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Journalism and social movements: Re-drafting our 1st draft of history. The case of the #UmbrellaMovement in Hong Kong and #RenunciaYa in Guatemala

Conference Paper · March 2017

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Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Unpaid internships and their effect on diversity in newsrooms [View project](#)



Online Mainstream coverage of social movements. [View project](#)

Online mainstream media coverage of social movements

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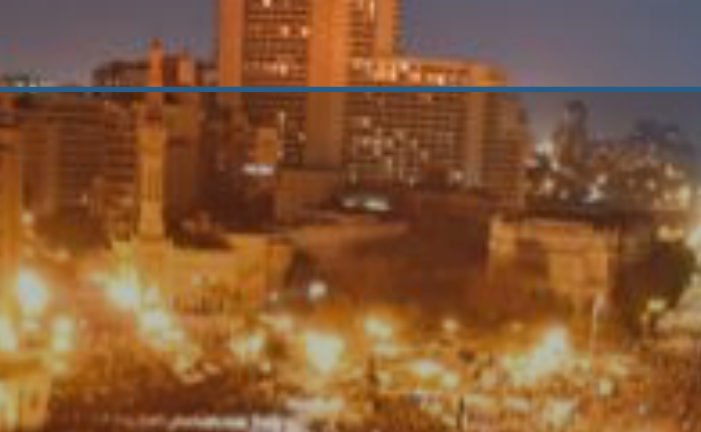
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I am Laura

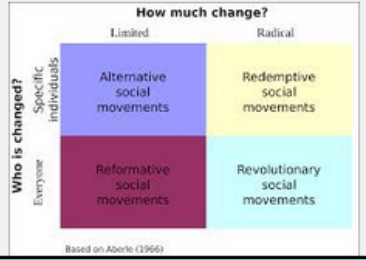
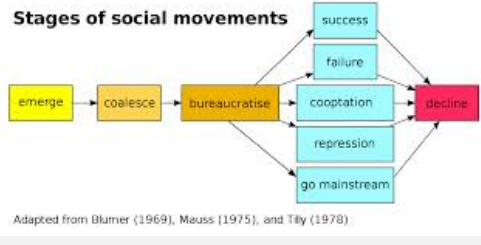


I want to talk to you about time





**ARAB SPRING /
TWITTER
REVOLUTIONS**





"Liberty leading the people" by Eugene Delacroix

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS



Sociology
Political science
Social Psychology
Urban Studies
Communications
History
Memory Studies

NOT
JOURNALISM

PURPOSE OF MY RESEARCH

- How does coverage translate into the daily actions of normal over-worked & underpaid human beings like everybody else?
- What is it about social movements that is so hard to translate into news?
- What could we do to improve our coverage?

1.

Social Movements

Let's start from
the beginning

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- Not even academics agree on how to define “social movements”
- Similar (sometimes synonymous?) to a lot of different social gatherings
 - “fraternities, youth groups, political parties, sects, nudists, voluntary associations, guerrilla organizations, cool jazz or beat literature – all fell under the rubric of <social movements>” (Cohen & Rai, 1998, p.1)
- “at the heart of every day life” (Touraine, 1981)
- Green movement, feminist movement, etc.

Basic characteristics

COLLECTIVE:

social exercise with a specific goal

CONSTRUCTIVE:

they strive for social change
(inside/outside of the system)

CHANGING:

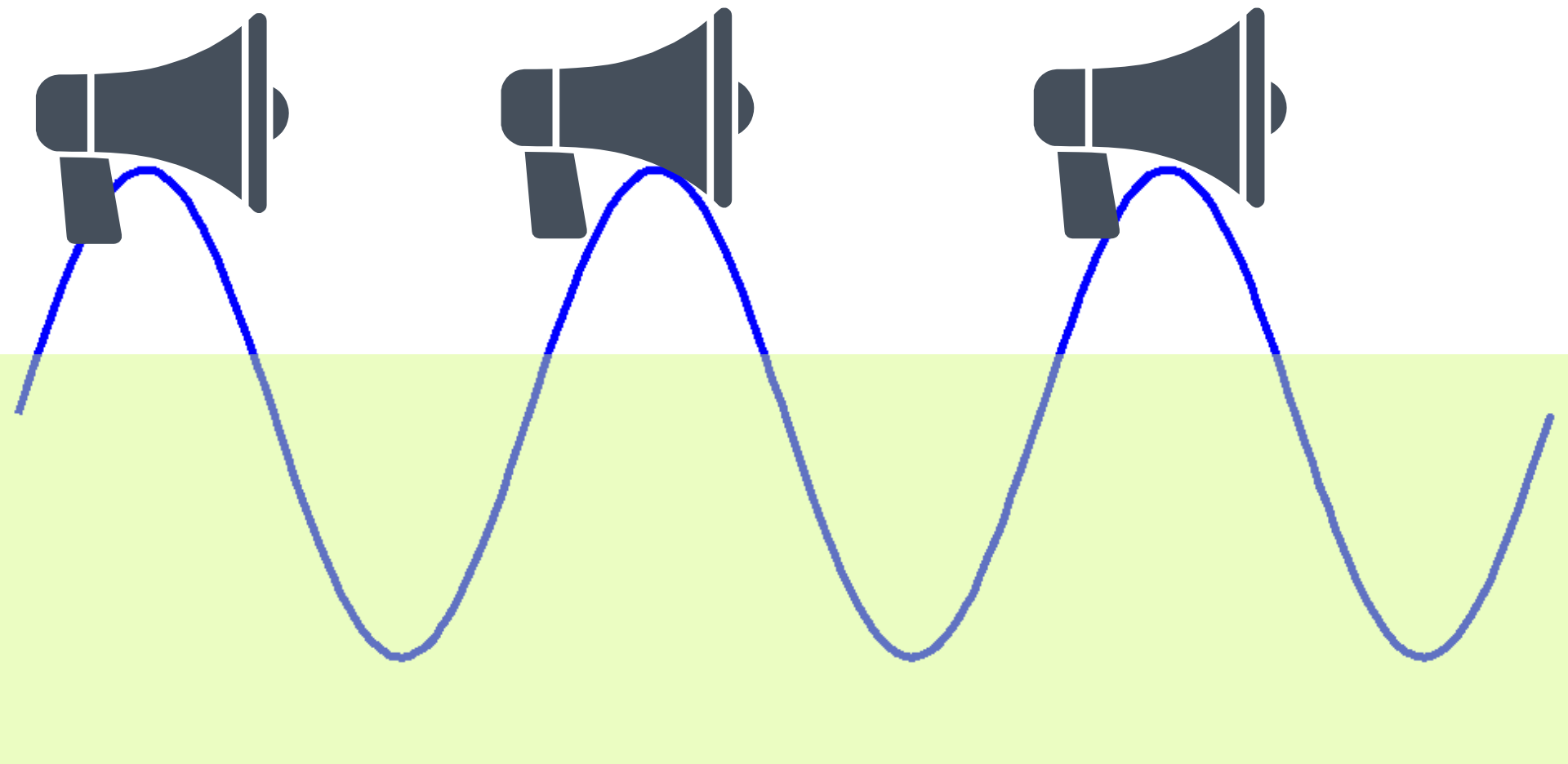
SM are “predictable only in the historical certainty that they will keep changing” (Edwards, 2004, p.128)

CHOSEN DEFINITION



“networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared identity”

(Diani & Bison, 2004, p. 282)



“invisible submerged networks” and periods of latency

2.

Journalism

Here is where it
gets interesting

**The very nature
of journalism
makes it
focused, nearly
obsessed with
the present.**



TIME



**“News is what a chap
who doesn’t care
much about anything
wants to read.
And it’s only news
until he’s read it.
After that it’s dead”**

(Waugh, *Scoop*, 1943, p. 66)

SELECTING WHAT IS NEWS

- Unwritten rules to decide what is “newsworthy”
- Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge (1965)
- Tony Harcup and Deirdre O’Neill (2001)
- Alan Bell (1991)
- Balance between entertainment (click-bait) and news value
- Audience interests
- ACTIVE decision by journalists

Nature of social movements v.
nature of “newsworthiness” or
making news

FRAMES



“Journalists routinely fail to provide the larger contexts (thematic frames) behind protests and cover them merely as disorder and violence news (episodic frames).” (Iyengar, 1991)

RIOT PORN is sexier

J AS SOCIAL NARRATIVE



“media are more than printed or electronic content: they are a meaning making in their own right with a complex set of symbols created by a series of journalistic conventions”
(Nicodemus, 2004, p.164)

MEDIA SHAPES HOW WE UNDERSTAND HOW SOCIAL CHANGE



HOW WE THINK ABOUT NEWS



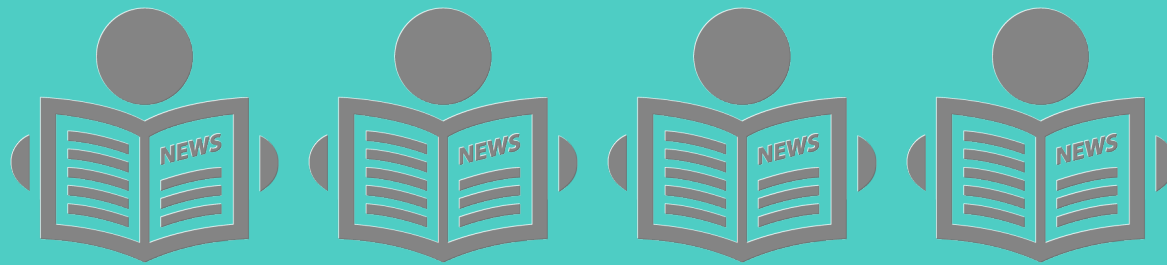
**News is the
“first rough
draft of
history”**

- former Washington Post
President & Publisher Philip L.
Graham

For the most part “the past is seen as being outside the parameters of journalists’ attention” (Zelizer, 2008, p. 81).



TIME



DAILY HEADLINES ADD UP TO A
NARRATIVE OF HOW SOCIAL CHANGE
HAPPENS



“The digital environment makes it clear that journalists no longer have a monopoly over time”

▣ (Zelizer 2017, p.5)



accumulated contemporaneity

**the paradoxical systematic
combination of chronicling and
archiving, or looking sideways
and backwards, by which the
meaning of a news event is
progressively crafted**

(Bodker, 2016)

Nature of news VS

Nature of social movements

Temporality of social change

Daily Coverage VS

historical record/narrative

Temporality of news production

Context VS

Background

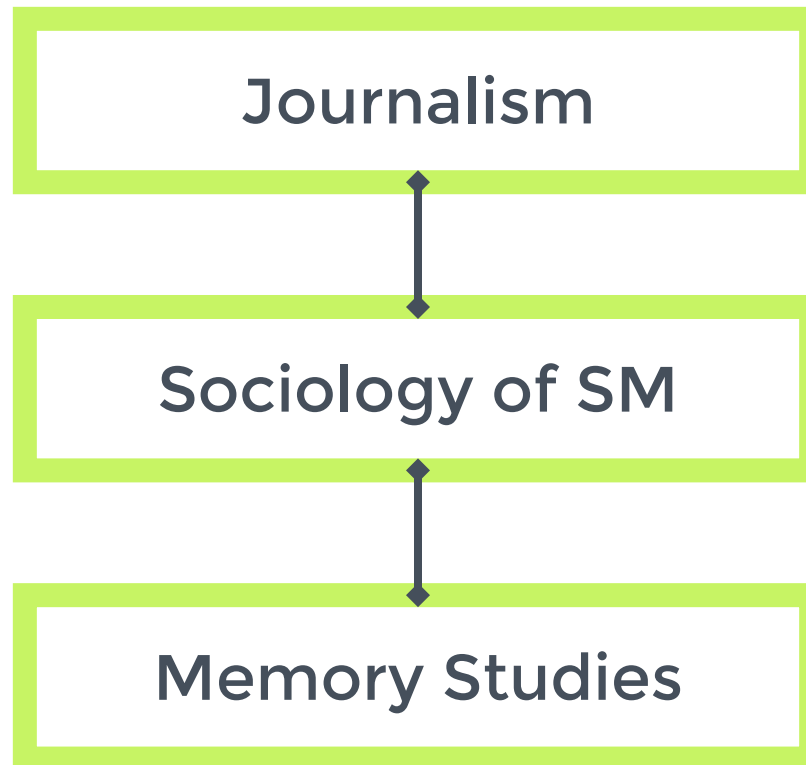
How much information is included

3.

Methodology

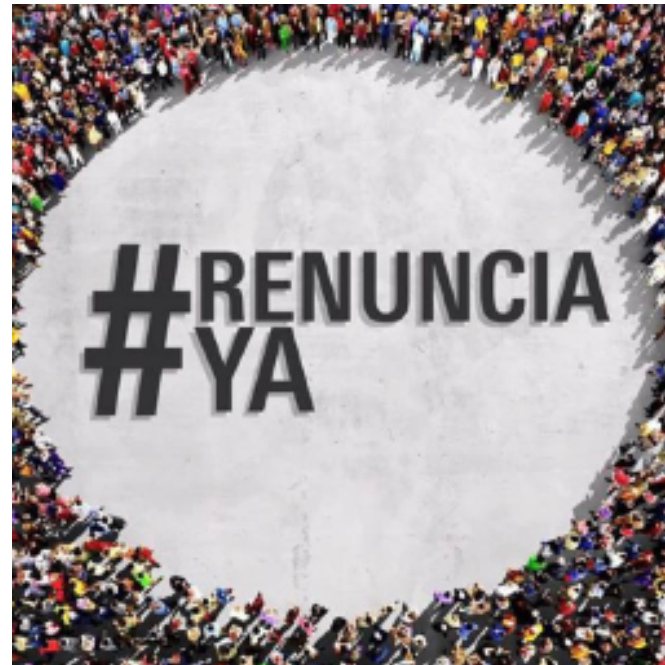
Work in
progress...

NEWSROOM CENTERED APPROACH



TWO CASE STUDIES

Data analysis of online coverage before during and after the events +
Semi structured interviews with journalists



#UmbrellaMovement - #RenunciaYa

HONG KONG

Democracy movement
goes back to the 80s
Linked to Independence
movement
Linked to media culture
post 1997 handover
Cross generational
identity movement
Has immediate political
goals and long term
social goals.

GUATEMALA

Transparency movement
goes back to the 60s
Direct political goals that
were achieved
Impeach president Otto
Perez Molina Aug 2015
Did not start from
politics, became cultural
call, still lingers

#UmbrellaMovement - #RenunciaYa

HONG KONG

- ▣ Occupy Central
- ▣ 26 Sept -15 Dec 2014

▣ TIME FRAME

- ▣ March 2014-March 2016

GUATEMALA

- ▣ July -Sept 2015
- ▣ Otto Perez Molina resigns on 3rd of Sept

TIME FRAME

Jan 2015 - Jan 2017

DATA COLLECTION



- ▣ BBC News /
BBC Mundo /
BBC World

- ▣ CNN / CNN
Español

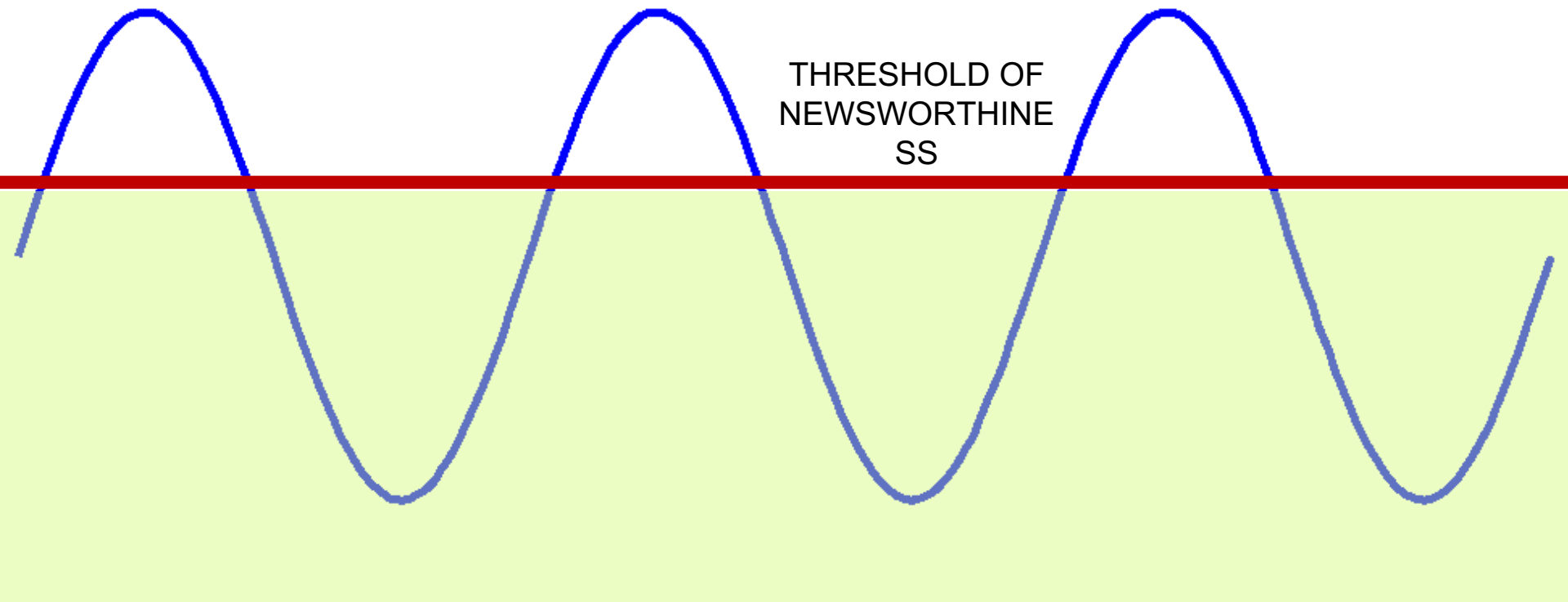
- ▣ New York
Times

- ▣ The Guardian

- ▣ South China
Morning Post

- ▣ Prensa Libre

ONLINE – MAINSTREAM- EASILY ACCESIBLE



Understand temporal news practices beyond the present

What to look for?

- networks of informal interactions
- a plurality of individuals
- political or cultural conflict
- a shared identity

- Frequency of coverage
- Type of sources
- Reliance on social media
- Mentions of organising
- Use of images
- Perception of outcomes

Challenges for journalists

- ▣ Organized even if they are not vertical.
- ▣ “low degree of institutionalization, high heterogeneity, a lack of clearly defined boundaries and decision making structures” (Koopmans, 1993, p.637)
- ▣ Conflict, reaction, opposition, unrest, disturbance, protest?
- ▣ SM create a public space where politics and culture overlap in different degrees

WHY?

- Lack of awareness of how SM work
- Lack of time
Multitasking budget tightened newsrooms
- Lack of resources
- Geography of stories, cover half the world away
Social media is great! But widens the coverage area and audience
- Lack of specialised knowledge (BEATS)
Human rights
Conflict
Politics
Crime

Thanks!

Any questions?



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