belief that social media was increasingly embedded in daily communicative practices in many different social spheres, as such it was a dimension of social reality not an alternative environment. This perspective was more prevalent among younger generation interviewees whose social activism had developed with their use of digitally enabled communications.

The *Rexista* collective represented this integrated approach to activism, illustrated in their ‘Fue el Estado’ action and promotion of the #yamecanse hashtag trending topic BOT battle (see page 150). These contentious expressive events were a combination of opportunity and orchestration which temporarily shifted social media from a site of information exchange and coordination to a scene of participation and contention,

⁴¹³ ‘it generated the impression that [the mobilization] was everywhere, which in turn inspired spontaneous demonstrations by people who wanted to do something, protests in local communities...’ (GL/SA/NGOP).

challenging institutional efforts to marginalise the movement.⁴¹⁴ The efforts of independent social media analysts to expose the manipulation of Twitter virality to undermine online protest (Finley 2015) itself became news about the anti-democratic methods employed in the service of the government.

The process of instrumentally maximising these opportunities was not without difficulties, particularly coordinating actions with longstanding SMOs with routinized procedures not based on fluid digital networks. Interviewees from human rights NGOs reflected on the constraints of instrumental communications practices which continued to be shaped by traditional priorities such as press conferences and authorised spokespersons. They noted the lively but unresolved discussions within organizations on how best to take advantage of dynamic social media features with greater agility and spontaneity, but without creating excessive risks to the reputation, strategy and identity of the movement.

Two interviewees were critical of organizational processes of NGOs and other movement actors that seemed to thwart attempts to utilize the more organic features of social media platforms and virality. One referred to the ‘terrible bureaucracy’ of such NGOs which deterred involvement of activists with more horizontal emancipatory approaches and attributed these seemingly outdated hierarchies to the desire of some NGOs to preserve their gatekeeper power (Bob 2005) and prevent the emergence of new political actors. However, another activist coordinating global networks, who was also critical of centralising features of the national movement and NGOs, nevertheless felt there was autonomy of action which enabled her to maximise network potential in the global mobilizations.

Despite the range of perspectives of movement participants in relation to digital and social media uses in the mobilization, there was unanimous recognition of their key

⁴¹⁴ In the case of #yamecanse, its impact was illustrated by the deployment of counter-attack BOTS, presumed to have been organized by government agencies or sympathisers, designed to undermine the trending status of the #yamecanse hashtags, and thus, remove them from the trending issues reported on by global media (Alberto Nájjar 2015; Suárez-Serrato et al. 2016).

role in facilitating information sharing and coordination, enabling feedback loops to reinforce offline as well as online participation. This process was aided in part by more individualised participation associated with social media activism (Bennett et al. 2013; Castells 2013), but also by avoiding organizational ‘branding’ which facilitated plural participation of less politicised individuals and small groups. This reflects the adaptive approaches of activists to these platforms and previous mobilization experiences. However, it also indicates how horizontal and expressive practices can find themselves in tension with more vertical approaches to strategic communications.

8.9 Transmission of affect

Digital and social media platforms played an important role in facilitating collective emotional identification with the parents, engaging a direct sense of outrage and sympathy, as well as the need to share these feelings with others.

Social media did not generate these emotions but the directness of communication with the individual user and the potential for interaction helped focus and articulate expressions of these feelings. This frequently provided an entry point for identification and participation.

‘con Ayotzi nos dimos cuenta de que el paradigma está cambiando; entendemos los problemas estructurales, pero parece que tiene que ser dirigida hacia las víctimas directas... lo importante es que te interpele... tu derecho... hay una cosa en redes que es más orientada al ‘yo’, me atrevo decir... En Ayotzi, era lo que [a los padres] les pasó a sus jóvenes, pudiera pasar a cualquiera de nosotros... Eso determina mucho como la gente responde en redes sociales, si no le interpela, no necesariamente se detiene a leerlo o darle clic, y mucho menos ir a la calle. Sí, funcionó la fórmula de las redes sociales a la calle en el caso de Ayotzi, porque el caso mismo conmovió por sí mismo... cuando la vida está en riesgo, las redes cobran más fuerza. Les toca a las personas’.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵ ‘With Ayotzi we realised the paradigm was changing; we understand the structural problems, but it seems you have got to focus actions on direct victims... the important thing is that it must personally concern you... your right... the thing about social media is that it’s more oriented toward the “I”, I think... In Ayotzi, it was about what happened to the children of the parents, it could be any one of us... that determines a lot how people respond on social media... if it doesn’t address them directly, they don’t necessarily stop to read or click, let alone go out on the street [to demonstrate]... the formula of social media to the streets worked in Ayotzi because the case itself was emotionally moving... when life is at risk, social media is more powerful... it directly affects people’ (GZ/NGOP).

Three interviewees considered that the shocking nature of the case was transmitted through the direct and fragmented social media information flows, as opposed to the curated coverage of mainstream media. This facilitated a raw empathy and a receptiveness to calls to support the families. This manifested itself as a personal need to join in the public demonstration and show personalised support for ‘los y las papas’. Social media helped arouse this sentiment beyond traditional social activist networks. In part this was due to the increasing use of livestreamed audio-visual material on different platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. This provided access to key events and showed the public actions and dignified desperation of the parents, enabling a sense of intimacy and direct emotional engagement unavailable in traditional media coverage: ‘la gente siente incluida en una transmisión por internet, comentan que yo soy con los papas, diles que estoy con ellos’.⁴¹⁶ Following online provided a means of emotionally identifying with the parents but also sharing that emotion in a way that simply joining in mass protests might not have achieved.

However, it is important to note that an aspect of this direct communication afforded by digital and social media was the sense that the emotions of the parents were authentic, not manufactured to elicit a response: ‘la cuestión es que este mensaje se dio innato. Las madres de Ayotzi ni los estudiantes nunca pensaron que necesitaba la empatía de la gente.’⁴¹⁷ Social media was effective at conveying that intensity of emotion, but only because those expressing it were seen to be acting naturally in response to what they were suffering. That is also perhaps why government counter-framing tactics focused on suggesting the parents were being manipulated in order to undercut this authenticity.

One digital activist believed social media communications, particularly Twitter, can express a collective emotional mood in relation to specific issues. As a result, he

⁴¹⁶ ‘people feel included in the transmission by internet, leaving comments that they are with the parents, asking us to tell the parents that they are with them’ (RX/NGOCP).

⁴¹⁷ ‘the point is that the message was expressed innately. Neither the mothers of Ayotzi nor the students ever thought that they needed people’s empathy’ (MG/NGOP).

gathered sample Twitter data in relation to particular events, and applied an interpretative methodology to assess the emotional temperature of network activity. In the right climate, this in turn suggested possible symbolic action or triggers to translate sentiment into street mobilization. The effectiveness of this method, which echoes Negri and Hardt's 'multitude', is difficult to assess, but it indicates how some of those involved in online activism are keen to instrumentally maximise the emotional transmission potential of social media communications, particularly Twitter. However, this also raises the potential for manipulating sentiment and undermining the authentic emotional communication which it seeks to harness.⁴¹⁸

Several scholars argue that digital and social media practices can facilitate emotional engagement in political issues (Dahlgren 2009, 2013; Papacharissi 2015; Wessels 2017). This is an important element of the process which motivates individuals and small groups to participate in collective action (Goodwin et al. 2009). The Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization featured these digital communications practices. Firstly, digital networks helped make the traumatic event and its consequences directly accessible not only as text, but also via audio-visual material. This immediacy encouraged networked individuals and small groups to share their responses, including feelings that the attack on the students constituted a threat to them and their loved ones. Secondly, it simultaneously provided an avenue to demonstrate individual and collective support for victims and rejection of the conduct of the state. This constituted a form of movement identity, but without requiring knowledge of human rights or other political discourses. This helped create a diverse community willing, albeit temporarily, to take to the streets in large numbers to express their shared anger and solidarity, and to demand institutional action. This transmission of emotion is also closely related to the connective action features of the movement.

⁴¹⁸ This also feeds into debates about manipulation of social media for marketing purposes or to promote "fake news" to influence public opinion and, for example, voting intentions in elections.

8.10 Connective action

The early plural effervescent mobilization of Ayotzinapa 43 was facilitated by uses of digital and social media, attracting wide individualised and small group participation. This reflects aspects of ‘connective action’ identified by Bennett & Segerberg (2013). However, this was followed by the gradual reduction in plural connective action in favour of organizational consolidation which prioritised more traditional collective action and political identities. This change reflected the short-lived cycle of connective mobilization, which was insufficient to develop the type of strategic or sustained contentious action necessary to challenge entrenched semi-authoritarian powerholders.

The energy unleashed through digitally facilitated ‘unbranded’ participation helped surpass recent experiences of public mobilization in support of social causes in Mexico, both domestically and in terms of international solidarity actions. However, unlike Bennet and Segerberg’s (2013) focus on individualised participation in connective action, this also seems to have been facilitated by the involvement of intermediary groups of individuals linked by political, social and geographic affinity, discussing and deciding to participate in the wider mobilization. This meso-level of deliberation and expression, whether conducted through traditional forms of face-to-face or phone communication, Whatsapp groups or other closed social media platforms, seemed to provide a relatively safe, limited sphere for engaging with the issues, sharing emotional responses and deciding to express these sentiments through participation in larger-scale collective actions. This also reflects how digital and social media was increasingly integrated into the range of communicative practices of daily relationships, particularly for younger urban generations.

However, this dynamic period of diverse effervescent involvement in protest online and offline gradually abated, partly due to the shifting dynamics of movement organizational consolidation.⁴¹⁹ Participants and observers noted that as the ANP exercised increasing control over coordination of the movement, the more connective

⁴¹⁹ It also reflected the cycle of mobilization (Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2004).

and plural aspects of the mobilization diminished. This also reflected aspects of the ongoing digital divide as most Guerrero based socio-political organizations tended to have less embedded use of digital and social media, relying on traditional forms of organization, recruitment and protest.

This reversion to a more centralised ideological decision-making, at odds with looser individualised or small group creative participation, appears to have contributed to the reduction in this connective online action in favour of more hybrid and traditional forms of collective action (Bennett et al. 2013). However, most interviewees also believed that this reflected the limits of digitally-enabled 'weak-tie' (Granovetter 1973; Gladwell 2010) connective action as a mobilizing practice, particularly in a context of partially democratic institutions prepared to resist popular civil society protest with a semi-authoritarian practices to preserve their power.⁴²⁰

One interviewee reflected on the limits of this digitally supported mass connective mobilization as a necessarily ephemeral process: 'creo que eso de los movimientos tan amorfos, tan grandes... No son manejables... son por las nubes... el resultado del choque de muchas fuerzas y se acabó'.⁴²¹

Another digitally oriented activists saw this protest process as an end in itself and the struggle for more structural outcomes a trap; where the creative rush of digitally enabled mobilization is its own validation: 'sé que son efímeros, son emocionales, no van a decir nada estructurados, un manifiesto... pero creo que es la oportunidad de ver nuevos actores... nuevos temas... y es algo que no aprecian las organizaciones'.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ On the one hand, the state was sufficiently strategic to talk with the parents and human rights NGOs and also avoided major incidents of outright repression which could have galvanised support for the movement and provoke international condemnation. On the other hand, it used traditional methods such as surveillance, threats, intimidation and smear campaigns in the media as well as discreetly negotiating the demobilization of parts of the movement coalition.

⁴²¹ 'I think the thing about such amorphous, such huge movements... they are not manageable... they are like clouds... a result of a clash of many forces and then they end...' (GF/SA/DA).

⁴²² 'I know they are ephemeral, emotional, they are not going to say anything structural, a manifesto or such like, but I think they are an opportunity to see new actors... new issues... and that is something the organizations don't appreciate' (EI/DA).

But activists with experience in different social movements considered this digitally enabled connective action stage as inadequate to mount concerted collective action: 'lo que se generó era el fenómeno de convocatoria, y eso es diferente de generar organización desde las redes'.⁴²³

Most activists also pointed to the limitations of social media platforms as a forum for carrying out internal movement deliberations between the different organizations and ideologies to negotiate movement agreements and articulate a common platform.⁴²⁴ This suggests that in rooted partially democratic situations, where movements face difficult internal and external threats, the deliberative features of digitally enabled counter-publics (Castells 2008) have been overstated.

The shift to ANP coordination of the political movement and the role of human rights NGOs articulating the human rights demands alongside the parents, gradually changed the mass plural mobilization character of the movement. This does not mean that digitally networked communications ceased to play an important role in the mobilization, but in more hybrid instrumental terms and less expressive of dynamic mobilization. They focused on the cost reduction features of coordination and information sharing as well as leveraging the mainstream media. The movement also became more reliant on traditional socio-political organizations and student activist groups to sustain routine public actions in support of the families. Those less committed to these organizational structures reverted to latency or were only intermittently involved in line with the changing political opportunity environment. In this context, the transient virality of digital networked mobilizations worked against sustaining the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization at the centre of the public agenda.

As a result, the majority of interviewees acknowledged, in line with Resource Mobilization Theory, the importance of organizational resources, instrumental

⁴²³ 'what was created was a phenomena of successfully calling people out to protest, but that is different from generating organization through social media' (EX/NGOP).

⁴²⁴ 'Las redes sociales no nos dan para realizar esos debates y entender los diferentes grupos' 'Social media just isn't useful for debating and reaching agreements between the different groups' (GZ/NGOP).

capacity and political commitment of human rights NGOs and some political organizations to sustain contentious collective action. Despite expressing concern that the hype around digitally enabled activism risked underinvestment in these traditional social movement practices, these interviewees also recognised the contribution of connective digital participation to the initial expressive and horizontal dynamism of the movement.

In conclusion, embedded digital and social media practices supported the early effervescent expressive stages of collective action, attracting new plural participation and strengthening the movement local and globally. However, in a context of partial democracy temporarily influencing public sphere debate is not enough to transform the political agenda, let alone to change institutional conduct or to address structural grievances. As a result, these affordances may have limited effects in the longer term for the movement. It may initially obviate the need for more systematic and agreed organizational structures, identity formation and decision-making, but it cannot replace these traditional features if contentious collective action is to be sustained.

8.11 Security threats

In the Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization, there were digital and social media security threats, including surveillance (Article 19 et al. 2017) against those involved in the movement, particularly dealing with sensitive issues or with a public profile. As a student activist observed, 'la decisión de abrir la boca después de lo que pasó el 26 [de septiembre], no se toma a la ligera. Había riesgos'.⁴²⁵ In this context, digital security was only one dimension of wider security threats confronting human rights and social activists as well as journalists in Mexico's partial democracy.

Interviewee activists considered the primary digital threat to be covert digital monitoring – even though their communications contained nothing illegal. They viewed such intrusions as primarily aimed at intimidation and gaining access to

⁴²⁵ 'the decision to open your mouth after what happened on the 26th [of September], you don't take lightly. There were risks' (SK/SA).

movement plans and actions. However, the ‘leaking’ of decontextualized private communications by security agencies to government aligned media was also considered part of a counter-framing tactic used to try to discredit movement actors. Most interviewees felt that it was impossible to defend against such interventions, manipulations and intimidation due to the record of official impunity which, in effect, encouraged such shadowy illegal actions. Participants attributed many of these practices to the key state agencies, such as the Federal Attorney General’s Office (PGR) or Secret Service (CISEN) and the Defence Ministry (SEDENA) which have a record of conducting surveillance and intimidation operations against human rights and social activists. These concerns proved to be correct.⁴²⁶

According to movement participants, the susceptibility of open networks to monitoring by third parties meant activists already considered platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were not appropriate for debates about the movement identity, strategy and tactics. For this type of activity face to face meetings were the preferred option. However, end-to-end encryption provided initially by Telegram, then Whatsapp, meant closed network platforms also provided an increasingly useful environment for small group cohesion, discussion and organizational issues.⁴²⁷ Though most activists also expressed a lack of confidence in these corporate platforms to protect data from state intrusion.

Despite widespread belief that surveillance occurred, there was considerable disagreement about whether online profiles, websites and other communications had been attacked as part of organized campaigns of harassment or were in fact random incidents. The complete impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of digital threats and intimidation made it difficult to distinguish between powerholder-sponsored intimidation from random incidents of trolling. However, at least one activist carried

⁴²⁶ See footnote 175, example c in relation to the illegal use of the Pegasus spyware.

⁴²⁷ Treré (2015a) reflects on the importance of these more ‘backstage’ and informal communications to sustain the small group cohesion which support the identity of movements.

out data analysis of online death threats he received, indicating systematic and well-resourced use of BOTS to threaten and intimidate (O'Carroll et al. 2017).⁴²⁸

Most activists and human rights NGOs recognised that cyber-protection and precautions remained inadequate: 'la seguridad digital siempre ha sido un problema para [nosotros]...'.⁴²⁹ In part, this was due to the costs and time involved in increasing security, but also because use of digital communications, such as smartphones, was not uniform. Older activists in particular were more reluctant to incorporate these devices into their practices. The lack of effective mobile signal and 3G/4G coverage in some rural areas diminished the usefulness of some devices, but also the decision not to adopt them reduced that particular security vulnerability. Those activists who used digital communications and who dealt with more sensitive case information and relationships were more likely to restrict or avoid social media platforms.

In summary, despite the existence of apparent democratic freedoms, social activists and journalists faced real and documented threats in terms of harassment and attacks, as well as surveillance of their legitimate activities and data (UN Human Rights Council 2017). However, this was only one aspect of a range of real and potential security threats. This led to limited modification of some digital and social media practices, restricting types of information flows and debates about the movement on open platforms. The growing embeddedness of digital communications in the practices of social activists meant that there was an increasing, if rather unspecified, awareness of the need to increase security measures. Those SMOs with more resources were engaged in developing alliances with more skilled and resourced actors to expose threats and mitigate risk.

⁴²⁸ Documented cases of human rights activists subjected to repeated online death threats, such as the case of anthropologist, Rossana Reguillo (Treré 2016) also illustrated the vulnerability of activists.

⁴²⁹ "digital security has always been a problem for us..."(QE/NGOP)

8.12 Conclusion

The Ayotzinapa 43 mobilization benefited from previous practices, experiences and networks, including those involved in other two case study movements. This enabled a hybrid movement to emerge and endure. Most interviewees understood the mobilization as a spontaneous emotional response to a trigger event which embodied the crisis of violence and human rights, directly implicating the state in the disappearance of 43 young students and the wider violence. This drew on underlying and active discontent with the political establishment and Mexico's captured institutions. The increasingly diverse digital media environment played an important role in how coverage of the Iguala events emerged, increasing shock and undercutting official narratives.

The victims, particularly their parents, represented the struggle against an abusive state. Human rights approaches, skilfully applied by human rights NGOs, provided a clear means of converting a raw cry of injustice into concrete and legitimised claims against the state. This facilitated international scrutiny and accompaniment which also reinforced the agency of the parents. Human rights discourse provided a focus to the movement, but the human story of the disappeared men and the struggle of their parents was the primary mobilizing narrative. Human rights discourse was secondary to this more affective framing narrative focused on traditions of social solidarity and demands for return of the forcibly disappeared. This galvanized support for a mass social protest movement made up of diverse individual and collective actors, some with more radical agendas which were on occasions in tension with narrower human rights demands.

The increasing embeddedness of digital communications in national and international solidarity networks enabled a rapid scaling up of support actions and participation, reducing the obstacles and costs to information sharing and coordination. Digital and social media practices also facilitated rapid emotional identification with the cause of the victims and the mobilizing narrative. They also supported the early effervescent expressive stages of mobilization, based on more spontaneous individualised or small group participation. However, the waning of this dynamic period also coincided with

the adoption of organizational structures and more centralised movement decision-making. This reduced plural connective action features in favour of more hybrid practices and a more politically committed collective identity. This ensured a durable core of organized politicised support capable of withstanding the counter-framing tactics of a semi-authoritarian government, even if this partly contributed to a reduction in the movement's wider mobilization and appeal. Increasing recognition of the vulnerability of digital and social media to threats, intimidation and surveillance, also reduced more open and deliberative practices in favour of selective digital advocacy to support movement strategy.

Chapter 9

Discussion chapter

9.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters have presented and analysed the qualitative data on the three case studies, enabling the development of a thematic framework to analyse the different dynamic practices of each movement in relation to human rights discourse and digital and social media. This chapter explores these different dimensions in a series of discussions on the framework themes spanning the three movements.

Before initiating that process, it is important to acknowledge a number of assumptions with regard this overarching discussion. Firstly, the three movements occurred consecutively, but also overlapped; each influencing and contributing to the practices of the next. In addition, Ayotzinapa 43 and MPJD groups are still active and involved in contentious collective action. As a result, a systematic comparison between each movement is not possible. Neither is it desirable as the process of reflection and interpretation by interviewees of earlier social movement experiences is an integral part of the evolving repertoire of practice which this analysis seeks to examine. Secondly, the data gathered is the result of interviews in which participants or observers reflected on and interpreted their experiences and understanding of the movements. As such, the meaning of the movements and their practices as set out in the framework analysis is an interpretation of complex socially constructed processes.

The table below brings together the themes in the framework to enable discursive reflections on the different and similar practices of the movements. However, these are associational rather than causal links and they do not cover all aspects of social movement practice. Nevertheless, they provide a map for exploring the constraining and enabling features of human rights discourse and digital and social media practices in the mobilizations.

9.2 Framework

	Human Rights approaches and discourse	Digitally networked communications, particularly social media
Context	Violence/impunity/democratic deficit/captured state. Non-rights protective status quo contrasts with institutional rhetoric of human rights and democracy. Traditions of civil society solidarity, resistance mobilizations and human rights claims-making.	Media environment dominated by narrow mainstream versus increasing range of digital and social media information flow; diversifying voices, narratives and information.
Trigger event	Dramatic/personal/symbolic of dysfunctional democracy, injustice and official collusion/ provokes anger and solidarity.	Viral spread of information undercutting official narrative, international coverage.
Networks	Networked activists, groups and individuals –are human rights activists central to movement networks? Small group participation.	Embedded communications practice linking local, national and international, reducing mobilization costs.
Narrative frame	Human rights important but not central dimension, instead personal narrative, emotional, expressive, indignation and solidarity.	Communicating emotion, sharing indignation, expressing solidarity.
Agency	Human rights discourse strengthening individual and collective agency / solidarity participation as agency.	Victims/survivors increasing social media use, widening range of voices, digital solidarity participation.

Articulation	Human rights as minimum element for plural civil society articulation, but insufficiently transformative/institutionally oriented. Human rights not just tool or empty point of articulation but also expressive of values and agency.	Explosion of voices – connective action, insufficient for long-term strategic struggle, return to hybrid/collective action of reduced costs.
Challenges and dangers	Is human rights discourse meaningful for movements beyond concrete victim claims? Is it too institutionally oriented to challenge captured state? Can it form part of a wider democratic and social justice agenda aspiring to social transformation?	Digital downsides – over expectation, cannot sustain movement deliberation, threats to activists and sustainability of mobilization processes. How far to restrict social media use to limit vulnerability?

9.3 The role of context

In this section I discuss the central role of the context out of which the three movements emerged in Mexico. This includes: a) the socio-political situation of Mexico's partial democracy and traditions of social mobilization, b) the increasing adoption of human rights discourse in the public sphere, and c) the changing media and digital communications environment. I argue that the crisis of Mexico's democracy contributed to the trigger events, but also the increasing embeddedness of human rights in public discourse and digital and social media in the communications environment facilitated the interpretation of trigger events by local, national and international publics as particularly meaningful and representative of the wider crisis of Mexico's democracy.

9.3.1 Emerging crisis

By 2011, spiralling criminal violence, impunity and political corruption were increasing manifestations of Mexico's flawed political transition, which had failed to produce accountable and effective institutions or social justice (Nassif 2009). Despite the existence of formal representative democracy, the power of economic, political and criminal networks had become ever more entwined and entrenched in advancing their interests at the cost of ordinary Mexican's struggling to live with dignity (Nieto 2013). In contrast, parts of civil society aspired to deeper, more socially just and participatory forms of democracy and resistance (Olvera 2016; Pleyers et al. 2017). The mismatch between the promise of a rights-protective plural democratic culture and the reality dominated by vested interests, corruption, violence and impunity provided fertile terrain for some social groups to understand these grievances as forms of 'social strain' in Smelser's (1962) language or more tellingly, as a State 'legitimation crisis' in Habermas' (1996) terminology.

This context contributed directly to the specific movement trigger events: the killing of Francisco Sicilia and 6 others, the enforced disappearance of 43 Ayotzinapa students and protests against the economic and media elites returning the PRI to power. Sharing an understanding of this context facilitated these singular events being recognised and interpreted as emblematic of the wider socio-political crises by diverse actors. Understanding the abuse of human rights as part of public sphere concerns was part of this interpretive template.

Despite the absence of new national level social movements in the years running up to 2011 (Olvera 2010), Mexico has long traditions of contentious civil society mobilization. These practices are a cultural resource and inspiration for autonomous self-organizing collective action, involving both expressive and instrumental challenges to powerholder (Stolle-McAllister 2005). As a result, the socio-political strains represented by the trigger events also constituted forms of political opportunity

(Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 2003) to reactivate and innovate the repertoire (Tilly 2004) of plural grassroots mobilization.

9.3.2 Reconfiguring human rights discourse

Human rights discourse had come to play an increasingly important political and social role in the public sphere in Mexico, but often with ambiguous significance. On the one hand, as part of the decades' long democratic transition, successive governments used human rights as a state-legitimizing discourse without radically altering the relationship between institutions and citizens. The ineffectiveness of the vast state apparatus supposedly tasked with protecting human rights was perceived as an act of simulation, undermining the value of human rights discourse. For more radical social actors the institutionalization of human rights represented a convenient official mask adopted by neoliberal economic and political elites determined to consolidate their hold on power, what Baxi (2012a) refers to as human rights discourse *to*.⁴³⁰

On the other hand, a small but active group of local, national and international NGOs used human rights discourse to promote respect and protection of human rights in Mexico, particularly civil rights. Some of these NGOs documented and exposed the chasm between the official rhetoric and actual compliance with international human rights law, mobilizing the international human rights movement to exert pressure on the Mexican government. Human rights discourse increasingly became a language used by a range of actors, including parts of the national media, to critique abuses of power and question the quality of Mexico's democracy. As part of this process, the 2011 reforms to the Constitution entrenched international and regional human rights legal obligations into Mexican law as never before. But this only slowly began to percolate through parts of the judicial system, gradually opening new paths to strategic litigation. However, these ideas and legal mechanisms remained beyond the reach of most ordinary citizens.

⁴³⁰ In contrast to this institutional instrumental use of human rights to serve the purposes of domination he refers to human rights *for* to express the emancipatory project of grassroots human rights discourse challenging domination.

Human rights discourse was gradually implanted into some institutional frameworks, and NGOs used national and international human rights mechanisms to demonstrate non-compliance. Despite this, human rights discourse continued to be widely regarded in public discourse, including by those involved in grassroots social and political activism, as specialist law and the realm of international actors or elite lawyers. It was also often seen as being under attack in parts of the mainstream media for supposedly protecting criminals more than victims of crime.

In addition, on the left, some political and social activists and academics were critical of human rights discourse as technocratic and cosmopolitan. They tended to view human rights NGOs engaged in institution-building with the transition governments as elitist and co-opted; as betraying a movement which had its origins in the struggle for emancipation of the dispossessed against authoritarian powerholders and the neoliberal agenda (Estévez López 2008; Bizberg 2014); and as distant from grassroots social movements challenging these economic and political conditions (Estévez López 2015).⁴³¹

However, according to different interviewees in this research, by 2010 these positions were changing as the crisis provoked by Calderón's 'war' became increasingly visible.⁴³² There was growing awareness among human rights activists of the need to reconfigure their approach to the emerging crisis, to make human rights discourse more meaningful for social and political actors engaged in contentious grassroots mobilizations in relation to the violence and the failures of political transition. This is what Arias and Ponte term the process of 're-legitimation' of human rights as a language of struggle (Arias Marín et al. 2015). It is in this context, that human rights

⁴³¹ I do not share this characterisation of human rights NGOs, but it reflects an important criticism of how national and international human rights NGOs responded to the transition process and were drawn into institutionalisation processes which delivered few results.

⁴³² This also reflects my own experiences working with local NGOs documenting disappearances in 2010 (Knox 2017).

discourse acted as an important framework for interpreting the trigger events as signifying violations in universal norms of human dignity of victims and a state failing to protect its citizens. This repositioned the violence and the state's involvement. The government could no longer sustain the claim of a 'Just War' on the basis of stigmatizing scores of ordinary Mexicans. Human rights discourse served both as a normative aspiration of how the state should act, but also as a concrete tool for recognising abuses of power and neglect of state responsibilities. As such, it increasingly served in public debate to pinpoint the failures of Calderon's 'war' and highlight the lived experience of those suffering its consequences.

9.3.3 Communications landscape

The rapidly changing media and communications environment with the spread of digital technologies facilitated a number of movement processes. While the specifics of digital media adoption varied between and within each movement, there were at least two dimensions of the wider context that played an important role from the outset.

Firstly, there was increasing diversity of internet-based news media coverage at national and international level. This included digitally native platforms or established media agencies, or blogs and posts by collectives or individuals. This tapestry of news and comment of emerging actors was weakening the traditional hold on news narratives promoted by Mexico's dominant mainstream media networks. Digital technologies reduced the costs and increased the reach of independent and alternative news platforms, and also made access to international news portals instantaneous. As a result, management of news narratives by governments was harder to sustain. This helped foster a sense that there was greater informational diversity available for those interested to find it; that there was growing access to a range of voices of marginalised people usually excluded from official narratives. This increased the potential to articulate new alternative narratives, as well as to leverage coverage into the mainstream media in an increasingly fluid and interconnected media (Chadwick 2013).

This was an emerging resource as well as political opportunity for the movements which in turn contributed to the diversification of the news environment.

Secondly, the features of web 2.0 technology afford greater potential for autonomous sharing and creation of information by individuals and groups. This self-production (Castells 2009a), even if not amounting to idealised deliberative fora, enabled discussion and sharing of information. This facilitated mutual identification and participation in and coordination of movement activities. These practices varied greatly within and between the movements, reflecting both the digital divide and other social and geographic inequalities. Despite these variations, the embeddedness of digital communications in civic life and, in particular, as part of political and social activism increased substantially between 2011 and 2016. In this context, individualised (Bennett et al. 2012) or small group digitally networked communications provided an important, though by no means exclusive, means of participation in movement actions.

The changing features of the media configuration and practices at the time each movement emerged did not determine the mobilization's form, but they played an important role in how participants heard about, interpreted, interacted, shared and responded to each trigger event and the subsequent mobilization.

9.4 Trigger events

If the context shaped aspects of the emerging movements, of equal relevance was the specific nature of the contingent trigger events and their immediate aftermath in shaping the political opportunity (Tarrow 1998) configuration and meaning. This included the response of those directly affected, the reactions of the authorities and media, and the process by which information spread. These contributed to the interpretation of a dramatic event in relation to understandings of the underlying context and discontents. In this process, human rights discourse played an important but secondary role. In contrast, the increasing use of digital communications meant a rapid and layered circulation of information. This facilitated the move from personal reaction to sharing the emotions of collective 'moral shock' (Jasper 1998) and

indignation, then to engagement in civil society actions to express these sentiments and challenge both the inevitability of the trigger event and the institutional responses toward those affected.

In the case of the MPJD, the rapid discovery that one of the seven murdered people was the son of Javier Sicilia transformed an act of routinized criminal violence, into a personified horrific event representing the senselessness of the wider 'war' and violence. This transformation was made possible because of Javier Sicilia's status and the close knit community around him. Javier Sicilia's early decision to take a public stance rather than go into private mourning received wide coverage in the mainstream media and new media platforms. However, human rights discourse did not feature strongly in his early statements. Instead, he expressed his family's personal tragedy, reflected on the suffering of other victims of the violence, rejected the government policy fuelling the violence and demanded justice. This focus on the emotional trauma of the violence, not in terms of human rights violations, enabled a rapid identification of those already disposed through their understanding of the context to respond to Javier Sicilia's angry cry of 'Ya Basta'.

The YoSoy132 trigger event was partly the protest at the *Ibero*, but owed more to the subsequent attempts by PRI officials, facilitated by the mainstream media, to delegitimise the demonstration against Peña Nieto. The protesters self-produced online video identifying themselves and asserting their right to reply, provided a means to support the protest vicariously, amplifying it into an act of rebellion against the political system. Human rights discourse was used in the initial protest to highlight the presidential candidate's involvement in and tolerance of human rights violations. The viral support for the protesters' video was premised on and expressed the right to freedom of expression. However, while these references to human rights provided an underlying cognitive framework to validate the student action, the identification with the initial protest and desire to join street protests was based on emotional sympathy, shared indignation and the desire to make public displays of resistance to the imposition of the PRI candidate. In this regard, the multiple uses of digital and social media platforms and their embeddedness in student culture were more important

than human rights discourse. Digitally enabled networking not only facilitated the mobilization, but also became a feature of movement identity, including its agility, horizontality, self-production and irreverence. It also showed how quickly social media uses could develop emotional responses, which could translate into street action and an organized movement. The trigger event was in fact a whole series of events which when seen together stirred a generation. However, human rights discourse was only an aspect of this drama, whereas digital and social media practices and the sense of involvement in plural collective self-defining political participation were both the medium and part of the identity of the movement.

In the case of the Ayotzinapa 43, the events of 26 September 2014 were recognised quite quickly as human rights violations. This was in part due to the early indications of state agent involvement, making traditional human rights discourse apt to frame state responsibility for grave abuses against individuals. However, this also required the early intervention of credible local NGOs, international media and witnesses. These actors helped legitimise the initial accounts of the surviving Ayotzinapa students. The other key feature of the aftermath was represented by the group of mothers and fathers of the disappeared students, desperately searching for their loved ones in the face of official obstruction and incompetence. Their dignified but angry demands quickly became a focal point of media, NGO and popular attention as a means of making sense of the Iguala events. In this context, human rights discourse was important to facilitate an interpretation of the events which focused on state responsibility, but sympathy and identification with the victims and their families was key to the early mobilization.

The increasingly pluralised media environment also contributed to this process as the events of Iguala emerged in a confusing, fragmented and dramatic manner, tracking the efforts of the parents to find their children. This helped create a multi-layered informational environment reaching many different actors and networks at national and international level, facilitating the rapid interpretation of events.

In conclusion, the trigger events, including their immediate aftermath, were intrinsic to the shaping of subsequent mobilizations. The 'moral shock' (Jasper et al. 1995) of

these events was understood in terms of the personal story of those directly affected, including their human and dignified responses. At the same time this contrasted with the abusive or inadequate actions of powerholders. In this context, human rights discourse was an important schema for interpreting these trigger events, both in terms of the betrayed aspirations of the democratic transition and as critical tool to identify specific powerholder responsibilities. However, it was not necessarily at the core of their emblematic significance and the process of emotional identification with those affected. At the same time, the growing prevalence of digitally enabled communications meant that when each event occurred there was an increasingly plural media environment to refract and disseminate the dramatic dimensions of the event to diverse audiences at national and international level. This also limited the capacity of powerholders to shape the news media coverage and how the event was understood by the public. This initial interpretation of the events prepared the ground for network reconfiguration and mobilization.

9.5 Networked mobilization and digital communication

Digitally networked communication facilitated national and global mobilization in support of local context driven movements. Key networked actors in the movements shaped their emerging identity and strategy, including the uses (or not) of human rights discourse. Activism practices were adapted as part of the growing recognition that digital communications could reduce barriers to information sharing and coordination by individuals and small groups, enhancing the reach and speed of networked participation in movements.

Social networks are an essential enabling dimension of social mobilizations (Diani et al. 2003); serving as hidden 'circuits of social solidarity' (Melucci 1996, p115). Digital communications have made it possible for distributed actors and local networks to communicate rapidly, theoretically forming global networks of counter-publics with the potential to resist hegemonic powerholders (Castells 2013b; Castells 2013a). In the three movements, the cross participation of actors in multiple national and international networks facilitated global solidarity, but these actions remained centred

on national processes rather than the ideas of 'Alterglobal' movements addressing the injustices of globalization (Farro et al. 2014). In fact, this rooted context was crucial to their appeal to national and international solidarity networks.

The multiple networks of actors and groups that responded to the trigger events were central to the processes shaping each mobilizations' identity, strategy and tactics. Key actors were either directly affected by the trigger events or rapidly joined in support of those affected. Pre-existing relationships based on friendship, trust, beliefs and ideology were important to enable this early involvement, often on the basis of face-to-face or phone call exchanges. The attitude and experience of these actors in relation to human rights discourse helped shape how or whether movements adopted human rights approaches and linked up with national and international human rights networks. That is to say, the nature of the trigger event alone did not determine the relevance of human rights discourse, but also the actors involved in the movement and how they interpreted and responded to the sets of emerging relations and practices.

It is in this context that Crossley's (2002; p176) account of the 'habitus' of social activists (refer to section 2.4.5) serves to understand the complex processes of individual engagement and innovation in the practices of social mobilization; where past experience and know-how shape approaches, but new circumstances and relations also enable intuitive responses in pursuit of aims which are also mediated by personal values and beliefs. He suggests a process at once reasoned in terms of taking advantage of opportunities, but not narrowly utility calculating or voluntarist; rather, complex relational processes in which individuals interact and innovate as part of a culture of purposive social mobilization operating through structured social relations.

This account is consistent with the experiences of different actors engaged in the case studies. It reflects how the rapid involvement of skilled human rights practitioners in the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 played an important role in shaping the adoption of human rights approaches as part of the movement discourse. This was not simply undertaken as a means to an end or applying previously learnt practices to leverage international opinion (Bob 2005; Hagan 2010). Instead, they were processes,

negotiated and innovated, to develop methods, tactics and strategies that were useful and relevant to the movement participants and were consistent with its evolving identity and values. This included avoiding human rights becoming the dominant discourse of the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, but still remaining an important aspect of its expressive and instrumental actions.

This was different to YoSoy132, where human rights discourse became increasingly marginal to the mobilization after the initial trigger event. This was partly due to the nature of the event, but also because the network of young participants were not strongly human rights oriented, with prior skill and experience in using the discourse. They did not feel that human rights discourse was central to or useful for the movement's identity or strategy; that it was too legalistic and institutionally oriented.⁴³³

On this basis, the case studies indicate that the local context and trigger events, filtered through the adaptive experience and orientation of key actors involved in the enabling networks, were major factors shaping each movement's particular approach to human rights. As such, the adoption of human rights discourse by social movements cannot be seen in terms of a narrow cost-benefit decision on the basis of the political opportunity structure, but one shaped by a series of dynamic variables which suggest a greater or lesser fit with the emerging identity and orientation of the movement and its key actors.

I now consider how the increasing adoption of digital communications platforms extended the networked mobilization practices of each movement, facilitating more individualised participation (Farro et al. 2014). Even with the MPJD, the relatively small number of activists skilled in the use of digital and social media, facilitated the rapid growth in support of the movement. They enabled sympathetic national and international actors to identify movement organizers, communicate and participate in

⁴³³ This is not to ignore the that human rights discourse featured in some of the actions of the YoSoy132 groups - for example, in questions posed in the livestreamed debate with presidential candidates.

distributed public actions. These practices enhanced the reach of the movement and its capacity to communicate with diverse national and global audiences, even if its use of web 2.0 deliberative features was limited (Treré et al. 2014).

In contrast, YoSoy132 developed directly out of embedded use of digital communications and was more inspired by the digitally facilitated activism of 'Alterglobal' movements. Widespread use of social media platforms not only reduced barriers to networked communication and participation, but also facilitated creativity in the production and sharing of mobilizing materials, contributing to the movement identity and public street actions. Ayotzinapa 43 combined a range of communications practices, reaching even wider and more diverse networks at national and global level to facilitate solidarity support and participation in actions. At times, these dense sets of online and offline connections enabled participation beyond traditional social activists, creating positive feedback loops to include less politically engaged individuals and affinity groups. Part of this process of evolving practice was that each of the movements learnt from earlier experiences, reconfiguring networks and actors involved in previous mobilizations to participate in new hybrid solidarity actions.

In this manner, each movement took advantage of the increasing adoption of digital communications to strengthen the movement mobilization in the manner suggested by Crossley; innovating on the basis of experience, orientation and participation in a dynamic culture of civil society contention. This included struggles over the relative prioritization to be given digital platforms so as not to exclude individuals and communities who were not active online or were without access to digital technology. However, even some initially sceptical actors began to appreciate the value of social media communications, not just to reach mainstream media, but also to facilitate mass mobilization processes and public actions. Despite this growing awareness, very few interviewees participating in the three movements considered social media platforms served as forums for movement-wide debates and deliberations in the formation of

identity and strategy.⁴³⁴ This also suggests that some of the more idealised participatory democratic practices associated with digital counter-publics suggested by Castells or Hardt and Negri were not strongly present in the three movements - with the possible exception of early YoSoy132 activities.⁴³⁵

In conclusion, key networked actors played important roles in shaping the movement practices, including approaches to human rights, but these cannot be understood in simply instrumental terms. Instead, they are complex relational processes in which actors engaged intuitively with the context and other actors, reflecting on their own experience and knowledge to contribute to the mobilization process and support those affected in a manner consistent with emerging movement values and repertoires. This included, but not exclusively, use of human rights discourses and links to the international human rights networks. Digital communications significantly contributed to the networks of the three movements, though to differing degrees. The increasing embeddedness of digital media in the social and political life of individuals, small groups, collectives and NGOs enabled a rapid scaling up of networks from small affiliation groups close to the trigger event, to configurations of multi-layered national and global networks enabling participation in online and offline collective actions. However, this networked participation was not solely based on individualised participation envisaged in some of the theories of modernity and the network society (Beck 2002; Castells 2009a), but also small group affiliations which mediated this larger networked participation.

9.6 Narrative framing

This section explores the principle narrative frames of meaning developed by each mobilization in terms of how participants understood the movements and their meaningfulness in the socio-political context. I conclude that human rights discourse

⁴³⁴ An exception to this was increasing use of encrypted messenger apps such as Whatsapp and Telegram for larger closed group conversations.

⁴³⁵ Even YoSoy132 deliberations were focused on larger physical assemblies, but smaller group discussion among adhering subnetworks as well as international affiliates formed part of the movement culture.

featured as part of this narrative, but it was only one aspect. More importantly, the narrative frames that appealed to potential participants were rooted in sentiment, solidarity practices and identifiable national concerns around stigmatization, insecurity, injustice and impunity of powerholders. Human rights discourse was mapped onto aspects of this narrative, particularly in communications with institutional and international actors, but this was not regarded as the mobilizing narrative for domestic participation or sympathy. In contrast, digital and social media practices contributed significantly to communicating the affective dimensions of the movement narrative. This aspect of social media use enabled movements to engage more directly with different distributed publics, facilitating immediacy, identification and a sense of emotional involvement amongst potential adherents in line with the framing narrative of the mobilization.

Framing analysis attempts to identify those aspects of movement discourse which foster or fail to foster cognitive frameworks sufficient to interpret trigger events and movement actions favourably; to stimulate support and rebut opposition (Della Porta et al. 2006). The idea of frames is to develop narratives which 'resonate' (Snow et al. 1986) with audiences in terms of their own cultural and political understandings, but also provide new dimensions for interpreting the situation or events, making a target 'them' responsible against which a mobilizing 'we' pursue specific demands (Johnston et al. 2005).

As observed in section 2.4.2, this analytical tool makes several dubious assumptions.⁴³⁶ Nevertheless, it remains useful for examining processes by which movements are understood by participants and audiences. However, it is important to remember this meaning-making is not solely based on ends-driven calculations, but is also part of

⁴³⁶ Among these are the analogy of a frame with a static image to examine a multi-layered and multidirectional dynamic processes; like resource mobilization and political process theories it assumes a model of utilitarian RAT decision-making by a unitary vanguard movement leadership which orchestrates frames of meaning purely to appeal as widely as possible to movement participants, public opinion and institutional actors. This suggests a manipulative exploitation of narrative for purely instrumental ends without regard to values or beliefs in relation to how narrative frames are negotiated, take shape and express values of movements (Marx Ferree et al. 2000).

multi-layered dynamic processes which can contribute to complex narratives that are identity-expressive and value-consistent with the movement.

In the case of the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, participants felt that the mobilizing narrative was the voice of the victims; their anger and dignity; their experience of suffering at the hands of criminals and the state and their emotionally charged demands to the authorities for the return of their loved ones and for justice. These represented acts of resistance against stigmatization, official abuses and neglect. This narrative was rooted in a shared sense of suffering and injustice based on a common understanding of how ordinary people are routinely ill-treated by powerholders in Mexico and are left voiceless, powerless and marginalised. In particular, the demand for the young men to be returned alive was urgent and vivid. This narrative appealed to solidarity and resistance to injustice, but also the fear of spreading violence. The accusation of grave human rights violations highlighted the involvement of the state, distinguishing it from, but also linking it to, violence routinely attributed to non-state actor criminal gangs. This intensified the gravity of the crime and outrage that the state, which was supposed to protect citizens, was in fact preying upon them. The specific crime of enforced disappearance also invoked the state sponsored abuses of the 'dirty war' when the PRI was responsible for disappearing perceived political opponents, including social activists and students. These human rights elements strengthened the case against the state and government. However, participants and observers did not believe this was the core mobilizing narrative or frame; or that these human rights dimensions constituted the mobilizations as 'human rights movements'.

This is not to ignore the role of the vocalisation of the suffering of the victims of human rights violations as a key element of the repertoire of strategic human rights advocacy, which seeks to elicit sympathy and support to influence policy makers (Schaffer et al. 2004; Brysk 2013). However, these advocacy strategies tend to position personal narratives of injustices and suffering within the framework of universal human rights, particularly focusing on international human rights law, and what this means in relation to the obligations of powerholders. This assumes that the discourse of human rights not only legitimises claims in terms of international standards, but it is these standards

that gives the claims resonance to mobilize collective action. However, the case study participants and observers did not identify this appeal to universal standards as the urgent mobilizing narrative for recruiting support domestically, rather it was the passionately charged appeal for solidarity and identification with the victims. This narrative frame operated on a more psychological and emotional level rooted in national political culture, enabling people to recognise and relate to the victims on the basis of their own experience and understanding of the context of injustice and violence as well as seeing others in their networks express similar attitudes.

The voice of the victims represented raw and human resistance to the status quo maintained by political, economic and criminal interests. In contrast, human rights discourse served primarily to appeal to those sectors already predisposed to the language of human rights norms, such as the national and international human rights movement, as well as institutional actors, but not to mobilize plural local and national constituencies. Interviewees thought that a narrowly focused appeal to human rights discourse would not have been a 'resonant' or effective mobilizing narrative for these constituencies. They believed that the public viewed human rights discourse as rather alien and technocratic. In addition, some social and political groups viewed human rights discourse and some NGOs as elitist and institutional; as downplaying or ignoring the political dynamics of social movement struggles, preferring to pursue apparently politically neutral legal strategies (which in turn were seen to favour powerholders given the ingrained bias and institutional weakness of the justice system). As such, it was not a discourse which appealed strongly to the traditions of collective resistance and grassroots political mobilization against powerholders. For this reason, participants believed that the framing narrative was rooted in the local political context, recognisable individual and collective emotions and experiences, including traditions of mobilization and solidarity with injustice.

Despite this perception that human rights discourse did not resonate widely, it is interesting to observe that a recent survey in Mexico found that human rights activists tended to believe that public perceptions of human rights were more negative than the survey data suggested (Ron et al. 2014). This raises an interesting question about

whether in fact more explicit framing of movement narratives in terms of human rights discourse could be equally or more effective in mobilizing and recruiting among domestic audiences than many activists believe. Either way, it appears to confirm an increasing recognition and embeddedness of human rights discourse in social relations, particularly in terms of citizenship and state obligations.

In the case of YoSoy132, human rights discourse was rapidly submerged in the broader debates of the movement and was not central to its more radical mobilizing narrative. In this context, human rights discourse served primarily to validate the right of the movement to express itself freely without fear of reprisals and to denounce intimidation. The movement was challenging the quality of Mexico's democracy, including the fairness of the media and electoral system, but human rights discourse was not felt to be sufficiently relevant. It did not seem to offer a challenge to the status quo in relation to democratic participation, social justice, political corruption and the hegemony of political and economic elites within Mexico's partial democracy, particularly their control of much of the mainstream media. In this context, human rights were largely taken-for-granted as a minimum but insufficient narrative to mobilize disparate identities and maximalist aspirations for social transformation. This process only increased as the movement took on a more organized structure around the UNAM with its culture of left-wing counter-hegemonic resistance activism, distrustful of rights discourses.

It is also interesting that movements seeking to enact new ways of 'doing' politics, particularly involving more horizontal deliberative participation; to challenge the old order and the limitations of representative democracy, largely overlooked human rights discourse. Is this because human rights discourse, as promoted by the global human rights movement, often promotes institutionalisation in domestic law, regardless of local context? This approach sees the instantiation of human rights discourse in legal protections as, at least in theory, a non-political process divorced from domestic political struggles? This may be strategically effective in terms of invoking the universal legitimacy of human rights to modify domestic law, but it can also result in a form of ahistorical airbrushing of the actual political struggles to claim,

define and instantiate rights domestically (Stammers 2009; Goodhart 2013). This process of making 'respect' and 'depoliticising' human rights discourse through the predominant focus on legal instantiation also seems to undercut its more radical potential for the transformative aspirations of movements, particularly when the state apparatus is geared toward simulation of legal compliance.

Another distinguishing feature of YoSoy132 was the absence of grave human rights violations in the trigger event. The initial support for the publicly defamed and misrepresented students was to show solidarity with their right to protest, but not as victims suffering traumatic abuses. As a result, the primary discourse was not focused on victims expressing grave injustice as with the other two movements. YoSoy132 was a mobilization of a different character whose narrative focused on rejection of the PRI and participation in collective self-affirming and irreverent public actions to expose Mexico's democratic deficits and continuing domination by economic and political elites. Participating in YoSoy132 was an enactment of freedom of expression and association. It communicated transformational hopes which went beyond the typical defensive justice claims of victims of state abuses which is most commonly associated with the claims-making of human rights discourse. As such, even as a secondary narrative, human rights discourse was not regarded as useful to the young inexperienced activists or fully expressive of the plural identity of the movement. This also suggests that the traditional understanding of human rights discourse, as particularly meaningful in instances of state repression against individuals or communities, continues to prevail in many sectors of society, limiting its resonance in relation to other dimensions of citizen/powerholder inequality, democratic participation and social justice.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁷ This suggests that despite the efforts of many human rights NGOs, particularly in Latin America, to promote conceptions of human rights more clearly engaged with social, economic, cultural and environment injustice of partial democracy, traditional understandings of state violations of civil and political rights are still the most widely recognised. This is perhaps not surprising given the importance of the political struggles against such abuses committed by repressive regimes in the region in the 1970s and 80s and some of the gravest abuses of power they represent, such as torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

I now examine how the expressive dimensions of the movements also coincided with emerging features of digitally networked communications, particularly social media. This enabled movements to combine the benefits of rapid information sharing and coordination, with a growing sense, at least among some activists, of the potential of social media to communicate the emotionally mobilizing narrative of the movement to local, national and global publics (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Dahlgren 2013; Papacharissi 2015).

The MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 focused on the victims, their emotional ordeal and demands. These were shared through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. This was initially facilitated by more digitally skilled activists collaborating with the movements, but also increasingly by victims themselves adopting social media as part of the mobilization practices. In the MPJD, some activists became aware of this feature of networked communication in the process of expressing and sharing movement sentiments online, realising that this form of communication reinforced a sense of participating in processes even with distributed networks. This was not necessarily acknowledged by other movement activists, particularly from older generations, who recognised the importance of digital communications as a tactical device for leveraging mainstream media coverage, but were less sensitive to other more expressive features of social media communication.

In the case of YoSoy132, the rapid circulation of the initial YouTube video via Twitter enabled a feeling of involvement in a protest, of recognising and sharing personal emotional reactions. In this self-reinforcing process, the excitement of recognition itself encouraged further engagement and recognition. These emotional responses were important to propel people to participate in early street protests or follow them livestreamed, conveying the immediacy and spontaneity of these actions, attracting further waves of interest. In the case of Ayotzinapa 43, the use of social media platforms by distributed networks nationally and international enabled disparate groups to post and share their contributions to public actions. This reinforced the identity of a community of support, as well as a creative engagement with the solidarity processes which also strengthened emotional identification. By this stage, activists

were increasingly aware of the importance of placing the voice of the families and others affected at the centre of social media communications, sustaining their emotional response to the unfolding situation. In this context, the narrative of the victims, rather than details of legal human rights demands, suited the features of social media networks, assisting with the process of emotional engagement.

However, the communication of sentiment via social media is not straightforward and is open to contestation, manipulation and counter-framing. The impact of circulating and sharing emotionally compelling information as part of the process of mobilization is dependent on the material being seen as authentic and emotional true, as well as reflecting the situation accurately. If perceived as intentionally falsifying the situation or emotionally manipulative, then the impact of social media can be reversed, undermining mobilization.⁴³⁸ The struggle between movement adherents and opponents over social media narratives and manipulation has gained increasing attention globally.⁴³⁹ However, participants in the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 were less aware of these threats, largely presuming the emotional expressiveness of communications was reflective of the values of the movement and integral to reasoned decisions to participate.⁴⁴⁰

In conclusion, narrative frames of each movement were focused on the expressive emotional responses to the trigger events. The focus on individual personal or collective stories was central to fostering a shared identity and disposition to act

⁴³⁸ It can also be used for regressive movements based on emotionally 'othering' sections of society and closing off identities (Farro et al. 2014).

⁴³⁹ The debate about 'fake news' has emerged since my field research. It addresses the creation of an emotive media narrative designed to discredit critical counter-narratives, regardless of whether they are based in fact or not. Nonetheless, even this manipulation of news narratives still relies on assertions of authenticity and falsity. If the target audience, for whatever reason, comes to believe they are being manipulated, then there is the potential for this narrative to become counter-productive. The concern regarding 'fake news' appears to be that the creation of an emotive narrative that all critical news is necessarily false undercuts the potential to expose the manipulations of that narrative on the basis of evidence.

⁴⁴⁰ This understanding also reflected how emotional engagement of publics as part of contestation and mobilization narratives is not in opposition to rational decision-making as envisaged in some social movement recruitment theories based on Rational Actor Theory, but an essential element of political engagement where sentiment and reason operate together shaping individual orientations and actions (Goodwin et al. 2009).

collectively against specific targets. The connection between this narrative and the values of solidarity and resistance were also important to root the mobilization in the struggle to transform Mexico's partial democracy. Increasingly embedded digital communications practices enhanced logistical capacity, but also facilitated this process of communicating and sharing movement sentiments to distributed recruits and audiences, developing a sense of collective identity. Human rights discourse featured in supporting aspects of this narrative frame but was not regarded as the primary language facilitating mobilization or emotional engagement. However, it did help reinforce the validity of the voice of the victims and their demands for justice, particularly in relation to international actors and institutional interactions. Despite the importance of these dimensions for the movements, human rights discourse remained secondary in comparison to emotional identification with the principle movement actors rooted in a shared understanding of the local context.

9.7 Agency

This section discusses the importance of individual and collective agency in the social movements. In particular it explores uses of human rights discourse in the developing agency of key movement actors and solidarity participants. In the three movements, digital and social media uses began to help enhance these functions, enabling new forms of participation and amplifying the visibility of the movement and its key actors. However, internal movement processes to facilitate the agency of those directly affected by abuses are necessarily complex and sometimes ambiguous, including in how the use of human rights discourse is introduced and negotiated by human rights activists with those affected.

Setting to one side wider sociological arguments about agency and structure, human agency is both the capacity to act autonomously to cause or seem to cause an effect in a given social context, but also the subjective sense of authoring or participating in the influencing action. The latter reflexive element is intrinsic to the experience of exercising control or influence in realising purposive activity – even if the ultimate effects are unintended or misrecognised. In the context of this study, agency is the

capacity of individuals or groups, often denied power in their social context, to exercise a degree of autonomous influence over their lives and constraining circumstances, coupled to an awareness of this shaping power. The reflexive sense of directly engaging with the political and social context in order to alter it, is central to the development of individual and collective political subjectivity and involvement in social movements (Giddens 1990; Gamson 1991, 1992). It is also a key dimension of modern conceptions of human rights which assert the central importance of individual autonomy, freedom and self-realization as part of the process of 'free and full development of [his] personality' (UN General Assembly 1948) intrinsic to human dignity.

In the three movements, agency was enacted and understood in differing ways, but was central to the mobilization process. Human rights discourse, particularly the adoption of human rights claims, strengthened this process through those affected making concrete demands against powerholders. The international human rights framework makes human rights claims a useful means to legitimise local social or justice demands in terms of universal standards and obligations. It also enables the identification of concrete institutional steps to fulfil these responsibilities. However this 'socialisation' of international human rights law into a domestic settings, is often conceived of as a primarily top-down instrumental process led by expert human rights lawyers at national and international level promoting human rights norms to local institutional actors (Gordon et al. 2007). In this process, insufficient attention is frequently paid to the dynamics of agency of non-institutional actors directly or indirectly affected by abuses. An important element of the meaningfulness of human rights discourse in social mobilizations relates to victims' involvement in claims-making.

The MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 were movements focused on the victims of grave abuses of physical integrity in which state agents were directly involved and/or were implicated in failing to prevent or investigate crimes by non-state actors. However, the process of the parents and other family members developing their agency to formulate demands to remedy this injustice in terms of human rights, was not an inevitable process. The support of human rights activists and NGOs played an important role in

facilitating the interpretation of individual experience of injustice in terms of violations of universal human rights standards. This implied a process of victims often seeking support and information from other victims or social activists. In this exchange human rights claims came to be understood as a means to strengthen and legitimise demands for institutional action by appealing to universal standards not determined by local powerholders. This approach avoided exclusive reliance on domestic law, strengthening victims' defence against manipulation of domestic judicial processes by powerholders. It also rerouted alternative approaches to injustice which victims might have followed, such as vigilante justice or more violent confrontation with powerholders, in favour of a mixture of civic action strategies involving legal cases, advocacy, direct action and social mobilization.

As observed in section 2.3.3, complex social relations underlie the processes by which those with knowledge of human rights discourse and practice, 'vernacularize' (Merry 2006b) it for individuals and communities whose rights are denied or abused. The latter may not necessarily be aware of or knowledgeable about human rights discourse or how it might apply to their situation and be used by them in their struggle for recognition and justice. As Merry suggests, the effectiveness of this process depends on the extent to which human rights discourse enables the disempowered to reinterpret their own situation as no longer inevitable, to one over which they can have some influence. As a result of this process, those directly affected can not only recognise the injustice in terms of human rights violations, but can come to formulate demands against powerholders to address the situation, beginning to enact their agency and political subjectivity in the face of a constraining context and with unpredictable results (Goodale 2013). Human rights claims is one but not the exclusive means of expressing this political subjectivity.

For a human rights claim to be meaningful, it needs to be formulated in terms of exposing the claimant's constraining social context of unequal power relations and disempowerment. This means interpreting the "indeterminacy" or openness of abstract international human rights law so as to make it relevant and meaningful in the specific context, but still within the conceptual parameters of universal human rights

norms – such as the right to non-discrimination and equality - which themselves are the subject of ongoing interpretation in international fora (Douzinas 2000,p 259).⁴⁴¹

That these demands find echo in the international human rights framework increases their potential usefulness to social and political actors acting in a local context. This is particularly so in Mexico where the authorities, at least formally, are committed to protect internationally recognised human rights which have become increasingly embedded in domestic legal, political and media discourses. This strengthens the meaningfulness and potential traction of human rights claims with different institutions, reinforcing their value for claims makers.

However, this process of disempowered individuals or communities formulating their demands in terms of human rights usually involves some form external expert input. This interaction implies an imbalance of power and knowledge and is open to instrumental use of victims, not necessarily undertaken to enhance their agency. Therefore, the manner in which this relationship is negotiated and sustained to develop autonomy and agency of claimants, for example, including features such as mutual respect, informational transparency and honesty, is key to the process of victims of injustice enacting their own agency.

Still, even with a successfully managed relationship, this sense of agency can only endure and grow if the value added by routing claims via human rights discourse is felt to have some degree of influence over the constraining social context. Without this, the empowering aspect of human rights claims-making risks dissipation and disillusionment. This is a pronounced risk in partial democracies such as Mexico, where the rhetorical use of human rights discourse for state legitimation purposes contrasts strongly with the actual political will and administrative measures taken to respect and protect rights in practice. The result is that expectations that human rights discourse

⁴⁴¹ Though as Scheingold (2010) observes this interpretive process of the indeterminacy of rights law can also be used to mount regressive campaigns.

can effectively help citizens challenge powerholder abuses or neglect is constantly under threat from actual experiences of institutional simulation of compliance.

In relation to the case studies, the MPJD struggled to reconcile the complex field of interests of multiple actors, including plural victims, human rights organizations and social activists, to sustain a unified and coherent mobilization focused on the plight of the victims but also the wider context of violence. Human rights initially featured as part of the normative aspiration of the good society to be constructed through the collective action of civil society. However, grounding this abstract ideal in concrete demands proved difficult. Partly due to these challenges, the leadership around Javier Sicilia and Emilio Álvarez took the strategic decision to focus on the immediate needs of individual victims in the form of collective demands for institutional support.⁴⁴² Despite some victims gaining hitherto denied access to official investigations, this institutional engagement and negotiation also increased disillusionment among some victims and solidarity supporters as institutions failed to comply in practice with human rights obligations. Even the success of instantiating the General Law on Victims, seemed to create an institutional trap which exhausted or diverted the agency of victims into a bureaucratic labyrinth without improving access to truth or justice. The empowering process of mobilization and claims-making was partly exhausted through institutional human rights manoeuvring.

However, this disillusion with institution-building did not end the mobilization of most victims groups which participated in the MPJD. Instead, many reconfigured into smaller dynamic collectives, learning from their experiences of mobilization to focus on their own cases and public actions in their regions, including human rights demands, and carrying out their own independent initiatives to locate the disappeared. This increasing agency was also accompanied by some victims and groups using digital and social media platforms to inform about their actions and recruit new participants. In this way, the initial agency forged through participation in the mass movement and

⁴⁴² This decision was also a consequence of the lack of sufficient NGOs and human rights lawyers to accompany the hundreds of relatives in the different regions of the country.

making human rights claims, facilitated the ongoing agency of these relatives.⁴⁴³ In this way, these processes of engagement in human rights claims-making and social mobilization had long-term repercussions for the agency of individuals and collectives of victims.

The Ayotzinapa 43 movement avoided the institution building of the MPJD.⁴⁴⁴ Instead, with the assistance of supporting human rights NGOs, it remained focused on the concrete justice demands of the parents and the state's abuses, particularly the official cover-up. Human rights lawyers played a key role in presenting evidence and advocating remedial action. Despite the cynical tactics of the government, this did not lead to the demobilization of the families. This is, perhaps, because the voice of the families and their demand for justice remained at the core of the movement. The agency of the parents, channelled through human rights-based demands, but communicated in the political discourse of organized social resistance, has been a pivotal feature of the sustained mobilization. As part of this process, some of the parents and students adopted digital and social media practices or have been supported by others to do so. While it is difficult to assess the contribution of these practices to the mobilization, they helped make visible numerous public activities involving the parent and their continued struggle. In this way, digital and social media were part of the strategic and expressive tools facilitating agency of some parents and sustaining the wider solidarity movement.

Another dimension of agency in the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 movements was the role of solidarity participation. This was perhaps more ambiguous and less central to the explicit identity of the movement, but it was intrinsic to the mobilization process. This was the sense of self-empowerment felt by many of those who answered the call to

⁴⁴³ Many of these groups also reconfigured into an alliance, *Movimiento por nuestros desaparecidos en México*, helping to secure the national law on enforced disappearances. This also included cooperation with the Ayotzinapa families.

⁴⁴⁴ This was also due to the focus on a single (though complex) case, which enabled full engagement of integral NGO accompaniment. In contrast, the myriad cases in the MPJD movement meant there was insufficient skilled and resourced NGO capacity to support all cases. As a result, focusing on institutional capacity to support victims theoretically increased their potential to access justice.

support the victims. The initial indignation felt at the trigger event found an outlet in expressing public support offline and online. By participating in a common endeavour in support of ordinary people's demand for justice against an unjust government, there was a feeling for many of involvement in something socially significant which the authorities tried to downplay or conceal. This engagement is an aspect of civil society participation in democratic processes, with contentious and deliberative dimensions supporting the enactment of citizenship in the public sphere. In one sense this is an assertion of democratic practice.⁴⁴⁵ However, more fundamentally it reflects the demand for Mexico's severely deficient democracy to be accountable to its citizens, including ensuring respect and protection of human rights. Therefore, contributing to this process, even in a small ways, such as retweeting #yamecanse o #fueelestado, was also felt to be part of the process of participation to challenge the status quo in support of the families and to bring about a more rights-protective democracy.

The agency of those participating in YoSoy132 appears to have operated on a similar level. The initial solidarity response to the trigger event was an assertion of individual and collective identification with the protesters via social media, then on the streets. The rapid scaling up of support and protest nationally and globally demonstrated not only an affinity with the original protest, but also a desire to individually and collectively enact the right to protest and challenge the political establishment. This was an assertion of the political agency for a generation of young people, many of whom felt the febrile excitement of debate, bridging social divides and forging new alliances in the process of expressing a developing political subjectivity. The autonomous creativity of online and street protest, including commitment to horizontal participation and forms of democratic decision-making, were also manifestations of this dynamic sense of agency (Farro et al. 2014). However, where Farro suggests human rights is the natural language of this individualised participation, in the case of YoSoy132, human rights discourse seems to have offered little in terms of a challenge to institutions which already, albeit superficially, accepted their validity. In the absence of victims of

⁴⁴⁵ The existence of contentious social mobilizations are often presented by semi-authoritarian governments as the tolerance of opposition and as such evidence of a functioning democracy, rather than evidence of frustration with partial democracy.

grave violations, human rights discourse was not perceived as useful or expressive of their plural and transformative agenda and did not contribute to their sense of collective agency.⁴⁴⁶

In conclusion, active and reflexive dimensions of agency are crucial to participating in social movements. The use of digitally enabled communications featured as part of this agency in all three movements, particularly in YoSoy132, but also by some victims as well as solidarity activists in the other movements. The MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 focused on victims with little previous social status or knowledge of human rights. Human rights discourse facilitated the process of interpreting their situation in a form that pinpointed powerholder abuses and responsibilities. Thus, claims could be expressed in legitimised human rights terms with the support of NGOs, but also in more politically charged forms of expression and action rooted in the parents experience and social movement culture. In contrast, YoSoy132 was not focused on such victims or embodied injustice, so human rights discourse did not serve to particularly enhance agency. For those movements supporting victims of grave abuses, adoption of human rights claims enabled a sense of empowerment as political subjects in relation to the authorities, wider society and global solidarity networks. It was influenced by human rights activists, but not determined by them. This relationship with victims remained central to the mobilization process and their sense of autonomy and agency. Despite the complexities and ambiguities of such relationships, the adoption of human rights discourse as a key part of the demands of the victims appears to have strengthened their agency. Nevertheless, the complex nature of these relationships and the developing sense of agency of claimants is also a potential area of further research.

9.8 Movement articulation

Social movements are coalitions of different individuals, groups and organizations with varying interests, beliefs, ideologies, resources and practices. The dynamic process of

⁴⁴⁶ The exception to this was in the case of those student protesters who were attacked or threatened by PRI supporters. In these cases, traditional narrow frames of civil and political rights were adopted to highlight the threat to the right freedom of expression and association.

articulating shared positions, identities and strategies is fraught with tension as well as excitement as indicated by the experience of all three movements. The greater the fluidity of the articulation process, the wider and more diverse the mobilization, with greater potential impacts. However, this also carries the danger of incoherence and destabilisation. Jaspers (2014) calls this the 'risk of over extension' (p224). Digital communications and human rights discourse can both facilitate and constrain this process. This sections discusses these dynamics in relation to the movements and how this impacted their capacity to sustain focused mobilization, particularly in the relatively hostile environment of Mexico's partial democracy.

The extent to which the process of articulation itself articulates new identities in social struggles is part of debates about civil society and social movements in relation to democratic processes and progressive social change discussed in section 2.2.3 (Laclau et al. 1985; Cohen et al. 1994; Foweraker 1995; Melucci 1996). Articulation means the way ideas are expressed, but also the way separate parts are joined and move in relation to each other. Both meanings are relevant to understanding the articulation of plural social actors in collective action; they relate to the processes of expressing and joining their plural interests. This means co-operation, but not necessarily agreement or consensus, among multiple civil society actors to take action together around some form of shared discourse or agenda.⁴⁴⁷ Laclau & Mouffe (1985) suggested articulation was around a shared approach to enacting radical democratic pluralism through agonistic resistance to hegemonic powerholders. This envisages human rights discourse as a possible vehicle for the articulation of these plural forces, but leaves the features of this use of human rights discourse to the praxis of context-specific mobilizations and their emergent political subjectivities.

⁴⁴⁷ In Latin America, new social movement concepts developed in response to the repression of traditional class-based political activism and the emergence of grassroots popular movements in diverse contexts with plural interests and autonomous identities (Alvarez et al. 1992). The challenge was how to articulate these various modes of resistance (Munck 2013). (see literature review chapter for more detailed discussion).

This radical appropriation of human rights discourse by transformative plural contentious mobilizations contrasts with more liberal or social democratic approaches to plural civil society. These focus on plural civil society in the form of diverse NGOs and associations using the 'lingua franca' of human rights discourse as the standard of the good society to act together pragmatically and deliberatively to reach consensus in the public sphere to exercise forms of social accountability over deficient institutions (Habermas 1991; Cohen et al. 1994). In this approach more formal and law-based approach, plural promotion of human rights standards in the public sphere gradually strengthens the democratic practices of institutions through advocacy, transparency, collective social participation and public pressure (Avritzer 2006).

These two understandings of the articulating potential of human rights discourse for plural civil society mobilizations were present in the three case studies, exemplifying the challenges of developing and sustaining plural movements. The MPJD initially raised expectations amongst multiple actors that it could articulate a 'movement of movements' to challenge the government's 'war' and other social drivers fuelling the violence. However, its primary constituency and narrative focused on the stigmatised and abandoned victims of the violence. Human rights discourse served as an aspiration and to pin point state responsibility for the plight of the victims. However, as negotiation and human rights institution-building became the main focus of the mobilization, its plural identity diminished, gradually becoming a victims' movement represented by a narrow leadership. This strategic decision was successful at maximising resources to challenge the stigmatization of victims. However, it struggled to articulate a wider human rights agenda to sustain the movement as a plural participatory mobilization, giving way to more traditional political advocacy.

In the case of YoSoy132, human rights discourse primarily featured around the initial trigger event and early defensive actions. As it developed into an expressive counter-hegemonic movement, based on resistance to the political and media establishment, the institutional orientation of human rights discourse was of little use to articulate different actors committed to forms of radical pluralism. In this context, the inspiration was international and local experiences of participatory grassroots resistance to elite

global capitalism. While human rights discourse is not incompatible with these ideas, it does not clearly add value or reinforce them. It provides only a minimum standard of human dignity not a maximizing vision of social transformation. As a result, for most activists human rights discourse did not help articulate its agenda or plural constituents beyond the initial trigger episodes.

Ayotzinapa 43 represented the combination of skilled human rights discourses combined with an expressive political resistance of the students and parents. In this context, human rights discourse helped articulate victims, human rights lawyers, supporting organizations, international networks and an array of other plural actors. In addition, its effectiveness was maintained by not monopolising the discursive approach of the movement or displacing the agendas of other key actors which addressed a range of social and political issues. However, at times, these wider more politically contentious agendas threatened to overwhelm the human rights focus. Nonetheless, as more radical demands waned with the changing political environment, the discourse of human rights and the voice of the parents remained key to the movement's continuing articulation. In this context, the Ayotzinapa 43 represents a more effective use of human rights discourse as an important, but not dominant, articulating discourse of the movement.⁴⁴⁸ However, it was still insufficient to articulate or sustain a more radical socially transformative agenda.

This evidence suggests that the adoption of human rights discourse enabled initial articulation of plural forces in the three movements, but this did not lead to the emergence of new political formations capable of forging transformative social agendas. Instead, the fragmenting pressures of plural interests and agendas always threatened to unravel the limited articulation of the coalition drawn together around concrete (not indeterminate) human rights demands.

⁴⁴⁸ This is not to argue that human rights discourse shaped these aspects of the movement, but that there was an effective fit in relation to all the different elements. Above all, human rights discourse remained effective as the mobilization was focused on a grave but also specific case of human rights violations in which the relatives remained consistently active in pursuit of their claims.

In relation to digitally enabled communication, in the three movements this provided an opportunity to circumvent some of the early obstacles to identity and agenda formation, by facilitating more agile participation in movement actions, less reliant on ideological convergence among participants (Hardt et al. 2005; Farro et al. 2014). Bennet and Segerberg (2013) suggest this form of 'connective action' does not require the formation of collective identity, a defining feature of social movements for many scholars (Della Porta et al. 2006). This enables looser horizontal expressions of affiliation with the actions without having to engage in negotiations or endorsement of an agenda, identity and strategy. Bennet and Segerberg also propose hybrid forms of connective/collective action for movements presenting both aspects of this practice.

Of the three movements, YoSoy132 and Ayotzinapa most reflected features of this type of social media articulated participation, whereas the MPJD reflected more traditional communicative practices based around collective identity. Both YoSoy132 and Ayotzinapa, in their early stages, facilitated participation of individuals and small groups in actions in response to trigger events and early calls to mobilize. This initial participation, facilitated via digital networks, did not imply membership of the movement, identification with particular organizations or even clear political or ideological affiliation. This effervescent period witnessed some of the most diverse and exciting actions in terms of spontaneous online and offline creativity contributing to the upsurge of social mobilization and protest. However, less visibly, core movement actors were taking steps to deliberate and decide on the agenda, tactics, identity and organizational structures to carry the movement forward. These processes of articulation were complex, and not necessarily shared by all movement participants. However, they were also important to carry the movements beyond the initial connective action stage, particularly in the face of political and media counter-framing attacks.

Another aspect of digitally enabled connective action is the assumption that individualised modernity (Zygmunt 2000; Beck 2002), means participation is based on individual involvement in movement networks, rather than collective identities such as class. However, the three movements in this research suggest, at least in the context

of Mexico, that small groups or collectives with shared interests based on trust, friendship, values and beliefs, frequently acted as intermediary formations, facilitating and sustaining participation in wider movement networks and actions. As a result, mobilization processes continued to rely on meso-level collective engagement processes, not simply individualised connectivity.

Digital connective action logics also suggest distributed individuals can act in loose and dynamic collectivities to raise issues with the democratic polity (Dahlgren 2009, 2013; Wessels 2017). The capacity of such plural civil society configurations to 'raise' an issue in the public sphere may be sufficient to produce changes in policy, law and administration in a relatively responsive democratic political culture. However, in partial democracies with features of semi-authoritarianism and state-capture, powerholders are more entrenched and there are more obstacles to influence institutional practice.⁴⁴⁹

In this context, the configuration of temporary connective digital social mobilizations struggle to project their influence beyond the short-lived public sphere enactment of protest.⁴⁵⁰ Instead, collective contentious action requires organizational structure, including SMOs, global support networks, identity and committed membership to sustain and articulate a long contentious struggle capable of enduring counter-framing tactics, co-optation and repressive measures. These traditional social movement practices (see section 2.4) imply a degree of strategic leadership, identity, discipline and resources. Yet these are the very features of mobilization, that more idealised conceptions of digitally enabled 'connective action' argue are redundant for contentious collective action (Castells 2009a).

⁴⁴⁹ In contrast to more authoritarian states, there is a relatively open public sphere. But in reality this is often circumscribed by democratic deficits, such as violence, impunity, corruption and clientalism.

⁴⁵⁰ A partial democracy, which includes multiple interests within the underlying institutional alliances, also remains better positioned to negotiate or diffuse a mass popular protest than an authoritarian state without resorting to widespread repression.

The experience of the three movements suggest digitally enabled participation can facilitate new expressive connective dimensions to movement action. However, these can also pose new challenges if they displace or are not supported by more consolidated and organized processes to strengthen movement articulation, identity and strategy. This is particularly so when operating in partially democratic environments. However, these very organizational practices potentially contribute to a reduction in the dynamic connective stage of movement action, and hasten the transition to more hybrid and traditional forms of practice.

In conclusion, in those instances where trigger events produced or revealed victims of serious abuses, human rights discourse became an important means of articulating different actors in a broad plural social mobilization around a minimum agenda. However, the narrow pursuit of institutional human rights reforms (as opposed to the accountability focus of Ayotzinapa 43) tended to reduce the articulating capacity of human rights discourse, particularly when not combined with other forms of contentious and expressive resistance which reflected the plural dimensions of the movement. When human rights discourse worked in tandem with victims, reinforcing their voice in claims making, not displacing them and other aspects of the movement agenda, human rights discourse supported the articulation of plural actors, but only to a limited extent. Additionally, horizontal digitally enabled mobilization initially avoided some of the traditional burdens of articulating plural movement actors, by facilitating forms of distributed connective action. However, this early mobilization stage was temporary and was gradually supplanted by more hybrid or traditional articulation processes to build identity and strategy to sustain the movements. These were a necessary element to maintain and coordinate collective action against entrenched powerholders in a long contentious struggle, but also reduced connective action features of the mobilization.

9.9 Dangers and challenges

9.9.1 Digital downsides

This thesis has shown how digital communications have been used by diverse actors to open up the media environment, enabling new voices to emerge and gain visibility. This pluralized information setting has been important for facilitating new instrumental and expressive aspects of social mobilization processes. However, this changing environment has also posed threats to activists. Responding to these has reduced some of the contributions that digital communications have made to movements. The challenge of identifying and mitigating these risks adds new complexities to social mobilization practices, particularly where semi-authoritarian practices continue to facilitate attacks on social activists as well as media workers.

The emergence of this diverse information environment was seen by interviewees as restricting the traditional capacity of powerholders to shape the news agenda. However, this is not necessarily an inevitable nor unstoppable process. The dispute about alleged foreign intervention in the 2016 US election process and the Brexit referendum also suggest how covert action by states or other major powerholders can shape the informational environment on social media, affecting political processes.⁴⁵¹ Several authoritarian governments around the world, such as China, have realised that controlling internet activity is possible, increasing the probability of less authoritarian governments adopting new tools to shape the online information environment to influence domestic political processes.

In Mexico, political elites have a long history of presenting a democratic façade while using covert and overt mechanisms to control interest groups, including media outlets and news information narratives. Additionally, a weakness of many new independent digital media platforms in Mexico is their reliance on non-commercial economic models which may be difficult to sustain, particularly in the face of financial or other

⁴⁵¹ Though this is not a new phenomenon as states have regularly engaged in diverse forms of covert and overt propaganda strategies to influence media framing of issues on the political agenda at home and abroad (Edward et al. 1988).

pressures. In contrast, the resource advantage of mainstream media networks supported strongly by political elites, even during this disrupted period, means they continue to exert great influence and have the potential to assert dominance over online information flows as well as consolidate their power in traditional broadcasting. In this context, international online media continues to play a pivotal role in production and reproduction of information on and in Mexico. As a result, the pluralization of information spaces and quality of those spaces cannot be taken for granted.

The use of digital communications also poses threats to movements and activists besides those outlined earlier in this chapter. There are the risks of reliance on digital platforms controlled by capitalist corporations, whose commercial interests do not coincide with social movements (Fuchs 2014). These companies control the access to and architecture of the technology, influencing online information flows and thus impacting social movement practices.⁴⁵² More worryingly is the willingness of social media platforms to cooperate with authoritarian, semi-authoritarian and democratic governments in order to shape social media information flows.⁴⁵³

The movements in this study also show how digital and social media platforms can be manipulated by those with resources and capability to reduce the visibility of popular digital support for contentious issues, such as with *#yamecanse* on Twitter. Individual activists have also been the target of organized trolling campaigns or systematic automated BOT attacks, which have included death threats and other serious intimidation. NGOs have also faced cyberattacks to steal data, disrupting activities and spreading fear about their safety. The lack of action by the authorities to take seriously such incidents or investigate and hold to account perpetrators reflects the long standing practice of impunity for those responsible for attacks on journalists, human

⁴⁵² For example, the algorithmic selection of Facebook timeline information has led some SMOs/NGOs to pay for their information output to appear on their followers' timelines.

⁴⁵³ For example, the recent case of Facebook allegedly colluding with the Philippines' government to control and shape public discourse in favour of the administration and against civil society critiques (Lauren Etter 2017)

rights defenders and social activists. In this context, digital communications can also serve as another route to attack and undermine movements.

The recent revelation that institutions of the state used surveillance software to illegally spy on political and social activists is evidence that the digital environment is not just an asset for social activists but also a vulnerability. Those civil society organizations with capacity are beginning to share expertise in developing knowledge and defence against this covert digital targeting, but their relative lack of resources means they will always be at a disadvantage. Furthermore, this is only available to those groups with organizational capacity. For small collectives or individuals involved in social activism, including human rights work, this digital vulnerability is difficult if not impossible to avoid. Nevertheless, these threats are part of a wider panorama in which social and political activists face or fear a range of physical and psychological threats in retaliation for their lawful activities.

In this environment, activists constantly take decisions to act (or not to act) about security threats, adjusting (or not) their behaviour to mitigate risks. This can include limiting uses of different types of social media and digital communications platforms to reduce vulnerability, for example limiting dialogue to closed networks on encrypted platforms such as Telegram or Whatsapp. This can also impact the flow of information and the potential of social media in relation to mobilization processes, particularly more open deliberative practices. In the case studies, digitally enabled communications were felt to add new dimensions to the mobilization process, but also introduced new risks which activists struggled to gauge and respond to. This is a complex balancing act in which suspicions and a certain degree of paranoia play an important part in reasonable precautionary thinking, but where there is also a struggle against uncontrolled paranoia. In a constantly shifting communications environment, these processes are liable to become more complex, both in terms of risks and preventive measures. These threats have potentially undermined some of the features of digitally enabled communications which thinkers such as Castells have argued can

facilitate contentious social mobilization and public sphere deliberations as part of emancipatory practices.⁴⁵⁴

9.9.2 Making human rights meaningful

The complex features of human rights discourse mean it is in constant tension between the self-asserting process of civil society claims-making and processes of legal instantiation and institutionalization. The social movements in this research are rooted in their local context and their use of human rights discourse is dependent on how far it can be made meaningful to reinforce and echo their claims nationally and internationally, but without defining those claims solely in terms of legal human rights standards. The indeterminacy and openness of human rights discourse facilitates this process. However, of the three movements, human rights discourse was used most meaningfully to reinforce and validate claims as part of mobilizations which focused on concrete, grave abuses, personified in the claims-making of relatives. This suggests that despite the openness of human rights discourse to take on new dimensions of social justice and inequality, its classic formulation to defend the rights of individuals suffering forms of violent abuse involving state responsibility, remains a key part of its meaningfulness in mobilization processes.

There are also risks associated with human rights discourse becoming more embedded in Mexico's political and legal culture if at the same time it does not lead to substantive improvements in the respect, protection and fulfilment of those rights. If the present trend of simulation continues, social and political grassroots actors may regard it merely as another tool of institutional entrapment and demobilization. It will cease to be regarded as a potential means of enacting plural citizenship and political subjectivity. As a result, it may come to be seen as less meaningful, particularly in more pre-figurative resistance movements questioning the nature of Mexico's partial democracy and aspiring to more radical transformative social change.

⁴⁵⁴ The growth in regressive far-right use of digital and social media to mobilize and enact protest and contention in Europe and the Americas also illustrates the rapidly changing security dynamics around uses of digital and social media in political mobilization processes.

The relevance, meanings and uses of human rights discourse are contested and under constant review in a range of different fora. However, in practice the merit of human rights discourse in domestic settings often relates to whether it is useful to people without power asserting their own self-realising demand to change situations they believe amount to oppression or abandonment. The self-assertion of injustice and demand for remedies from powerholders is itself a vital source of the legitimacy of human rights norms (Donnelly 2013). However, this is often concealed in the machinery of instantiation in national law and multilateral state sponsored processes for developing international human rights law. As Arato and Cohen observe:

‘The struggle for rights demonstrates that while the state is the agency of the legalization of rights, it is neither their source nor the basis of their validity. Rights begin as claims asserted by groups and individuals in the public spaces of an emerging civil society. They can be guaranteed by positive law but are not equivalent to law or derivable from it; in the domain of rights, law secures and stabilizes what has been achieved autonomously by social actors.’ (Cohen & Arato 1994, 446).

The process of institutionalisation not only ignores the role of these self-asserting grassroots claims, but replaces them with legal rights validated by the machinery of the state and international actors. As Stammers (2009) suggests, the empowering process of originating rights claims can paradoxically become a process of legitimising the state and marginalizing the claims-makers. Therefore, part of the struggle for the meaning and relevance of human rights is to maintain the claimants of rights at the centre of the political process; to reconfigure citizenship and the relationship to powerholders without sliding into technical and institutionalised human rights discourses.

In Latin America the adoption of human rights discourse is often associated with the struggle to emerge from the repressive years of authoritarian rule, supported by the international human rights movement. The ‘socialization’ of rights has frequently been conceived of as a process of cosmopolitan international actors and expert local activists projecting human rights law to non-compliant states in the Global South in support of those suffering repression (Keck et al. 1998; Goodman et al. 2013b). This narrative

places the forces of globalization, of which international human rights discourse forms part, at the centre of the process. Local social movements are viewed merely as vehicles for fostering democratization and the institutionalization of international human rights at the national level. However, electoral democracy has not produced the promised rights-protective regimes. The institutionalisation of governmental human rights discourse has primarily served to legitimize the state while concealing or downplaying ongoing patterns of abuses and neglect (Arias et al. 2010a). In relation to Mexico, governments of the Global North have until now been content to view this as a work-in-progress of an important trading partner loyally following neoliberal prescriptions. In this context, human rights discourse risks being debased by its institutional association and ineffective legal procedures, leaving the actual plight of disempowered or oppressed communities ignored or unaddressed.

The process of such communities or groups coming to see and express their grievances, at least partly, in terms of human rights discourse often involves relationships with networks of skilled human rights and social activists helping to reclaim the meaning of human rights discourse distinct from its narrow institutional formulations. As suggested, such relations are complex and not always successful, but they are important to the process of those affected reflecting on the value of human rights discourse, including its limitations.⁴⁵⁵ It is through this process that universal human rights discourse can be shaped to the particular aspects of their claims making rooted in specific social situations to address diverse forms of injustice.⁴⁵⁶ This process can reinforce the claims, but not by reducing them to the purely technical and institutional language of human rights. This is part of the process of respecting the context and origins of the claims-makers. As this research indicates, social movements emerging from these contexts are not primarily perceived as and do not self-identify as human rights movements as they are not circumscribed by human rights discourse. In fact,

⁴⁵⁵ It is also through this process that those affected can become the advocate for their communities' rights and articulate their own particular formulation of rights claims based on their experiences. These collective experiences of self-organizing and developing positions toward human rights discourse is part of the process of developing political subjectivity and autonomy.

⁴⁵⁶ Though the consequences and implications of attitudes and approaches to human rights discourse can vary widely as they are appropriated or rejected in local contexts (Goldstein 2007).

part of the validity of their claims making is that they originate in complex, rooted social processes, which include multiple political, social, economic and cultural dimensions giving rise to lived injustices. Human rights discourse is one approach to interpret these elements, but not the only one. Its relevance rests on giving a more widely recognised formulation to these injustices and aspirations for remedy, but without excluding other key dimensions of the mobilization or reducing issues to technical problems and institution-building. Navigating these tensions is part of the successful use of human rights discourse by social movements.

This may suggest a means-to-end instrumental approach to human rights discourse, adopted purely because of its potential traction with powerholders (Hagan 2010) and international public opinion (Bob 2005), rather than principled commitment to universal human rights regardless of the political context (Sikkink et al. 1993). This in some senses is correct. However, there can be a false opposition posed between instrumental and value-expressive practices. More relevant is the model of adaptive strategic practice, as suggested by Crossley, in which the values of social actors are an integral part of the complex relational contributions to movement mobilizations. In this context, the use of human rights discourse by social movements can also be expressive of the values of universal human rights, but without being defined by them. For example, a key value of human rights discourse is its capacity to help expose particular injustices by contrasting them with the normative ideal of universal human dignity. As Shklar (1990) suggests, this sense of injustice will always overflow potential remedies, but human rights discourse can enable particular claims to be formulated in universalist terms that are recognised beyond the particularities of the context. This can give the claimant a greater sense of their own strength and validity in relation to local powerholders. The potential of empowerment and agency for claimants is itself a key source of the legitimacy of human rights discourse, rather than the processes of states recognising international laws. As such, the instrumental use of human rights discourse by those facing injustice and indignity is integral to the values of human rights discourse itself.

This use of human rights discourse worked most effectively in the case of the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, which were defensive in character, supporting victims. However, YoSoy132, which questioned Mexico's electoral democracy, only partially referenced human rights discourse. An important element of the critique of Mexico's democracy is the failure to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in practice. Despite this, human rights discourse was not felt to be particularly meaningful, unifying or resonant in the mobilization process of YoSoy132. In part this is due to human rights discourse being seen as, at least partially, trapped in the flawed institutionalization processes of the democratic transition. As such it is taken-for-granted by many social actors, but not regarded as a discourse capable of engaging the collective imagination to orient social mobilizations toward emancipation or major social transformation – it is seen as primarily defensive or minimalist. This points again to the complex sometimes contradictory features of human rights discourse and its many uses and meanings in plural social mobilizations seeking to address structural democratic deficits.

The effectiveness of human rights discourse for social actors seems to rest on reinforcing embodied claims-making of injustice, but not occupying centre stage in the imagination of activists or the public; facilitating validation and legitimation, but not defining or circumscribing the movement and its aspirations.

9.10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the plural processes taking place in the three social movements in order to analyse the enabling and constraining features of human rights discourse and digital and social media as understood by those involved. This has illustrated how the social movements were dynamic improvised mobilizations based on strategic, value-expressive and emotional responses to context specific trigger events in Mexico. The integration and use of human rights discourse and digital communications varied and was shaped by the configuration of events, actors and supporting networks, including the purposive intent of the movement.

In relation to human rights discourse, its adoption depended on how it could be moulded to usefully support the socially rooted demands of claimants in concrete cases of injustice but without monopolising or displacing their voices. Human rights discourse particularly facilitated forms of international solidarity, as well as self-affirming agency of claimants. It was also seen as important for the movements when it provided a minimum framework to articulate plural actors. However, if the agenda narrowed exclusively to human rights discourse or focused on institution-building, it diminished this articulating capacity. As a result, the meaningfulness of human rights discourse in the movements hinged on providing legitimizing support for claims-makers, but not seeking to monopolise that legitimacy. It also struggled to articulate the plurality of movement actor concerns, particularly the aspiration to transform Mexico's partial democracy.

In relation to digitally networked communications, their social embeddedness and malleability meant they were increasingly integrated into the repertoire of social movement practices, reducing costs and barriers to information sharing and civic engagement. In addition, use of social media facilitated individualised and small group sharing of sentiment and emotional responses to trigger events and key movement actors. Connective autonomous involvement of distributed networks temporarily facilitated effervescent horizontal online participation, but did not displace the need for traditional organizational hierarchies and resources to sustain contentious collective action. These features of digitally enabled engagement were also facilitated by and reinforced the increasingly plural media information environment. Despite these enabling uses, social movements continued to face determined opponents, sometimes resorting to repressive measures online and offline. As a result, activists adjusted online practices, sometimes limiting reliance on connective features of digital communications considered vulnerable in contentious mobilization processes. The different dimensions of digital and social media practice made important contributions to the mobilization process, but they also brought with them new challenges and limitations.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

I set out in this research to examine how human rights discourse and social media featured in the practices of recent nationally focused contentious social movements in Mexico. The purpose was to examine the ways in which uses of human rights discourse and digital and social media were understood to constrain and enable these movements in the process of mobilizing civil society and challenging the status quo of Mexico's partial and violent democracy.

To achieve this, I developed an overarching research question, and three subsidiary questions to unpack specific dimensions of the movements' practices and relevant features of the wider context. The questions sought to examine particular aspects of these practices, but not as isolated phenomena, rather as integral elements of dynamic social processes.

I used qualitative research methods to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants in the movements and close observers to develop an interpretivist analysis of the key themes which emerged in relation to the research questions and each movement. This process was also rooted in qualitative analysis of additional media materials relating to each movement's activities and a close reading of contemporary Mexican history, particularly political democratization and violence, developments in civil society, institutionalization of human rights norms and the evolving media and communications environment.

Before addressing the research questions in detail, I will summarise the background to the research as well as some of its strengths and weaknesses.

10.2 Background

This research project emerged in response to Mexican civil society struggles to shift the terms of Mexico's deficient democracy and the failure of the official political or institutional order to recognise or address major democratic deficits, such as accountability, civic participation, human rights, rule of law, inequality and citizenship. Two elements to potentially reduce the disadvantage of civil society in this struggle were the practices and significance of human rights discourse and digital and social media as part of contentious non-institutional social mobilizations. Literature on human rights is wide-ranging but usually focused on international relations (Risse Ropp et al. 1999; Forsythe 2012), foundational or ontological status (Griffin 2008; Donnelly 2013), human rights law (Steiner et al. 2008) or global civil society (Cohen et al. 2000), advocacy strategy (Bob 2005; Brysk 2013) and challenging abusive or deficient governance (Landman 2006; Levitsky et al. 2010; Freeman 2011). In literature addressing civil society counter-publics or non-institutional forms of political resistance (Cohen et al. 1994; Stammers 2009), human rights discourse has been suggested as a *lingua franca* of moral principles in a globalised world (Keck et al. 1998; Castells 2009b) or as an indeterminate discourse facilitating articulation of plural actors as part of radical democratic contentious practice (Laclau et al. 1985) or as a form of cosmopolitan constitutionalism developed through deliberative consensus (Habermas 2010). However, these approaches rarely examine human rights discourse in terms of the multifaceted, sometimes contradictory, practices of social mobilizations focused primarily on national contexts rather than on transnational processes of economic, social and technological globalization. The approach taken in this project is in line with recent sociological and anthropological studies on how human rights are used in context (Goodale 2006; Goodale et al. 2007; Goldstein 2012). This empirical research method enables a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of practice and their implications for the actors involved as well as for wider social relations.

Literatures on digital and social media have often assumed or slipped into deterministic approaches to the technology of communications (Fuchs 2014), for example, suggesting they generate autonomous counter-publics and protest through new forms of horizontal participation (Hardt et al. 2005; Juris 2005; Castells 2013). However, as

communications technologies have become increasingly embedded in social relations, more grounded studies have considered how diverse media practices contribute in different ways to wider hybrid communicative environments and social relations (Couldry 2012; Chadwick 2013; Mattoni et al. 2014). This includes exploration of how individualised digital media practices can contribute to civic engagement in the political process, public sphere and democratic development (Dahlgren 2013; Wessels 2017). My research has adopted this approach to examine the different features and meanings of digital and social media practices, but in the specific context of social mobilization challenging Mexico's democratic and institutional deficits.

10.3 Limitations and strengths of research

Human rights discourse and digital and social media are different types of artefact, which do not necessarily lend themselves to comparison. However, they are two key socially constructed phenomena which have become increasingly important and connected in global as well as national societies, and whose meaning and uses are in constant flux. They form part of the fabric of practices through which actors engage with each other, their environment, powerholders and collectively significant events. This makes them particularly relevant to understanding the dynamics of social relations and individual agency of social actors in particular societies. These complexities are often lost in the binary democratic/authoritarian institutional approach usually adopted to examine political societies outside the Global North. In contrast, this research generates empirically based data and analysis of the complex dynamics that social activists face in partial democracies. In particular, it addresses the process of mounting meaningful collective mobilization to challenge entrenched powerholders, influence the public sphere and enact autonomous protest, while at the same time resisting the multiple external and internal pressures to demobilize or pursue non-democratic practices. The examination of these processes through the lenses of human rights discourse and digital and social media implies a relatively limited field of attention, but also sufficiently broad so as to enable engagement with the wider dynamics involved in forms of non-institutional social and political contention and agency. However, the research does not focus in detail on the institutional responses

and impacts of the political, social and legal demands of the movements. These merit further investigation, but in this thesis they are dealt with only in brief in the context chapters.

I adopted an interpretivist partial-insider methodology to examine the practices of the movements and their wider social and political significance. Other ontological and epistemological approaches are possible with different methodological implications. However, this approach is consistent with my constructivist outlook with regard to the social world. This assumes collective social activity cannot be understood independently from the meanings and experiences of actors involved or the reflexive position of the researcher in relation to the field of study. The advantage of exploring the experience, beliefs and understandings of actors directly in the form of interview encounters is that it enables social movements to be understood as complex social processes. As such, their significance is inextricably embedded in the unfolding intersubjective practices of participation and the wider social context, but not circumscribed by the intentions and interpretations of individual actors. Also, my background in independent research on human rights issues in Mexico enabled me to access a range of participants and develop mutual trust. This facilitated a safe environment to explore complex and sometimes ambiguous feelings and reflections on social mobilization processes. It also aided the development of my own reflexive practice as a social science researcher, including the process of recognising and limiting the bias that my experience and biography potentially contributed to the analysis.

The conclusions of the study are based on an inductive analysis of a limited data set of 30 qualitative interviews as well as qualitative content analysis of supporting media materials. This data set could have been broadened to include a wider range of participant interviewees and from a greater number of locations. However, the limits of one researcher, resources and time for fieldwork required me to focus on a targeted selection of interviewees and ensure sufficient time for in-depth interviews. The interviewee selection process also meant minimising security risks and other potential negative ethical impacts. Despite this limitation in the scale of the sample, in the latter stages of field work I detected repeating patterns in interviewee responses which was

suggestive of 'data saturation' (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, p80), implying a solid data set with which to analyse the research questions.

As a non-native speaker of Spanish, I potentially missed some of the nuances in interviewee responses.⁴⁵⁷ However, I am a fluent in Spanish with experience of working in Mexico. In addition, intense immersion in the limited number of interview audio recordings guaranteed accurate transcriptions and ensured deep familiarization with the content. This in turn strengthened the recursive process of data recognition, classification and comparison (including the testing and rejection of alternative interpretive ideas) in the development of an analysis which examined the similarities and differences in practice between the case studies across the data set.

The research is rooted in a particular social context, so I have not sought to develop highly abstract concepts or a totalizing theory to interpret the empirical data. This avoids losing complexity and nuance integral to context specific research which can be the cost of greater abstraction in pursuit of generalizability (Flick 2009). As a result, I do not claim that the conclusions are universally applicable, but rather generate important insights relevant to social and political processes across Latin America. In particular, many countries of the region are subject to similar patterns of partial or deficient democratic transition (Arias et al. 2010b) and face cycles of contestation by dynamic and plural civil society actors (Munck 2013) which use human rights discourse and digital and social media as part of their mobilizing practices. As a result, the research makes an important contribution to the understanding of these social and political processes.

I now discuss my findings in relation to the research questions set out in the introduction, starting with the three subsidiary questions

⁴⁵⁷ For example, one interview was conducted in the difficult listening environment of a busy café in which the interviewee's restless young son was keen to gain his mother's attention.

10.4 Discussion of research questions

10.4.1 What was the role of human rights discourse in claims-making in the social mobilizations challenging powerholders and pursuing social change?

The research has shown how human rights discourse performs several different roles, both internally to the movement but also as part of the wider political culture and context out of which the movements emerged and in which they struggled to challenge powerholders. These roles include: the increasing recognition of human rights standards as they have become embedded into the domestic legal framework and public discourse; the adoption of these standards as a schema for interpreting or enacting symbolic events triggering the movements; the influence of networks of skilled human rights activists shaping movement practices and strategic focus; the contribution of human rights discourse to the agency of the claims-making of victims; and the openness of human rights discourse to enable the articulation of plural actors in collective action. I will now discuss these different roles and their significance for the movements.

Resource Mobilization and Political Process theories (see section 2.4.1) stress the internal and external structural conditions which facilitate or hinder social mobilization. A feature of the environment which has developed during the 30-year transition in Mexico is the increasing status of international human rights norms in domestic law. This has not meant the implementation of these norms, but they have increasingly featured in public discourse and to evaluate the quality of the emerging democracy.⁴⁵⁸ As such, as human rights discourse has become part of the external

⁴⁵⁸ It is at this stage in the 'socialising' of international human rights law that Risse and Sikkink originally suggested that states would be shamed into "norm compliance" (Risse Ropp et al. 1999). However, their more recent work acknowledges that non-compliance might also be affected by the capacity of the state to deliver (Risse et al. 2013). Nevertheless, this approach once again fails to address the thorny issue of how political will is constructed in domestic settings, particularly in partial democracies. It prefers to focus on administrative weaknesses of a presumed unitary state, rather than consider underlying causes for the lack of political will. These relate to more complex internal political and social forces shaping the fragmented state and institutional performance in partial democracies, not just administrative inefficiency. These features do not necessarily fit the model of liberal democracy in political theory. This is where nationally focused social movements, such as the case studies in this thesis, attempt to shift

political opportunity structure, it is increasingly available to activists to make claims challenging perceived abuses and failures of governance.⁴⁵⁹ As a result, the trigger events of each of the movements were readily interpretable by those involved or close support networks, not only as criminal acts or abuses of power in terms of the domestic context, but also as breaches of wider universal standards enshrined in human rights norms and the principles of human dignity. This did not require a detailed analysis of each event in terms of technical legal obligations, but an interpretation symbolically pointing to the political, institutional and moral crisis of the existing order and its distance from universal normative ideals. This encouraged interpretation of the trigger events as emblematic of wider institutional deficits by movement actors, not just isolated outrages. For example, the killing of Juan Francisco Sicilia was not presented as a human rights case implicating direct state responsibility for the crime, but Javier Sicilia's speeches demanded how the state should act toward victims, articulating a normative hope for how society ought to and could work if civil society acted together to demand respect for human rights. YoSoy132 used the cultural memory of past human rights violations to reawaken public attention to the presidential candidate's record on human rights, then asserted the right to freedom of expression to respond to attempts to delegitimise their protest. As such, the increasing embeddedness of human rights discourse made it a legitimizing element orienting the interpretation of the trigger events towards forms of collective civil society action, which itself is an important source of the legitimacy of human rights discourse.

However, it is important not to overstate the increasing prevalence of human rights ideas in Mexico, as the discursive use of human rights in the public sphere is mainly limited to activists, and a minority of academics, politicians, institutional actors and sections of the more critical media – and the understanding of human rights even within these spheres is contested. In contrast to this, negative attitudes often prevail

the political agenda, influencing the priorities of the political and economic forces which dominate the state and its relationship to citizens.

⁴⁵⁹ International human rights norms and discourse have also developed during this period; explicitly addressing issues of democratic governances, not solely in terms of traditional minimal liberal safeguards of civil and political rights, but also an increasingly comprehensive approaches to issues of social justice and inequality.

among many public officials and the mass media.⁴⁶⁰ As such, human rights discourse helped turn trigger events into mobilizing catalysts for sections of the population already oriented towards its normative aspirations. However, it is not understood as a compelling language to engage wide public participation in mass contentious mobilization. So while human rights discourse has increasingly become part of the fabric of public discourse, it did not particularly ‘resonate’ (Snow et al. 1986, p447) in the lives of the majority of the population for the purposes of framing movement narratives.

The trigger events of each movement were central to their emergence, providing the ‘moral shock’ (Jasper 1997, p106) for individuals and small groups to recognise previously latent or isolated expressions of anger about democratic deficits, the suffering of ordinary people in the violence, disempowerment and a sense of injustice (Shklar 1990). However, these sentiments, while supported by human rights discourse, did not draw their emotional and purposive energy from human rights discourse. According to the interviewees in all movements, the key mobilizing dynamics were based on a rawer culturally rooted recognition of embodied injustice, suffering and resistance; the desire to manifest outrage and rejection of business-as-usual by drawing on the rich traditions of civil society expressive collective action. The point here is that the mobilizations emerged relatively spontaneously, not as planned strategic coalitions to promote previously agreed advocacy objectives. Human rights discourse was an important legitimating interpretive element to understand the events and contrast local reality with universal standards. However, this discourse was not the primary means of turning the events into nationally significant grievances to inspire personal and collective participation.

This conclusion challenges assumptions in some literature which attributes a central role to human rights discourse in the mobilizing narrative of social movements (Simmons 2009; Brysk 2013). Such an approach is usually premised on the context of

⁴⁶⁰ For example, alleging human rights lawyers and activists use technical human rights law to protect criminals, profiteer from compensation and undermine measures to combat crime and insecurity.

authoritarian states where highly constrained local actors seek to instrumentally leverage international opinion through use of human rights discourse, which is assumed to trigger international solidarity influencing domestic political forces. However, this ignores or downplays the importance of domestic mobilizations in their own political culture. In the context of partial democracies such as Mexico, movements may have the political space to build a significant national constituency and identity, which is supported by, but not dependent on, international actors. However, their narrative to mobilize domestic support is less dependent on human rights discourse and more on emotional and cognitive understandings of the significance of the trigger events in terms of the particular society and the individuals affected. In contrast, human rights discourse is perceived, including by some social activists, as external, alien and technocratic - distant from the frameworks of understanding and action of ordinary people. As a result, these domestic focused movements are not simply processes for 'socializing' the cosmopolitan discourse of human rights into local contexts (Goodman et al. 2013b, 2013a), but local contexts setting the parameters of the social mobilization in which human rights discourse plays a legitimating, but secondary role. This is important as it roots social movements in their local context rather than as an offshoot of globalization and transnational advocacy networks.⁴⁶¹

In contrast to this limited role of human rights discourse in the mobilizing narrative of the three movements, the interviewees - particularly in relation to the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43 - recognised the role of human rights discourse through the skills and resources contributed by networks of human rights oriented activists and NGOs. The internal dynamics of the movements are not just static resources, but also the adaptive and skilled practises of networked actors who influence the strategies and approaches of the movements, including facilitating the support of international actors. When these networks of activists and NGOs form part of the movement coalition, their relative centrality to the movement often shapes the manner and extent to which human rights discourse features in their strategic and expressive actions. For example,

⁴⁶¹ This is not to argue that international support is not an important factor in legitimating the domestic movement and increasing its chances of success, but that the practices and meanings of domestic oriented movements and national political process cannot be understood primarily in these terms.

the rapid support of human rights activists of the nascent MPJD led to an increasing identification of the movement with human rights approaches. In contrast, YoSoy132 enjoyed the sympathy of human rights networks, but much less active involvement. This limited the extent to which a skilled use human rights discourse was available or meaningful for YoSoy132 actors.⁴⁶² However, it is important to note that even when human rights discourse featured strongly, such as in the case of Ayotzinapa 43, the identity of the movement was not reducible to the approach of human rights NGOs participating in the movement. They remained plural social mobilizations involving diverse individuals, groups and interests, contributing a range of skills and practices to the alliance, and in the case of Ayotzinapa 43, with a mobilizing narrative strongly focused on the lived-experience of the parents and students.

Another important role of human rights discourse is its potential to empower victims of abuses through the process of formulating specific claims against powerholders in terms of human rights norms. By asserting the claimants' inherent entitlement to fair treatment and action by powerholders not contingent on local law and its selective application, claimants impose a 'remedial logic' (Donnelly 2013, p8) on the state which is not wholly determined by the state and its dominant interests. The legitimised discourse of human rights also makes the claim concrete and gives it a moral authority rarely achieved in direct political confrontation or transactional negotiation with powerholders – approaches frequently adopted by traditional popular social mobilizations seeking concessions from powerholders. As a result, it has the potential to enhance the agency of victims in the process of self-realising claims-making and active citizenship, which in turn can reinforce the wider relevance of human rights discourse in national public discourse. However, the relationship to expert support for claims-making, usually in the form of human rights activists and lawyers, is complex, requiring long-term relationships of trust and respect. These face many challenges, not least when routes to justice are indefinitely blocked by powerholders and counter-

⁴⁶² For example, international human rights experts could have been approached to address and legitimate debates on the issues of media impartiality and diversity in relation to human rights, but this technical approach was regarded as offering less than the more direct political attack and satire targeting the mainstream media.

framing narratives are used to delegitimise the relationship. Nonetheless, the agency-reinforcing role of human rights discourse for victims can be key to the wider meaning and identity of the movement. For example, making solidarity participation meaningful to show support for the claims-making of victims in the case of MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43. In a somewhat distinct process, YoSoy132 focused more on the enactment of the right to freedom of expression as part of self-actualizing political agency. But in all three cases, this sense of exercising or supporting forms of autonomous claims-making against organized power was crucial to each movements' identity and force.⁴⁶³

Lastly, the openness and indeterminacy of human rights discourse has been identified as enabling the articulation of plural social claims and identities in heterogenous movements engaged in 'agonistic' contentious struggle with powerholders in the pursuit of more radical forms of democratic practice (Laclau 2005; Mouffe 2005; Estévez López 2011). This theoretical position suggests the emergence of new political subjectivities in the plural struggle for transformative social justice agendas. However, my research found this idealised vision of emancipatory popular social movement activism - which was often shared by social activists in all three movements - struggled to develop a human rights discourse to generate and maintain a plural articulation between the different movement interests, beliefs and ideologies. The most successful was Ayotzinapa 43, but the tensions surrounding wider transformative agendas and more focused attention on the immediate demands of the families was ultimately resolved in favour of the latter; the demands of other social actors became increasingly marginalized which reduced the more transformative aspirations of the movement and its plurality.

The openness of human rights discourse provides an initial platform for convergence of diverse actor interests, but the process of articulating the movement and its emerging identity, necessitates relatively coherent and meaningful objectives,

⁴⁶³ The importance of the agency of claims-makers to the meaning of the movement is also the reason why counter-framing narratives of powerholders frequently focus on stories which supposedly illustrate the manipulation of victims by subversive or mercenary movement actors, instrumentally taking advantage of the naivety of victims to advance their own selfish interests.

intelligible internally for participants but also externally to engage potential recruits and public opinion. As a result, there is inevitably a process of deliberating and trying to agree common agendas, strategies, practices in processes more reflective of Habermas (1996) than Carl Schmitt.⁴⁶⁴ This deliberative process was ongoing within the movements to a greater or less extent. In the MPJD it was largely curtailed in favour of narrow strategic leadership and decision-making, whereas YoSoy132 tried to maintain horizontal deliberation and plurality of positions and practices. However, the definition of an agenda implies concretizing plural aspirations into more or less specific demands. In the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, where human rights claims remained central to the movement objectives, human rights discourse was no longer open or 'empty', but particular and specific, focused on the demands of victims.

As a result, the empirical evidence in this research suggests that the articulating potential of human rights discourse for plural actors is overestimated. Human rights discourse did not remove the need for plural actors to engage in the messy process of negotiating objectives, identity and strategy. Human rights discourse can provide a minimum self-limiting agenda (Cohen and Arato 1994), particularly when focused on the concrete claims of specific victims and communities. However, it does not readily reconfigure to compellingly and coherently express the diverse socially transformative agendas of plural movement actors. This is particularly so, as the experience of YoSoy132 demonstrated, when trying to address the multiple deficits of partial democracies (rather than monolithic repressive regimes). These more complex agendas oriented toward the specific socio-political context of partial democracies do not readily fit within recognised paradigms of human rights practice or commonly shared understandings of human rights discourse.⁴⁶⁵ The hope that human rights discourse can articulate these multiple agendas risks overextending the discourse to

⁴⁶⁴ The proponents of 'agonistic' radical democratic practice draw on the political philosophy of Carl Schmitt and his critique of liberal democracy.

⁴⁶⁵ For example, issues like corruption, media power, criminal violence, state capture and participatory decision-making are not easily framed in terms of human rights discourse which is focused on the unitary functions of the state. They also raise more clearly political and ideological questions around models of representative and radical democracy which go beyond the minimum regulatory principles of citizen-state interaction set out in human rights principles.

displace others, which may generate frustration and discord, destabilising the movement coalition.

In addition, human rights objectives are often oriented toward securing formal instantiation of rights in law, but paradoxically this risks the demobilizing dynamics of negotiation, particularly given the well-founded suspicion that powerholders will not substantively implement agreements. As a result, this institutional ‘face’ (Morris 2010) of human rights can undermine the articulating potential for heterogeneous movements as they are drawn into institutional engagement.⁴⁶⁶ In the context of partial democracy, this raises an important question for social movements. Is human rights discourse too self-limiting to communicate the aspiration of more socially just and democratic structural change or can human rights discourse work alongside other approaches to develop a more comprehensive social agenda to articulate plural non-institutional social actors?⁴⁶⁷ Are human rights activists at national and international level sufficiently attuned to these nuances and the concerns of other movement actors seeking forms of progressive change? These issues require further examination.

There is frequently an assumption that human rights provides a principled discursive framework for plural actors to pursue social justice and deepen democratization. In part the findings of this empirical research support this understanding, but it also demonstrates that the micro and macro dynamics of social movements in relation to

⁴⁶⁶ Though as two interviewees observed, demobilization, particularly in the case of the MPJD, can be understood in the terms of Tilly, McAdam and Tarrow’s structural model of social movements. This argues, like Beth Simmons, that politically excluded social groups mobilize to gain access to institutional decision-making. When this objective is achieved, and the excluded group sits at the table of power or influences the public sphere, social mobilization ceases. However, this appears excessively optimistic given the limited impact of the MPJD. The more realistic assessment of the majority of interviewees pointed to the important but limited impacts of the MPJD, but above all, the institutional skill of reducing social mobilization by granting superficial concessions and dividing movement constituents.

⁴⁶⁷ Or as some argue, there should be a retrenchment from this higher aspiration of human rights discourse in the face of the global challenge to the principles of universal human rights posed by increasingly hostile governments, such as those of the USA, Russia and China (Rieff 2018). This position advocates falling back on reduced understandings of human rights based on traditional minimalist defensive rights to protect individuals from the worst abuses (Ignatieff 2003), avoiding engagement in wider maximalist issues of social justice and democratic practice. However, the effect of this would appear to make human rights less relevant to social movements engaged with challenging partial democracies.

human rights discourse are more complex and carry with them ambiguous and constraining implications. As a result, this research has generated a richer understanding of the dynamics and meaning of human rights discourse in specific culturally rooted processes of social mobilization.

10.4.2 How has the use of digital and social media featured in the practice and significance of these social mobilization processes?

This research confirms how the increasing embeddedness of digital and social media in social relations in Mexico and globally has become integral to social activism, particularly enabling horizontal responsiveness to symbolic events. My findings confirm how digital and social media increase movement resources, facilitating coordination and dissemination of information, but also how their expressive and affective dimensions, enable looser forms of individual and small group participation in movement actions. However, it also suggests these features of practice are transient and have not substantially shifted the capacity of movements to sustain collective contentious action and translate public sphere visibility into more transformational impacts in Mexico's partial democracy.

In Mexico, the 'mediation opportunity structure' (Cammaerts 2012) had developed by 2011 to the extent that individuals, collectives, NGOs, journalists and media outlets used digital and social media to create and share a range of information addressing socially contentious issues. As a result, when the trigger events took place, networks of friends, associates and sympathisers distributed information rapidly, assisting in independent interpretation of their significance alongside mainstream media coverage. The malleability and openness of digital and social media, coupled to the bridging power of actors, such as journalist Carmen Aristegui, to link up multiple networks, enabled the rapid circulation of news and comment, contributing to the sense of drama and importance of the trigger events. This helped extend and amplify their significance nationally and globally, which in turn fed back into social media loops to demonstrate growing concern and solidarity.

This was rapidly followed by intentional use of digital and social media as a means of communicating information and materials on the emerging mobilization. This produced positive feedback which facilitated the organization of solidarity actions of the incipient movement nationally and internationally. My research on the three movements confirms the findings of scholars (Shirky 2009; Bimber et al. 2005a; Earl & Kimport 2011) who argue digitally enabled networks lower movement resource costs, facilitating and extending coordination and participation in collective actions offline and online. However, digital practices of those involved in the three movements did not generally support the more idealised claims of interactive and deliberative digital counter-publics strengthening citizen-lead democratic practice (Benkler 2006; Castells 2013). Some interviewees argued that YoSoy132 was different, as social media facilitated dynamic involvement in counter-speech. However, the details of this digital involvement suggest practices were more expressive than deliberative, as most movement debate increasingly took place in small group discussions or in larger offline assembly meetings. As a result, movement deliberations in all three cases appear to have been more concentrated in smaller closed networked communications or face-to-face, suggesting a less radical shift from traditional movement paradigm and a continuing reliance on established trust networks. Nonetheless, it is also evident that digital and social media increasingly formed part of the communicative fabric of the movement culture. This facilitated an important sense of expressive agency and distributed identity which encourage national and global participation.⁴⁶⁸

A particular feature of digital and social media use that this research found to contribute most strongly to each of the movements and their identity was the transmission of emotional mobilizing narratives. This supports Papacharissi's (2015) argument that social media can facilitate identification and sharing of sentiment,

⁴⁶⁸ The expressive possibilities of social media also encouraged some victims and survivors to adopt online profiles in the case of MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, or to nominate others to act in their stead, to communicate with movement supporters to sustain mobilization, enacting their own forms of agency. As has been observed in relation to human rights, the agency of claims-makers is an important feature of social movements in the development of political subjectivity and individual self-realization. Digital and social media made a contribution to this process.

helping to inspire and sustain participation. The importance of this is that where human rights discourse is seen as too technical and alien to drive a mobilizing narrative, digital and social media helped communicate a narrative focused on the emotional responses of those affected in their culturally rooted context. This facilitated forms of personal or small group identification with the victims in the case of the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, and in the case of YoSoy132 with the cause of the defamed students. It also enabled recognition of others emotionally sharing that same identification, reinforcing the legitimacy of individual responses. The quality of immediacy of social media, for example online streaming of events, and the capacity to rapidly inform friends and associates, and see their responses, made an important contribution to generating and sharing sentiments of anger and solidarity. This facilitated the collective emotional response to trigger events and to subsequent protest actions, imbuing them with a personal and rooted meaningfulness and an urgency to participate in public acts of solidarity. This strengthened the sense of agency of those using digital and social media, apparently reinforcing participation in public events, rather than weakening it as suggested by Gladwell (2010).

These findings confirm the role of affect and emotion in the process of becoming politically engaged and participating in collective action. This is not the dry utility calculating decision-making of Rational Actor Theory, nor the crowd induced irrationality of collective behaviourists nor Habermas' deliberative construction of consensus.⁴⁶⁹ Instead, it is the complex interplay of cognitive and emotional processes of individuals operating within their social milieu, including small groups, and carrying with them their own skills and interpretive schema and beliefs to respond imaginatively to events in their environment (Crossley 2002). In this context, the research shows how the immediacy and connectivity of digital and social media contributed to the plural affective processes which motivated participation in movement actions.

This is not to suggest that such processes are exclusively mediated by digital communications nor that they cannot be manipulated, but that the complex interplay

⁴⁶⁹ Refer to the discussion of these different analytical approaches to social movements in section 2.4.

of affect and reason is intrinsic to individual and collective political activity. However, the uses of digital and social media in helping shape these processes also raises questions about the potential openness of digitally enabled networks to emotional manipulation for purely instrumental political ends which are not necessarily democratic nor rights-protective (Tucker et al. 2017).⁴⁷⁰ This is potentially an area of further investigation.

This research also confirmed how uses of digital and social media facilitated connective action (Bennett et al. 2013), reducing the need for movement collective identity or 'branding' to facilitate participation. Loose digital networks enabled diverse civil society actors not aligned with particular political or social groups to engage with the mobilization. However, this was not necessarily on the basis of individualised participation proposed by theorists of modernity (Beck 2002; Castells 2009a) and contemporary collective action (Farro et al. 2014). In contrast to these more atomised approaches, the three mobilizations also drew on small group affiliations. These suggested varying levels of social cohesion and meso-level identity (Treré 2015a) to support social mobilization which are not solely based on individualised participation.

The early and more connective action stage of mobilization was effervescent but temporary, dissipating in the face of hard and prolonged resistance from powerholders.⁴⁷¹ In this context, movement resources, such as identity, leadership, strategic communications and coalition agenda agreements were necessary to sustain contentious mobilization (though these more hierarchical and bureaucratic internal processes also probably contributed to reducing connective participation). In this

⁴⁷⁰ Political propaganda, since its inception, has been premised on engaging emotional responses of target audiences in greater measure than more reasoned reflections. Digital political lobbyists have just adapted these practices to the scaled up potential of digital and social media platforms, such as in the case of Cambridge Analytica (Cadwalladr et al. 2018). The question is then about how open, legal and transparent these communicative strategies are in mobilizing support and the extent to which the practices and objectives are consistent with such principles as personal autonomy, privacy, equitable treatment, informational reliability.

⁴⁷¹ This is not to suggest that more consolidated democracies are necessarily always responsive to the pressures of social movements, but there are more channels of influence available than in a partial democracy. A feature of partial democracy is the role of political and economic powerholders thwarting effective democratic accountability; for example, preventing public sphere agendas developing or being translated into institutional practice.

phase, digital and social media practices became less horizontal and participatory, usually reverting to strategic information sharing and coordination functions managed by SMOs coupled to more traditional or hybrid media practices (Chadwick 2013). It is perhaps a paradox that while digital and social media enabled and disseminated some of the movements' most expressive features to attract participation, the endurance of the movement implied increasing attention to less connective practices and focus on the traditional qualities of social movements associated with Resource Mobilization Theory.

In conclusion, digital and social media practices featured strongly in facilitating information flows and coordination of the three movements. Less recognised is how these practices helped transmit and share the socially rooted emotional narratives driving mobilization and contention. This was particularly so during the connective phase of looser participation, which enabled plural civil society actors and collectives to dramatically enact diverse forms of contention, reinforcing the mobilizations at national and international level. However, these creative eruptions were short-lived.

In the context of partial democracy, where influencing the public sphere rarely translates into changes in institutional practice, more traditional social movement resources and practices were needed to sustain contentious mobilization. In this second, less vibrant phase, as the movements' organized for the long haul, connective and digitally expressive dimensions diminished. This process also contributed to the declining plurality and dynamism of the movement, for example, activists became more absorbed with internal democratic processes or developing more centralised and strategic advocacy alliances. These processes were less attractive to recruit participation, but they were also essential to the long-term endurance of contentious struggle.

10.4.3 How did movement practices relate to changing digital news media environment and to digital counter-attacks and threats?

In recent years, debate about uses of digital and social media has often focused on their potential to enhance or undermine democratic practices. This has particularly focused on the implications for active citizenship and the public sphere primarily in consolidated democracies (Dahlgren 2013; Wessels 2017) or the potential to undermine authoritarian regimes by enabling forms of mass collective protest (Tufekci et al. 2012; Howard et al. 2013). The first situation assumes a relatively free media environment, receptive to public opinion and democratic accountability of powerholders, in which digital and social media is an additional means of democratic engagement. The second assumes a highly controlled mainstream media environment, in which digital and social media provide an alternative channel of information for non-institutional debate and potentially organizing contentious challenges to powerholders.⁴⁷² In partial democracies such as Mexico, the majority of the mainstream media, particularly TV and radio, has served dominant economic and political interests, but there is also a significant range of critical media, particularly newspapers. These media actors also operate in an environment of pressure and attacks of different sorts constraining their practice, particularly at regional level. In this mixed context, digital and social media has to some extent disrupted the dominant media power, and afforded plural and independent actors the potential to create and disseminate a wider range of news narratives. Many of these new actors are open to or sympathetic toward the social movements in this research. This more plural media environment has enhanced movement mobilization capacity, but use of digital and social media has also increased vulnerabilities in the form of digitally enabled counter-attacks which activists have struggled to effectively quantify and respond to.

In Mexico, the news media environment has been disrupted by digital technologies, creating a new 'media opportunity structure' (Cammaerts 2012). This included the creation and circulation of a range of news and information by popular independent and alternative digital outlets, from *Aristeguinoticias* to *SDPnoticias* to *Desinformémenos*. This has enabled independent journalists to gain greater visibility,

⁴⁷² Though this more optimistic form of techno-determinism has been undercut as states have become wise to using social media to target activists, turning the supposedly emancipatory tools against them.

but also for the voices of diverse citizens, such as victims of the violence and social conflicts, to reach different audiences.

The rapidly increasing penetration of digital technology and use of social media to access news information has reduced the traditional reliance on the principle TV channels. For all interviewees, this change increased the sense of a more plural counter-public environment, weakening, though not eliminating, the traditional agenda-setting control of the mainstream media.⁴⁷³ In this context of shifting global patterns of media production and consumption, the mainstream media could no longer commercially afford to ignore alternative digital information circulating widely at international or local level on platforms accessible to large sections of the public. As a result, information began to move rapidly between platforms and across technologies as part of an increasingly complex and dynamic hybrid media environment (Chadwick 2013).

Since 2011, this has had several implications for social movement practice. Firstly, movement leaderships continued strategic approaches to attract mainstream media coverage of movement messages and to influence the public sphere. This strategy was enhanced by targeting independent and international media outlets to increase leverage over national mainstream media. Secondly, the emergence of a range of alternative media platforms also facilitated forms of solidarity journalism which more or less explicitly supported the movements and promoted the voices of their diverse actors. The reach of these alternative platforms in terms of wider public opinion or decision-makers was limited. However, they played an important role in reflecting back the expressive activities and sentiments of the movement to participants or potential recruits, supporting the development of identity and solidarity, giving greater visibility to a range of movement actors, not just the leadership.

⁴⁷³ This is not to assume that all alternative digital news information has accurately represented events or that it is not subject to its own political bias. But it has posed an important challenge to the complacency of some mainstream media which has a poor record of independent news coverage, particularly on politically sensitive issues. Neither is it to suggest that the new plurality of voices eliminates the power of the mainstream TV and radio media to shape the national political agenda.

Closely linked to alternative media platforms was the development of individual or small group information circuits on social media platforms featuring movement activities. This facilitated a form of subculture surrounding the movements, enhancing and maintaining identity, particularly among smaller collectives of friends and associates on closed network platforms, like WhatsApp and Telegram.⁴⁷⁴

The other side of the malleability of digital and social media is its vulnerability to well-resourced powerholders using the technology to implement counter-measures to undermine progressive movements. This is particularly the case in partial democracies like Mexico where powerholders in practice are often not constrained by social norms or the rule of law. This has included spreading false information and rumours to undermine the credibility of movement leaders and activists. Digital surveillance and break-ins to steal offline computer data have been used to gather information, but also spread fear. There has also been increasing use of automated and manual BOTs to manipulate social media platforms and intimidate activists.⁴⁷⁵ Digital media is also increasingly used to deliver death threats against activists in the form of emails or social media messages. The failure of the authorities or social media companies to conduct substantive transparent investigations to hold those responsible to account has helped foster an increasingly hostile climate for online progressive activism and suspicion among activists that this impunity is convenient for powerholders to tacitly demonstrate their capacity to act outside the law.

In response to this sense of vulnerability, activists have either disregarded the dangers or spent time and resources to evaluate the risks and benefits of forms of digital and social media practice for movement activism. This has included decisions to curtail

⁴⁷⁴ This also supports Treré's (2015) examination of some of the 'backstage' communications patterns of YoSoy132 activists which sustained mobilization but which were not visible beyond their closed networks.

⁴⁷⁵ In the western media the idea of the Russian "bot factory" has become associated with foreign State attempts to subvert democratic processes. However, these were also employed with less fanfare (or general international media interest) by the political parties in Mexico, particularly the PRI, in the 2012 presidential elections and then with greater public attention in the case of #yamecansa.

certain uses of social media, particularly involvement in more deliberative debates on open network platforms. This potentially limits some of the more connective action responses to emerging events present in the early stages of mobilization such as in YoSoy132 and Ayotzinapa 43. However, growing awareness and evidence of digital threats against activists has also facilitated greater knowledge sharing between activist groups and NGOs at local and global level to better identify and react to digital threats.

My research found that reflecting on the features of the rapidly changing opportunity structure of the digital media environment is part of the adaptive alertness of activists. This enabled the movements to respond to and take advantage of the changing media landscape, particularly the increased plurality of media actors, including expanded access and coverage of diverse voices. As such, this helped, at least temporarily, shift the informational balance in favour of more varied coverage of news events, engaging digitally connected generations seeking out news information online. However, the mainstream media, particularly TV, continues to be regarded by activists and observers as the principle shaping force of the political agenda. This kept the strategic attention of movement leaderships focused on maximising influence with the mainstream media, tending to assume that alternative media would instinctively cover movement actions. Even given the scarcity of resources and the need for prioritisation, this approach appears to underestimate the contribution of alternative media accompaniment to sustain the social movement culture and identity.

The longstanding tradition of threats and attacks against independent journalists and social activists has only worsened during the process of partial democratization and spiralling violence. As a result, the potential of digital and social media to be used against social movements was assumed as a given by many activists, but this - at least initially - did not lead to major adjustments in activism. There is a tension between the potential of digital and social media practices to favour mobilization versus the increasing capacity of powerholders to exploit communicative practices to undermine movements and target activists (Verkamp et al. 2013; Treré 2016). The growing awareness of these threats, and the knowledge that the authorities will not investigate them seriously, has encouraged an increasing reflection on the types of digital

communications practices that social activists can engage in securely and safely. The evaluation of risk varies widely, but appears to indicate a tendency toward reducing unguarded spontaneous and fluid communication on open networks. This may reduce potential for less directed forms of connective action visible during the early dynamic stages of movement mobilization. However, this more security minded approach to digital and social media platforms needs further investigation to make a detailed assessment of its impact on activist practice.

I now turn to discussion of the primary research question.

10.4.4 In relation to recent social movements involved in non-institutional contentious politics in Mexico, how have human rights discourses and uses of digital and social media enabled and constrained these mobilization processes?

This section draws together the previous discussions to address this overarching research question. It shows how the particular features of human rights discourse and digital and social media have been mobilized to contribute to the strategic and expressive dimensions of the movements. However, these logics are not a panacea and also introduce elements of risk and over-expectation. In addition, for participants, recognising the limited role of both - that is avoiding the movements being understood solely in terms of their human rights and digital media practices - was vital to ensure the meaning of the mobilizations remained rooted in the struggles for justice in Mexico's partial democracy.

Human rights discourse, even if its meaning and significance is open and contested, has become a widely legitimised frame of reference in Mexico for social actors to interpret trigger events, particularly justice claims of individuals and communities. This reinforces the process of social actors recognising trigger events as symbolic of the wider institutional and democratic crises affecting the country, and recognising the legitimate role of victims of injustice and of civil society to support those affected in claims-making and wider aspirations for institutional and social change. The

international human rights movement often supports but does not determine this process.

Networks of skilled human rights oriented activists, when participating in the movements, facilitate and deepen this interpretive approach. Human rights NGOs and activists provide skills and resources for the mobilization process as well as a logic oriented toward engagement with the state. These institutional orientations are often in tension with more radical transformative aspirations of plural movement coalitions.⁴⁷⁶

Despite the importance of human rights discourse supporting the interpretive template of the trigger event, the mobilizing narrative of the movement to motivate participation in nationally focused actions is not based on projecting human rights discourse. Instead, it is focused on an urgent, emotional identification with individuals affected by the trigger events and their responses. These framing narratives are more culturally rooted in shared cognitive and emotional recognition of the treatment of those affected, their suffering, a sense of solidarity, feelings of concern about wider threats and desire to be part of a collective contentious experience of resistance to unjust powerholders and the status quo. In contrast to these more subjective, emotional rooted responses, human rights discourse is considered too alien, institutionalised and technocratic to generate the type of personal and collective commitment to inspire and sustain nationally focused contentious action.⁴⁷⁷ As a result, it features more clearly in narratives targeting international audiences and institutions.

⁴⁷⁶ However, not all movements rely on these resources and approaches, particularly those not seeking state remedy for injustice, such as YoSoy132. Such movements adopt different forms of plural contention in which human rights discourse is less relevant as it is not focused on institutional remedy for victims, but transformative political processes.

⁴⁷⁷ This tension between the particularity of the local versus the universalizing concepts of human right is part of the strengths of human rights discourse. However, to only interpret the local through the lens of human rights discourse risks excluding key dimensions of the meaningfulness of domestic social and political processes which this research explores.

On the other hand, the relative detachment of human rights discourse from the context can support the agency of key movement actors, particularly victims of grave abuses. It can enable them to make claims, usually with the support of local activists, in terms of universal standards which are not defined by local and national powerholders. This process also facilitates links to international support networks. As a result, using human rights discourse for claims-making can strengthen the sense of the legitimacy of victims' claims, reinforcing their voice in the struggle for justice as well as wider social change.⁴⁷⁸

Lastly, I found the idealised role of human rights as an open discourse enabling the articulation of plural movements to challenge the status quo to be overstated, particularly when facing the consolidated and skilful powerholders of Mexico's partial democracy. The process of developing and agreeing a substantive coalition agenda remained unresolved. In effect, this limits the articulation of the movements to expressions of their plurality or relatively narrow human rights demands.

In the case of the MPJD and Ayotzinapa 43, the ultimate focus on the particular and concrete human rights demands of the families sustained the mobilizations, but reduced their movements' plural and transformative appeal. YoSoy132 avoided minimum human rights based demands but struggled to articulate a coherent plural agenda beyond the enactment of non-institutional political activism. This reflects common tensions in social movements between radical and pragmatic actors, in which human rights discourse is often conceived of as a lingua franca (Castells 2009b) for articulating these plural actors in either deliberative (Habermas 1996) or agonistic (Mouffe 2005) practices. The evidence in each case suggests this expectation was not met. Human rights discourse interpreted by the multiple actors involved, facilitated a space of initial convergence, but this became too constraining to reflect the substantive plurality of movement interests and transformative aspirations. It could not reconcile

⁴⁷⁸ However, this sense of enhanced victim agency can also diminish in the face of consistent institutional failure to comply with international human rights obligations, or when claims-maker expectations of human rights discourse are too high or misrepresented to them, or when relations with activist supporting human rights claims break down.

or sustain the tensions between competing priorities, such as the focus on immediate individual justice claims, engagement in wider institutional negotiation or determination to sustain forms of autonomous contentious mobilization in pursuit of transformative social change. These frictions are not new to social movements, but the lesson that many activists felt they had learnt was that human rights discourse was only a particular dimension of the mobilization process. It could not and should not be seen as its articulating or monopolising discourse; the challenge was finding ways of articulating plural actors with different social agendas, without leveraging these issues into the prism of human rights discourse.

In relation to digital and social media, my research shows the adaptive responses of the movements engaged with the facilitating potential of the emerging digital media environment, but also how this carried with it certain constraining implications for sustaining dynamic mobilizations.

As with human rights discourse, the increasing embeddedness of digital and social media in social relations facilitates responses to trigger events by a receptive and widening online audiences. In particular the rapid, spontaneous and independent circulation of information on and responses to trigger events amplifies their impact and reach, undercutting institutional efforts to shape the framing narrative.

Digital and social media practices of movement activists are increasingly integrated with offline activities. As such, they reduce the resource costs and time necessary to extend the reach of incipient mobilizations; supporting rapid coordination and sharing of information with distributed recruits to enact collective action events online and offline. Each of the three case studies also shows how activist circulation of social media coverage of protest events, reinforces the meaningfulness of the movement for potential recruits, creating a sense of excitement and involvement.

The immediacy and horizontal connectedness of digital networks reinforces communication of the emotional narrative of the movement, which is central to the mobilization process. The three movements erupted as social media networks

facilitated the sharing of feelings, such as anger and solidarity, reinforcing affective narratives. The research suggests, however, that this process was not necessarily achieved purely through individualised participation as suggested by Castells (2009a) and Bennett & Segerberg (2013). Instead of equal importance are mediating networks of small group affiliations, which often involve offline relationships, reinforcing emotional and cognitive responses, as well as deliberations about participation.

Digital and social media practices appear to favour the dynamics of rapid recruitment into forms of 'connective' action, based on looser unaffiliated participation in selected online and offline actions. This is in contrast with much social movement theory, which suggests that mobilization is based on adhesion to a movement structure or collective identity. Despite these early surges in 'connective' participation representing some of the most dynamic and creative episodes of contention, they are also transitory. As a result, they are insufficient to significantly challenge or substantially influence entrenched powerholders. Most activists are aware of these ephemeral features and the importance of developing more enduring movement practices, such as organizational structure, identity and strategy to sustain collective contention.⁴⁷⁹ However, this organizational consolidation also appears to contribute to declining connective participation. In this context, digital and social media practices can facilitate an important early dynamic impetus to contention, but these features are also in tension with more traditional or hybrid strategic communications practices. Nevertheless, without more resilient structural organization to sustain mobilization, movements struggle to move beyond their effervescent beginnings, such as with YoSoy132.

This conclusion suggests that more enthusiastic claims about digital and social media practices radically modifying the capacity of social movements to impact the public sphere and the institutional order are overstated, particularly in the context of partial

⁴⁷⁹ Some digital activists tend to idealise the initial ephemeral moment as that of maximum creativity, as this is when traditional hierarchical forms of movement practice are challenged and innovated, potentially enabling new actors to emerge. This perspective tends to identify impact in terms of expressive protest movement culture rather than in wider social and political relations.

democracies such as Mexico. However, the research confirms their important role in the dramatic emergence of the movements. This should not be dismissed, as even brief manifestations of non-institutional collective democratic discontent and demands for justice are important to show that plural civil society can act collectively; that profound if vague desires for change, moral renewal and a new relationship between citizen and state can develop just beneath the surface of simulated democratic governance. The surging response to each trigger event points to these sentiments and their potential to reverberate in the national political narrative and culture. However, the capacity of the movements to develop the organisational resources and coherence to sustain contention beyond this point is also vital to achieve specific goals and lasting impact. This is the case with Ayotzinapa 43 and the collectives of relatives of the disappeared. Their sustained mobilization, involving but not characterised by digital and social media activism, made a significant contribution to the collapse in credibility of the PRI government of Enrique Peña Nieto.

However, perhaps the most significant contribution of digital and social media to the milieu in which social movements operate is in relation to the wider media environment. In this context, increasingly widespread adoption of digital and social media has disrupted the power of dominant elite aligned media forces, enabling plural new media actors to emerge giving greater scope for different voices and their experience. This strengthens the capacity to disseminate mobilizing narratives to potential movement recruits, but it also increases movement leverage with other media outlets in the pursuit of strategic objectives. This diverse media and social media environment is attracting ever greater audiences in Mexico, forcing traditional TV and radio to cover issues once ignored or marginalized. However, this disruptive effect is not necessarily guaranteed to continue as the media environment reconfigures nor is it exclusively detrimental to elites. For example, movements and social activists are vulnerable to negative uses of digital and social media by powerholders, which in turn can force them to restrict their online practices. This more constrained use of digital and social media by activists may potentially limit some of the dynamic and organic features of digitally facilitated mobilization which contribute to trigger events becoming symbolic for mass collective action. This changing feature of practice needs

to be researched further to better understand its effects as the dynamics of digital and social media practice continue to develop and change.

My research evidences the diverse ways that human rights discourse and digital and social media feature in the practices of each movement. They are understood primarily to enhance important aspects of the mobilizations, but also entail certain logics which movements grapple with in the process of consolidating their identity and objectives. The three cases show how the meaning of these dynamics are often contested within movements, but are part of the reflexive and adaptive practice of social activists engaged in mobilizations. In this context, human rights discourse and digital and social media are part of the discursive and technological context out of which movements emerge. As such, they are deployed as available and potentially useful resources. They contribute shaping qualities to the movements but do not monopolise or determine their identity or practices, which are the result of dynamic collective processes of multiple actors engaging with the meaning of their concrete social and political context.

10.4.5 What does the research mean for our understanding of civil society, the role of social media, the state, and censorship in contemporary Mexico?

The research shows how civil society in its most dynamic and plural form, that is social movements, are able to coalesce and act collectively in Mexico in response to particular symbolic events representing the deeper crises in Mexico's democracy. The collective expression of active discontent with key features of contemporary Mexico such as violence, injustice and exclusion from effective participation in the construction of a fairer society, exerts non-institutional pressures on powerholders. This can awaken the sense of social actors directly contributing to the reconfiguration of the status quo in favour of the excluded or victimised, of re-establishing normative ideas of citizenship and justice to influence institutional practice. This form of independent civil society collective action is not an alternative to the captured institutional order, but asserts the possibility of constructing change through autonomous collective political action in

the public sphere. Outcomes are unpredictable and inevitably disappointing compared to aspirations, but the reawakening of hope through the assertion of collective moral authority outside the imposed parameters of the State and traditional hierarchies of powerholders, is not a marginal feature of political development, but an important component to understanding the dynamics of social change.

The research also indicates how the three movements played an important role in exposing the bankruptcy of the prevailing political party system and its inability to escape capture by multiple vested interests. This contributed to the groundswell of popular rejection of the traditional political parties in the 2018 elections. The veteran left-wing candidate, AMLO and his party, MORENA, successfully exploited this disenchantment, helping foster a sense of hope that he could deliver social transformation. This included commitments to address some of the issues that had sparked the three movements. However, the challenge for these new gatekeepers is to enact fresh democratic and institutional approaches which fulfil these diverse expectations. This is no small task, particularly as so many of AMLO's party and appointees come directly from the traditional political parties and bureaucracy with links to vested interests and ingrained suspicion of independent civil society.⁴⁸⁰

Having awakened popular expectations that things can be done differently, the repercussions of failure will be grave, risking new levels of disillusionment with democratic governance. It is also quite possible that new symbolic events, representing emerging failures of governance at national and local level, may also create new contexts for plural civil society to engage in non-institutional collective action. The signs

⁴⁸⁰ The early signs are mixed, particularly in relation to addressing the drivers to the violence and human rights violations, such as going back on his campaign promise to gradually remove the military from policing functions or develop a clear strategy for addressing the crisis of the disappeared. However, the new government has taken steps to establish a form of truth commission to reinvestigate the Ayotzinapa 43 cases. The extent to which the new government will fundamentally change the relationship of citizens to the state and society to institutions or will simply replicate the practices of the past remains to be seen.

so far are that these types of mobilization may come from the political right seeking to challenge the popular legitimacy of the AMLO project. However, it is also quite possible that independent progressive actors may also engage in forms of collective contention to demand more substantive social and political change. In either scenario, it is also clear that a diverse civil society, active on many different issues and in many different regions, will continue to play roles in developing public sphere deliberations and actions, challenging institutional performance and expressing diverse civil society perspectives. These may not amount to national level social movements such as the three in this research, but they represent plural forms of social and political engagement, with the potential to contribute to Mexico's political development.

It is in this context that the meaning and uses of human rights discourse remain highly relevant for interpreting and framing the successes and failures of governance and formulating specific claims against powerholders as well as promoting normative change. This research shows how human rights NGOs at national and local level as well as the collectives of victims and other groups often use human rights discourse, even if only to a limited extent, to frame and press their claims. This means that in certain sectors of civil society, human rights discourse features as routinized practice, whether in the form legal claims, media messages, institutional negotiation or protest demands.

However, the research also shows that human rights discourse when mobilized as part of widescale and plural social movements often displays different features to the more narrowly focused practices of human rights NGOs. As such, it cannot be understood solely as a strategic tool to engage institutional responsibility, public opinion or even as an articulating device to unify plural actors. It is better understood as operating on different levels as a dynamic feature of collective political contention, enabling forms of claims-making, but also orienting and shaping these in particular directions. Not all of these may be consistent with the aspirations and beliefs of the movements and their diverse participant actors.

This has implications for claims-makers, solidarity supporters and the targets of the mobilization. Part of mitigating these limitations is recognising their existence. For

example, avoiding an overly dominant human rights discourse in the mobilizing narrative; recognising that while instantiation of human rights is key to their protection, the meaningfulness of human rights claims is not limited to the process of legal instantiation; that the a key dimension of human rights claims-making is as an expression of self-asserting power to challenge domination and exclusion; and human rights demands alone cannot adequately represent a transformational social agenda. These are some of the different features and meanings of human rights discourse which make it useful but also paradoxical when mobilized as part of collective contentious action in a national context. Understanding and shaping these dynamics is part of the developing and reflective practice of social activists in Mexico in their struggle to contest injustices and impact the country's political development.⁴⁸¹

The same process of reassessment of digital and social media has been underway in recent years in Mexico, with early optimism about its supposedly democratizing potential, giving way to pessimistic evaluations of its impact on social relations and democratic practice. However, this research has shown how social movements in Mexico have engaged with digital and social media as part of the mobilization processes, enabling the rapid participation of diverse local, national and international actors in forms of networked collective contentious action. However, it also suggests these features, while accelerating the intensity of the movement, may contribute destabilising features, which movements, if they are to endure, need to guard against by recourse to more traditional mobilization and security practices.

However, it is also the case that as powerholders, both state and non-state actors, have become aware of weaknesses of digital platforms, enhancing their capacity to legally and illegally shape digital information flows. This potentially undermines the capacity of social actors to safely use some of the more dynamic features of digital and social media to challenge dominant narratives. Even worse, this may also increase

⁴⁸¹ This is particularly the case in a world where the status and acceptance of the idea of universal human rights is under attack on the global stage, not least from the new right-wing governments in the Americas reshaping regional institutional outlooks antithetical to many aspects of human rights discourse.

powerholder capacity to orchestrate attacks on civil society actors, threatening their legitimacy and physical security. The extent to which the new government ends the longstanding impunity enjoyed by those who attack social activists, human rights defenders and journalists, will play a role in determining how far the digital environment can continue to be mobilized in favour of progressive mobilization processes.

The emergence of a hybrid news media environment involving print media, radio, TV, websites, blogs and social media is radically altering the media landscape globally. It is difficult to predict the development of this process and its long-term impact on media plurality and access to information in Mexico. However, this research has shown the disrupting influence of digital technology on the traditional relations between State and media in Mexico. This has so far contributed to greater media plurality and a weakening of some of the practices that enabled powerholders to effectively shape news narratives. These traditional dynamics have not evaporated, particularly at subnational level, but the potential for plural information and narratives to circulate has increased. The MORENA government has stated its commitment to strengthen media plurality, but it will inevitably face increased scrutiny and attack from a range of media interests. The extent to which it institutionalises mechanisms and a regulatory environment to ensure media plurality and freedom of expression, including in the digital sphere, and resists the temptation to resort to traditional methods to control media outputs will be one of its greatest tests and perhaps one of its lasting legacies.

Human rights discourse is often treated as the handmaiden of liberal democracy in Western political thought. However, the promise of human rights is much more radical than a narrow electoral conception of democracy and individual freedom. It speaks to citizenship, powerholder accountability and governance that strives to achieve social justice and equality. This includes protecting and fostering individual and collective dignity, autonomy and development. Mexico's partial democracy has so far shown that institutional human rights discourse can fail to deliver on almost all these fronts while serving to maintain the fiction of a fully functioning democracy. The social movements in this research illustrate that this contradiction can be exposed by significant events

interpreted by diverse actors to symbolise the deep injustices that have stunted Mexico's development. These mobilizations challenged the terms of this partial democracy, but did not necessarily establish the social and political agenda to deliver justice and social transformation. Nonetheless, this aspiration remains active in many sectors of civil society, particularly in the families of the disappeared and their supporters. This sentiment is also latent in broader sections of society. Only the coming years will reveal the extent to which institutional practice can be transformed to substantively realise human rights ideas and whether national level civil society mobilizations will emerge to engage the public imagination to make contentious demands for a deeper democratic transition.

10.5 Policy recommendations and follow up research questions

10.5.1 Policy recommendations

As an international academic based in the Global North, I am conscious of the sensitivities of making policy prescriptions to civil society actors in the Global South who have a rich tradition of human rights and social activism. This is particularly the case when the project has not had the resources to involve those who participated in the research in discussion about the findings. However, in my follow-up activities I envisage sharing a summary of the thesis findings with the participants to gather their responses.

My own reflexive position in relation to the research means that the findings are focused on understanding the dynamics of human rights discourse and digital and social media in the particular context of nationally oriented movements. That is to examine their context specific dynamics, rather than consider them as a subset of the global human rights movement or digitally enabled activism socialised 'outward' to 'peripheral' contexts in the Global South.⁴⁸²

⁴⁸² As observed earlier, this has often appeared to be an undertone of literature addressing the socialization of human rights law and the dynamics of globalization.

As a result, the recommendation which emerges from this research to international academic, institutional and civil society actors in relation to human rights discourse and digital media practices is to pay attention to the particular complex dynamics of their use in non-institutional political mobilizations. This means recognising that plural social actors use the tools available - some are more committed to the particular features of human rights discourse and digital communications than others - but the important issue is to understand how the different ways they are used (or not used) and their implications in the wider struggle of plural civil society to challenge democratic deficits. This means recognising that there are different aspects of their use with different meanings and values. For example, human rights discourse cannot only be understood as a legal tool, or in the case of digital and social media, their contribution is not limited to cost reduction of communications. That is not to argue that international actors should support all aspects of these mobilization processes uncritically, but they should recognise that they cannot be understood solely in terms of the promotion of international human rights norms nor idealised (or perhaps, increasingly, demonised) as forms of horizontal digital communication. Instead, their political and social significance is rooted in plural traditions and changing practices of activism and political culture in Mexico. These processes need to be examined in their own terms not simply as local manifestations of global trends. This does not mean ignoring the importance of international actors or global political forces in nationally oriented mobilization processes, but that the nuanced dynamics of domestic change should be understood better in order to accompany local actors in collective endeavours to address democratic deficits. So, a question for international actors is also how far non-institutional social mobilizations can be supported to strengthen local claims for justice and democratic accountability, but without imposing models of activism from the Global North. This means not focusing purely on institutional human rights initiatives or expert partners as the means of supporting democratic development and social justice, but engaging with a wide range of social actors committed to different forms of democratic participation.

In many respects, this recommendation is also relevant to domestic civil society. Assumptions about social movements, human rights discourse and digital media are

widely held and wide-ranging; drawing on multiple theories, aspirations and experiences. However, these often result in relatively narrow individual perspectives which do not necessarily reflect on the different dimensions of their use and meaning for engaged social mobilizations, complicating the process of negotiation of plural actors in social movement mobilizations. Therefore, as part of adaptive practice, it is important to recognise and understand the nuances of the uses of human rights discourse as it relates to interpreting the socio-political context and trigger events, the role of networks in shaping movements, the relative function of human rights discourse in framing narratives and strengthening agency, but also its limitations in relation to movement mobilization and articulation. In the same way, social and political actors need to reflect on the dimensions of digital and social media as part of their practice, including its affective and connective features. These can facilitate civil society mobilization, but can also increase transience and vulnerability. Moreover, social actors need to reflect on how these practices can consolidate and strengthen a more plural media environment in which all members of Mexico's diverse society can inform and be informed as part of the process of overcoming democratic deficits.

10.5.2 Additional research areas and questions

This research has focused on the particular dynamics of social movement mobilization in relation to human rights discourse and digital media practice, but in the course of this research a number of issues have emerged which merit further investigation.

In relation to the digital and social media, rapidly changing technology and practices mean that this area is a moving target, particularly the potential for its covert manipulation to serve powerholders, rather than strengthen civil society to mobilize and challenge democratic deficits. This includes the issue of increased digital threats to social activists and journalists. These subjects deserve further study in relation to the practices of the state, political parties, the media, economic actors and criminal networks as well as grassroots activists. This would help understand if features of the communications landscape have decisively tipped in favour of covert manipulation and

surveillance of digital communications, undercutting some of the features identified in this research which support forms of progressive social mobilization.

On human rights discourse, this research has focused on the dynamics of practice in relation to nationally oriented social movements. This raises questions about different contexts in which human rights discourse is operationalised as part of social actors engaging with powerholders. For example, in the human rights litigation, advocacy and institutional building of NGOs and legal professionals outside the context of mass social mobilization. Another question which has also emerged, is how far human rights discourse can operate in conjunction with other plural social and political change agendas in pursuit of improved democracy and social justice, for example, in relation to corruption and inequality. This will be a particularly relevant issues as the new administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador takes office.

Another emergent issue is how human rights discourse features in different types of grassroots activism, particularly to question the exercise of formal and informal power as part of civil society efforts to increase political participation, social justice and accountability at subnational level. As other research cited in this thesis (Ron et al. 2014) suggests, the assumption that human rights are poorly understood and seen as foreign and technocratic may be changing more than activists realise, increasing the potential to integrate human rights discourse more fully into different claims-making narratives and strategies in a range of conflictual situations. These localised contexts also provide a means of exploring in more detail the complex relationships between local human rights experts and individuals or communities suffering the denial of rights and how this plays out in connection with understandings of human rights, individual agency, political subjectivity and the power relations of socialization processes.

On the international stage, the human rights system is coming under increasing attack from multiple quarters. The wider impacts of this trend are not clear; for example, whether partial democracies such as Mexico, and its subnational powerholders, will be even less inclined to comply with human rights commitments and therefore whether human rights discourse will continue to be regarded as useful to challenge

powerholders. Given this changing environment, further research should investigate how human rights ideas are being interpreted and used (or not) by individuals and communities suffering different forms of injustice, particularly at subnational levels. This will contribute to understanding whether human rights discourse, as a dimension of social mobilization and civil society action, is in retreat or is, perhaps, gaining currency in the face of new threats.

Bibliography

- A/Res/60/147 UN General Assembly (2006), Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.
- Acemoglu, D, Naidu, S, Restrepo, P and Robinson, JA (2015), *Democracy, Redistribution, and Inequality*. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Ackerman, EF (2018), El PRI y La Sociedad Civil. *Nexos*. available at <https://redaccion.nexos.com.mx/?p=8491> [17 July 2018].
- Ackerman, JM (2005), *Human Rights and Social Accountability*. Participation and Civic Engagement, Social Development Department, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, World Bank.
- Aguayo, S (2015), *De Tlatelolco a Ayotzinapa: Las Violencias Del Estado*. Editorial Ink.
- Aguayo, S and Rosales, LPP (1997), *Las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales de Derechos Humanos En México: Entre La Democracia Participativa y La Electoral*. Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos.
- Ahmed, A (2017), Spyware in Mexico Targeted Investigators Seeking Students. *New York Times*. available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/10/world/americas/mexico-missing-students-pegasus-spyware.html> [17 July 2018].
- Ahmed, A (2018), Mexico Spyware Inquiry Bogs Down. Skeptics Aren't Surprised. *New York Times*. available at www.nytimes.com/2018/02/20/world/americas/mexico-spyware-investigation.html?ref=nyt-es&mcid=nyt-es&subid=article [17 July 2018].
- Alberto Nájjar (2015), Peñabots, El Ejército Que Neutraliza La Crítica Al Gobierno. *BBC Mundo*. available at http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/03/150317_mexico_internet_poder_penabot_an [18 July 2018].
- Alexander, JC (2006), *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford University Press.
- Alhindi, WA, Talha, M and Sulong, G Bin (2012), The Role of Modern Technology in Arab Spring. *Archives Des Sciences*, 65(8): 101–112.
- Allcott, H and Gentzkow, M (2017), Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election.

- Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2): 211–236.
- Almond, G and Verba, S (1989), *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Sage Publications.
- Alonso Sánchez, J (2012), La Democratización Frustrada: Limitaciones Institucionales y Colonización Política de Las Instituciones Garantes de Derechos, y Participación Ciudadana En México. *Espiral (Guadalajara)*, 19(55): 179–191.
- Alvarez, S, Dagnino, E and Escobar, A (Eds.) (1998), *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Culture: Re-Visioning of Latin American Social Movements*. Westview Press.
- Alvarez, S and Escobar, A (1992), *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, strategy, and democracy*. Oxford: Westview Press.
- Ameglio, P (2016), Movimiento Por La Paz Con Justicia y Dignidad: Construir Paz En La Guerra de México. *Polis. Revista Latinoamericana*, 15(43): 1–14.
- Amnesty International (2006), *Violence against Women and Justice Denied in Mexico State*.
- Amnesty International (2007a), *Mexico: Oaxaca - Clamour for Justice*.
- Amnesty International (2007b), *Laws without Justice: Human Rights Violations and Impunity in the Public Security and Criminal Justice System*.
- Amnesty International (2009), *New Reports of Human Rights Violations by the Military*. London.
- Amnesty International (2010), *Mexico: Invisible Victims - Migrants on the Move in Mexico*.
- Amnesty International (2013), *Confronting a Nightmare: Disappearances in Mexico*.
- Amnesty International (2014), *Mexico: Out of Control -Torture and Ill-Treatment in Mexico*.
- Anaya Muñoz, A (2009), Transnational and Domestic Processes in the Definition of Human Rights Policies in Mexico. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31(1): 35–58.
- Anaya Muñoz, A (2014), *El País Bajo Presión: Debatiendo El Papel Del Escrutinio Internacional de Derechos Humanos Sobre México*. CIDE.
- Anaya Muñoz, A (2015), Violaciones a Los Derechos Humanos Por Parte de Actores No Estatales y Presion Transnacional, 98–139, in: Estévez, A. and Vásquez, D. (Eds.), *Derechos Humanos y transformación política en contextos de violencia*. FLASCO Mexico: UNAM, CISAN.

- Arias, ED and Goldstein, DM (2010a), Violent Pluralism, 1–34, in: *Violent Democracies in Latin America*.
- Arias, ED and Goldstein, DM (2010b), *Violent Democracies in Latin America* (D. M. Goldstein and E. D. Arias, Eds.). Duke University Press.
- Arias Marín, A and Ponte Ordorica, F (2015), Hacia La Relegitimación Del Discurso de Los Derechos Humanos En América Latina. *El Cotidiano*, (194).
- Article 19, Red en defensa de los derechos digitales R3D and Tecnologia digital para el cambio social (2017), *Gobierno Espía: Vigilancia Sistemática a Periodistas y Defensores de Derechos Humanos En México*.
- Asociación de internet.mx (2018), *Estudio Sobre Los Habitos de Los Usuarios de Internet En Mexico 2017*.
- Avritzer, L (2006), Civil Society in Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: Between Democratic Deepening, Social Fragmentation, and State Crisis, 35–57, in: *Civil society and democracy in Latin America*. Springer.
- Axford, B (1997), *Politics: An Introduction*. Psychology Press.
- Azola, E (2012), El Movimiento Por La Paz Con Justicia y Dignidad. *Desacatos*, 40(septiembre-diciembre): 159–170.
- Baker, G (2002), *Civil Society and Democratic Theory : Alternative Voices*.
- Ballinas, V (2010), Muertes de Civiles En El Combate Al Crimen, “Daños Colaterales”: Galván. *La Jornada*. available at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2010/04/13/politica/005n1pol> [28 October 2018].
- Barber, B (2003), *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Univ of California Press.
- Bartra, R (2013), *The Mexican Transition: Politics, Culture & Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*. University of Wales Press.
- Baxi, U (2012a), *The Future of Human Rights*. OUP India.
- Baxi, U (2012b), Changing Paradigms of Human Rights, 266–285, in: Eckert, J., Donahoe, B., Strümpell, C., and Biner, Z. Ö. (Eds.), *Law against the state: ethnographic forays into law’s transformations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Baym, NK and Boyd, D (2012), Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(3): 320–329.
- Beck, U (2002), *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and Its Social and*

Political Consequences. Sage.

- Benford, R and Snow, D (2000), Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(2000): 611–639.
- Benford, RD (1997), An Insider's Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective. *Sociological Inquiry*, 67(4): 409–430.
- Benkler, Y (2006), *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. Yale University Press.
- Bennett, WL and Segerberg, A (2012), The Logic of Connective Action. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5): 739–768.
- Bennett, WL and Segerberg, A (2013), *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berger, R (2015), Now I See It, Now I Don't: Researcher's Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative research*, 15(2): 219–234.
- Bimber, B, Flanagin, AJ and Stohl, C (2005a), Reconceptualizing Collective Action in the Contemporary Media Environment. *Communication Theory*, 15(4): 365–388.
- Bimber, B, Flanagin, AJ and Stohl, C (2005b), Action in the Contemporary. *Communication Theory*, 15(4): 365–388.
- Bizberg, I (2014), Civic Society, Democratization, and Globalization in Latin America, 217–232, in: Farro, A. L., Lustiger-Thaler, H., and Toscano, E. (Eds.), *Reimagining Social Movements: From Collectives to Individuals*. Routledge.
- Blumer, H (1951), Collective Behavior. *New outline of the principles of sociology*: 166–222.
- Bob, C (2005), *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Boltanski, L (1999), *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P (1990), *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford university press.
- Bradshaw, S and Howard, PN (2017), Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation. *University of Oxford, Computational Propaganda Research Project*.
- Brambila, JA (2017), Challenges to Media Openness in Contemporary Mexico, 397–408, in: Friedrichsen, M. and Kamalipour, Y. (Eds.), *Digital Transformation in Journalism*

- and News Media: Media Management, Media Convergence and Globalization*. Springer International Publishing.
- Breuer, A and Welp, Y (Eds.) (2014), *Digital Technologies for Democratic Governance in Latin America : Opportunities and Risks*. Routledge.
- Brownlee, J (2009), Portents of Pluralism: How Hybrid Regimes Affect Democratic Transitions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(3): 515–532.
- Bryman, A (2012), *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Brysk, A (2013), *Speaking Rights to Power; Constructing Political Will*. Oxford University Press.
- Brysk, A and Stohl, M (2017), *Expanding Human Rights: 21st Century Norms and Governance*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Buscaglia, E (2013), *Vacíos de Poder En México: El Camino de México Hacia La Seguridad Humana*. Debate.
- Cadwalladr, C and Graham-Harrison, E (2018), Revealed: 50 Million Facebook Profiles Harvested for Cambridge Analytica in Major Data Breach. *The Guardian*. available at <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-facebook-influence-us-election> [28 October 2018].
- Calabrese, A (1999), The Information Age According to Manuel Castells. *Journal of Communication*, 49: 172–187.
- Calhoun, C (2011), Civil Society and the Public Sphere, 311–323, in: Edwards, M. (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Calhoun, CJ (1992), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. MIT press.
- Camargo, CB and Jacobs, E (2013), Social Accountability and Its Conceptual Challenges: An Analytical Framework. *Basel Institute of Governance*, (Working paper series No. 16).
- Cameron, MA, Hershberg, E and Sharpe, KE (2012), Voice and Consequence: Direct Participation and Democracy in Latin America, 1–20, in: *New institutions for participatory democracy in Latin America*. Springer.
- Cammaerts, B (2012), Protest Logics and the Mediation Opportunity Structure. *European Journal of communication*, 27(2): 117–134.
- Camp, RA (2007), *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Consolidation*. Oxford University Press New York.

- Campos Garza, L (2016), A 6 Años Del Asesinato de Dos Estudiantes Del Tec. *Proceso*. available at <https://www.proceso.com.mx/434051/a-6-anos-del-asesinato-jorge-javier-estudiantes-del-itesm-ejercito-sigue-impune> [28 October 2018].
- Carlson, M and Usher, N (2016), News Startups as Agents of Innovation. *Digital Journalism*, 4(5): 563–581.
- Castañeda, J (2002), Palabras de Dr Jorge Castaneda Ante La 57 Asamblea General de La ONU. *UN General Assembly*. available at <http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/57/statements/020913mexicoS.htm> [28 October 2018].
- Castells, M (1996), The Rise of the Network Society. Vol. 1 of The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. *Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell*.
- Castells, M (1997), *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Vol. 2, The Power of Identity*. Blackwell.
- Castells, M (2007), Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society. *International journal of communication*, 1(1): 29.
- Castells, M (2008), The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1): 78–93.
- Castells, M (2009a), *Communication Power*. OUP Oxford.
- Castells, M (2009b), Globalización, Estado y Sociedad Civil: El Nuevo Contexto Histórico de Los Derechos Humanos. *Isegoría*, 22(22): 5–17.
- Castells, M (2013), *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Castells, M, Yazawa, S and Kiselyova, E (1995), Insurgents against the Global Order: A Comparative Analysis of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the American Militia and Japan's AUM Shinrikyo. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*: 21–59.
- Centro Prodh (2011), Informe Sobre El Estado de México Durante El Sexenio 2005-2011. available at http://www.centroprodh.org.mx/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=59&Itemid=28&lang=es [20 February 2018].
- Centro Prodh (2013), Transición Traicionada: Los Derechos Humanos En México Durante El Sexenio 2006-2012. available at

- http://www.centroprodh.org.mx/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=28&lang=es&limitstart=15 [19 February 2018].
- Centro Prodh (2017), *Mujeres Sobrevivientes de Tortura Sexual En Atenco*. available at http://centroprodh.org.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2472%3Amujeresdeatenco-en-la-corte-contra-la-tortura-sexual&catid=209%3Afront-rokstories&lang=es [19 February 2018].
- Chadwick, A (2013), *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Oxford University Press.
- Ciudadanos en Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos A. C (2010), *Informe 2010*. available at <http://cadhac.org/2010.pdf> [28 October 2018].
- Cleaver, HM (1998), The Zapatista Effect: The Internet and the Rise of an Alternative Political Fabric. *Journal of International Affairs*, 51: 621–640.
- Cohen, J (1997), Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy, 407–437, in: Bohman, J. and Rehg, W. (Eds.), *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics*. MIT Press Cambridge, MA.
- Cohen, JL (1985), Strategy or Identity : New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements. *Social Research*, 52(4): 663–716.
- Cohen, JL and Arato, A (1994), *Civil Society and Political Theory*. MIT press.
- Cohen, R and Rai, SM (2000), *Towards a Cosmopolitan Politics*. Athlone Press. London.
- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) (2009), *Informe Sobre Seguridad Ciudadana y Derechos Humanos*.
- Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (2012), *Violencia Contra Las Mujeres En El Estado de México*. available at <http://cmdpdh.org/publicaciones-pdf/cmdpdh-violencia-contra-las-mujeres-en-el-estado-de-mexico.pdf> [19 February 2018].
- Cook, D, Waugh, B, Abdipanah, M, Hashemi, O and Rahman, SA (2014), Twitter Deception and Influence: Issues of Identity, Slacktivism, and Puppetry. *Journal of Information Warfare*, 13(1): 58–71.
- Corporación Latinobarómetro (2017), *Informe Latinobarómetro 2017*. Santiago de Chile.
- Couldry, N (2010), *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. Sage publications.

- Couldry, N (2012), *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Polity.
- Couldry, N and Curran, J (2003), *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Creswell, JW (2009), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE, 2009.
- Crossley, N (2002), *Making Sense of Social Movements*. Open University Press.
- Crowley, M (2014), Saving Mexico. *Time Magazine*. available at <http://content.time.com/time/covers/pacific/0,16641,20140224,00.html> [28 October 2018].
- Curran, J (2002), *Media and Power*. Psychology Press.
- Cutcliffe, JR (2003), Reconsidering Reflexivity: Introducing the Case for Intellectual Entrepreneurship. *Qualitative health research*, 13(1): 136–148.
- Dagnino, E (2011), Civil Society in Latin America, 122–134, in: Edwards, M. (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Dagnino, E, Olvera, A and Panfichi, A (2006), *La Disputa Por La Construcción Democrática En América Latina*. Centro de Investigaciones y Fondo de Cultura Económica, el CIESAS y la Universidad Veracruzana.
- Dahl, RA (1956), *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. University of Chicago Press.
- Dahl, RA (1998), *On Democracy*. Yale university press.
- Dahlgren, P (2009), *Media and Political Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahlgren, P (2013), *The Political Web: Media, Participation and Alternative Democracy*. Palgrave Macmillan Basingstoke.
- Davis, DE (1999), The Power of Distance: Re-Theorizing Social Movements in Latin America. *Theory and Society*, 28(4): 585–638.
- Davis, DE (2010), The Political and Economic Origins of Violence and Insecurity in Contemporary Latin America: Past Trajectories and Future Prospects, 35–62, in: Arias, E. D. and Goldstein, D. M. (Eds.), *Violent Democracies in Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Diani, M and McAdam, D (Eds.) (2003), *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*. Oxford University Press.

- Diario Oficial de la Federación (2017), *Ley General En Materia de Desaparición Forzada de Personas, Desaparición Cometida Por Particulares y Del Sistema Nacional de Búsqueda de Personas*.
- Díaz-Domínguez, A and Moreno, A (2014), Effects of #yosoy132 and Social Media in Mexico's 2012 Presidential Election, 227–251, in: Domínguez, J. I., Greene, K. F., Lawson, C. H., and Moreno, A. (Eds.), *Mexico's evolving democracy: A comparative study of the 2012 elections*. John Hopkins University Press.
- Dinerstein, A (2014), *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America: The Art of Organising Hope*. Springer.
- Donnelly, J (2007), The Relative Universality of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 29(2): 281–306.
- Donnelly, J (2013), *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. Cornell University Press.
- Douzinas, C (2000), *The End of Human Rights: Critical Thought at the Turn of the Century*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Douzinas, C (2007), *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*. Routledge.
- Downing, JDH (2001), *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Sage.
- Earl, J and Kimport, K (2011), *Digitally Enabled Social Change: Activism in the Internet Age*. Mit Press.
- Earl, J and Schussman, A (2002), The New Site of Activism: On-Line Organizations, Movement Entrepreneurs, and the Changing Location of Social Movement Decision Making, 155–187, in: *Consensus decision making, Northern Ireland and indigenous movements*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Edward, H and Chomsky, N (1988), *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Edwards, G (2009), Habermas and Social Movement Theory. *Sociology Compass*, 3(3): 381–393.
- Edwards, M (2011), *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Ehrenberg, J (2011), The History of Civil Society Ideas, 15–28, in: Edwards, M. (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford University Press.

- Ekman, M (2018), Anti-Refugee Mobilization in Social Media: The Case of Soldiers of Odin. *Social Media + Society*, 4(1).
- Escalante Gonzalbo, F (2012), *El Crimen Como Realidad y Representación: Contribución Para Una Historia Del Presente*. El Colegio de México.
- Escalante, JC (2013), Las Televisoras Vulneran La Equidad En La Contienda. *Desacatos*, 42(mayo-agosto 2013): 79–102.
- Espinoza Valle, V and Monsiváis, A (Eds.) (2012), *El Deterioro de La Democracia : Consideraciones Sobre El Régimen Político, Lo Público y La Ciudadanía En México*. El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.
- Esquivel Hernández, G (2015), Desigualdad Extrema En México. available at https://www.oxfamMexico.org/sites/default/files/desigualdadextrema_informe.pdf [28 October 2018].
- Esteinou Madrid, J (2013), La Reforma Constitucional de Las Telecomunicaciones y Los Cambios Comunicativos Para El País. *Revista de la Realidad Mexicana*, 28(181): 5–16.
- Estévez López, A (2008), *Human Rights and Free Trade in Mexico: A Discursive and Sociopolitical Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Estévez López, A (2011), Human Rights in Contemporary Political Sociology: The Primacy of Social Subjects. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 33(4): 1142–1162.
- Estévez López, A (2015), La Crisis de Derechos Humanos y El Dispositivo de Administración Del Sufrimiento: Necropolítica Pública de Víctimas, Defensores y Periodistas En México. *El Cotidiano*, 30(194): 7–17.
- Estrada, M (2014), Sistema de Protesta: Política, Medios y El #YoSoy 132. *Sociológica*, 82(29): 83–123.
- Faith, B and Prieto-Martin, P (2016), Civil Society and Civic Engagement in a Time of Change. *IDS Bulletin*, 47(2A).
- Farro, AL, Lustiger-Thaler, H and Toscano, E (2014), *Reimagining Social Movements: From Collectives to Individuals*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- FEMOSPP (2006), Draft of Report by Special Prosecutor for Social and Political Movements of the Past. *The National Security Archive*. available at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB180/> [19 July 2018].
- Fernández Poncela, AM (2014), De La Red a Las Calles ¿ y de Las Calles a Las

- Conciencias ? El Movimiento Estudiantil # YoSoy132. *Argumentos (México, DF)*, 76(sept-dici): 127–147.
- Fernández Poncela, AM (2015), Una Mirada Social General Sobre El Movimiento Por Ayotzinapa. *Revista Teknokultura*, 12(2): 241–265.
- Fernando García, L and Robles Maloof, J (2016), La Vigilancia y Su Impacto En El Derecho a La Privacidad En México, 159–198, in: Lara, J. C. (Ed.), *Internet en México: Derechos Humanos en el entorno digital*. Derechos Digitales.
- Finley, K (2015), Pro-Government Twitter Bots Try to Hush Mexican Activists. *Wired*. available at <https://www.wired.com/2015/08/pro-government-twitter-bots-try-hush-mexican-activists/> [19 July 2018].
- Finnemore, M and Sikkink, K (1998), International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. *International Organization*, 52(4): 887–917.
- Flam, H and King, D (2007), *Emotions and Social Movements*. Routledge.
- Flick, U (2009), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Sage.
- Flores-Márquez, D (2017), Movimientos Sociales e Internet En México, 119–126, in: Pleyers, G. and Garza Zepeda, M. (Eds.), *México en movimientos: resistencias y alternativas*. MAPorra.
- Forst, R (2012), The Justification of Human Rights and the Basic Right to Justification. A Reflexive Approach, 81–106, in: *Philosophical dimensions of human rights*. Springer.
- Forsythe, DP (2012), *Human Rights in International Relations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Foweraker, J (1995), *Theorizing Social Movements*. Pluto Press.
- Fraser, N (1990), Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*, 26(25/26): 56–80.
- Freeman, M (2011), *Human Rights: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Polity.
- Froehling, O (1997), The Cyberspace ‘War of Ink and Internet’ in Chiapas, Mexico. *Geographical Review*, 87(2): 291–307.
- Fuchs, C (2014), *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. Sage.
- Fuerzas Unidas por Nuestros Desaparecidos en Coahuila (FUUNDEC) (2010), Aumentan 50 a Las Denuncias de Personas Desaparecidas En El Estado de Coahuila. *website*. available at <https://fuundec.org/comunicados-2/> [19 July 2018].

- Fukuyama, F (1989), The End of History? *The national interest*, (16): 3–18.
- Fundar Centro de Análisis e Investigación (2014), ‘Lamentables Las Acciones Del Gobierno Federal En Contra de Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos Que Acompañan El Caso de Los Normalistas de Ayotzinapa’. available at <http://fundar.org.mx/lamentables-las-acciones-del-gobierno-federal-en-contra-de-personas-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-que-acompanan-el-caso-de-los-normalistas-de-ayotzinapa/> [19 July 2018].
- Fundar Centro de Análisis e Investigación and Article 19 (2015), Libertad de Expresión En Venta. available at <http://www.fundar.org.mx/mexico/pdf/LibertadDigitalOk.pdf> [19 July 2018].
- Gabriel Weimann (2014), *New Terrorism and New Media*. Commons Lab Wilson Center.
- Gallagher, J (2012), Mobilization in México 2012: The Movement for Peace and the Struggle for Justice. *Anuari Del Conflict Social*: 1235–1260.
- Gamson, WA (1991), Commitment and Agency in Social Movements. *Sociological Forum*, 6(1): 27–50.
- Gamson, WA (1992), *Talking Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gamson, WA (1995), Constructing Social Protest, 85–106, in: Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (Eds.), *Social movements and culture*. Routledge.
- Gamson, WA (2004), Bystanders, Public Opinion, and the Media, 242–261, in: Snow, D., Soule, S., and Kriesi, H. (Eds.), *The Blackwell companion to social movements*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Gamson, WA and Meyer, DS (1996), Framing Political Opportunity, 275–290, in: McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D., and Zald, M. N. (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gamson, WA and Wolfsfeld, G (1993), Movements and Media as Interacting Systems. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 528(1): 114–125.
- García González, LA (2016), *New Social Movements and Social Networking Sites’ Uses: Mexicans’ Mobilization for Peace in Mexico*. PhD Thesis, Nottingham Trent University.
- Garcia, RG and Treré, E (2014), The #YoSoy132 Movement and the Struggle for Media

- Democratization in Mexico. *Convergence*, 20(4): 1.
- Garza, J (2015), Políticas Públicas y Violencia En México: La Incidencia Del Movimiento Por La Paz Con Justicia y Dignidad. *Iberoamérica Social: revista-red de estudios sociales*, (V): 55–66.
- Gayo-Avello, D (2016), Politics and Social Media. available at http://danigayo.info/publications/Gayo-Avello_Politics_and_Social_Media/ [19 July 2018].
- Geertz, C (1973), Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture, 3–30, in: *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books, Inc.
- Gerbaudo, P (2012), *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. Pluto Press.
- Gerbaudo, P and Treré, E (2015), In Search of the ‘We’ of Social Media Activism: Introduction to the Special Issue on Social Media and Protest Identities. *Information Communication and Society*, 18(8): 865–871.
- Giddens, A (1984), *The Constitution of Society*. 1984.
- Giddens, A (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford University press.
- GIEI (2015a), Informe Ayotzinapa I, Investigación y Primeras Conclusiones de Las Desapariciones y Homicidios de Los Normalistas de Ayotzinapa. available at <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/actividades/giei/GIEI-InformeAyotzinapa1.pdf> [19 July 2018].
- GIEI (2015b), El Informe Ayotzinapa II, Avances y Nuevas Conclusiones Sobre La Investigación, Búsqueda y Atención a Las Víctimas. available at <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/actividades/giei/giei-informeayotzinapa2.pdf> [18 July 2018].
- Giraud, E (2014), Has Radical Participatory Online Media Really ‘Failed’? Indymedia and Its Legacies. *Convergence*, 20(4): 419–437.
- Gitlin, T (1980), *The Whole World Is Watching*. University of California Press.
- Gladwell, M (2010), Small Change; Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted. *The New Yorker*: 1–9.
- Glaser, B and Strauss, A (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. AldineTransaction.
- Goldfarb, JC (2012), *Reinventing Political Culture: The Power of Culture versus the*

Culture of Power. Polity.

- Goldstein, DM (2007), Human Rights as Culprit, Human Rights as Victim: Rights and Security in the State of Exception. *The practice of human rights: tracking law between the global and the local*: 49–77.
- Goldstein, DM (2012), Whose Vernacular? Translating Human Rights in Local Contexts, 111–122, in: Goodale, M. (Ed.), *Human Rights at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press.
- Gómez, M (2015), Ayotzinapa: De La Crisis Humanitaria a La Crisis de Estado. *El Cotidiano*, 189(enero-febrero): 50–59.
- González Villarreal, R (2013), *El Acontecimiento #YoSoy132. Crónicas de La Multitud*. Mexico City: Editorial Terracota.
- González Villarreal, R (2015), *Ayotzinapa, La Rabia y La Esperanza*. Mexico City: Editorial Terracota.
- Goodale, M (2006), Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights. *Current Anthropology*, 47(3): 485–511.
- Goodale, M (Ed.) (2009), *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Goodale, M (2013), Human Rights and Moral Agency, 418–435, in: Holder, C. and Reidy, D. (Eds.), *Human rights: the hard questions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goodale, M and Merry, SE (2007), *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goodhart, M (2013), Human Rights and the Politics of Contestation, 31–44, in: Goodale, M. (Ed.), *Human Rights at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press Oxford, UK.
- Goodman, R and Jinks, D (2004), How to Influence States: Socialization and International Human Rights Law. *Duke Law Journal*: 621–703.
- Goodman, R and Jinks, D (2013a), *Socializing States: Promoting Human Rights through International Law*. Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, R and Jinks, D (2013b), Social Mechanisms to Promote International Human Rights : Complementary of Contradictory ?, 103–122, in: Risse, T., Ropp, S. C., and Sikkink, K. (Eds.), *From Commitment to Compliance: The Persistent Power of Human Rights*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goodwin, J, Jasper, JM and Polletta, F (2009), *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social*

- Movements*. University of Chicago Press.
- Gordon, N and Berkovitch, N (2007), Human Rights Discourse in Domestic Settings: How Does It Emerge? *Political Studies*, 55: 243–266.
- Gramsci, A (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. International Publishers.
- Granovetter, M (1973), The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6): 1360–1380.
- Griffin, J (2008), *On Human Rights*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Guba, EG (1990), *The Paradigm Dialog*. Sage publications.
- Guidry, JA, Kennedy, MD and Zald, MN (2000), *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power, and the Transnational Public Sphere*. University of Michigan Press.
- Gun Cuninghame, P (2017), # YoSoy132 and the ‘Mexican Spring’ of 2012: Between Electoral Engagement and Democratisation. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 36(2): 192–205.
- Gutiérrez, B (2015), # Ayotzinapa : La Expansión Global de Una Causa. *Horizontal*. available at <http://horizontal.mx/ayotzinapa-la-expansion-global-de-una-causa/> [19 July 2018].
- Guzmán Vergara, O (2017), Mexico and Its Foreign Policy of Denial. *Sur - International Journal of Human Rights*, (26).
- Habermas, J (1981), New Social Movements. *Telos*, 49(1981): 33–37.
- Habermas, J (1991), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. MIT press.
- Habermas, J (1996), *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.
- Habermas, J (2010), The Concept of Human Dignity and the Realistic Utopia of Human Rights. *Metaphilosophy*, 41(4): 464–480.
- Hagan, M (2010), The Human Rights Repertoire: Its Strategic Logic, Expectations and Tactics. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 14(4): 559–583.
- Hammersley, M (1992), *What’s Wrong with Ethnography? Methodological Explorations*. Routledge.
- Hardt, M and Negri, A (2001), *Empire*. Harvard University Press.
- Hardt, M and Negri, A (2005), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*.

Penguin.

- Harlow, S (2013), Adapting, Adopting and Diffusing: Leveraging Web 2.0 Tools for Activism in Mexico. *Journal of Latin American Communication Research*, 3(1): 3–35.
- Harlow, S (2014), Social Change and Social Media; Incorporating Social Networking Sites into Latin American Activism, 146–164, in: Anita Breuer and Yanina Welp (Ed.), *Digital technologies for democratic governance in Latin America: opportunities and risks*. Routledge.
- Harlow, S and Harp, D (2012), Collective Action on the Web. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(2): 196–216.
- Hastrup, K (2003), Violence, Suffering and Human Rights: Anthropological Reflections. *Anthropological Theory*, 3(3): 309–323.
- Held, D (2006), *Models of Democracy*. Polity.
- Hernández, A (2012), *Los Señores Del Narco*. Grijalbo.
- Hernández, A (2017), *La Verdadera Noche de Iguala: La Historia Que El Gobierno Quiso Ocultar*. Grijalbo.
- Hibbert, N (2017), Human Rights and Social Justice. *Laws*, 6(2): 7.
- Hindman, M (2009), *The Myth of Digital Democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Hoggett, P and Thompson, S (2012), *Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies*. Continuum International Publishing.
- Von Holdt, K (2014), On Violent Democracy. *The sociological review*, 62:S2: 129–151.
- Hopgood, S (2013), *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Cornell University Press.
- Howard, PN and Hussain, MM (2013), *Democracy's Fourth Wave?: Digital Media and the Arab Spring*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Howard, PN, Kollanyi, B and Woolley, SC (2016), Bots and Automation over Twitter during the US Election. *Computational Propaganda Project: Working Paper Series*.
- Human Rights Watch (2006), *Lost in Transition*. Human Rights Watch.
- Human Rights Watch (2009), *Uniform Impunity*. Human Rights Watch.
- Human Rights Watch (2011), *Neither Rights Nor Security: Killings, Torture, and Disappearances in Mexico's "War on Drugs"*.
- Human Rights Watch (2014), Mexico: Investigate All Evidence in Killings of 22 by Soldiers. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/08/22/mexico->

- investigate-all-evidence-killings-22-soldiers [27 February 2018].
- Huntington, SP (1993), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma press.
- Ignatieff, M (2003), *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry*. Princeton University Press.
- Inter American Commission on Human Rights (2015), Situación de Los Derechos Humanos En México. available at <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/Mexico2016-es.pdf> [29 October 2018].
- Jasper, JM (1997), *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography, and Creativity in Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press.
- Jasper, JM (1998), The Emotions of Protest: Reactive and Affective Emotions in and around Social Movements. *Sociol. Forum*, 13(3): 397.
- Jasper, JM (2010), Cultural Approaches in the Sociology of Social Movements, 59–109, in: *Handbook of social movements across disciplines*. Springer.
- Jasper, JM (2014a), *Protest: A Cultural Introduction to Social Movements*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Jasper, JM (2014b), Constructing Indignation: Anger Dynamics in Protest Movements. *Emotion Review*, 6(3): 208–213.
- Jasper, JM and Poulsen, JD (1995), Recruiting Strangers and Sriends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests. *Social Problems*, 42(4): 493–512.
- Johnson, S (2001), *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*. Scribner.
- Johnston, H and Noakes, JA (2005), *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective* (H. Johnston and J. A. Noakes, Eds.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Juárez, KC (2011), Un Nuevo Panorama Constitucional Para El Derecho Internacional de Los Derechos Humanos En México. *Estudios Constitucionales*, 9(2): 123–164.
- Juris, JS (2005), The New Digital Media and Activist Networking within Anti-Corporate Globalization Movements. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597(1): 189–208.
- Juris, JS (2012), Reflections On# Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, Public Space, and

- Emerging Logics of Aggregation. *American Ethnologist*, 39(2): 259–279.
- Juris, JS and Khasnabish, A (2013), *Insurgent Encounters: Transnational Activism, Ethnography, and the Political*. Duke University Press.
- Keck, M and Sikkink, K (1998), *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.
- Khanna, A, Mani, P, Patterson, Z, Pantazidou, M and Shqerat, M (2013), The Changing Faces of Citizen Action: A Mapping Study through an ‘Unruly’ Lens. *IDS Working Papers*, 2013(423): 1–70.
- King, G, Pan, J and Roberts, ME (2013), How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression. *American Political Science Review*, 107(2): 326–343.
- Klandermans, B (1997), *The Social Psychology of Protest*. Blackwell.
- Knox, R (2017), Social Movements in Support of the Victims: Human Rights and Digital Communications, 126–146, in: Panster, W., Smith, B., and Watt, P. (Eds.), *Beyond the Drug War in Mexico: Human rights, the public sphere and justice*. Routledge.
- Kurasawa, F (2009), A Message in a Bottle. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(1): 92–111.
- Laclau, E (2005), *On Populist Reason*. Verso.
- Laclau, E and Mouffe, C (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.
- Van Laer, J and Van Aelst, P (2010), Internet and Social Movement Action Repertoires. *Information, Communication & Society*, 13(8): 1146–1171.
- Landman, T (2006), *Studying Human Rights*. Routledge.
- Landy, D (2013), Talking Human Rights: How Social Movement Activists Are Constructed and Constrained by Human Rights Discourse. *International Sociology*, 28(4): 409–428.
- Latinobarómetro (2016), Latinobarómetro Análisis de Datos. available at <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp> [28 April 2017].
- Lauren Etter (2017), How Duterte Turned Facebook Into a Weapon—With Help From Facebook - Bloomberg. *Bloomberg Businessweek*. available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-12-07/how-rodrigo-duterte-turned-facebook-into-a-weapon-with-a-little-help-from-facebook> [18 December 2017].

- Lavalle, AG and Bueno, NS (2011), Waves of Change Within Civil Society in Latin America Mexico City and São Paulo. *Politics & Society*, 39(3): 415–450.
- Lawson, C (2001), *Building the Fourth Estate; Democratization and the Rise of the Free Press in Mexico*. University of California Press.
- Levitsky, S and Way, LA (2002), Elections Without Democracy, The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51–65.
- Levitsky, S and Way, LA (2010), *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lievrouw, L (2011), *Alternative and Activist New Media*. Polity.
- Lim, M (2013), Framing Bouazizi: ‘White Lies’, Hybrid Network, and Collective/Connective Action in the 2010-11 Tunisian Uprising. *Journalism*, 14(7): 921–941.
- Lincoln, YS and Guba, EG (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage.
- Locke, J (2014), *Second Treatise of Government: An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and End of Civil Government*. John Wiley & Sons.
- López Pacheco, JA (2013), Los Derechos Humanos En Movimiento: Una Revisión Teórica Contemporánea. *Espiral (Guadalajara)*, 20(56): 9–37.
- López Pacheco, JA (2015a), El Campo de Las ONG de Derechos Humanos En México: Recursos y Agendas. *Cotidiano - Revista de la Realidad Mexicana*, 30(194): 97–106.
- López Pacheco, JA (2015b), Fases Históricas de La Defensa de Los Derechos Humanos En Colombia y México. Las ONG En Contextos de Violencia, 1970-2010, 191–233, in: Ansolabehere, K., Serrano, S., and Vázquez, L. D. V. V. (Eds.), *Los derechos humanos y la violencia: Estado, instituciones y sociedad civil*. FLASCO Mexico.
- López Pacheco, JA (2017), Socialización de Información y Movilización de Las Víctimas. Estrategias Regionales de Defensa de Los Derechos Humanos Frente a La Violencia En México. *Papeles del CEIC*, (1): 7.
- López Pacheco, JA and Hincapié Jiménez, S (2015), Campos de Acción Colectiva y Las Ong de Derechos Humanos. Herramientas Teóricas Para Su Análisis. *Sociológica*, 85(mayo-agosto de 2015): 9–37.
- Madison, GB (2002), *The Political Economy of Civil Society and Human Rights*. Routledge.

- Malena, C, Forster, R and Singh, J (2004), Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice. *Social Development Papers, World Bank*, 76.
- Martens, C, Vivares, E and McChesney, R (2014), *The International Political Economy of Communication: Media and Power in South America*. Springer.
- Martínez Garza, F, González Macías, R and Miranda Villanueva, O (2015), Actores Políticos y Sociales de Los Telediarios: Una Tarea Pendiente de Las Televisoras Mexicanas. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70: 750–764.
- Martinez, R (2011), ‘Tuiteros’ Detenidos En Veracruz Por ‘Terrorismo’ Se Dicen Víctimas de Torturas. *Proceso*. available at <http://www.proceso.com.mx/279960/e2-80-9ctuiteros-e2-80-9d-detenidos-en-veracruz-por-e2-80-9cterrorismo-e2-80-9d-se-dicen-victimas-de-torturas> [6 December 2017].
- Marx Ferree, M and Merrill, DA (2000), Hot Movements, Cold Cognition: Thinking about Social Movements in Gendered Frames. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(3): 454–462.
- Marx, K (1844), On The Jewish Question. *Marxists Internet Archive*. available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/index.htm> [2 January 2018].
- Mason, J (2002), *Qualitative Researching*. Sage.
- Mattoni, A and Treré, E (2014), Media Practices, Mediation Processes, and Mediatization in the Study of Social Movements. *Communication Theory*, 24(3): 252–271.
- Mauleón, H de (2012), De La Red a Las Calles. *Nexos: Sociedad, Ciencia, Literatura*, 34(417): 35–43.
- McAdam, D (2010), *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. University of Chicago Press.
- McAdam, D, Tarrow, S and Tilly, C (2003), Dynamics of Contention. *Social Movement Studies*, 2(1): 99–102.
- McCarthy, JD and Zald, MN (1977), Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6): 1212.
- McLagan, M, Gregory, S, Avni, R and Torchin, L (2006), Technologies of Witnessing: The Visual Culture of Human Rights. *American Anthropologist*, 108(1): 191–220.
- Melucci, A (1996), *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge University Press.

- Meneses, ME (2013), Redes y Medios En El Proceso Electoral 2012: Mismas Prácticas, Herramientas Distintas. *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, 25(133): 19–23.
- Meneses Rocha, ME (2015), *Ciberutopias; Democracia, Redes Sociales, Movimientos-Red*. Editorial Porrúa.
- Meneses Rocha, ME and Castillo González, MC (2016), #TodosSomosAyotzinapa: Storytelling, Identidades, Representaciones y Reflexividad En Disputa. *Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación/Culture, Language and Representation*, 16(2): 37–56.
- Merriam, SB (2009), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Merry, SE (2006a), Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle. *American Anthropologist*, 108(1): 38–51.
- Merry, SE (2006b), *Human Rights and Gender Violence, Translating International Law into Local Justice*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Meyer, L (2015), Felipe Calderón o El Infortunio de Una Transición. *Foro internacional*, 55(1): 16–44.
- Milan, S (2013), *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. Springer.
- Mill, JS (1986), *On Liberty*. London: Penguin Classics.(Original work published 1859).
- Miller, J and Glassner, B (2001), The ‘inside’and the ‘Outside’: Finding Realities in Interviews, 125–139, in: Silverman, D. (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*. Sage London.
- Miniwatts Marketing Group (2018), Latin American Internet Usage Statistics. *Internet world stats*. available at <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats10.htm> [28 October 2018].
- Modonesi, M (2014), Post Zapatismo: Identidades y Culturas Políticas Juveniles y Universitarias En México. *Nueva sociedad*, (251): 136–152.
- Monsiváis Carrillo, A, Pérez Torres, A and Tavera Fenollosa, L (2014), Protesta Social, Política Deliberativa y Democracia: Un Análisis de Los “Diálogos Por La Paz” En México. *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 34(3): 623–644.
- Montalvo, T (2012), Peña Nieto Busca Dominar Las Redes Con Un ‘Ejército de Priistas En Línea’. *Expansión en Alianza con CNN*.
- Morozov, E (2012), *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. PublicAffairs.

- Morozov, E (2013), Not by Memes Alone. *The New Republic*: 46–52. available at <https://newrepublic.com/article/112189/social-media-doesnt-always-help-social-movements> [19 July 2018].
- Morris, L (2010), Sociology and the Two Faces of Human Rights. *Sociology Compass*, 5: 322–333.
- Mouffe, C (2005), *On the Political*. Psychology Press.
- Mouffe, C (2018), *For a Left Populism*. Verso Books.
- Moyn, S (2010), *The Last Utopia*. Harvard University Press.
- MPJD, SERAPAZ and CENCOS (2011), ‘Seguridad Ciudadana y Derechos Humanos En México’. available at <https://issuu.com/cencos/docs/comisioninteramerican> [19 July 2018].
- Munck, R (2013), *Rethinking Latin America: Development, Hegemony, and Social Transformation*. Springer.
- Nash, K (2012), Human Rights, Movements and Law: On Not Researching Legitimacy. *Sociology*, 46(5): 797–812.
- Nash, K (2015), *The Political Sociology of Human Rights*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nassif, AA (2009), El Desencanto de Una Democracia Incipiente. México Después de La Transición, 9–62, in: Rodríguez Araujo, O. (Ed.), *México ¿Un nuevo régimen político?* Siglo veintiuno editores.
- Navarro, LH (2015), Ayotzinapa: El Dolor y La Esperanza. *El Cotidiano*, 189: 7–17.
- Nieto, N (2013), La Corrupción Política En México: Del Pasado a La Transición Democrática. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 8(1): 127–145.
- Noakes, JA and Johnston, H (2005), Frames of Protest: A Road Map to a Perspective, 1–29, in: *Frames of protest: Social movements and the framing perspective*. Rowman & Littlefield Lanham, MD.
- Nyamu-Musembi, C (2005), Towards an Actor-Oriented Perspective on Human Rights, 31–49, in: Kabeer, N. (Ed.), *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*. Zed Books.
- O’Carroll, T and Escorcía, A (2017), Mexico’s Misinformation Wars. *Open Democracy*. available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/hri/tanya-ocarroll/mexico-misinformation-wars> [28 October 2018].
- O’Donnell, G (1993), On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A

- Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries. *World Development*, 21(8): 1355–1369.
- O'Donnell, G (1994), Delegative Democracy. *Journal of democracy*, 5(1): 55–69.
- O'Donnell, G and Schmitter, P (1986), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. John Hopkins University Press.
- OACNUDH (2018), Doble Injusticia: Informe Sobre Violaciones de Derechos Humanos En La Investigación Del Caso Ayotzinapa. available at http://www.hchr.org.mx/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1088:doble-injusticia-informe-sobre-violaciones-de-derechos-humanos-en-la-investigacion-del-caso-ayotzinapa&Itemid=280 [19 July 2018].
- Observatorio estudiantil de medios de Comunicación (2014), Medios y Redes En Caso Ayotzinapa. *Observatorio de la Comunicación II, Ciencias de la Comunicación del Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente*. available at <https://observatorio2iteso.wordpress.com/2014/11/26/medios-y-redes-en-caso-ayotzinapa/> [19 July 2018].
- Olivier, G and Tamayo, S (2015), Tensiones Políticas En El Proceso de Movilización-Desmovilización: El Movimiento #YoSoy132. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades*, (79): 131–170.
- Olson, M (1965), *Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press.
- Olvera, A (1997), Civil Society and Political Transition in Mexico. *Constellations*, 4(1): 105–123.
- Olvera, A (2003), Las Tendencias Generales Del Desarrollo de La Sociedad Civil En Mexico, 42–69, in: Olvera, A. and Celis Callejas, F. (Eds.), *Sociedad civil, esfera pública y democratización en América Latina*. Universidad Veracruzana, Fondo de Cultura Economica Mexico.
- Olvera, A (2010), The Elusive Democracy: Political Parties, Democratic Institutions and Civil Society in Mexico. *Latin America Research Review*, 45: 78–107.
- Olvera, A (2015), Moralidad Pública, Derechos Humanos y Sistema Político En México, , in: Hernández-Baqueiro, A. and Suárez-González, A. (Eds.), *Perspectivas éticas de la seguridad ciudadana en Chile y México*. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México.

- Olvera, A (2016), La Crisis Política, Los Movimientos Sociales y El Futuro de La Democracia En México. *Revista mexicana de ciencias políticas y sociales*, 61(226): 279–295.
- Olvera, A and Celis Callejas, F (Eds.) (2003), *Sociedad Civil, Esfera Pública y Democratización En América Latina*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Padilla, T (2009), Las Normales Rurales: Historia y Proyecto de Nación. *El Cotidiano*, (154): 85–93.
- Papacharissi, Z (2015), *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Paramétrica (2015), Las Marchas Por Ayotzinapa. *parametria.com.mx*. available at http://www.parametria.com.mx/carta_parametrica.php?cp=4717 [30 August 2017].
- Pateman, C (1970), *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Patton, MQ (1999), Enhancing the Quality and Credibility of Qualitative Analysis. *Health services research*, 34(5 Pt 2): 1189.
- Patton, MQ (2002), *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Sage.
- Paula Mónaco Felipe (2015), *Ayotzinapa Horas Eternas*. Ediciones B.
- Pearce, J (2010), Perverse State Formation and Securitized Democracy in Latin America. *Democratization*, 17(2): 286–306.
- Peruzzotti, E and Smulovitz, C (2003), Societal and Horizontal Controls: Two Cases of a Fruitful Relationship, 309–331, in: Mainwaring, S. and Welna, C. (Eds.), *Democratic Accountability in Latin America*. OUP Oxford.
- Petras, J (1997), Imperialism and NGOs in Latin America. *Monthly review*, 49(7): 10.
- Placencia, LG (2016), De La Crisis de Seguridad a La Crisis de Derechos Humanos. *Revista Pensamiento Penal*, 16 June.
- Pleyers, G, Garza Zepeda, M and Holloway, J (Eds.) (2017), *México En Movimientos. Resistencias y Alternativas*. MAPorra.
- Poell, T and Dijck, J (2016), Constructing Public Space: Global Perspectives on Social Media and Popular Contestation. *International Journal of Communication*, 10: 226–234.
- Polletta, F (2002), *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. University of Chicago Press.

- Polletta, F and Amenta, E (2001), Second That Emotion? Lessons from Once-Novel Concepts in Social Movement Research, 303–316, in: *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Polletta, F and Jasper, JM (2001), Collective Identity and Social Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(2001): 283–305.
- Poma, A and Gravante, T (2015), Las Emociones Como Arena de La Lucha Política. Incorporando La Dimensión Emocional Al Estudio de La Protesta y Los Movimientos Sociales. *Ciudadanía Activa, Revista Especializada en Estudios sobre la Sociedad Civil*, 3(4): 17–44.
- Della Porta, D (2013), *Can Democracy Be Saved*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Della Porta, D (2014), *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*. OUP Oxford.
- Della Porta, D and Diani, M (2006), *Social Movements: An Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Posner, EA (2014), *The Twilight of Human Rights Law*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Proceso (2011), '¡No Más Sangre!' *Proceso*. available at <http://www.proceso.com.mx/260600/260600-no-mas-sangre> [14 February 2018].
- Proceso (2014), Pide Unesco Al Gobierno de Peña Investigar Asesinato de Ciberactivista. available at <http://www.proceso.com.mx/385939/pide-unesco-al-gobierno-de-pena-investigar-asesinato-de-ciberactivista> [6 December 2017].
- Putnam, RD (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon and Schuster.
- Puyosa, I (2017), YoSoy132: Un Movimiento En Red, Post-Zapatista y Deliberativo, 67–100, in: Russo, J. (Ed.), *Democracias y ciudadanías en América Latina: Ensayos en honor de Francisco Delich*. Ediciones y Gráficos Eón, S.A. de C.V.
- Rajagopal, B (2003), *International Law from below: Development, Social Movements and Third World Resistance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reith, S (2010), Money, Power, and Donor–NGO Partnerships. *Development in Practice*, 20(3): 446–455.
- Reyna García, VH (2016), Cambio y Continuidad En El Periodismo Mexicano: Una Revisión Bibliográfica. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, 27: 79–96.

- Rheingold, H (2000), *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. MIT Press.
- Rieff, D (2018), The End of Human Rights? Learning from the Failure of the Responsibility to Protect and the International Criminal Court. *Foreign Affairs*, (April).
- Risse, T, Ropp, SC and Sikkink, K (1999), *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*. Cambridge University Press.
- Risse, T, Ropp, SC and Sikkink, K (2013), *The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Risse, T and Sikkink, K (1999), The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practices: Introduction. *Cambridge Studies in International Relations*, 66: 1–38.
- Ritchie, J and Lewis, J (Eds.) (2003), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage.
- Robertson, J, Riley, M and Willis, A (2016), How to Hack an Election. *Bloomberg Businessweek*2. available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-how-to-hack-an-election/> [28 October 2018].
- Rodio, EB and Schmitz, HP (2010), Beyond Norms and Interests: Understanding the Evolution of Transnational Human Rights Activism. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 14(3): 442–459.
- Rodríguez Munguía, J (2007), *La Otra Guerra Secreta: Los Archivos Prohibidos de La Prensa y El Poder*. Random House Debate.
- Ron, J, Golden, S, Peek, S, Sparling, L and Crow, D (2014), The Human Rights Sector in Mexico Evidence from Activists, the Public, and Elites. available at <http://jamesron.com/documents/hro-report-mexico.pdf> [28 October 2018].
- Ronfeldt, D, Arquilla, J, Fuller, G and Fuller, M (1999), *The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico*. Rand Corporation.
- Rousseau, JJ (1968), *The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right (Cranston, M., Trans.)*. London: Penguin Classics.(Original work published 1762).
- Rovira Sancho, G (2007), La Red Transnacional de Solidaridad Con La Rebelión Indígena de Chiapas y El Ciclo de Protestas Contra La Globalización (Tesis Doctoral). *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, México*.

- Rovira Sancho, G (2012), La Primavera Mexicana #YoSoy132, La Comunicación y El Proceso Electoral de 2012 En México. *Fundación Betiko*.
- Rovira Sancho, G (2013), Activismo Mediático y Criminalización de La Protesta: Medios y Movimientos Sociales En México. *Convergencia*, 20(61): 35–60.
- Rovira Sancho, G (2014), El #YoSoy132 Mexicano: La Aparición (Inesperada) de Una Red Activista. *Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals*, (105): 47–66.
- Salazar Villava, CM and Cabrera Amador, RE (2013), Heterogeneidad de Una Irrupción Social:#YoSoy132. *Tramas 40 UAM-X*: 15–40.
- Salem, S (2014), Creating Spaces for Dissent: The Role of Social Media in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, 171–188, in: Trottier, D. and Fuchs, C. (Eds.), *Social Media, Politics and the State Protests, Revolutions, Riots, Crime and Policing in the Age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube*. Routledge.
- Saltalamacchia, N and Covarrubias, A (2011), La Trayectoria de Los Derechos Humanos En La Política Exterior de México (1945-2006), 161–210, in: *Derechos Humanos en Política Exterior. Seis casos latinoamericanos*. México: Porrúa & ITAM.
- Saltalamacchia Ziccardi, N (2009), 1968 y Los Derechos Humanos En México. *Foreign affairs Latinoamérica*, 9(1): 133–142.
- Santos Díaz, A, Pérez Merlos, D, Mandujano Arrez, G and Tristán Quiñones, I (2015), Un Drama Social En El Estado: El Caso Ayotzinapa. *Boletín Onteaiken N°*, 19(mayo): 53–66.
- Schaffer, K and Smith, S (2004), *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*. Springer.
- Schedler, A (2013), Mexico's Civil War Democracy, in: *APSA 2013 Annual Meeting Paper; American Political Science Association 2013 Annual Meeting*. Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas.
- Scheingold, SA (2010), *The Politics of Rights: Lawyers, Public Policy, and Political Change*. University of Michigan Press.
- SEGOB (2012), 'Quinta Encuesta Nacional Sobre Cultura Política y Prácticas Ciudadanas'. available at <http://www.encup.gob.mx> [28 October 2018].
- Serrano, M (2017), A Humanitarian Crisis in the Making, 53–75, in: Panster, W., Smith, B., and Watt, P. (Eds.), *Beyond the Drug War in Mexico: Human rights, the public sphere and justice*.

- Shefner, J (2008), *The Illusion of Civil Society: Democratization and Community Mobilization in Low-Income Mexico*. Penn State Press.
- Shirky, C (2009), *Here Comes Everybody: How Change Happens When People Come Together*. Penguin UK.
- Shklar, JN (1990), *The Faces of Injustice*. Yale University Press.
- Short, D (2009), Sociological and Anthropological Approaches. *Human Rights. Politics and Practice*: 96.
- Sicilia, J (2011a), Discurso de Javier Sicilia, 8 de Mayo. *marchanacionalporlapaz.blogspot*. available at <http://marchanacionalporlapaz.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/discurso-de-javier-sicilia-8-de-mayo-df.html> [23 May 2017].
- Sicilia, J (2011b), Sicilia En El Zócalo: Cambio Radical o Boicot Electoral. *Proceso*. available at <http://www.proceso.com.mx/269424/sicilia-en-el-zocalo-cambio-radical-o-boicot-electoral> [19 July 2018].
- Sicilia, J (2011c), La Fuerza de La Debilidad y La Caravana Del Consuelo. *La Jornada*. available at <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2011/06/26/sem-javier.html> [28 October 2018].
- Sicilia, J (2016), *El Deshabitado*. Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial.
- Sikkink, K and Keck, M (1993), Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America. *International Organization*, 47(3): 411.
- Silverstone, R (2007), *Media and Morality*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Simmons, BA (2009), *Mobilizing for Human Rights: International Law in Domestic Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sjoberg, G, Gill, EA and Williams, N (2001), A Sociology of Human Rights. *Social Problems*, 48(1): 10–47.
- Smelser, N (1962), *Theory of Collective Behavior*. New York: The Free Press.
- Smith, PH (2005), Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective. *New York*.
- Snow, DA, Rochford, EB, Worden, SK and Benford, RD (1986), Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review*, 51(4): 464–481.
- Speed, S (2007), Exercising Rights and Reconfiguring Resistance in the Zapatista Juntas

- de Buen Gobierno, , in: Goodale, M. and Merry, S. E. (Eds.), *The practice of human right: tracking law between the global and the local*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stammers, N (1999), Social Movements and the Social Construction of Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21(4): 980–1008.
- Stammers, N (2004), Taking Part: Social Movements, INGOs and Global Change. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 29(3): 333–372.
- Stammers, N (2009), *Human Rights and Social Movements*. Pluto Press.
- Stammers, N and Eschle, C (2005), Social Movements and Global Activism, 50–67, in: De Jong, W., Shaw, M., and Stammers, N. (Eds.), *Global Activism, Global Media*. Pluto Press.
- Steiner, HJ, Alston, P and Goodman, R (2008), *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals: Text and Materials*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Stolle-McAllister, J (2005), *Mexican Social Movements and the Transition to Democracy*. McFarland & Company. McFarland.
- Suárez-Serrato, P, Roberts, ME, Davis, C and Menczer, F (2016), On the Influence of Social Bots in Online Protests: Preliminary Findings of a Mexican Case Study. *Social Informatics*, 10047: 269–278.
- Tamayo, S (2015a), Crisis de La Política y Cultura Política. El Movimiento Por Ayotzinapa. *Razon y Palabra*, 89(Marzo-mayo): 18–22.
- Tamayo, S (2015b), Violencia, Movimientos Sociales y Ayotzinapa. *Redpol*, (12): 1–25.
- Tarrow, S (1998), *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tarrow, S (2005), *The New Transnational Activism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tasioulas, J (2013), Human Rights, Legitimacy, and International Law. *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 58(1): 1–25.
- Tilly, C (1978), *From Mobilization to Revolution*. McGraw-Hill New York.
- Tilly, C (2004), *Social Movements, 1768-2004*. Paradigm Publisher.
- De Tocqueville (2003), *A Democracy in America (Vol. 10)*. Regnery Publishing.
- Touraine, A (1971), *The Post-Industrial Society: Tomorrow's Social History: Classes, Conflicts and Culture in the Programmed Society*. Random House.
- Trejo Delarbre, R (2011a), Televisión: De Mala Calidad y En Muy Pocas Manos, 85–96, in: Bravo, J., Vega Montiel, A., and Trejo Delarbre, R. (Eds.), *Panorama de la*

- comunicación en México 2011*. Asociación Mexicana de Derecho a la Información.
- Trejo Delarbre, R (2011b), Bajo El Imperio de La Televisión. *Infoamerica ICR*: 75–85.
- Trejo Delarbre, R (2014), Televisa: Viejas Prácticas, Nuevo Entorno. *Nueva sociedad*, (249): 149–162.
- Treré, E (2011), Nuevos Movimientos Sociales, Activismo Digital y Nuevas Tecnologías de La Comunicación. *Cuartas Jornadas: la comunicación como objeto de estudio. Teoría y prácticas en ciencias sociales. Memorias. Querétaro: Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro*: 1–9.
- Treré, E (2012), Social Movements as Information Ecologies: Exploring the Coevolution of Multiple Internet Technologies for Activism. *International Journal of Communication*, 6: 2359–2377.
- Treré, E (2013), #YoSoy132: La Experiencia de Los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales En México y El Papel de Las Redes Sociales Desde Una Perspectiva Crítica. *Educación Social. Revista de Intervención Socioeducativa*, (55): 112–121.
- Treré, E (2014), Más Allá de La Concepción Instrumental de La Comunicación En Los Movimientos Sociales: Los Medios Como Prácticas En El Ecosistema Comunicativo. *Comunicación y Cultura*: 61.
- Treré, E (2015a), Reclaiming, Proclaiming, and Maintaining Collective Identity in the #YoSoy132 Movement in Mexico: An Examination of Digital Frontstage and Backstage Activism through Social Media and Instant Messaging Platforms. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(8): 901–915.
- Treré, E (2015b), The Struggle within: Discord, Conflict and Paranoia in Social Media Protest, 163–180, in: Dencik, L. and Leistert, O. (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on social media and protest: Between control and emancipation*. Rowman and Littlefield Lanham.
- Treré, E (2016), The Dark Side of Digital Politics,. *IDS Bulletin*, 47(1).
- Treré, E and Barranquero, A (2013), De Mitos y Sublimes Digitales: Movimientos Sociales y Tecnologías de La Comunicación Desde Una Perspectiva Histórica. *Revista de Estudios para el Desarrollo Social de la Comunicación*, 8: 27–47.
- Treré, E and Cargnelutti, D (2014), Movimientos Sociales, Redes Sociales y Web 2.0: El Caso Del Movimiento Por La Paz Con Justicia y Dignidad. (Spanish). *Communication & Society / Comunicación y Sociedad*, 27(1): 183–203.

- Trottier, D (2016), *Social Media as Surveillance: Rethinking Visibility in a Converging World*. Routledge.
- Tucker, JA, Theocharis, Y, Roberts, ME and Barberá, P (2017), From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy. *Journal of democracy*, 28(4): 46–59.
- Tuckman, J (2012a), *Mexico: Democracy Interrupted*. Yale University Press.
- Tuckman, J (2012b), Pressure on Mexican Presidential Candidate in Televisa Media Row. *The Guardian*.
- Tufekci, Z (2015), Algorithmic Harms beyond Facebook and Google: Emergent Challenges of Computational Agency. *J. on Telecomm. & High Tech. L.*, 13: 203.
- Tufekci, Z and Wilson, C (2012), Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations From Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62(2): 363–379.
- Turner, BS (1993), Outline of a Theory of Human Rights. *Sociology*, 27(3): 489–512.
- UN General Assembly (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights. available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- UN General Assembly (1985), Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. *UNGA Resolution 40, p34*.
- UN Human Rights Council (2014a), Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Mission to Mexico. *A/HRC/28/68/Add.3*.
- UN Human Rights Council (2014b), Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. Mission to Mexico. *A/HRC/26/36/Add.3*. available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Executions/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx>
- UN Human Rights Council (2017), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders on His Mission to Mexico. *A/HRC/37/51/Add.2*.
- UNDP (2002), *Human Development Report: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- UNESCO (2017), Concentration of Media Ownership and Freedom of Expression: Global Standards and Implications for the Americas. available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002480/248091E.pdf> [28 October 2018].

- Velasco, JL (2005), *Insurgency, Authoritarianism, and Drug Trafficking in Mexico's 'Democratization'*. Routledge.
- Verkamp, J-P and Gupta, M (2013), Five Incidents, One Theme: Twitter Spam as a Weapon to Drown Voices of Protest. *The 3rd USENIX Workshop on Free and Open Communications on the Internet*. available at <https://www.usenix.org/conference/foci13/technical-sessions/papers/verkamp> [28 October 2018].
- Villa Gómez, JD (2012), La Acción y El Enfoque Psicosocial de La Intervención En Contextos Sociales: ¿Podemos Pasar de La Moda a La Precisión Teórica, Epistemológica y Metodológica? *El Ágora USB*, 12(2): 349–365.
- Villamil, J (2013), 'Manuel Cossío Ramos , El Espía Del Cisen En El Movimiento #YoSoy132'. *El Proceso*. available at <http://www.proceso.com.mx/343793/manuel-cossio-ramos-el-espia-del-cisen-en-el-yosoy132> [19 July 2018].
- Villegas, P and Malki, E (2016), Mexican Report Says Investigators Botched Search for 43 Students. *New York Times*. available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/15/world/americas/igual-mexico-missing-students-report.html> [19 July 2018].
- Waisman, C (2006), Autonomy, Self-Regulation and Democracy: Tocquevillean-Gellnerian Perspectives on Civil Society and the Bifurcated State in Latin America, 17–33, in: Feinberg, R., Waisman, C., and Zamosc, L. (Eds.), *Civil society and democracy in Latin America*. Springer.
- Warren, ME (2011), Civil Society and Democracy, 337–348, in: Edwards, M. (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of civil society*. Oxford University Press.
- Watt, P and Zepeda, R (2012), *Drug War Mexico: Politics, Neoliberalism and Violence in the New Narcoeconomy*. Zed Books.
- Weber, M (1946), Politics as a Vocation, 77–128, in: Gerth, H. H. and Wright Mills, C. (Eds.), *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Wellman, B (2001), Computer Networks as Social Networks. *American Association for the Advancement Of Science*, 293(5537): 2031–2034.
- Wellman, B (2004), Connecting Communities: On and Offline. *Contexts*, 3(4): 22–28.
- Wessels, B (2010), *Understanding the Internet: A Socio-Cultural Perspective*. Palgrave

Macmillan.

Wessels, B (2017), *Communicative Civic-Ness Social Media and Political Culture*.
Routledge.

Weyland, K (2004), Neoliberalism and Democracy in Latin America: A Mixed Record.
Latin American Politics and Society, 46(1): 135–157.

Wilson, RA (1997), Human Rights, Culture, and Context: An Introduction, 1–27, in:
Wilson, R. A. (Ed.), *Human Rights, Culture, and Context: Anthropological
Perspectives*. Pluto Press.

Yashar, DJ (2005), *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous
Movements and the Postliberal Challenge*. Cambridge University Press.

Yin, RK (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Sage Publications.

Zakaria, F (1997), The Rise of Illiberal Democracy. *Foreign affairs*, 76: 22–43.

Zires, M (2014), Violencia, Redes Sociales y Procesos de Subjetivación Política: El Caso
De# Verfollow En Veracruz, México. *Argumentos (México, DF)*, 27(75): 119–144.

Zygmunt, B (2000), *Liquid Modernity*. Polity, Cambridge.

Appendix

What is meant by ‘human rights discourse’ in this thesis?

Practical and theoretical dimensions of human rights are discussed in section 2.4, but the concept of ‘human rights discourse’ that this thesis adopts refers to the broad intellectual idea and project of human rights as universal standards of behaviour and treatment that individuals and communities are entitled to by virtue of being human. According to the United Nations:

“Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.”⁴⁸³

This appendix provides an account of different dimensions of human rights discourse that are relevant to the thesis.

International human rights law. This establishes particular rights through the UN General Assembly’s 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international and regional treaties, conventions and mechanisms as well as through their recognition in national and local laws. These rights are established by imposing obligations on states.

However, while these legal instruments instantiate rights in international and national public law, ‘human rights discourse’ also refers to the wider social and political uses and meanings of human rights in terms of upholding values inherent to human dignity.

⁴⁸³ United Nations: ‘What are human rights’, available at <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/> [29 October 2018].

This includes how ideas of human rights are manifested and contested in the media, popular culture, academia and activism.

Human rights activism. This refers to a dual process. Firstly, activists, who are often lawyers or others with some knowledge of international human rights law, analyse a particular context or events affecting individuals or communities unfairly in terms of breaches in international human rights norms. Activists, who are sometimes directly from the communities affected or acting on their behalf, gather and present publicly human rights claims based on evidence that powerholders - usually, but not exclusively, state authorities - are violating or failing to comply with obligations established in national or international human rights law. This can lead to legal cases presented to the courts, but not necessarily, as activists may focus their claims on media or public sphere exposure of injustice (particularly if fair and impartial legal or administrative redress is inaccessible because of the domestic context). In this situation, international human rights norms are invoked as the standard to judge local actions by and increase pressure on powerholders, through legal and/or moral pressure.

The second process, which is less well recognised, involves bottom-up influence on international human rights law. In this case, local contexts of unfair treatment of individuals or communities, which have not thus far been recognised as human rights violations in international human rights law, are interpreted and presented as manifestations of the denial of human dignity inherent in the principles of human rights discourse, even if not in the letter of human rights law. This process, often involving local communities, victims, activists, academics and international legal experts, can lead to reinterpretation or extension of international human rights law to include previously unrecognised instances of human rights violations. Examples of this process include the process of gender-based violence and denial of indigenous people' rights being recognised as violations of international human rights law.

These two processes are part of the complex dialogue between particular instances of denial of human rights, claims-making and the legal machinery of instantiation. It also

illustrates how despite the concept of human rights being open (i.e. what constitutes human dignity?), they are also constantly in the process of definition and partial closure through instantiation.

Another feature of advocacy in relation to human rights issues, is the use of human rights frames to communicate specific grievances in terms of violations in universal human rights, such as the right to free speech or the right not to be killed, disappeared, discriminated against or denied access to justice and the basic necessities to live with dignity and freedom. In this thesis, human rights frames refer to public sphere narratives that appeal to the concept of universal human rights; to position particular instances of injustice in relation to them and identify powerholder responsibilities in terms of failing to comply with these norms. Framing analysis is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3 in relation to the mobilizing process of social movements.

These are some of the key features involved in the concept of 'human rights discourse' which this thesis examines, particularly in relation to the dynamics of social mobilization.

Annex

Annex 1: YoSoy132: un pliego petitorio al pie de la Estela de Luz. 23 mayo 2012

La situación en la que se encuentra México exige que las y los jóvenes tomemos el presente en nuestras manos, es momento de que luchemos por un cambio en nuestro país, es momento de que pugnemus por un México más libre, más próspero y más justo.

Queremos que la situación actual de miseria, desigualdad, pobreza y violencia sea resuelta.

Las y los jóvenes de México creemos que el sistema político y económico no responde a las demandas de todos los mexicanos.

Los estudiantes unidos de este país creemos que una condición necesaria para corregir esta situación consiste en empoderar al ciudadano a través de la información, ya que ésta nos permite tomar mejores decisiones políticas, económicas y sociales. La información hace posible que los ciudadanos puedan exigir y criticar de manera fundamentada a su gobierno, a los actores políticos, a los empresarios y a la sociedad misma. Por eso, "Yo Soy 132" hace del derecho a la información y del derecho a la libertad de expresión sus principales demandas.

Hoy los jóvenes de México hemos encendido una luz en la vida pública del país. Asumamos este momento histórico con valentía e integridad. No esperemos más, no calleemos más, los jóvenes decimos ¡Presente!

A los medios de comunicación nacionales e internacionales, a las instancias competentes del gobierno, a la sociedad mexicana en general, el movimiento "Yo Soy 132", declara:

Primero, somos un movimiento ajeno a cualquier postura partidista y constituido por ciudadanos, por lo tal no expresamos muestras de apoyo o rechazo hacia ningún candidato político. Nuestros deseos y exigencias se centran en la defensa de la libertad de expresión y del derecho de información de los mexicanos. Nuestra preocupación se

deriva del estado actual de la prensa nacional y los medios de comunicación, así como de su papel político

en el contexto democrático.

Segundo, “Yo soy 132”, no representa a ninguna institución pública de educación superior, ni privada, su representación depende únicamente de los individuos que se suman a esta causa ya que se articulan por medio de los comités universitarios.

Tercero, el movimiento “Yo Soy 132” a través de la deliberación interuniversitaria democrática, cuenta ya con principios generales que guían su causa, así como estatutos que aseguran la participación de los individuos ya de los grupos que los hacen suyos.

En esencia, nuestro movimiento busca la democratización de los medios de comunicación, con el fin de garantizar información transparente, plural e imparcial para fomentar una consciencia y pensamiento críticos.

Es por eso que, exigimos competencia real en el mercado de medios de comunicación, en particular a lo referente al duopolio televisivo.

Exigimos hacer del acceso a Internet un derecho constitucional efectivo en los términos que establece el Art. 1 de nuestra Carta Magna.

Exigimos la instalación en todos los medios informativos radio, televisión y medios impresos, civiles que defiendan el interés público, como lo son la publicación de un Código de Ética del manejo informativo y la instauración de un ombudsman.

Exigimos someter a concurso producciones para los canales públicos permisionarios a las distintas escuelas de Comunicación. Exigimos abrir el debate entre los jóvenes y los medios de comunicación sobre las demandas aquí expuestas.

También exigimos garantizar la seguridad de todos los integrantes de este movimiento, de quienes se expresan libremente en el país y en particular de aquellos periodistas que han sido alcanzados por la violencia.

Además, expresamos nuestra absoluta solidaridad con las personas que en los próximos días han sido reprimidas por manifestar libremente sus ideas en distintos Estados de la República Mexicana.

Como demanda inmediata exigimos la transmisión en cadena nacional del debate de los candidatos a la Presidencia de la República. Y no encontramos en esto una imposición a las audiencias privilegiadas, sino como forma de garantizar el derecho de elegir ver o no a quienes hoy no cuentan con esa posibilidad.

Universitarios, jóvenes y ciudadanos de la República Mexicana, este movimiento los convoca a organizarse y sumarse y hacer suyo este Pliego Petitorio.

Por una democracia auténtica, "Yo Soy 132".

Source: Animal Político, 23 mayo 2012, available at <
<https://www.animalpolitico.com/2012/05/declaratoria-y-pliego-petitorio-de-yo-soy-132/>> [28 October 2018]

Annex 2: Asamblea Nacional Interuniversitaria "Yo Soy 132"

Boletín de prensa, 30 mayo 2012

Resolutivos provisionales sobre las discusiones en mesas de trabajo que llevaron a cabo jóvenes y estudiantes que participan activamente en el Movimiento "Yo soy 132", organizados en la Asamblea Nacional.

Interuniversitaria. El evento se llevó a cabo el día 30 de mayo de 2012, en Las Islas de Ciudad Universitaria de la UNAM, con una participación de 54 universidades (públicas y privadas) de diversos estados de la República Mexicana. El evento contó con la participación solidaria de diversos artistas, intelectuales, académicos y organizaciones de la sociedad civil, así como con la asistencia de más de 90 medios locales, nacionales e internacionales. Al encuentro asistieron más de 6500 personas.

1. Acerca de la postura y posición política del movimiento

-Somos un movimiento autónomo y apartidista, que se declara plural, incluyente y pacífico.

-Declaramos que la cultura, el arte y la educación serán nuestras armas más poderosas de expresión, manifestación y participación política.

-Nos pronunciamos en contra de la imposición mediática de cualquier candidato a elección popular, así como de los sesgos informativos en los medios de comunicación, particularmente de las grandes televisoras del país.

-Ante la coyuntura electoral, nos manifestamos en contra de la manipulación mediática e inconformes con un proceso electoral contaminado que pretende restaurar el viejo régimen político.

-Consideramos que el antiguo régimen priísta ha practicado la violencia de Estado, la represión, el autoritarismo, la corrupción generalizada, la opacidad en la toma de decisiones públicas, la coacción del voto, entre otras prácticas antidemocráticas.

-Creemos que existe suficiente evidencia para demostrar que la cara actual de ese viejo régimen es el candidato Enrique Peña Nieto y el proyecto que éste representa. Aclaremos que no se trata de odio ni de intolerancia contra su nombre, sino hartazgo e indignación ante lo que el candidato del PRI representa.

-Ante ello, y considerando que los estudiantes no conseguiremos solos detener la restauración del viejo régimen, hacemos un atento llamado a otros sectores sociales que al igual que nosotros se sienten indignados por el estado actual de la nación, para llevar a cabo distintas manifestaciones pacíficas, creativas y propositivas en todo el país.

2. Frente al contexto electoral, la falta de información y la transparencia en los comicios, el movimiento declara:

-No confiamos en el Instituto Federal Electoral ni en los partidos políticos. Reconocemos que se está gestando un fraude electoral, que puede llevar al país a una crisis social y política de mayor profundidad.

-Nos pronunciamos por un proceso electoral limpio, transparente y equitativo. Rechazamos cualquier tipo de imposición, a través de cualquier medio, del candidato del PRI: Enrique Peña Nieto.

-Hacemos un llamado a la unidad nacional. Este movimiento y los movimientos sociales de este país tienen un potencial importantísimo para cambiar las cosas. Tenemos la capacidad para organizarnos y cambiar el rumbo de nuestra nación.

-Ante un posible escenario de fraude electoral o de imposición, proponemos documentar todo lo que ocurra durante la elección, a través de mecanismos audiovisuales, redes sociales y medios de comunicación alternativos.

-Proponemos hacer una campaña que denuncie el proceso antidemocrático, ilegítimo y fraudulento que hay detrás de la elección.

-Exigimos que el IFE reconozca a los observadores del Movimiento "Yo soy 132" para vigilar la elección.

-Llamamos a organismos internacionales como la CELAC, para participar en la observación de la jornada electoral del próximo 1 de julio. Proponemos una campaña de recaudación de firmas, a través de este movimiento.

-Llamamos a la sociedad civil, y a las organizaciones sociales que coincidan con este movimiento, a construir un centro de cómputo ciudadano independiente, que tenga observadores en todas las casillas del país, para hacer un cómputo paralelo.

-Exigimos que el próximo debate del 10 de junio, se transmita en vivo y en cadena nacional, y que el Movimiento "Yo soy 132" puedan incidir en los temas del debate: particularmente en materia de política educativa y democratización de los medios de comunicación.

3. Respecto a la participación en espacios públicos en los medios de comunicación:

-Exigimos un código de ética para los medios de comunicación, así como el establecimiento de la figura de ombudsman -o defensor de la audiencia- en todos los medios, garantizando el derecho de replica consagrado en el Artículo 6 de la Constitución.

-Exigimos una revisión del esquema actual de repartición de tiempos electorales.

-Impulsamos la creación de medios de comunicación propios de las universidades de cada entidad, además de la difusión de TV UNAM a nivel nacional.

-Proponemos, a partir del lunes 25 de junio, a todos los del "Yo soy 132" a liberar la clave de sus módems para garantizar el acceso de la sociedad a la información que se distribuye en la red.

-Impulsaremos la creación de diversos medios de comunicación alternativos para el movimiento.

-Crearemos un podcast que se llame: "¿Quién es Peña Nieto?", que se difundirá a través del transporte público y así como en otros medios de divulgación.

4. Agenda post-electoral y alcances del movimiento Declaramos mantener el Movimiento "Yo Soy 132", incluso después del período electoral, en apoyo a un proyecto de nación democrático y viable. La agenda pos-electoral del Movimiento "Yo soy 132" impulsará los siguientes aspectos:

-Reforma política de los medios de comunicación.

-Constituir en un movimiento que lucha a favor de las demandas de la sociedad, independientemente de las elecciones.

-Exigir la transparencia y rendición de cuentas.

-Exigir espacios democráticos en medios de comunicación.

-Esclarecer, evidenciar y prevenir los feminicidios.

5. Respecto a las políticas educativas, el movimiento exige:

-Que se ejerza con transparencia el presupuesto destinado a la educación.

-Que se garantice el acceso y la permanencia a la educación gratuita a todos los mexicanos sin distinción alguna, en todos los niveles o sistemas educativos del país.

-El rechazo total y absoluto al Programa de Créditos Educativos para la Educación Superior porque viola los artículos 3ro y 24 de la Carta Magna.

-La constante renovación de la plantilla docente y de investigación de las universidades públicas, así como los estímulos dignos para el retiro de los académicos.

-El cese del Elba Esther Gordillo del cargo de Presidenta Vitalicia del SNTE que ocupa ilegítimamente.

Exigimos juicio político a Elba Esther Gordillo; que se investiguen sus cuentas bancarias, propiedades, y las de sus familiares y prestanombres.

-Que el Secretario de Educación Pública tenga una preparación pertinente en materia educativa.

-Erradicar el analfabetismo de todo el territorio nacional.

6. En materia de Ciencia, Tecnología y Salud, el movimiento declara:

-Exigimos que el presupuesto REAL destinado a Ciencia y Tecnología sea del 2%, garantizando su uso efectivo.

-Debe prohibirse cualquier proselitismo basado en el bienestar social. La salud es un derecho y no una mercancía.

-Exigimos en el próximo debate a candidatos presidenciales hacer explícitas sus prioridades, estrategias, presupuesto y gabinete en las áreas de Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología.

-Demandamos la creación de la Secretaría de Ciencia y Tecnología.

-Exigimos la creación de la asignatura de promoción de la salud, ciencia y tecnología en todos los niveles de educación básica, abierta a la multidisciplina.

-Exigimos la inclusión en los medios de comunicación, televisión y radio, de espacios para la divulgación científica.

-Demandamos que el gobierno electo entregue al Movimiento "Yo soy 132" y a la sociedad, su programa de actividades en materia de salud, ciencia y tecnología para que el movimiento realice una vigilancia en el cumplimiento.

Source: Grupo Formula, 31 mayo 2012. Available at <

<https://www.radioformula.com.mx/notasimp.asp?Idn=247039&idFC=2012>> [28

October 2018]