

A GUIDE TO UTILIZE CYBERACTIVISM

FOR FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

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# #IN-SIGHT: A Product Service System for Leveraging Cyberactivism in Non-Governmental Organizations

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To my younger-self.

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## ABSTRACT

The driving force behind activism in the digital age is increasingly coming from behind screens rather than just the streets. The rise of cyberactivism on social media platforms has emerged as a significant phenomenon, empowering marginalized groups to amplify their voices in the digital realm. Despite social media's significance in social movements, the dispersed nature and inherent characteristics of social media result in fragmented participation in cyberactivist activities, ultimately reducing its potential impact. Previous studies have examined the concept of cyberactivism and its influence on social movements, but there has been a lack of research focusing on the structuring of cyberactivism activities to effectively instigate social change. The aim of this study was to investigate how the design of a product service system can be employed to support the redirection of cyberactivism activities for gender-based violence cases, enabling marginalized groups to effectively exert pressure on oppressive regimes. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were identified as key catalysts in bridging the gap between the public and government officials. A broad literature review was done for a comprehensive analysis of social media's structure and characteristics, focusing on user engagement and government response. Case studies on cyberactivism related to gender-based violence were examined using autoethnography, revealing fragmented activity and the need for a targeted approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGOs in order to gain insights into their internal dynamics as well as their online and offline outreach. Drawing from



broad literature review and field research, the product service system, #IN-SIGHT, was designed to enhance the effective utilization of social media for raising awareness and mobilizing action against gender-based violence. Co-design sessions were held to test #IN-SIGHT, the primary result for all organizations is the delivery of helpful guidelines that enhance the effective utilization of social media, enabling them to communicate their messages efficiently and save valuable time. This system proved particularly beneficial for newly-established and small organizations with limited media presence, fostering the growth of well-structured local organizations and promoting feminist ideology. Through its expanded reach, #IN-SIGHT empowers organizations to exert pressure on governmental bodies and accelerate the response process. Additionally, the product service system fosters a deeper understanding among NGOs regarding the importance of social media in activism, prompting them to reevaluate and improve their online presence.

**Key words:** *cyberactivism, gender-based violence, intersectional feminism, Non-Governmental Organizations, social media, product service system design*

## RIASSUNTO

La forza trainante dell'attivismo nell'era digitale proviene, non solo dalla strada, ma sempre più dai dispositivi digitali. La crescita del cyber attivismo sui social media si è configurata come un fenomeno significativo, permettendo anche ai gruppi emarginati di amplificare le proprie voci nel mondo digitale. Nonostante l'importanza dei movimenti sociali all'interno dei social media sia aumentata, la natura dispersa e le caratteristiche intrinseche delle piattaforme digitali hanno causato una partecipazione sempre più frammentata alle attività di cyber attivismo, andando a ridurre così il suo potenziale impatto. In passato, degli studi hanno esaminato il concetto di cyber attivismo e il suo influsso sui movimenti sociali, ma mancano ancora delle ricerche che si concentrino sulla strutturazione delle attività di cyber attivismo che servono per innescare in maniera efficace il cambiamento sociale. L'obiettivo di questa ricerca è stato quello di indagare come il design di un Product Service System (PSS) possa essere impiegato per supportare il riorientamento delle attività di cyber attivismo per i casi di violenza di genere, consentendo ai gruppi emarginati di esercitare pressioni efficaci sui cosiddetti regimi oppressivi. Le Organizzazioni Non Governative (ONG) sono state identificate come i catalizzatori chiave nel colmare il divario tra il pubblico e i funzionari governativi. È stata effettuata una vasta revisione della letteratura per ottenere un'analisi approfondita della struttura e delle caratteristiche dei social media, concentrandosi sull'interazione degli utenti e sulla risposta governativa. Sono stati esaminati casi di studio sul cyber attivismo legato alla violenza di genere utilizzando l'auto-etnografia,

rivelando un'attività frammentata e la necessità di un approccio mirato. Sono state condotte interviste semistrutturate con le ONG al fine di acquisire una migliore comprensione della loro dinamica interna e del loro impatto online e offline. Sulla base della revisione della letteratura e della ricerca sul campo, è stato progettato il sistema di servizio di prodotto #IN-SIGHT per migliorare l'utilizzo efficace dei social media nella sensibilizzazione e nella mobilitazione contro la violenza di genere. Sono state effettuate sessioni di co-progettazione per testare #IN-SIGHT, e il risultato principale per tutte le organizzazioni è stato la fornitura di linee guida utili che migliorino l'utilizzo efficace dei social media, consentendo loro di comunicare i propri messaggi in modo efficiente e di risparmiare tempo prezioso. Questo sistema si è dimostrato particolarmente vantaggioso per le organizzazioni di recente costituzione e di piccole dimensioni che hanno una presenza mediatica limitata, favorendo la crescita di organizzazioni locali ben strutturate e promuovendo l'ideologia femminista. Attraverso la sua ampia portata, #IN-SIGHT dà alle organizzazioni la possibilità di esercitare pressioni sui regimi governativi e accelerare il processo di risposta. Inoltre, il PSS favorisce una comprensione più approfondita delle ONG sull'importanza dei social media nell'attivismo, incoraggiandole a rivalutare e migliorare la propria presenza online.

**Parole chiave:** *cyberattivismo, violenza di genere, femminismo intersezionale, Le Organizzazioni Non Governative, social media, design del Product Service System*

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# **CHAPTER 3:**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In the digital age, social media platforms have revolutionized the way we interact, share information, and form communities. These platforms, driven by user-generated content and interactions, offer features such as hyperconnectivity, accessibility, and the spillover effect. As a result, daily interactions have been transformed, enabling freedom of speech, global outreach, and the emergence of new social dynamics.

One significant outcome of this transformation is the rise of cyberactivism. Cyberactivism empowers marginalized groups, providing them with a platform to voice their concerns and advocate for societal change. While existing research has explored the concept of cyberactivism and its influence on social movements, limited attention has been given to understanding how cyberactivism can be effectively organized and guided to catalyze social change.

This thesis study aims to contribute to the research on organizing and guiding fragmented cyberactivism activity to promote social transformation. Previous research has primarily focused on defining cyberactivism and examining its impact on various social issues. However, there is a research gap regarding the structuring of cyberactivism activities to effectively exert pressure on oppressing regimes.

The main objective of this study is to develop a product service system that supports the organized and targeted use of cyberactivism in addressing gender-based violence and hate crimes. For preliminary research, a broad literature analysis will

be conducted to gain insights into user engagement on social media platforms and the responses of governments to online activism. Qualitative research methods are to be used for this thesis. The study also will also examine recent case studies of cyberactivism related to gender-based violence using autoethnography as a method. The research's inspiration is rooted in my personal experiences as an active user of social media for cyberactivism in a geography where cyberactivism has become the only space marginalized groups, like women and LGBTQ+ individuals, can have a voice.

Based on preliminary research, it was concluded that cyberactivism activity in this context was fragmented, necessitating a more focused and strategic approach. This led to a shift in focus towards associations such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) as key catalysts in achieving the desired outcomes. In this study, the field research specifically focuses on NGOs fighting against gender-based violence in Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two leading NGOs in order to understand their internal process both online and offline. Through a comprehensive review of literature and field research, a carefully designed product service system, #IN-SIGHT was developed. This system aims to enhance the efficient utilization of social media platforms, promoting awareness and mobilizing action against gender-based violence. Co-design sessions were conducted with the NGOs to test the prototype of the product service system.

## 1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis begins with a broad literature review, next two chapters. Chapter 2 explores the use of social media and its impact on society by contextualizing the importance of social media in contemporary society. The chapter begins with defining social media and explores its accessibility and engagement for individuals. It also examines the broader impact of social media on society, including its influence on governmental policing. Chapter 3, delves into the impacts of the digital age on activism, exploring the history of activism and its transition into today's online society. The discussion then narrows down to cyberactivism, specifically focusing on its relevance for marginalized groups. Additionally, the chapter explores the intersection of design activism and provocative design. Each chapter concludes by summarizing the key findings and implications.

The preliminary research continues on Chapter 4, where the focus narrows down on case studies on gender-based violence. The chapter presents three specific cases of femicide, the femicide of Hande Kader, Pınar Gültekin, and Masha Amini. Each case study examines the circumstances and implications surrounding the femicides through the lens of collective action and cyberactivism. The chapter concludes by summarizing the main findings and insights from the case studies. The chapter concludes by summarizing the main findings and insights on cyberactivism from the case studies.

Continuing, Chapter 5 focuses on the methodology employed in the research. It outlines the aim and objectives of the study and provides an overview

of the research methods and methodology. The chapter describes the different phases of the research process, starting with a broad literature review and preliminary research, followed by a specific focus on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which shape the field research. The chapter concludes by mentioning design methodology used in the process. Chapter 6 centers around the field research, the semi-structured interviews conducted with NGOs. After an introduction, the chapter presents the interviews conducted with Mor Çatı and Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu (We Will Stop Femicides Platform). It highlights the common pain points and key insights gathered from these interviews.

In Chapter 7, the development of the designed product service system can be viewed. It commences by presenting the envisioned service through a ideation map, which provides an overview of the service concept. It then proceeds to delve into the service design process, employing various tools to ensure its effectiveness. These tools include a system map, stakeholder map, stakeholder value proposition, customer journey maps, and a comprehensive brand strategy. The chapter also includes the prototype that was created. Chapter 8 involves the prototype itself. Chapter 9 focuses on the testing results and key stakeholder feedback. It discusses the feedback received from stakeholders who interacted with the designed product service system. Finally, Chapter 10 serves as the conclusion chapter, summarizing the main findings of the research. It also discusses the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research.



# **CHAPTER 2:**

# **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY**

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The number of smartphone subscriptions worldwide has been increasing rapidly over the course of the years, with a remarkable number of six billion people using smartphones today, that it is forecasted to escalate by several hundred million in the upcoming years (Ericson, 2022) With continuous development of technology, increasing access to the internet and high demand of smart devices, social media is becoming more and more integrated into people's daily lives. As of 2022, the average social media user spends approximately 2 hours and 27 minutes scrolling and interacting through social media and this time is also expected to grow further (GWI: Datareportal, 2022).

This chapter will focus on defining social media and its scope of relation to people's daily lives. The attributes of diverse social media platforms will be examined in relation to their effects on individuals and society. Moving forward with user engagement, another key element supporting Di Gangi and Wasko's (2009) theory would be the user-generated content context and format. Shahbaznezhad et al. (2020) investigate the relationship between user engagement behaviors, active and passive, and content context and format on different platforms. They classify the content context into three: rational (informational), transactional and emotional. In this chapter, only the rational and emotional context types will be reviewed due to relevancy. The findings indicate that rational content delivered in photo format generates substantially more likes than comments, encouraging more passive or affective responses whereas emotional content



in video format triggers more active involvement, especially in the form of commenting, by reaching higher levels of emotional stimuli. The research also concludes that the emotional content influence on user engagement behavior is platform-independent. (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2020) Carty and Barron (2019) discuss that instantaneous, raw user-generated video content triggers more sympathy in individuals thus, supporting Shahbaznezhad et al. 's (2020) findings on user engagement behavior. Active engagement not only fosters increased interactions but also facilitates the dissemination of information. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of emotional content being shared among peers and experiencing the “spill-over effect.” The subsequent section will provide further discussion on this phenomenon.

## 2.2 DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA

The first form of social media as we know it today emerged in the year 1997 as a website called SixDegrees.com where users could set up a profile, create lists of connections and send messages. (The Evolution of Social Media,2021). Even though SixDegrees.com was a short-lived attempt, the concept of social media has taken off during the early 2000s with the advancements in technology and further digitalization in daily life. The present-day scope of social media has expanded across disciplines immensely, even though there tends to be unity when labeling platforms as social media, there is no consensus on why these platforms fall under the social media category (Carr and Hayes, 2015). The definition of social media is constantly changing and evolving due to social media's fast-evolving nature, resulting in a lack of

common definition, making it hard to create a shared understanding, especially in academia. Carr and Hayes (2015) have analyzed and filtered the previous definitions of social media across various disciplines and platforms and defined social media as:

*“Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and **selectively self-present**, either in real-time or asynchronously, with **both broad and narrow audiences** who derive value from **user-generated content** and the perception of **interaction with others.**”*

In this section, the scope and the definition of social media as well as the current popular social media platforms and their uses will be examined and discussed.

Social media today can be considered a mass-communication web of online interactions through user-generated content that extends to distinct areas. Examples of types of social media platforms include messaging apps like WhatsApp, social networking sites such as Facebook, and media-sharing apps like Instagram. (Han et. al, 2021) As Carr and Hayes (2015) discuss, depicting the scope of social media gets more complicated as it scatters between disciplines along with the growing technologies and user experience of social media outlets. The current state of social media’s scope covers a vast variety of sectors which branches from individual and organizational economic opportunities like marketing, job seeking, and content creation to mundane daily needs like receiving news, and instant messaging. The value of using social media

is mainly built upon user-to-user interaction, but it may differ based on the content and context. (Carr and Hayes, 2015) In contrast to traditional media outlets, the value attributed to content on social media is not primarily based on the identity of content creator or sharer, but rather on the extent of user interactions it receives.

The drastic impact of social media and its popularity can be portrayed through the towering difference between an “influencer” revenue and average income. An influencer, in the context of social media and marketing, refers to an individual who has gained a significant following and influence over their audience, often through the creation and dissemination of content that aligns with specific interests or trends (Arora et al., 2019; Himelboim & Golan, 2019; Huotari et al., 2015) Social media influencers earn up to 420 times more than the average person through product promotion and brand collaborations. (Greyser, 2021) Influencers’ value creation mainly depends on their follower profile and the followers’ interaction with the influencers’ content. Following Carr and Hayes’ (2015) depiction of social media, users with broad audiences such as influencers get to curate their shared content, indirectly shaping their follower profile, and bridging the contact gap between organizations and their target audience. Social media has become a pillar for businesses to survive since the rising popularity of social media outlets has lessened the marketing impact of traditional media, putting influencer-based marketing and social media-based recruiting on demand. (Greyser, 2021) Another major shift social media has created is the regular interaction and communication

between individuals. Social media has completely changed how communication functions, making information communication technologies, ICTs, a core part of daily communication.

Even though all social media platforms are built to serve different specific purposes, Bayer et al (2020) categorize the main aspects of social media into 4 different elements: the profile element, the network element, the stream element, and the message element. The profile is considered as the self-representation element where users display information in their personalized space, it usually consists of a chosen photo or avatar, a bio, and a background picture and stores all of the previously shared content by the user. (Bayer et al 2020) Self-representation is defined as “the process of controlling how one is perceived by other people” (Leary, 1995). Bayer et al. (2020) discuss that self-representation can differ online and offline since people are given the power to choose and carefully curate how they want to be perceived by others. While this provided flexibility of self-representation can empower some and help them to put their best foot forward for social validation, approval, and acceptance, it also carries the risk of people serving a misleading image of themselves in order to achieve the satisfaction of said social validation and acceptance. This makes authenticity the key challenge of self-representation online. (Bayer et al 2020)

Following through with the network element, Bayer et al (2020) depict it as the provided interface “for engaging with the catalog of accounts (people) that users are connected to on social media.”

Depending on the design of the social media platform, this “catalog of accounts” can consist of both connecting mechanisms: one-way, such as following a public figure with similar values, and/or mutual connections, like “adding friends”. The two activities most strongly associated with building “social capital” on social media are seeking knowledge and maintaining relationships. Social capital is a concept that encompasses the resources individuals obtain through their personal relationships. It is commonly divided into two types: bonding social capital, which involves tangible or emotional support and is associated with strong ties, and bridging social capital, which involves exposure to new perspectives or information and is associated with weak ties. On social media, people often connect with people they already know, frequently reflecting existing in-person ties, these connections are categorized as “strong ties” and are usually attained through mutual social media connections. On the other hand, “weak ties” are generally obtained between individuals through shared content and can happen through one-way connections as well as mutual connections. The network element serves to create strong and weak ties between people through connecting mechanisms and shared content which can later benefit social mobilization. (Bayer et al 2020)

Moving on to the third social media element, the stream also referred to as the “Timeline”, is the center display for recent content and news about the users’ curated network on a platform. (Bayer et al 2020) The most common stream features on popular social media platforms consist of: text updates, time-limited stories, post reactions, post

comments, recommended content, and adverts. (Bayer et al 2020) According to Bayer et al. (2020) it is possible to engage with the content on the stream on three different levels: active use, passive use, and a newly defined middle ground between the two. Active use is considered to be “behaviors that leave visible traces” such as posting or commenting, participating in activities, creating messages, disseminating information, and providing emotional support to others (Shahbaznezhad et al. 2020) whereas passive use is defined as scrolling. (Bayer et al 2020) Carr et al. (2015) argue that quick, content-free interactions such as likes can be considered the gray area between active and passive use as Alhabash et al. (2013) describes this type of use as “affective response”. Lastly, streams reflect a high level of awareness due to their extensive and continuous information display, as users become aware of other users or happenings in their network. (Bayer et al 2020) Mentioned awareness can often be the trigger for knowledge contamination and spill-over effect which will be later discussed.

Finally, the message element is described as “focused interactions between two or more users using text and/or other media content, regardless of the platform or phone in hand.” (Bayer et al. 2020) Often described as the “background” element or a secondary function for social media platforms, yet it is a crucial element that is the artery of connectedness on social media since it feeds and merges with other elements. Although the message may not be able to stand alone to differentiate social media from other social platforms, it promotes overall usage and tasks that call for more privacy than broadcasting can provide. (Bayer et al. 2020)

Carr & Hayes (2015) suggest that stand-alone text messaging is typically considered independent from social media however, Bayer et al. strongly defend that the messaging element is a vital part of social media that anchors the users to the social media platform and despite the variety of ways people can interact with one another, Bayer et al. demonstrates the importance of messaging in determining how connected people feel on a daily basis. Furthermore, people now have the ability to connect directly with nearly every person in their social context because of the widespread use of online messaging. (Bayer et al. 2020) Therefore, the message element designates the people's level of accessibility to other individuals as well as the connectedness people feel with each other and the world.

The use and functions of mainstream social media outlets including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Tiktok will be broken down, Table 1, regarding Bayer et al.'s (2020) four social media elements to better understand the scope of daily user interactions of the platforms. This study will mainly focus on these mainstream social media platforms.

After analyzing the social media definitions and feasible core elements, it is important to have a clear picture of how individuals interact with social media on a daily basis for the purpose of developing a deeper comprehension of social media's impact on society and social mobilization.

|           | The Profile Element | The Network Element                                 | The Stream Element   | The Message Element |
|-----------|---------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| FACEBOOK  | Private             | One-way (Following) + Mutual (Adding friends)       | Text updates, Image/Video posts, Time-limited posts, Post comments, Post reactions, Comment reactions, Adverts | Individual or Group |
| INSTAGRAM | Private or Public   | One-way (Following) + Mutual (Reciprocal Following) | Text updates, Image/Video posts, Time-limited posts, Post comments, Post reactions, Comment reactions, Adverts | Individual or Group |
| TWITTER   | Private or Public   | One-way (Following) + Mutual (Reciprocal Following) | Text updates, Image/Video posts, Time-limited posts, Post comments, Post reactions, Comment reactions, Adverts | Individual or Group |
| YOUTUBE   | Public              | One-way (Subscribing) + Mutual (Subscribing)        | Text updates, Image/Video posts, Time-limited posts, Post comments, Post reactions, Comment reactions, Adverts | -                   |
| TIKTOK    | Public              | One-way (Following) + Mutual (Reciprocal Following) | Text updates, Image/Video posts, Time-limited posts, Post comments, Post reactions, Comment reactions, Adverts | Individual          |

**Table 1:** Use and functions of mainstream social media outlets regarding four social media elements (elaborated from Bayer et al., 2020)



## 2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND INDIVIDUALS: ACCESSIBILITY AND USER ENGAGEMENT

The internet is a key tenet of the contemporary information society, connecting billions of people globally. (Petrosyan, 2023) As social networking is among the most popular online activities in the world, it's hardly surprising that its use is spreading rapidly in all geographies. The number of people online is reported to be 5.16 billion as of January 2023 with a drastic density of active social media users, over 4.26 billion. (Petrosyan, 2023) The numerous user-driven platforms that make up social media enable the dissemination of interesting material, the development of conversation, and communication with a larger audience. (Kapoor et al. 2018) In this part, the concepts of individual self-expression and hyperconnectivity within social media will be undocked through the topics of accessibility and user engagement behavior based on user-generated content.

Taking the percentage of people with active social media use to people with internet access into account, the low barrier to entry of social media should not come as a surprise. Social media's low barrier to entry brings both advantages and disadvantages on individual and societal levels. The Human Rights Council of the United Nations General Assembly declared access to the Internet to be a "basic human right" in May 2011. (Mildebrath, 2021) Social media's low barrier of entry highlights social media as a place of free speech and provides the opportunity for everyone that has access, to voice their opinions and express themselves. While

easy access to social media can provide attainable entertainment, products and services, Jones (2018) discusses social media platforms, specifically, Twitter, are also platforms that can contradict and challenge political ideologies, worldviews, and perceptions. She draws attention to the importance of individuals voicing their opinions and experiences especially when public debate is in question. The use of social networks has assisted the growth of user-generated initiatives, where the center of a movement is the personal experiences of individuals. The sharing of personal experiences has served to put light on the unjust actions of those in positions of authority in communities. (Jones 2018) Carty and Barron (2019) support this statement by classifying the new media ecosystem as a “bottom-up approach to communication.” Social media’s low barriers to entry create an atmosphere that encourages the self-expression of individuals as well as connecting like-minded individuals to build and reinforce communities.

Even though access to the Internet is classified as a basic human right and as crucial as low barriers to entry are for freedom of speech, the topic of accessibility of social media triggers various socio-economical and ethical problems. Earl et al. (2017) discuss that access to social media still holds an elitist approach. Low-income people continue to have restricted access to the Internet, and thus to social media communities and content. Their ability to communicate in these bountiful spaces is hindered even before they are created. (Deursen & Dijk, 2018) The accessibility issue due to socioeconomic status contradicts social media being a free speech platform for all. While low barriers to entry provide platforms to amplify individual voices, the obstacle

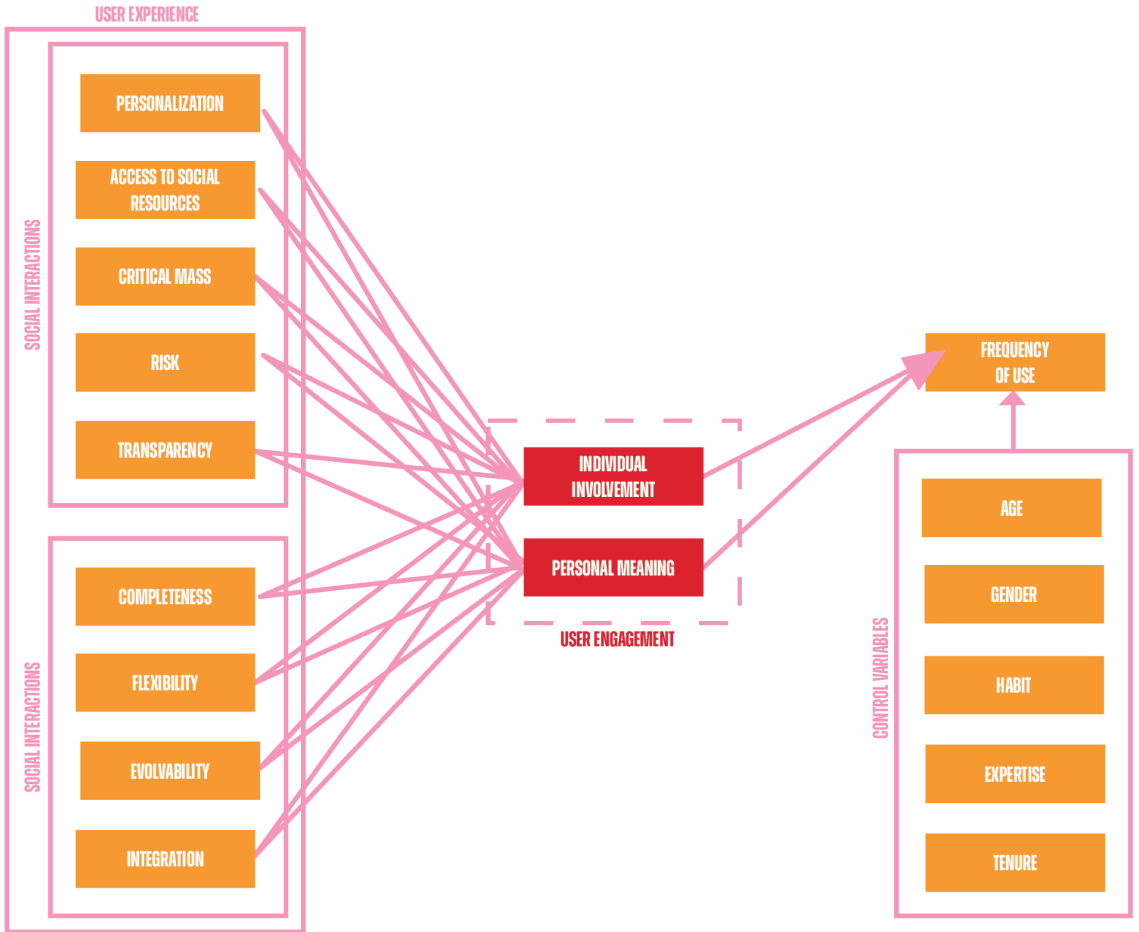
of socio-economical differences should be taken into consideration.

Social media platforms operate based on the continuous influx of user-generated content and user engagement with that content, due to the platforms' continuous growth and inherent characteristics. Therefore, users' roles have shifted from passive spectators of information to active members who are now co-producers (Lee et al., 2018) and co-creators of content and value (Di Gangi & Wasko 2009) through their online interactions and behaviors (Dolan, Conduit, et al., 2019). Levels of engagement in co-creation activities can vary from simple types of engagement, portrayed by the characteristics of passive use, affective responses or to higher types of user engagement, portrayed by the characteristics of active use. Engagement is interactive and context-dependent, and it can be understood by delving into each of its multiple factors (Shahbaznezhad et al. 2020) including engagement frequency and how they engage. Users interact with the platform via contributing, retrieving, and/or exploring. (Di Gangi & Wasko 2009) Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) elaborate on social media engagement theory under the lens of socio-technical systems which suggests that a system is made of two sub-systems, social and technical. According to Di Gangi and Wasko (2016), users' experiences can vary, and they suggest that both the social interactions within a system and its technological aspects play a role in shaping how users perceive their experiences. Social interactions in social media enhance user experiences by displaying individual attention to a user's needs and/or interests, offering access to social resources and friends, and depicting an open and transparent

atmosphere for exchange. Technical aspects are the perceived capabilities of technology and they give users tools to help them have a better experience. The technical features include; the degree of precision with which users may get information and engage, the flexibility of features to be used for diverse purposes, the capacity to integrate material within the social media platform, and the adaptability of features to match users' individual demands as they gain experience. (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016)

Moreover, Di Gangi and Wasko (2016) believe that user engagement depends on two psychological aspects, as depicted in Figure 1: individual involvement and personal meaning. Individual involvement encompasses a user's perception that their participation in a social media platform holds personal significance and is relevant to fulfilling their needs. (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016) Personal meaning refers to the degree to which users perceive that their needs, values, and/or interests are being fulfilled. User satisfaction can be influenced by both individual involvement and personal meaning (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2009), which subsequently impact users' engagement patterns on their preferred social media platform and the content they post.

Moving forward with user engagement, another key element supporting Di Gangi and Wasko's (2009) theory would be the user-generated content context and format. Shahbaznezhad et al. (2020) investigate the relationship between user engagement behaviors, active and passive, and content context and format on different platforms. They classify the content context into three: rational (informational), transactional and emotional. In this chapter, only



**Figure 1:** Depicts Di Gangi & Wasko's Social Media Engagement theory (2016)

the rational and emotional context types will be reviewed due to relevancy. The findings indicate that rational content delivered in photo format generates substantially more likes than comments, encouraging more passive or affective responses whereas emotional content in video format triggers more active involvement, especially in the form of commenting, by reaching higher levels of emotional stimuli. The research also concludes that the emotional content influence on user engagement behavior is platform-independent. (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2020) Carty and Barron (2019) discuss that instantaneous, raw user-generated video content triggers more sympathy in individuals thus, supporting Shahbaznezhad et al.'s (2020) findings on user engagement behavior. Active engagement not only fosters increased interactions but also facilitates the dissemination of information. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of emotional content being shared among peers and experiencing the “spill-over effect.” The subsequent section will provide further discussion on this phenomenon.

To sum up, accessibility and user engagement behavior of social media platforms play a significant role in the self-expression of individuals and their connectedness with ongoing discussions as well as with each other. Following through, the insights gathered from individual behavior linked with the user engagement theory and social media's low barriers to entry will be investigated via the perspective of community formation and its outcomes.

## 2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Social media is simply a digital area made by people, for people that offers a setting that is favorable for interactions and networking to happen at various levels, whether it's personal, professional, business-related, marketing, political, and/or societal. (Kapoor et al. 2018) Considering the nature of the social media platforms and the individual behavior in social media use discussed previously, it is impossible to oversee the fertile environment social media creates for interactions and knowledge contamination between users. This section will discuss how social media's speed and international connectivity has enabled a new way of knowledge spread by creating weak ties and, through spillover effect, new communities and possibly echo chambers.

Online social connections enable knowledge to be combined and exchanged. (Xiao et al. 2015) Social interaction ties influence online resource interchange and combination, information exchange among units competing for knowledge gain. (Xiao et al. 2015) Some characteristics of social media enable and even improve the new approach to knowledge transformation. The speed of social media and its international connectivity can be taken as examples. In their research, Jones (2018) mainly discusses how popular social media, especially Twitter, have created a platform where continuous dialogue is dominantly fast-paced and encourages like-minded individuals to build communities where geographic restrictions do not exist. While physical locations frequently share equivalent socio economic problems, they provide platforms that are location-agnostic, allowing information to

flow more extensively. The opportunity to connect and exchange perspectives with individuals across the globe has created more chances for people to engage, learn, and communicate online.

Individuals' online interactions have been amplified by the mobility and instantaneity of smartphones and social networking platforms. (Jones, 2018) This has encouraged users to communicate information in real time, regardless of their physical location or time zone. (Wellman & Gulia, 1999, p. 1). Physical communities are important in society, but internet platforms have shifted communities to a different context. Individuals worldwide with similar interests, points of view, or disagreements can connect and come together in unexpected and fragmented ways. (Jones, 2018) As societies become more global, technology has blurred the formerly distinct 'real' and 'virtual' worlds, resulting in a merger of the two, as people's interactions in physical and online locations become entwined. (Jones, 2018) Tufekci (2012) also claims that new digital mediums such as social media may help communities grow despite geographical distance by constructing virtual public spaces. Barriers of race, religion, gender, and ethnicity have less of an influence in the context of online communities than they do in physical communities where bias and judgment prevail on shared perspectives. (Katz, Rice & Acord et al., 2004, p. 326).

Many social media users voluntarily communicate with strangers, suggesting a fundamental change in how online interactions differ from in-person ones. (Jones, 2018) As a result of this change, more people in society are prepared to reveal private information



online with strangers than they would in person in order to connect with others (Jones, 2018) and feel a sense of belonging. (Ridings & Gefen, 2004) These online encounters between strangers may well be characterized as “weak ties,” where connections are made only through a common bond of experience or interest. (Ridings & Gefen, 2004, p. 4.) Virtual communities tend to focus on fairly specialized topics, with relationships among members primarily intended to exchange knowledge about these topics. Virtual communities can be on a wide range of topics, for example they can vary from a fanbase community of a band to communities around political views. Virtual community conversations typically convey opinions, offer and request information, express feelings, and propose solutions, and therefore making them an excellent location to ask relative strangers for information. The extent and effect of “weak ties,” distinguishes online communities from offline communities when exchanging knowledge (Ridings & Gefen, 2004) which paved the way for social media to redefine how knowledge is spread now.

Another facet that is amplified by online communities is peer-to-peer sharing or in other words, the “spill-over” effect. The spill-over effect can occur through various forms of active engagement or affective response of a user, whereby social media algorithms showcase the interacted content in the timeline of their followers. This provides an opportunity for those followers to engage with the content and subsequently contribute to the spill-over effect. (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2023) explains the spill-over effect creates trust in the shared information since it is being passed through mostly friends

or peers to individuals. Spill-overs are caused by social media sharing rather than a search engine or news aggregator rankings. The spill-over effects are stronger as more people encounter a piece of content. (Nesi et al. 2018) Therefore, compared to offline interactions, interactions online tend to have a larger and faster reach through weak ties and the speed of social media platforms. The concept of spillover effects in social media emphasizes the interconnectedness and influence that social media platforms and interactions can have on individuals, groups, behaviors, attitudes, and broader societal dynamics. It highlights the need to consider the broader implications and consequences of social media activities beyond the immediate context. Thus, the spill-over effect has a significant role in online social interactions resulting in forming of online communities through social media's new way of knowledge spread. Carty and Barron (2019) discuss that rather than replacing collective identity and weakening the potential for collective activity in actual communities, online forms of communication frequently supplement those based on face-to-face contact. The immediate peer-to-peer sharing also enables technologically equipped networks to function as hybrids, encouraging information viewers to engage in heated themes. Carty & Barron (2019) also emphasize the significance of community development, or inclusion, through horizontal information flows in both virtual and physical settings. They claim that social media adds to the logic of collection by facilitating the physical gathering of people from various backgrounds in order to develop and sustain solidarity, especially in heated topics such as politics, health and social injustice. (Carty & Barron, 2019) This concept will

be further developed in the case studies of this study.

On the other hand, the spill-over effect can have a negative impact depending on the content that is being passed around. Research highlights that the combination of the extraordinary speed of social media combined with low barriers to entry creates a fertile environment for the spread of disinformation (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020) and may lead to manipulation, especially when compared to traditional media. Zhuravskaya et al. (2020) expresses the capacity and speed of online media users to repost, share, and copy content made by others, may weaken the reputation mechanisms that serve to protect the quality of the information provided by traditional media outlets. The easy spread of disinformation and fake news can have profound effects when it comes to topics like health or politics. Furthermore, low barriers to entry also significantly increase the number of news sources available and, arguably, allow users to customize their news sources to their prior preferences more finely than traditional media allows; this could potentially lead to echo chambers. (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020) An echo chamber is “a setting in where individuals are surrounded by people whose opinion agrees with their own.”(Cinelli et al., 2020) Considering the trust built around the information shared by peers and friends (Bearth & Siegrist, 2021) combined with social media’s nature of knowledge spread creates the ground for the spread of disinformation and manipulation.

While the location-agnostic nature and speed of social media define new ways of information spread

and eventually lead to online communities, these aspects can also result in forming echo chambers. Due to how social media platform algorithms work, news feed algorithms may influence the selection process by boosting content that is similar to what has already been seen, diminishing content diversity and eventually leading to polarization. The formation of echo chambers is not only due to the algorithm but also to a phenomenon known as confirmation bias. Humans have a tendency to seek information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs, so users actively choose to engage with people with similar opinions and life outlook. Information dissemination is frequently biased within these closed communities created by members with similar preferences and content consumption patterns. (Cinelli et al., 2020) Social media offers users a new paradigm of information creation and consumption (Shu et al., 2017), consequently shifting the way we connect, discuss, and form our opinions (Cinelli et al., 2020). Echo chambers are one of the most debated issues that emerged from the use of social media platforms due to their polarizing and closed nature. (Cinelli et al. 2020) For instance, social media platforms with low levels of content regulation, and moderation, as well as the advantage of anonymity, such as Reddit, have led to a great deal of hate speech. (Cinelli et al. 2020 & Carty&Barron 2019) Carty and Barron (2019) describe how the alt-right movement uses social media networks to radicalize individuals, most notably young white males. The several sites' concepts, which include messages, videos, and chat rooms, are meant to persuade or reinforce the notion that white males are victims in today's cultural climate, which values diversity, multiculturalism, and gender equality. They also take direct action to

defend their white and cultural history, as well as their identity. A cohesive and committed assembly of white nationalists may be viewed as a legitimate social movement by the greater society as a result of the spillover effect—organizing online and using public areas to demonstrate in huge numbers. (Carty & Barron 2019) The radicalization and unity of alt-right white supremacists, driven by the dissemination of false information, serves as a compelling illustration of the alarming and divisive nature of echo chambers. It also highlights the potency of the spill-over effect within social media platforms, particularly in the formation of online communities.

In conclusion, a new way of spreading information and community formation is enabled mostly by the speed and the geographically borderless nature of social media. Both have positive and negative repercussions which can end up in virtual and physical unification but also in polarization, especially through the spread of disinformation. In the next section, where the governmental bodies stand and how law functions in the cases of online actions and communities will be examined to better understand the influence of social media today.

## **2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA AND GOVERNMENTAL POLICING**

The rise in social media usage has come under increased scrutiny of governmental policing and censorship practices. (Elmas et al., 2021) Governments

around the globe leverage social media in various ways; their use and surveillance of social media especially differ from democratic or autocratic governments. Based on the introduced assets and risks of social media, this section will explore governmental policing, including how governments utilize censorship and surveillance by laws to regulate information spread and user interactions on online platforms.

Firstly, in mature democratic governments, social media is seen as an asset that can benefit true democracy. Social media makes it more difficult for political and economic actors to conceal potentially adverse details by offering an outlet for the opposition and whistleblowers. (Enikolopov, n.d.) Zhuravskaya et al. (2020) argue that this could possibly render political regimes to be more susceptible and accountable, demanding transparency and honesty from political actors. User-generated material and two-way communication on social media combined with the power of social media when forming communities, may also alter the way politicians and citizens interact: Politicians can use social media to gain instantaneous feedback on policy acts, discuss policy proposals, and track political unrest. This type of input could be utilized to enhance policies. Another way social media strengthens democracies is through educating and encouraging society on forming political opinions and taking action. Social media platforms' impact on opinion making of course makes politicians concerned about their social media presence. Politicians utilize social media to engage with voters, and the rise of social media has an impact on their offline behavior. (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020)

On the other hand, governmental bodies cannot overlook the fertile ground social media platforms create for the spread of fake news, and the possible polarizing hate groups promoting hate speech and xenophobia. Zhuravskaya et al. (2020) discusses how, since instant reactions can rely on emotions rather than logic, deceptive information that instills fear or fury may spread quicker than true news, which is frequently less emotionally charged. The ease with which emotional information is spread online may also be a factor in the failure of fact-checking based on reason to disprove fake news. Therefore, governments around the globe keep an eye out for online activity and have started considering law action in cyberspace. Even if the intentions of protecting society from false news and harmful ideologies may serve settled democracies, the power of surveillance over social media activity can be easily abused and used for manipulation of information in so-called democracies and/or autocracies. (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020)

The reasons for censoring the content vary, governments base their censorship judgments on; cultural, historical, religious, constitutional, political, moral, and ideological considerations, as well as on political or religious objections to pornography, extremism, gambling, anonymity, privacy, or intellectual property rights. (Ververis et al., 2019) As an example of abuse of surveillance and censorship, Iran's censorship of social media platforms is a well-documented phenomenon. The Iranian government employs various methods to control and regulate online content by law and technical regulations, including social media platforms. (Bunn, 2015) Iran's censorship of social

media is driven by a combination of political, religious, and social factors. The Iranian government actively controls and restricts access to social media platforms in order to maintain political control, uphold conservative religious values, and shape the cultural landscape of the country. (Wojcieszak & Smith, 2013) From a political perspective, Iran's government aims to suppress dissent and maintain its grip on power. (Wojcieszak & Smith, 2013) By censoring social media, the government seeks to prevent the spread of political views that challenge the ruling regime and undermine its authority. (Meserve & Pemstain, 2017) The control of information and communication channels is crucial in managing public opinion and preventing the organization of opposition movements (Li, 2020), and Iran's outtake on social media control along with its mainstream media supports the argument of social media's power in opinion-forming.

Religious concerns also play a significant role in Iran's social media censorship. As an Islamic Republic, the government strives to ensure that online content aligns with conservative religious values and does not offend religious sensibilities. Content that is considered immoral or promotes alternative religious beliefs is actively censored to maintain societal adherence to Islamic principles. (Ververis et al., 2019) Additionally, social factors contribute to Iran's social media censorship practices. The government aims to promote a particular vision of Iranian society and culture that is in line with its values and ideology. Social media platforms have the potential to disseminate alternative ideas and cultures that may challenge this vision due to its location-agnostic nature.



(Plantin & Punathambekar , 2018) Consequently, the government filters and blocks content that is perceived as subversive or incompatible with Iranian values. (Ververis et al.,2019) The use of religious beliefs to control masses and suppress opposing ideas is nothing new in politics, the surveillance of online activity in autocracies also creates a life threat to those who are not aligning with the oppressor's ideas, (Ashokkumar et al. 2020) eventually stripping social media's atmosphere of free speech fueled by fear.

The Internet has stronger effects in countries where traditional media are censored while the Internet is not. (Zhuravskaya et al. 2020) The case of Turkey can be given here as an example. Due to the censorship of mainstream media, the Internet frequently assists in informing voters who have no other ways of obtaining political information (particularly regarding government corruption), occasionally leading to regime change. (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020) This was no different in Turkey however, social media has been subject to increasing regulation and censorship in recent years. In July 2020, the Turkish parliament passed a new law that gives the government broad powers to regulate social media platforms. (Tunc, 2021) The law was passed as a series of new measures to curb the spread of fake news and disinformation, which is said to pose a threat to national security and public order.

Under the new law, social media companies with more than one million daily users must appoint a local representative in Turkey and comply with government requests to remove content or face fines and bandwidth reductions. (Tunc, 2021) Parks et al. (2017) argue that it is a tool for the

government to stifle dissent and restrict freedom of speech, pointing out that the government has used the law to target journalists, activists, and opposition politicians. (Parks et al. 2017) There have been reports of individuals being arrested and charged with terrorism-related offenses for simply expressing their opinions on social media or criticizing the government. (Human Rights Watch, 2020) The government has also been known to block access to social media platforms during periods of political unrest or protests. (Parks et al. 2017)

On the other hand, the Turkish government utilizes bots to manipulate information and create an illusion of a bigger community as supporters of the ongoing regime. Social media bots are computer based algorithms that automatically control social media accounts, generate content, and interact with human users, often attempting to emulate human behavior. (Honari & Alinejad, 2021) In September 2020, for example, Twitter removed thousands of accounts that it said were linked to a state-backed propaganda campaign aimed at undermining opposition parties and critics of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. (Reuters, 2020) In 2015, under the rule of Erdoğan, the government also developed an online system called CIMER (Turkish Presidency Contact Line) where, among its many uses, people can report social media content that insults the ruling government or the president possibly resulting with the person who created or reposted the content facing jail time up to 4 years. (Dogan, 2016) In conclusion, the case of Turkey provides a striking example of the ongoing tension between social media and governmental policing. While the Turkish government argues

that its measures are necessary to protect national security and public order, there are concerns that the Turkish government's increased surveillance and censorship of social media is a threat to free speech and democracy in the country.

Social media and governmental policing strategies and reasons vary in each country, especially depending on their ruling system and how stable they are. While in stable democracies governmental policing actions can be based on humanitarian perspectives like preventing the spread of fake news or hate speech, the power of censorship and monitoring can easily overreach and be abused to initiate fear and benefit the oppressing governments like in the cases of Iran and Turkey.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of social media platforms and their impact on user interactions, networking, and information sharing. These platforms offer users diverse functions and purposes, enabling self-representation through profiles, connecting with others, engaging with content in timelines, and fostering focused interactions through messaging. However, it is still important to address the challenges of accessibility and socio-economic inequalities that hinder full participation in online communities.

Furthermore, user engagement on social media is influenced by a combination of factors. Social interactions within the platform, technological

capabilities, and the context and format of user-generated content all shape users' experiences and determine their level of involvement. Emotional content, often delivered through videos, tends to encourage active engagement, while rational content in photo format generates more passive responses. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing platforms that foster meaningful user experiences.

Social media platforms have also revolutionized the spread and exchange of knowledge. They provide a global, borderless space where individuals can connect and share information, fostering inclusivity and the exchange of perspectives. Virtual communities centered around specialized topics facilitate information seeking and sharing, while the spill-over effect enhances knowledge dissemination by increasing trust and engagement. However, the ease of sharing and the lack of strong regulation on social media platforms can also lead to the rapid spread of disinformation and the formation of echo chambers, limiting content diversity and perpetuating biased information.

The last section of the chapter also highlights the role of governments in regulating social media through surveillance and censorship practices. Democratic governments often view social media as a tool for transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement, while also grappling with challenges such as the spread of fake news and hate speech, still this is not always the case. Autocratic regimes, on the other hand, tend to employ social media censorship to suppress dissent, uphold conservative values, and control public opinion.

The cases of Iran and Turkey exemplify the tensions surrounding social media and governmental policing. Iran's censorship practices are driven by political, religious, and social factors, while Turkey has increasingly regulated and censored social media to control political information. However, concerns arise regarding the erosion of free speech and democracy, as these measures can be easily abused, instilling fear and benefiting oppressive regimes.

In navigating these complexities, it is essential to strike a balance between promoting free expression and regulating harmful content. Responsible platform design, robust governmental policies, and public awareness are crucial in creating inclusive and accountable digital environments that respect individual rights, uphold democratic principles, and foster meaningful interactions. The next chapter will explore how social media creates a space for marginalized groups to find their voices, fosters communities to initiate activism in the digital age.



**CHAPTER 3:**

**FROM ACTIVISM  
TO CYBERACTIVISM**





## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss what activism is through the lens of history, comparing then and now with the impact of the digital age. Starting from unveiling activism in its historical context, understanding what activism is, who engages in activism and how, why marginalized groups are a big part of activist movements, down to activism in the digital age. The main focus will be on cases involving marginalized groups experiencing discrimination, examining their presence and active participation in significant activism initiatives.

Moreover, the concept of “Cyberactivism” will be defined and discussed, referring to specific characteristics of social media discussed previously in Chapter 2. The chapter will also dive deeper into how social media plays a role in activism today and the leverage points for marginalized groups explored in two brief case studies. Later, this chapter will conclude with an understanding of “provocative design” and how it can take a part in design activism to assist cyberactivism.

## 3.2 ACTIVISM THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Activism refers to the efforts and actions individuals or groups take to bring about social, political, or environmental change. (Oxford Languages, n.d.) The history of activism is rich and diverse, encompassing a wide range of individuals, groups, and movements. This part will explore activism and organizations within their historical background, answering what activism is and why people, especially marginalized groups, engage in it.

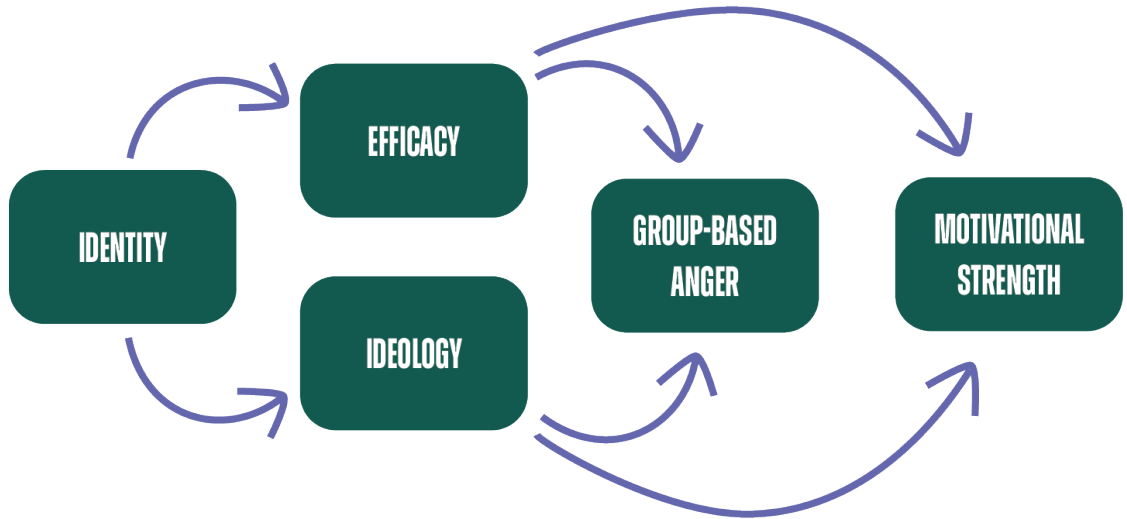
Activism is a broad term encompassing a range of activities to raise awareness, challenge established norms, advocate for specific causes or issues, and promote social justice. (Green, 2016) It can take various forms, including peaceful protests, rallies, demonstrations, boycotts, letter-writing campaigns, lobbying, civil disobedience, community organizing, online activism, and grassroots initiatives. (Loya & McLeod, 2011). It can be conducted by individuals, civil society organizations (CSOs), social movement organizations (SMOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or larger social movements. Green (2016) argues that CSOs encompass a wide range of organizations, ranging from modest, community-oriented groups to prominent global NGOs like Oxfam. There is often a distinction made between grassroots CSOs and NGOs. CSOs typically rely on membership and operate at the local level, although some have grown substantially, and they can be either informal or legally established entities. Moreover, they often heavily rely on volunteers. On the other hand, NGOs are typically managed by a board and professional staff, with a lesser degree of responsibility towards their supporters. (Green, 2016)

Loya & McLeod (2011) argues that at its core, activism involves actively engaging in efforts to influence public opinion, policies, or behaviors to address a particular problem or promote a specific cause, aiming to challenge existing power structures, combat injustices, and amplify the voices of marginalized or underrepresented groups. Activism can be driven by a wide range of issues, such as human rights, environmental protection, gender equality, racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, disability rights, economic inequality, and peace advocacy, among others. Activists often seek to raise awareness, mobilize communities, and effect change through various means, including education, advocacy, community organizing, and direct action. (Loya & McLeod, 2011) The motivations behind activism can vary greatly, but they are often rooted in a sense of moral or social responsibility, a desire for equity and justice, personal experiences of injustice or discrimination, or a commitment to creating a better future. (Roosevelt, 2019) People who engage in activism often believe in the power of collective action and the potential to create meaningful change through their efforts. While activism can be challenging and may face resistance from established systems or powerful entities, it has played a significant role throughout history in advancing social progress, bringing attention to important issues, and shaping public discourse. (Fløttum et al., 2006) From civil rights movements to environmental activism, activism has been instrumental in challenging the status quo, promoting awareness, and inspiring positive social change. (Fløttum et al., 2006)

Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013) discuss

that people usually engage in activism due to reality contradicting their values or culture and they are willing to take action to bring change. Based on Figure 2, grievances arise when interests and/or principles that are deemed important by a group are perceived to be under threat. The stronger the perception of threat to the group's interests and principles, the greater the anger and willingness of individuals to participate in protests as a means of safeguarding their interests, principles, and expressing their discontent. Conversations revolving around politics within social networks enhance efficacy and convert individual grievances into shared concerns and collective anger, ultimately leading to increased involvement in protests. (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) It is not a surprise that members of marginalized groups are usually the flag-bearers in activist movements since it is almost always their own rights and freedom at stake. In other cases, activists are allies who are working to support marginalized communities and advance social justice. Medina (2023) sheds a light on the fact that the historical exclusion and mistreatment of marginalized groups have spurred them to engage in protests. The injustices endured throughout history have fueled emotions and determination of people in marginalized groups to effect social change and seek justice. By tracing their historical experiences of oppression and resistance, the motivations and contributions of these groups in advocating for social change can be better understood. (Medina, 2023)

Women and LGBTQ+ individuals have historically faced systemic oppression and discrimination. The feminist movement that emerged in the late 19th



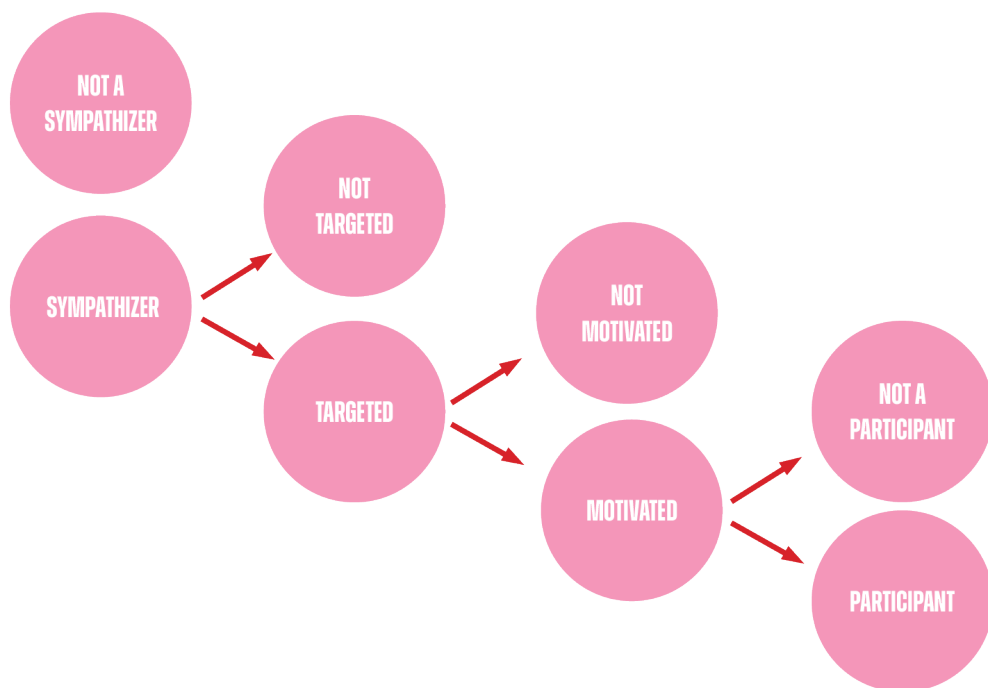
**Figure 2:** Motivational framework integrating identities, grievances and emotions. (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013)

century can be given as an example that sought to secure equal rights and opportunities for women. (Isin & Turner, 2002) Female activists have been instrumental in advancing the cause of women's rights, including the right to vote, reproductive rights, and workplace equality. (Isin & Turner, 2002) For instance, women played a crucial role in the 1960s civil rights movement by organizing boycotts and sit-ins, even when they faced sexism within the movement itself. (Greene, 2016) The LGBTQ+ community has also confronted widespread discrimination and persecution, notably during the Stonewall riots of 1969, where LGBTQ+ individuals resisted police harassment and ignited the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement (Silva & Jacobo, 2020), which will be further explored. The history of oppression and lack of their basic human rights

have motivated these groups to engage in activism. It is also crucial to address the concept of intersectionality and recognize that marginalized groups face intersecting forms of oppression. Intersectionality in feminism is the recognition and analysis of how different social categories intersect and interact with each other, shaping individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege (Churchill, 2016; Wong, 2011). It emphasizes that individuals' identities and experiences cannot be understood or addressed by considering only one aspect of their identity, but rather by acknowledging the complex and interconnected nature of multiple social identities (Churchill, 2016; Wong, 2011). Intersectionality originated from the work of Black feminist scholars and highlights the limitations of mainstream feminism in addressing the experiences of marginalized groups (Churchill, 2016). It calls for an inclusive and intersectional approach to feminist activism, policymaking, and social change that recognizes and addresses the intersecting forms of oppression faced by individuals (Churchill, 2016; Wong, 2011). Intersectional feminism seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all individuals, particularly those who are most marginalized (Churchill, 2016; Wong, 2011). Transgender women of color, for example, have fought against the multiple burdens of sexism, racism and transphobia throughout history. (Silva & Jacobo, 2020) Intersectionality has further shaped activism, emphasizing the need for inclusive and comprehensive approaches to social change.

Marginalized groups have found strength and support through collective action and community building. According to Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013), people's motivation for

collective action mobilization can be divided into four distinct stages: individuals must feel empathy towards the cause, be informed about the upcoming event, express a desire to participate, and have the means to actively engage. (Figure 3) The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s can be given as an example for the feminist protests throughout history, which brought together diverse women to challenge patriarchy and fostered a sense of solidarity among women worldwide. (Hague, 2021)



**Figure 3:** The process of action mobilization. (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013)

LGBTQ+ activists have also formed vibrant communities and organizations to support each other, advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, and raise awareness about the issues they face. (Humble, 2021) Activism has served as a catalyst for building resilient communities and fostering a sense of belonging and support. (McCaughey et al., 2003) Activist movements have also provided marginalized groups with a platform to raise awareness and assert their rights. The second-wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a surge of women activists demanding gender equality, reproductive rights, and an end to domestic violence. (Hague, 2021) Similarly, LGBTQ+ activists fought for recognition, acceptance, and equal rights, leading to milestones such as the decriminalization of homosexuality and eventually the legalization of same-sex marriage in several countries. Activism has empowered these groups to challenge societal norms, break down barriers, and demand visibility and equality.

Keeping the intersectional point of view in mind, women activists were present not only for the feminist movement, but they were and still are flag bearers for countless causes, The Black Power Movement in the 1960s being just one of them. The Black Power movement emerged in the 1960s as a response to ongoing racial oppression and systemic racism faced by African Americans in the United States. It emphasized self-determination, cultural pride, and the fight against white supremacy and racial discrimination. (Joseph, 2009) The movement sought to empower Black communities, challenge existing power structures, and address the intersecting forms of racism, classism, and sexism. (Joseph, 2009)



Black Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) are already classified as one of the marginalized groups fighting for their rights in this world ruled by white privilege. Nevertheless, Greene (2016) argues women of color played a vital role in the Black Power movement, contributing to its ideology, leadership, and grassroots organizing. They pushed for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to the issue, highlighting their own experiences and struggles with racism and also sexism. Women within the movement advocated for gender equality, racial justice, and community empowerment. Prominent figures like Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, and Elaine Brown made significant contributions to the movement, advancing its goals through their activism, intellectual discourse, and organizational leadership. They challenged gender norms and fought against both racial and gender discrimination, highlighting the connectedness of their struggles. (Greene, 2016)

Collins (2009) states that women of color also played critical roles in organizing and mobilizing communities, establishing grassroots organizations, and leading community-based initiatives. They worked to address big topics such as education, poverty, police brutality, and healthcare disparities, recognizing the interconnectedness of these issues with racial and gender inequality. Despite their pivotal contributions, Black women in the movement often faced marginalization and sexism even within activist spaces. However, their efforts paved the way for future generations of people and especially women of color, influencing subsequent social justice movements and shaping the understanding of intersectionality in activism. (Collins, 2009)



**Figure 4:** Angela Davis speaking at a street rally in 1974.



**Figure 5:** Members of the Third World Women's Alliance in NYC in 1972.

Another example that played a key role in intersectional activist history is The Stonewall Protests. The Stonewall Protests which took place in June 1969, and were a pivotal moment in the history of LGBTQ+ activism and has had far-reaching importance in advancing LGBTQ+ rights globally. (Silva & Jacobo, 2020) Stageman (2017) articulates the protests erupted in response to a police raid where the police assaulted over 200 queer people in the Stonewall Inn, a popular gathering place for the LGBTQ+ community in New York. The attack became the last drop and ignited the protests that made space for queer individuals to fight back against the ongoing harassment and oppression they experienced. The events at Stonewall galvanized the LGBTQ+ community, sparking a wave of resistance. The protests continued for several nights and sparked the formation of numerous LGBTQ+ organizations and advocacy groups. (Stageman, 2017)

Transgender BIPOC women, such as Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, played a significant role in the Stonewall riots. (Stageman, 2017) Johnson, an African American transgender activist, emerged as a prominent leader in the events. Rivera, a transgender woman of Venezuelan and Puerto Rican heritage, also played a crucial role in the riots and later co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) alongside Johnson. (Morris & Nakayama, 2014) Their courage and participation helped bring attention to the intersectional nature of discrimination, advocating for the rights and visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming folk in the broader struggle for basic human rights for the LGBTQ+ community.

Hall (2018) underlines that the Stonewall riots are seen as the beginning of the modern Gay Liberation movement. The queer community marked a turning point in the fight against discrimination and oppression. The protests inspired a collective sense of pride, resilience, and determination within the LGBTQ+ community, encouraging them to assert their rights and demand equality. In the aftermath of Stonewall, LGBTQ+ activists and organizations across the United States and around the world mobilized, advocating for legal protections, visibility, and social acceptance. The protests led to the formation of numerous LGBTQ+ organizations, such as the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, which played significant roles in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and shaping the movement's future. (Hall, 2018)

The Stonewall riots also helped to galvanize broader societal support for LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance. They brought the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community into the public consciousness, challenging societal attitudes and fostering dialogue. Subsequently, the Stonewall riots influenced the formation of LGBTQ+ pride events and parades, the commemoration of the riots one year later in June 1970 inaugurated a series of annual LGBT Pride events that continue to this day worldwide, which continue to serve as symbols of visibility, solidarity, and celebration. (Silva & Jacobo, 2020) Overall, the Stonewall riots hold immense importance as a watershed moment in LGBTQ+ history, the riots sparked a powerful movement that continues to drive progress in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, promoting greater acceptance, inclusivity, and equality for all individuals, regardless of their sexual



**Figure 6:** Marsha P. Johnson, Stonewall Riots in NYC, 1969.

orientation or gender identity.

To conclude, activism is the fruit of personal encounters with injustice or prejudice, a feeling of moral or social duty, a desire for equality and justice, or a dedication to building a better future. The presence of marginalized groups, including women and the LGBTQ+ community, in activism is deeply rooted in their historical experiences of oppression and resistance. From the suffrage movements to the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, these groups have consistently challenged societal norms, demanded equality, and sought justice.

### **3.3 ACTIVISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Similar to every part of life, the rapid development of technology in recent years, especially the reality of social media entering people's daily lives, has its effects on how activism unrolls in today. Whether it was the pen, printing press, telegraph, radio, television, Internet, or high-speed digital technology, activists have always used the most recent communication tools to gather new members, exchange and disseminate information, and organize support. (Carty&Barron, 2019) Activism in the digital age starts to be more and more driven not only on the streets but from behind the screens. The characteristics of social media priorly discussed in the first chapter has had a significant impact on how activist movements develop and unravel. This part will discuss what cyberactivism is and how social media has played a role in informing people, building empathy and eventually building pressure on unjust systems through the lens of online activism.

## 3.3.1 DEFINING CYBERACTIVISM

Cyberactivism is the utilization of digital technologies, such as social media, websites, and online forums, for the purpose of engaging in political or social activism. (Stevens, 2019) While there isn't a precise definition for cyberactivism, it is generally understood as a process akin to traditional activism, but with unique dynamics that alter the way pressure is exerted on corporations and governments. (Illia, 2003) It is a form of activism that harnesses the power of the internet to coordinate, rally, and communicate with like-minded individuals who share similar objectives and values. Cyberactivism can manifest in various ways, including through online petitions, social media campaigns, and hacktivism. (Carty& Barron, 2019) Stevens (2019) mentions its vital role lies in uniting conscientious citizens within a virtual space, particularly in situations where unified action is necessary. Cyberactivism encompasses the means by which the internet and social media platforms empower users to become activists. (Stevens, 2019) It represents a transfer of unconventional political action into the realm of information and communication technologies, reshaping the traditional practices of politics, expanding inclusivity, and fostering public awareness. (Fernández, 2012)

Moreover, cyberactivism serves as a source of healing and validation for marginalized communities, providing an outlet for individuals to address and recover from traumatic experiences and different forms of oppression. (Ortiz et. al 2019) It is described as a dynamic, intermittent, and evolving phenomenon that engages in "informational

politics,” exerting widespread influence and public pressure on authorities and occasionally resulting in changes in governmental behavior, institutional modifications, or regulatory adjustments. (Ortiz et. al 2019 & Jordan 2008) Cyberactivism has emerged as a new and important social phenomenon, particularly for women to participate politically in the revolutionary process. (Müller-Funk, 2014)

### **3.3.1.1 INFORMATION SPREAD IN THE CYBERSPACE**

An area where activism benefits from the new information technologies in the digital age is the new way of information spread. As discussed in Chapter 2, cyberspace and social media have changed accessibility to information and media drastically. Social media’s characteristics like the spontaneous formation of weak ties, the range of trust through spill-over effect, the speed of creating content and resharing with a single click, and its location-agnostic nature have had significant effects on how activist movements emerge and flow today. Social media has allowed activism to evolve from campaigners seeking media attention from the mainstream press to regular folks becoming message makers and mobile citizen journalists, who create and share their own information. (Carty&Barron, 2019) In contrast to previous forms of technology, which depended on a one-to-many flow of information that was mostly controlled by governmental or corporate interests, the new media ecosystem is a bottom-up approach to communication. (Carty&Barron, 2019) Social media platforms’ ability to create



the new “town hall” of today’s society. Ordinary folks, armed with their tech-savvy intuition, are already organizing and holding politically focused activities in both cyberspace and local communities to achieve social change. (Carty&Barron, 2019)

Carty and Barron (2019) discusses social media has challenged the institutionalized power relations, eventually allowing the power to shift from governmentally observed and controlled mainstream media down to the social media profiles of regular Joe’s. Subsequently, they have the ability to distribute real-time and unaltered videos via mobile devices in a decentralized manner, thereby altering the dynamics of political conflict and social activism. This shift challenges the traditional control exerted by corporations, government officials, the police, and other authoritative bodies over the communication landscape.) As an illustration, despite efforts by mainstream media to undermine social movements, activists can sway public opinion in their favor by offering more empathetic narratives, particularly in the aftermath of incidents involving police brutality. These narratives, captured by citizen-recorded videos, can eventually reach the mainstream press, bypassing attempts to trivialize them. There were even cases where authorities tried to make filming of events challenging if not impossible using unadjusted force on professional journalists. However, the police brutality could not escape citizen journalism, police were seen on film pepper spraying, tear gassing, beating, wrongfully detaining, and in some cases even firing at peaceful protestors, while activists successfully live-streamed and shared the events to the Internet and social media. (Carty&Barron, 2019)

### 3.3.1.2 EMPATHY BUILDING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Another aspect cyberactivism has benefitted from the bottom-up approach social media brought in information flow is that citizen journalism is more effective in triggering people emotionally and therefore building empathy. Reflecting back to Di Gangi and Wasko's (2016) user engagement theory, psychological aspects of individual involvement and personal meaning determine user engagement with the platform. Individual involvement and personal meaning are two interrelated concepts that describe a user's perception of their role in a social media platform. (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016) This approach can be brought from engagement with the platform itself down to engagement with online content and ongoing discussions. Kemekenidou (2016) considers the speed and connectedness through social media and argues that the empathic hyperconnectivity within social media networks allows individuals to share their experiences irrespective of race, class, or gender, providing a means to connect with audiences that were previously harder to engage with. They believe social media networks present a distinct opportunity to emotionally impact individuals who may not belong to one's primary audience. (Kemekenidou, 2016) Multiple facets on social media such as hashtags or shared content type can trigger different levels of emotional stimuli. For instance, unedited video content under an emotionally charged, crisis-based hashtag (eg. a case of domestic violence) is more likely to trigger people emotionally and therefore, generate sympathy for the victim (Shahbaznezhad

et al. 2020; Kemekenidou, 2016) which can eventually turn into action. The very hyperconnectivity that can facilitate the proliferation of hate speech online can also serve as the remedy to combat it. (Kemekenidou, 2016) Within the realm of activism, hyperconnectivity has the potential to be a powerful tool in the fight against inequality, provided that it is rooted in empathy rather than aggression. (Kemekenidou, 2016)

However, the threat of manipulation through the spread of disinformation and formation of echo chambers should still be taken into account when it comes to topics of social and political activism. Following Shahbaznezhad et al. (2020) research, emotionally heavy and/or relatable content tends to spread significantly faster on social media and with the integration of advanced technologies into social media, such as artificial intelligence, it has become a lot easier to manufacture disinformation and manipulate masses. When it comes down to echo chambers, it can be mentally beneficiary to be in a space with like-minded people on heavy topics however, echo chambers easily create the illusion of majority is sharing the same point of view on specific topics for social change and can lead people to be delusional about the outcome of their motives. (Nguyen, 2020) An additional drawback of echo chambers when it comes to cyberactivism is that they make it much harder to influence people with opposing opinions due to the extreme polarization echo chambers generate on intense topics such as politics. (Jeon et al., 2021)

### **3.3.1.3 BUILDING PRESSURE AND CYBERACTIVISM**

On the other hand, cyberactivism has advanced the reach of activist movements and changed the way activists build pressure on oppressive governments and regimes. Emerging communication patterns have transformed the organizational dynamics and structure of social movements, reducing reliance on professional leadership and expertise. (Carty&Barron, 2019) Instead, collective behavior increasingly takes place at the grassroots level and becomes less reliant on activist communities. (Carty&Barron, 2019) This is possible thanks to social media's hyperconnectivity and ability to gather like-minded people together to form communities. Along with social media algorithms some instruments such as hashtags hold irreplaceable importance in cyberactivism due to their role in information spread and topic-based community formation, and eventually for building pressure on oppressors. (Jones, 2018) Hashtags function as clustering mechanisms and allow people to voice their opinions on a certain topic. Twitter greatly stands out for its use of hashtags and its benefit in cases of cyberactivism. (Kemekenidou, 2016) On Twitter, the proliferation of hashtags focusing on significant social and cultural matters has experienced exponential growth, motivating users to share their personal narratives and bring attention to critical cases. (Yang, 2016) The widespread adoption of hashtags has greatly enhanced the searchability and identification of tweets, prompting users to express their opinions by incorporating relevant hashtags that align with

the content of their posts.(Jones, 2018)

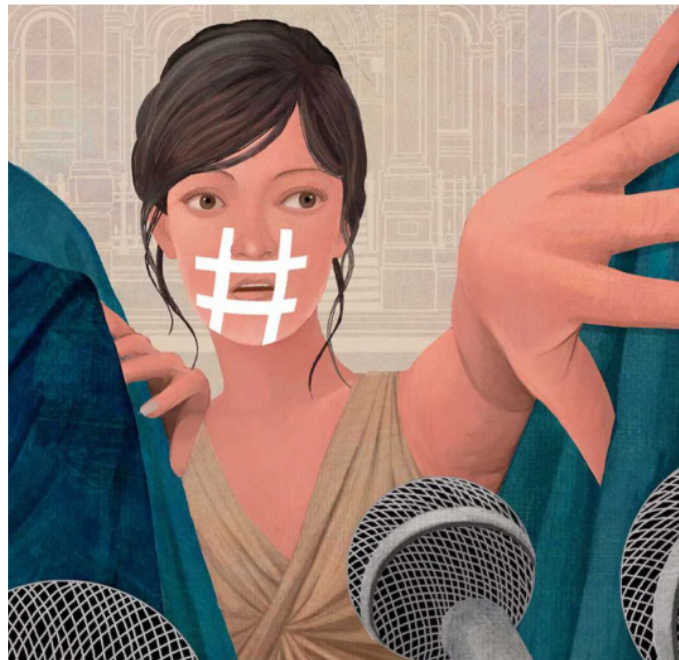
Kemekenidou (2016) discusses how hashtags serve multiple purposes, such as topic search and connection, but their significance extends further when they “trend.” When a hashtag gains substantial traction among numerous users, it appears as a “trending” on a chart where Twitter notifies users, ensuring even people who are unfamiliar with the topics can encounter it. Consequently, in a positive light, Twitter functions as a democratic network, as discussions about a shared topic become significant to everyone involved. Each individual’s voice holds value, where one can tweet unlimited with a hashtag. In mere seconds, a hashtag can unite people who may otherwise have no commonalities, disregarding their connections, interests, or other factors. The influence of trending hashtags in open communities can extend to individuals who may not typically express interest or possess connections to specific subjects. (Kemekenidou, 2016) As a result of the hashtag phenomenon, marginalized voices can find a platform to be heard, and trending hashtags hold substantial power in shaping broader conversations within the media and even politics. Originating on Twitter, the “hashtag movements” initially emerged online and subsequently made a profound impact on public debate as they spread to other social networks, gained traction in mainstream media, and ultimately transcended the digital realm to shape activism, foster participation, and strengthen community bonds on the streets. (Yang, 2016) Hashtag movements also spread internationally as a result of the reach of social networking platforms (Carty& Barron, 2019) often drawing attention to

local issues on a global level which functions as a critical point when building pressure on oppressing governments. Accordingly, hashtags have emerged as crucial pathways for individuals to actively engage and participate in movements for social change and build pressure. (Carty & Barron, 2019) These “hashtag movements” have played a significant role in drawing attention to pressing societal issues, raising awareness, fostering consciousness, and motivating people to take action. (Carty & Barron, 2019)

The rise of independence in cyberactivism does not mean activist organizations lost relevancy, in fact, social media fosters countless leverage points for organizations. (Stiff, 2018) Like all communities, social media helps to grow activist organization communities to larger numbers. Social media assists organizations to educate, recruit supporters, unite and mobilize for a common cause. (Elliott & Earl, 2018) Organizations can display their work and reach larger amounts of people swiftly, calling for offline action in as little as 280 characters. Engaging in online activism can inspire individuals to take their participation further by joining offline protests. (Greijdanus et al., 2020) Through cyberactivism, offline protests have grown and gained traction faster compared to post-digital era activism. (Garcia, 2015) Social media has also provided a platform for activists to communicate and bring themselves to safety during demonstrations. (Kozlov, 2021) Tufekci (2017) argues that social media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of protest, allowing for faster and more decentralized mobilization than ever before. Furthermore, organizations can start or utilize hashtags to draw

local and even international attention which can lead to global mobilization. (Tufekci, 2017) Social media's speed and international reach hold immense power over activist movements to build pressure on governments and/or regimes since international connections are soft spots for every ruling force. Especially for oppressive regimes, like autocracies, building international pressure is often the most effective way for social change.

To sum up, cyberactivism through social media has played an immense role in informing and connecting people, building empathy eventually resulting in exerting pressure on unfair systems. The key points of this section can be found in the following table. (Table 2) Some significant cases of cyberactivist or "hashtag" movements will be sampled, within the relevancy of marginalized groups, in the next subheading.



**Figure 7:** Illustration by Sonia Kretschmar

### **Dissemination of Information and Content:**

- Social media's bottom-up approach to communication challenges institutionalized power relations and allows for the distribution of real-time, unfiltered content.
- Social media platforms have changed the accessibility and dissemination of information, allowing ordinary individuals to become message-makers and mobilize for social change.
- Hashtags play a vital role in cyberactivism, facilitating topic-based community formation, information spread, and building pressure on oppressive entities.

### **Empathy and Emotional Connection:**

- Social media's hyperconnectivity and empathic engagement foster empathy and emotional connection, bridging gaps between diverse audiences.
- Cyberactivism serves as a source of healing and validation for marginalized communities, providing an outlet to address oppression and traumatic experiences.

### **Empowerment and Mobilization:**

- Cyberactivism utilizes digital technologies for political or social activism, enabling coordination, communication, and mobilization among like-minded individuals.
- Social media enables decentralized mobilization, reduces reliance on professional leadership, and empowers grassroots collective behavior in social movements.
- Organizations leverage social media to educate, recruit supporters, unite for a cause, and call for offline actions.
- Social media's speed and international reach facilitate global mobilization, enabling the building of international pressure on governments and regimes.

### **Challenges and Concerns:**

- There are concerns about the spread of disinformation and the formation of echo chambers, which can manipulate public opinion and create polarization.

**Table 2:** Key findings of “3.3 Activism in the Digital Age”



## 3.3.2 ACTIVISM, CYBERACTIVISM AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Unfortunately, the passing years and advancements in technology have not changed the focus group of social movements. Marginalized groups like women, people of color and LGBTQ+ community are still at the very heart of the activist movements in 2023. However, their set of tools for making noise and disturbing authorities for social change has also expanded to social networking platforms. This section will delve deeper into two significant cases of social movements that originated from cyberactivism and subsequently gained global prominence, leading to tangible grassroots-level changes for the marginalized groups involved.

**Black Lives Matter** movement is one of the biggest social movements that has emerged in the digital age. The movement seeks to address systemic racism, police brutality, and the disproportionate violence and discrimination faced by Black individuals within every sphere of society. Originating from a social media hashtag, #BlackLivesMatter emerged by female activists, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin in 2012. (Hillstorm, 2012) The movement gained nationwide recognition in 2014 following the deaths of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York all due to wrongful use of violence by the police towards unarmed black individuals. (Hillstorm, 2012) In 2020, #BlackLivesMatter hashtag resurfaced in all social media platforms after the murder of George

Floyd by the hands of a police officer in Minnesota. (Wu et al., 2023) Floyd was suspected of using a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill, he was unarmed and did not resist the police during his arrest however one of the police officers was filmed with his knee over Floyd's neck for over 9 minutes until he was out of oxygen. (Beaman, 2021) Floyd's last words "I can't breathe" was heard through the video clip that later took over the internet by storm and became a slogan for #BlackLivesMatter movement in 2020. (Beaman, 2021) The police officer Derek Chauvin was not immediately taken off duty and arrested for abuse of power and that was what caused the protests to catch fire. #BlackLivesMatter hashtag gained immense traction following Floyd's murder, and garnered around 3.4 million original posts, which accounted for approximately 13% of all posts, and received a staggering 69 billion engagements, making up roughly 15.5% of all engagements on Twitter during a 7 day period. (Wirtschafter, 2021) This engagement caused outrage throughout the world, resulting in protests in over 60 countries and marking United States' largest demonstration in history with around 15 to 26 million protestors marching for #BlackLivesMatter. (Buchanan et al., 2020) As a result of the demonstrations, the murderer of George Floyd was taken off duty and was sentenced to 22 years of prison time. (Reuters, 2021)

Wu et al (2023) explore people organizing protests, demonstrations, and acts of civil disobedience to shed light on police brutality and systemic racism that disproportionately impacts the black community and demand accountability under the cause of #BlackLivesMatter. The movement emphasizes the need for structural reforms in law



**Figure 8:** #BLM Protesters facing off against police in New York, 2020.

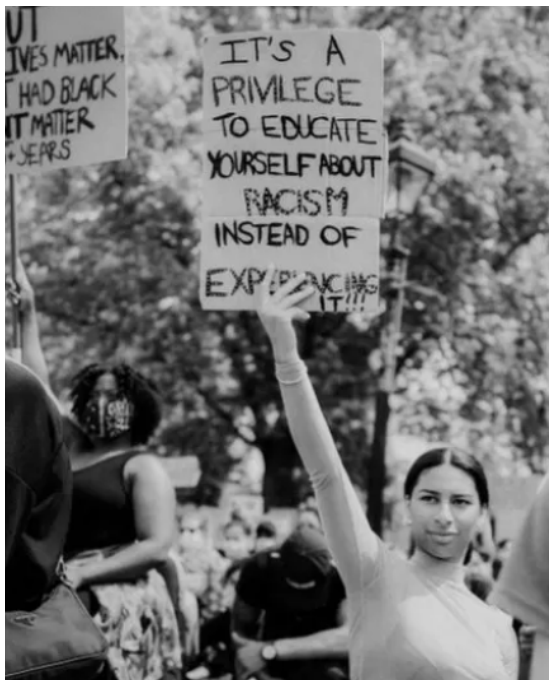


**Figure 9:** Black Lives Matter protest in Los Angeles on May 30, 2020.

enforcement, criminal justice, education, healthcare, and other areas where racial disparities persist. It calls for an end to racial profiling, excessive use of force, discriminatory practices, and the devaluation of Black lives. Importantly, #BlackLivesMatter is not just a social media movement, but also a rallying cry and a call to action. (Wu et al 2023) It has sparked conversations about race, privilege, and inequality on a global scale. (Beaman, 2021) It has also inspired individuals, organizations, and communities to examine their own biases, be an ally, and work toward dismantling systemic racism. The hashtag movement #BlackLivesMatter has had a significant impact, driving changes in public opinion, influencing policies, and inspiring other movements focused on racial justice and equality. Wu et al (2023) It continues to serve as a powerful force in the ongoing fight against racial injustice and the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable society



**Figure 10:** Ethiopia Berta, marches in Washington, D.C. 2020.



**Figures 11-12:** #BLM Protesters Bristol, United Kingdom. 2020.



**Figure 13:** Black Lives Matter protest in Paris, France. 2020.

Another activist movement that started off and gained popularity through social media later to be carried on the streets and initiate change in multiple industries is the **#MeToo movement**. Quan-Haase et al. (2021) delves into the “Me Too” movement started in 2006 by social activist Tarana Burke. Burke began to use the phrase on Myspace, one of the very first social media networks, to promote “empowerment through empathy” among women of color who experienced sexual assault. However, the “Me Too” movement gained traction in 2017, after actress Alyssa Milano tweeted “If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write “Me Too” as a reply to this tweet”. (Quan-Haase et al., 2021) Later she came forward to call out world-famous Hollywood director Harvey Weinstein for sexually assaulting her. (Guardian, 2017) Her tweet got recognition amongst millions, thousands of women as well as queer folk coming forward with their past around sexual abuse in the workspace from men in power, using the hashtag #MeToo. (Quan-Haase et al., 2021) Even more women in the filming industry came forward about the abuse they faced in the past by Weinstein, triggering his downfall as a director and arrest as a rapist. (BBC, 2023) The hashtag movement made its way to headlining in Times magazine and later to be called “the most powerful force for equality since women’s suffrage” by the Economist (2018). Brue (2021) discusses how #MeToo has exposed numerous high-profile men of sexual misconduct, leading to the downfall of influential individuals in numerous industries. The movement has sparked important conversations about consent, power dynamics, and the need for systemic change. It has also prompted changes in workplace policies, laws,



**Figure 14:** #MeToo Protests on International Women's Day in Seoul, South Korea. 2018



**Figure 15:** Protestor in #MeToo Protests, 2017.

and cultural attitudes towards sexual harassment. (Brue,2021) But most importantly, the hashtag campaign empowered women to break the silence surrounding their experiences and refuse to feel ashamed of them. (Caputi et al, 2018) They found the courage to speak out, often finding solace in the support of anonymous individuals who shared their own stories, unaware of the audience they would reach. (Caputi et al, 2018) The pivotal aspect in this context was the sense of support felt and provided within the realm of cyberspace.

To this day, marginalized communities are still at the very center of oppression by the ruling white supremacist, patriarchal mindset. Social media may not be able to nip the problem in the bud but it would be only fair to state that social media provides a platform for repressed voices to be heard and connect through cyberactivism to roar back to the ones in power. The following section will explore the ways in which design activism can support marginalized groups in utilizing and structuring the progress they achieve through cyberactivism.



**Figure 16:** Women's March in Washington, 2017



## 3.4 DESIGN ACTIVISM AND PROVOCATIVE DESIGN

At their very core, design and activism exist for the same purpose: to improve life and make the world a better place for all. Hence, with the increasing need for social change, the need for design activism followed and several design networks and groups were founded to address social, economic, and environmental issues. This part will discuss what design activism is, where empathy stands in design, and which design thinking and methodologies can be utilized for questioning the system.

Some of today's most serious concerns are unresolved by existing systems and policies. As a result, an increasing number of actors are turning to social innovation for new answers. (Hilgren et al., 2011) Design activism is an upcoming movement that emphasizes the importance of design in addressing basic civic and societal issues. The purpose of design activism is to use an intervention to influence systemic change. (Song & Lou, 2016) The design activism movement does not focus on specific project or inquiry design solutions. It demands an opening design to constantly act on societal problems, which incorporates stakeholders in a collaborative manner in order to generalize problem-solving solutions and data. (Song & Lou, 2016) Design activism is about utilizing design thinking and tools for the process of societal change in order to have long-term effects rather than focusing on providing a product as a short-lived solution. The most often discussed topics are social concerns, which include increasing the social welfare state in local or global contexts,

generating constructive social change, and meeting the needs of underserved elements of society. (Cetin, 2016) Various service design methodologies can participate in design activism, in this research, provocative design will be further explored for design activism.

Ozkaramanli and Desmet (2016) elaborate traditional design methods encourage the development of products that improve the efficiency, comfort, and pleasure of daily interactions. Provocative design methods, on the other hand, attempt to question the status quo through products that reveal assumptions and generate debate. “Provocative design” is used to describe design methods that function in a design environment where asking questions is as essential as addressing issues. (Ozkaramanli & Desmet, 2016) Provocative design methods are considered audience-centered rather than user-centered since their primary goal is to provoke communication instead of providing a function. (Tharp &Tharp, 2018) Discursive design falling under the umbrella of provocative design, refers to the development of objects/services/interactions with the primary goal of communicating ideas. (Tharp &Tharp, 2013) The fundamental notion of discourse is concerned with the concepts of language and conversation—communicative acts and exchanges. (Tharp &Tharp, 2018, pg.74) Discursive design aims to evoke emotions, usually through an artifact, and make the audience question, raising awareness on debatable issues of psychological, sociological, and ideological concern. (Tharp &Tharp, 2013)

Discursive design can also coexist and intertwine with other provocative design methodologies,

such as reflective design. The primary goal of the discursive endeavor is to promote human freedom by encouraging thoughtful reflection. Sengers et al. (2005) argue the term ‘reflection’ encompasses the process of engaging in critical thinking and bringing unconscious elements of our experiences into conscious awareness. This allows us to consciously choose our attitudes, practices, values, and identities, which is essential for individual freedom and the overall quality of life in society. Without reflection, we tend to adopt these aspects without conscious consideration. Moreover, reflection extends beyond a purely cognitive activity and permeates our entire perception and experience of the world. Unconscious assumptions are not merely rational knowledge; they are deeply ingrained in our identity and shape our worldview. Similarly, critical reflection goes beyond providing new information; it presents opportunities to perceive the world and ourselves in a profoundly different manner. (Sengers et al., 2005)

Furthermore, Ozkahramanli and Desmet (2016) discuss that products that cause dilemmas may interrupt or delay decision making in favor of making informed judgments. Triggering dilemmas is defined as the purpose to create awareness of conflict among individual concerns through designed goods and services that engage the audience in a “stop and think” attitude. Ozkahramanli and Desmet (2016) further argue that one possible way to trigger said attitude can be through products that create dilemmas by embodying symbols to stimulate reflection about conflicting personal or societal concerns. Another asset that can possibly convey the audience to self-reflect is through empathic

modeling activities. Empathic modeling activities are an important approach for developing empathy, they are simulations of scenarios through relatively brief artificial experiences. (McDonagh & Thomas, 2010) They provide the audience with a somewhat superficial awareness of the marginalized party's state of mind, they are nonetheless an effective tool in means of alerting the audience and making them think. (McDonagh & Thomas, 2010)

To conclude, design thinking and methodologies, such as provocative design can be utilized in design activism to address societal issues and push whomever interacts to take a step back and think. Using design as a medium to provoke a questioning of the system through empathic tools and symbols can be beneficial for discussing marginalized groups to rewrite the narrative and ignite grassroots level societal change.

## **3.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlights the significance of activism as a means to bring about social, political, and environmental change. Activism encompasses a wide range of activities and involves various entities, including individuals, CSOs, SMOs, and NGOs. The motivations behind activism stem from a sense of social responsibility, a desire for equity and justice, personal experiences of injustice, or a commitment to a better future. Marginalized groups have played crucial roles in activism, challenging systemic oppression and discrimination while advocating for their rights. Intersectionality has shaped activism by emphasizing inclusive approaches to social change.

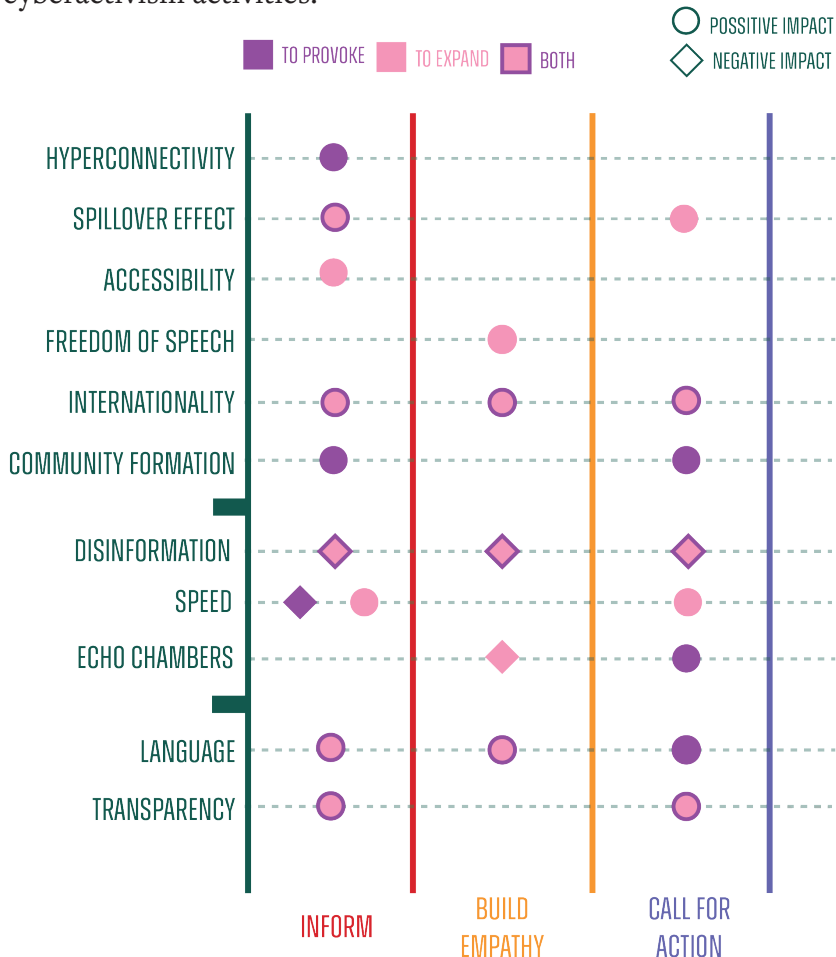
Today, the arrival of social media and digital technologies has revolutionized activism. Cyberactivism, which utilizes digital platforms for political or social activism, has emerged as a powerful force in mobilizing individuals and creating social change. Social media has democratized the dissemination of information, enabling regular individuals to become message-makers and citizen journalists. It has also facilitated the building of empathy through the sharing of personal experiences and emotional content. Hashtags have played a pivotal role in clustering discussions and amplifying marginalized voices, driving public debates.

Moreover, cyberactivism has transformed the dynamics of social movements by reducing reliance on professional leadership and fostering grassroots collective behavior. It has empowered individuals and organizations to educate, recruit supporters, and mobilize for causes. The chapter also delves into the concept of design activism, which utilizes design interventions to influence systemic change and address societal issues. Provocative design methods, such as discursive design, aim to challenge the status quo and evoke emotions to raise awareness and prompt critical thinking.

In conclusion, the main understandings of this chapter emphasize the significance of activism in combating injustices, amplifying marginalized voices, and driving social progress. The digital age has ushered in cyberactivism, leveraging social media as a powerful tool for information dissemination, empathy building, and grassroots organizing. Additionally, design activism plays a crucial role in addressing societal issues through innovative design

interventions. Together, these forms of activism contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society by questioning the existing power structures and promoting positive change.

Figure 17 summarizes the literature review on social media platforms and cyberactivism, providing an overview of positive and negative impacts. Moreover, it identifies specific areas where these impacts can be amplified or mitigated, with the aim of stimulating engagement among existing audiences or expanding the reach of information for cyberactivism activities.



**Figure 17:** Findings of broad literature review

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

# CHAPTER 4:

# CASE STUDIES ON CYBERACTIVISM AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe defines gender-based violence against women as distinct from other forms of violence because it is both caused by and a result of unequal power dynamics between women and men. These power imbalances contribute to the subordinate status of women in both public and private spheres, thereby normalizing violence against women. The term “gender” is used to acknowledge how harmful attitudes and societal expectations about women’s roles and behavior perpetuate violence against them. This terminology does not replace the biological definitions of “sex,” “women,” and “men,” but instead emphasizes that inequalities, stereotypes, and violence stem from damaging preconceptions about women’s attributes and roles, which in turn restrict their agency. (Council of Europe, n.d.) As with most marginalized groups, cyberspace has become a space for women of any race, religion, sexual identity and orientation to have a voice. This chapter delves into a detailed analysis of how the social media aspects discussed in preceding chapters have influenced three distinct case studies. The objective is to explore the specific roles played by these social media elements and their impact within each case study.

The following case studies were chosen to address the most severe and extreme form of violence within a broader spectrum of violence against women and girls, gender-related killings, also known as femicides. Femicide is characterized as a deliberate killing motivated by factors related to gender, such as entrenched gender roles, discrimination against women and girls, unequal power dynamics



between women and men, or detrimental social norms. (UNWomen, 2022) These case studies were specifically chosen from similar geographies, Turkey and Iran and were done so for autoethnography purposes. Due to my personal experience as a woman who grew up as a part and supporter of the LGBTQ+ community in Turkey, I have personally been a part of the marginalized groups that have found their voice through social media under an oppressive governmental regime. The inspiration behind the focus of the research comes from my own personal and cultural experiences. The two case studies chosen on gender-based violence have been major traumas for the mentioned marginalized groups in Turkey. The ongoing Feminist Revolution in Iran resonates with women around the globe who have experienced various forms of oppression, silencing, and impact due to patriarchal structures, allowing them to empathize with the movement at different levels. My personal experiences with cyberactivism will serve as a guide for the timeframes of the case studies, details about social media activity (such as the hashtags used), and the long-term impact of the femicide on society.

## 4.2 CASE STUDY 1: THE FEMICIDE OF HANDE KADER

Hande Kader, was a 23-year-old transgender activist and sex worker in Istanbul, Turkey. Just like many other transgender women in Turkey, Hande was stripped of her basic rights, going through what is called a “social death” just because of her identity. (Kaos GL, 2016) Her existence and many legal rights were disregarded by society. Hande’s dreams of studying linguistics and translating books were hindered by transphobia, bullying, and discrimination. (Azizi, 2016) Consequently, she was forced into sex work, a common outcome for many transgender women in the country. Kaos GL (2016) elaborates that transgender individuals in Turkey endure discrimination, hate speech, and various forms of oppression from a young age. They face pressure from their families, encounter difficulties in education, struggle to find employment, and are often subjected to social exclusion. Despite the challenges she faced, Hande Kader actively fought for her rights. Hande became a prominent figure of LGBTQ+ resistance when she confronted police interference during the Istanbul Pride Parade in 2015 by bravely standing in front of a water cannon vehicle. Hande was a courageous woman who lived her life as a voice for all marginalized individuals. (Kaos GL, 2016)

Tragically, Hande Kader was yet another victim of a transgender hate crime. On August 6, 2016 she was reported missing by her flatmate when she failed to return home the following week. (T24, 2018) Her lifeless and unrecognizable body was discovered

on August 13 in Zekeriyaköy. (T24, 2018) Her body was found raped, mutilated and burned. When her burned body was found, this brutality didn't even carry any news value. Her death did not make it to any of the mainstream media outlets, further highlighting the disregard faced by transgender individuals in Turkey.



**Figure 18:** Hande Kader being taken by the Police in Istanbul Pride, 2015.

## 4.2.1 THE FEMICIDE OF HANDE KADER AND CYBERACTIVISM

After failing to garner any attention from mainstream media outlets, LGBTQ+ organizations turned to social media as a platform to amplify Hande Kader's story. They initiated a campaign called "Be the Voice of Hande Kader" using the hashtags #HandeKader and #TransCinayetleriPolitiktir (Transgender Homicides are Political), highlighting the lack of media coverage and slow response from authorities in addressing the case. The campaign quickly gained momentum, with countless users engaging with the hashtags and learning about the tragic death of Hande Kader. Social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram played a crucial role, enabling the hashtags to reach Turkish public figures.

The cyberactivism surrounding Hande's case had significant impacts. Some celebrities broke their silence, publicly demanding justice for Hande Kader and criticizing the legal system for its perceived inaction in finding her murderer. (Figure #) As a result of this online pressure, the topic of Hande's murder finally made its way into one of the mainstream media outlets when renowned columnist Ayşe Arman covered it in newspapers on August 17 with trans journalist Michelle Demisevich. (Arman, 2016)

In the interview with Arman (2016), Demisevich drew attention to how it could have been anyone in Hande's place, "On that day, you could have been in Hande's place, and so could I. There is no difference for them (the murderers)." Hande

Kader's tragedy was closely compared to Özgecan Aslan's, a cisgender 19 year old woman raped, mutilated and burned with a close manner as Hande in the previous year. There was nationwide outrage following Özgecan's murder. On Arman's interview with Demisevich, she forwarded the question why society has not reacted the same way to Hande Kader's murder as they did to Özgecan Aslan's. Demisevich drew attention to cultural transphobia saying:

*“I believe that the underlying sentiment is the same for the reactions received. However, when it comes to a transgender woman, it is not often reflected outwardly. There is a fear of being criticized when expressing condemnation of this crime on Twitter or Facebook, or when taking to the streets with a banner, hearing remarks like, “Are you marching for that freak?!” Some even think, “After all, she was transgender! She deserved it. It goes against our religion and traditions! She wouldn't have been killed if she wasn't transgender!” But Özgecan, she was a girl who conformed to society's heterosexual norms. She followed all of society's rules. That's why her murder sparked nationwide outrage. But who cares about transgender Hande Kader! Why would they react! It goes against their way of life, their philosophies, everything...” (Arman, 2016)*

On August 22, the LGBTQ+ Solidarity Association used social media to call for a physical demonstration in Taksim Square, Istanbul. (Figures 19-20) Hundreds of people marched and voiced their resistance, chanting slogans such as “Men kill, the government protects” and “Transgender Homicides are Political, We Want to Die in Our Time.” (BBC, 2016) The protests continued countrywide and the

collective pressure mounted on the government through social media. Finally, on October 16, a suspect was arrested in connection with Hande Kader's murder. (Kaos GL, 2018)

As someone actively supporting the LGBTQ+ community and advocating trans visibility, I observe that Hande Kader continues to be a symbol of LGBTQ+ and intersectional feminist resistance in Turkey. Her memory is honored every year during Pride month, in response to subsequent hate crimes, and through an association bearing her name. As for social media use, the role of free speech on social media in amplifying Hande's voice when traditional avenues failed cannot be underestimated. It brought together thousands of individuals who sought justice for a transgender woman who would have been overlooked by authorities due to her identity. The case of Hande Kader underscores social media's reach through its hyper-connectivity and spillover effect, as well as its power in informing and unifying individuals and later triggering a societal change in unjust systems.



**Figure 19:** Protests for Hande Kader in Taksim, Istanbul. 2016.



**Figure 20:** Protestor with “We Want to Live” writing on their dress. Istanbul, 2016.

## 4.3 CASE STUDY 2: THE FEMICIDE OF PINAR GÜLTEKIN

Pınar Gültekin was a 27-year-old Economics student in Muğla. She disappeared on July 16, 2020, after leaving her home. (NTV, 2023) According to Sözcü (2020), her family sought help from the police and gendarmerie and requested assistance through social media to find Gültekin. The authorities initiated an extensive search operation to locate her. A list of people who knew Gültekin was compiled, and security camera footage in the area was examined, along with statements from witnesses. The police determined that Gültekin had been seen talking to a person at a shopping mall, identified as Cemal Metin Avcı, a 33-year-old married man and father of one, who operated the entertainment venue called “Cüce Bar” in the center of Muğla. (Sözcü, 2020)

Security forces intensifying their search in the wooded area surrounding Avcı’s farmhouse in Yerkesik Neighborhood of Menteşe district discovered a barrel filled with cement that had been discarded in the forested area. Firefighters managed to open the barrel with difficulty using an electric saw, and it was determined that the lifeless body of a woman found inside belonged to Pınar Gültekin. Following suspicion, Cemal Metin Avcı was detained. Avcı and Gültekin allegedly had a relationship, and Avcı could not accept rejection from Pınar after she broke up with him several times. (Sözcü, 2020) Initially denying the accusations, he later confessed to murdering Gültekin in his cottage by strangling her, later burning her body, and pouring cement in the barrel before disposing of her body in the forest.





**Figure 21:** Pinar Gültekin, 2020.

(NTV 2023 & Sözcü 2020) He was subsequently arrested. Avcı's confessions were fragmented and inconsistent. After the forensics report, it was determined that Gültekin was still alive when Avcı had set fire. (Sözcü, 2020)

As reported by NTV (2023) Cemal Metin Avcı's brother, Mertcan Avcı, was also detained by gendarmerie teams as his phone signals were detected at the crime scene and in the vicinity during the same time period as his brother. He was arrested on charges of "destroying evidence." During the ongoing trial, Mertcan Avcı was granted release pending trial. In the thirteenth hearing of the trial concerning Gültekin's murder, the defendant Cemal Metin Avcı was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment. However, his sentence was reduced to 23 years due to the application of unjust provocation. The court acquitted Mertcan Avcı and the other defendants. This verdict received massive backlash from the public. The Muğla Chief Public

Prosecutor's Office appealed the 23-year prison sentence given to Cemal Metin Avcı and the acquittal decision for his brother, Mertcan Avcı. During the appeal process, the 4th Criminal Chamber of the Izmir Regional Court of Justice sentenced Cemal Metin Avcı to an aggravated life sentence and Mertcan Avcı to 4 years in prison in March 2023. (NTV, 2023) Pınar Gültekin's case lasted a total of 2 years and 8 months.

## 4.3.1 THE FEMICIDE OF PINAR GÜLTEKIN AND CYBERACTIVISM

Pınar Gültekin's murder had immense reactions both from the mainstream media and social media. The brutal murder of the 27-year-old has become the focal point of local feminist organizations such as We Will Stop Femicides Platform and Women's Coalition. Her case was closely followed by these organizations in court. Women throughout the country organized protests by using the hashtag #PınarGültekinicinAdalet (Justice for Pınar Gültekin). I have observed discussions where the public was disturbed by how the news was delivered by mainstream media organs, where black and white pictures and name of Pınar Gültekin were distributed but the suspect's information remained secret, only using his initials and he was only referred to as a "business owner". Women on social media took the matter into their own hands and started sharing Cemal Metin Avcı and his bar's name along with photos in order to protest and expose the murderer, accusing mainstream media organs of protecting a potential murderer's reputation. (Figure 22)

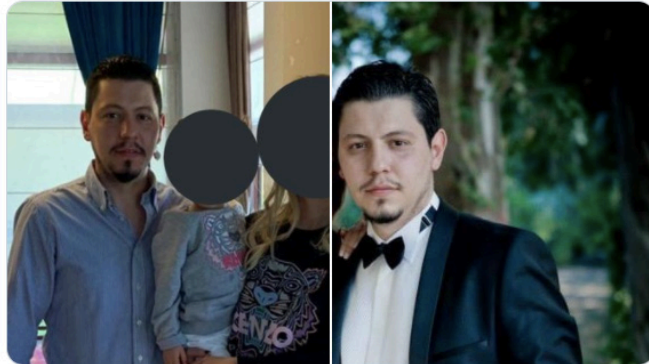
Protests broke out also when Avcı's brother who allegedly helped Avcı hide Gültekin's body was released pending trial. The Turkish justice system has built a reputation for not carrying out the existing laws on gender-based violence cases, especially the Law for Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women- No 6284, and granting suspects of gender-based violence with penalty reductions and the attainment of



**Sherlock**  
@dedektifpipo

Size şerefsizliği anlatamam, ama fotoğraflarını gösterebilirim. Pınar'ı öldürüp, yakıp, üzerine beton döken evli ve çocuk sahibi Cemal Metin Avcı. Muğla Akyaka'da "Cüce" adlı mekanın sahibi. Bu mekanı sakın unutmayın. GİTMİYORUZ! Yayalım... #pinargultekin

[Translate Tweet](#)



11:58 AM · Jul 21, 2020 · [Twitter for Android](#)

5.1K Retweets and comments 15.2K Likes

**Figure 22:** Tweet exposing Cemal Metin Avcı, 2020.

deterrent sentences. At the same time as Pinar Gültekin's murder, Turkey's involvement in the Istanbul Convention was being reconsidered by the authorities. Council of Europe (n.d) states The Istanbul Convention as a significant human rights treaty that sets forth extensive legal norms to safeguard women's freedom from violence and address domestic violence. Developed through the Council of Europe's persistent endeavors dating back to the 1990s, this European legal framework was negotiated and adopted by its 47 member states on 7 April 2011 under the name "Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence." It acquired its name from the city where it was first signed on 11 May 2011. (Council of Europe, n.d.) The possibility of withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention also fueled the protests around Pinar Gültekin's case, using it to draw attention to how crucial the Istanbul Convention is for women's safety and right to live.

Following Pinar Gültekin's case and the discussions around the Istanbul Convention, a social media campaign was initiated in July 2020 by Turkish women (NTV, 2023) with the hashtags #ChallengeAccepted #BlackandWhiteChallenge #WomenSupportingWomen, some posts also including #IstanbulConvention SavesLives. The social media campaign was introduced as the "Black and White Challenge" where women were challenging female friends and even public figures as well as celebrities openly on Instagram to join in on the challenge by sharing a picture of themselves in black and white, using the hashtags. Each time a woman posted she needed to challenge at least one other, this practice of challenging another woman

to share a black-and-white picture emerged as a way to highlight the alarming reality that anyone could be the next headline in the news for a femicide. The challenge gained traction and thousands of women started participating in the challenge. By utilizing the spill-over effect and social media's international reach the campaign even reached world-renowned Hollywood actresses such as Jennifer Aniston, Eva Longoria, Jennifer Garner and Kerry Washington. (NTV, 2023) (Figure 25) However, the intention to draw attention to the ongoing discussions around gender-based violence in Turkey and the case of Pınar Gültekin was lost in translation, resulting in the international audience as well as some of the Turkish audience regard the #BlackandWhiteChallenge only as a women's support movement. Unfortunately, despite efforts by the Turkish audience to explain the origin of this challenge in the comments section of international Instagram posts, it did not receive significant attention. (Figure 26)



**Figure 23:** “If you are afraid of the dark at night, we will set this city on fire.” Women’s Day March, Turkey. 2020

Following the online reaction, on 22 July 2020, the President also tweeted “I have no doubt that the perpetrator who murdered Pınar Gültekin will receive the harshest punishment they deserve. I will personally follow the trial and do whatever is necessary as the Republic of Turkey to put an end to violence against women, something we never want to experience again.” (RTErdogan, 2020) Despite this statement, on March 20, 2021, Turkey had withdrawn from the Istanbul Convention with his signature. (Resmi Gazete, 2021)

Trials for Pınar Gültekin’s case continued but its media attention declined with time. In the case’s thirteenth trial on June 20, 2022, the reduction of Avcı’s lifetime sentence to 23 years reignited protests through social media, reviving the #PınarGültekinicinAdalet hashtag. Soon after the backlash from the public, Avcı’s case was reevaluated and he received lifetime imprisonment. His brother who helped him in the process was also sentenced to 4 years of prison time.

When looking into Pınar Gültekin’s murder and its storyline on social media, social media’s accessibility has allowed her parents to call for help through social media and reach out to the authorities faster while catching the public attention. Through the use of hashtags, people were able to mobilize by forming communities in their locations, demanding justice for Gültekin. It was also possible for Gültekin’s case to go international with the #BlackandWhiteChallenge by leveraging social media’s spillover effect and hyper-connectivity. However, the Black and White challenge lost its primary meaning throughout its course due to



**Figure 24:** Turkish women protesting for Istanbul Convention, 2020.



Liked by wattage53 and others

jennifer.garner Thank you for the ❤️, @rachelzoe @ampurdygurl @jenniferlovehewitt @mollybsims. I'm sending love back to you and heaps to all women looking after their sisters. That's how it's done, ladies ❤️❤️❤️. #challengeaccepted #womensupportingwomen

View all 1,130 comments

**Figures 25:** Jennifer Garner's #Challengeaccepted post



turkishphilanthropyfunds 152w

Thank you for raising awareness. We realized that not many know the reason for the most recent #challengeaccepted movement. Turkish women recently have started using the hashtag to raise awareness for violence against women in Turkey after a 27-year old was murdered by her boyfriend. Please share this information widely if you want to support this movement so the message does not get lost in translation and so that the challenge won't lose its meaning. And, please follow @turkishphilanthropyfunds for updates. #saynotoviolenceagainstwomen #kadınışiddetehayır #womensupportingwomen

Reply



ebruu\_duman 152w

The starting point was taken a stance against the increasing murders of women in Turkey. 30 women were killed in July alone. We are fighting to prevent the Istanbul Convention that protects women from being abolished and we need women all over the world in our struggle. because we know that the suffering of being a woman has a common language all over the world. we know you understand us, your support is really valuable and can make a difference. Please go ahead, for sisterhood 🙏

**Figures 26:** Turkish commenters explaining the challenge under Garner's Post.

the inconsiderate strategy of social media's digital tools and the underestimation of echo chambers. The anonymous creators of the challenge may have intended to draw international attention by choosing English as the main language for the posts, nevertheless, the overuse of disconnected hashtags prevented the message from passing through to the audience outside the echo chamber. Another possibility is that the creators thought that the meaning behind the use of black and white photos was universal, thinking that their message would be clear for all. However, the latter entertains the possibility that the creators of the challenge are stuck in their own echo chamber, expecting everyone in the social media space to share the same experiences as themselves. If this was indeed the case, their echo chamber appeared to be quite insular. As someone who closely followed the case and the cause itself, I had to conduct research to understand the original purpose of the challenge, which makes understanding the reasoning of the challenge quite unlikely for people outside the echo chamber of the cause to predict.



## 4.4 CASE STUDY 3: THE FEMICIDE OF MASHA AMINI

In line with the news reports by Kohli (2022) published in Time magazine, Mahsa Amini, aged 22, was apprehended in Tehran on September 13 2022 by the notorious morality police, known for enforcing strict Islamic codes of conduct and dress. In Iran, all women, regardless of religion or nationality, are required to wear hijabs in public. Amini was charged with violating the country's headscarf law.

According to the Iranian security forces, Amini was taken to a detention center where she underwent training on hijab regulations. It was during her time there that she suffered a heart attack and collapsed. Sadly, she passed away on September 16 at a hospital in Tehran.

However, Amini's family contradicts this account, alleging that she was subjected to physical assault by the police while being transported to the detention center, which witnesses claim to have seen. Her father, unable to view her body fully, caught a glimpse of her foot, which exhibited signs of bruising. As reported by the Associated Press, it is believed that her demise resulted from severe head injuries, specifically a skull fracture, inflicted by powerful blows.

Following allegations that she was killed by law enforcement, protests erupted among Iranians. However, the government responded with a harsh crackdown, deploying riot police, leading to arrests, injuries, and at least 17 reported deaths, as per state



**Figure 27:** Masha Amini before and after assault, 2022

media. Independent sources estimate this number around 30.

While Iranian authorities maintain that Amini died from heart failure, her family and protestors across the country accuse the government of concealing her murder. These demonstrations have now expanded internationally, expressing not only outrage over the restrictions imposed on women regarding hijabs and broader issues in Iran but also against the current regime. During one protest in Iran, a crowd of Iranians filled the streets, chanting “death to the oppressor, be it the shah or the supreme leader!” Since September, the nationwide protests in Iran have been steadily growing in response to Amini’s death. Initially sparked by demonstrations on the streets and through social media, condemning what protestors believe to be an unlawful killing, the protests have evolved into a broader movement fueled by recent displays of oppressive government actions and long-standing frustrations with the authoritarian regime.

Reports and videos from various demonstrations across the country depict unarmed protestors being subjected to beatings and harassment by the police. Notably, student protests have played a significant role, marking a departure from the traditionally politically inactive youth. Campuses like Sharif University in Tehran have experienced heightened aggression from authorities, with accounts of violent scenes involving gunfire, tear gas, and bloodshed, as described by witnesses on campus. The protests reflect a range of frustrations, including the mandatory modesty laws, restrictions on political choices and freedom of speech, and discriminatory practices against ethnic minorities. Amnesty International's investigation revealed that on September 21, Iran's top-level military authorities issued orders to security forces nationwide to "severely confront troublemakers and anti-revolutionaries." As a means of controlling the flow of information, internet access continues to be blocked by the authorities. (Kohli, 2022) However, by that time the protests already went global and protesters in Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Lebanon, Turkey, Canada, and the United States came together in a show of solidarity with the demonstrators in Iran, chanting Jin Jiyan, Azadi (Women, Life, Freedom). (RFE/RL, 2022)

In a news report by Lucia Binding on March 13, 2023, it was revealed that Human Rights Activists, an organization actively monitoring the situation in Iran, has reported a staggering number of arrests during the protests, exceeding 19,700. They further alleged that the violent crackdown by authorities resulted in the deaths of at least 530 individuals as they suppressed the demonstrations. The protests

still go on to this day in different intensities and forms. These protests vary from women dancing in public to going outside without a hijab which is both prohibited in Iran. As a result of the recent backlash, the Iranian government has been somewhat restrained in its response to public dissent. However, the oppressive measures targeting women persist under the Islamic government, including the banning of women without headscarves from using public transport and the enforcement of demonstrations on proper headscarf wearing by other women supporting the regime. (From\_\_Iran, 2023)

However, according to independent news sources and the Instagram account From\_\_Iran, which portrays the socio-political climate of Iran, reports indicate that severe punishments for participating in protests persist. Since November 2022, girls' schools have been targeted with chemical gas attacks, leading to the poisoning of thousands of female students.

Despite employing extensive mass surveillance to identify dissent, including women without hijabs, the Islamic Republic has denied any responsibility for the recent chemical gas attacks on girls' schools. The regime's denial, coupled with their failure to track the attackers or provide any witnesses, has further solidified the belief among the Iranian people that these attacks are deliberate acts orchestrated by the regime. Many view them as a means of seeking revenge against Iranian society, particularly young girls, for their active participation in the Woman, Life, Freedom Revolution, which marked a significant anti-regime movement in the

history of the Islamic Republic. With unwavering courage, schoolgirls have taken a prominent role in challenging the oppressive regime and its ideological symbols. They have fearlessly defied compulsory hijabs, symbolically burned images of past and present supreme leaders Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Khamenei within their classrooms, and boldly displayed anti-regime slogans throughout schools. (Figure 28) Regime propagandists, aware of the allegations made by the Iranian people, swiftly blame “autonomous” groups for chemical attacks on schools. However, there is no evidence to support the existence of such groups, and the regime utilizes them as a means to evade responsibility for domestic human rights violations. This tactic has been previously employed in 2017 for the acid attacks in Isfahan, where extremist “autonomous” groups were falsely accused. The evidence strongly suggests that the regime’s security establishment, either directly or indirectly, has coordinated these chemical attacks. The Iranian people perceive these attacks as a deliberate act of terror and punishment, aimed at deterring future mass unrest within Iranian society. (From \_\_\_Iran, 2023)

## 4.4.1 THE FEMICIDE OF MASHA AMINI AND CYBERACTIVISM

Social media played a primary role in the protests that were initiated with Masha Amini's death. Given the authoritarian nature of Iran's Islamic Republic, the country's mainstream media sources and the news disseminated internationally are subject to significant control and manipulation, favoring the supreme leaders. Social media has emerged as a vital platform for Iranian citizens to reveal the realities taking place within their borders. Protesters have documented and shared their struggle, calling upon individuals outside of Iran to amplify their voices.

As per Kohli's report on the Time, After the incident involving Amini, protests initially erupted in her hometown and quickly spread to approximately 80 cities, including the capital city, Tehran. Iranian women, as a symbol of solidarity with Amini, have taken to publically burning hijabs and cutting their hair, both in the streets and on various social media platforms. Public squares in Tehran have become gathering points for crowds, and disturbing videos capturing instances of police brutality against peaceful protesters have gone viral. These protests have also gained international attention, extending beyond the borders of Iran. Women, public figures, celebrities from around the globe shared videos of them cutting their hair in solidarity with Iranian women (Figure 29) using the hashtag #JinJiyanaAzadi (Women, Life, Freedom in Kurdish). The Iranian population experienced a significant disruption in internet access, resulting in a virtual halt of internet usage across the country.

Prior to this blackout, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had already imposed strict censorship measures, blocking Iranians from accessing foreign social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This blackout triggered immense stress for Iranians, reminding the previous large-scale protests in 2019, where the government implemented a week-long internet shutdown. These shutdowns pose challenges for organizing protests, documenting human rights violations, and sharing information. It is estimated that approximately 1,500 civilians were killed during the 2019 shutdown. (Kohli,2022)

Independent journalists on social media and various international media outlets have stepped forward to



**Figure 28:** Girls without headscarves protesting the Supreme Leaders, Iran. 2022.

assist Iranian citizens in documenting their struggles. According to Gritten et al. at BBC, Iranian authorities have been deliberately disrupting internet services in an attempt to restrict the flow of information and manipulate the narrative. However, despite these efforts, Iranians are still managing to share videos of protests taking place across the country through messaging apps and social media platforms.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of these videos, journalists undergo a verification process. They carefully analyze the footage, looking for identifiable landmarks, signs, and other visual cues that can be cross-referenced with satellite images, street-level photos, and previous recordings. Additional factors such as weather conditions, the position of the sun, and the angles of shadows are taken into account to establish the exact timing of the events. (Gritten et al., 2022)

The internet blockage only fueled the protestors around the globe to act. On October 22, Around 80,000 Iranians and their supporters marched in Berlin, with participants from across Europe chanting the protestors' slogan of "Women, Life and Liberty!" marking the largest gathering held by the Iranian diaspora so far. (BBC, 2022) I was a part of this demonstration and I got the chance to see how people from different ethnicities united. I am personally coming from a religion-centered community with the essence of Middle Eastern culture, yet I believe the Feminist Revolution in Iran struck as an inspiration to all who are trying their hardest to breathe in a white-centralized patriarchal-ruled world, resulting in such a strong demonstration in Berlin.



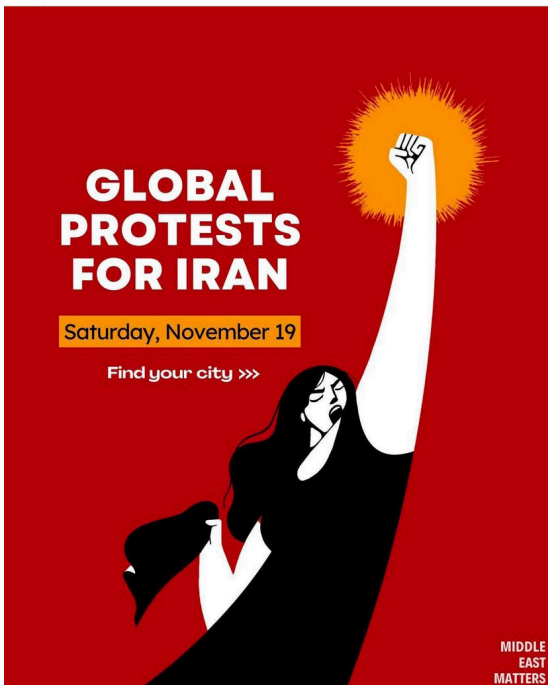


**Figure 29:** An Iranian protestor cutting her hair during the Istanbul protest, 2022.



middleeastmatters

...



**Figure 30:** Global call for action, Instagram, 2022.



**Figure 31:** “Woman, Life, Freedom” Berlin, 2022

The NGO, Middle East Matters, organized unified protests in more than 100 cities around the globe on November 19th and shared the information through their Instagram account. (MiddleEastMatters, 2022) Public figures and artists also showed their reaction to the Islamic Republic regime. In a show of solidarity with anti-government protesters in Iran, Swedish MEP Abir Al-Sahlani made a statement by cutting her hair in the European Parliament. (Mouriquand, 2022) Dutch-Iranian artist, Sevdaliza released a song called “Women Life Freedom” in solidarity with Iranian women, with the statement:

*“I wrote a song for oppressed women around the world. I stand proud as an Iranian woman and I am supporting the fight of my sisters who shed their blood, hair, hearts and brains to give us all the hope that one day, we will be free. At a young age I became aware of the systematic means of forcing women into obedience through violence and intimidation. To persuade women that their minds, bodies, and freedom do not belong to them. Our humanity demands we stand up against the oppression of women. Now. And forever. We must continue to speak up and fight institutions that condone oppression, violence and murder. We must face the people that deny the dignity and respect for all of us women. We are so tired of being told how to be, what to be.”* (Sevdaliza, 2022)

Iranian activists staged a peaceful protest where they lay on the ground in the Met Museum New York covered in red paint holding slogans such as “They raped and murdered me in the Islamic Republic Prison” and “I was filming the protest and they killed me.” (MiddleEastMatters, 2022)

The protests are still going on, however, their media coverage has declined over time. Despite social media accounts dedicated to the political landscape of Iran, the Women Life Freedom revolution, and Middle East-focused NGOs actively sharing information, the coverage of the topic by international mainstream media sources has decreased, possibly due to the revolution becoming common place and the emergence of other global news updates. The significant impact of social media in the Iranian Feminist Revolution cannot be underestimated, as citizen journalism played a disruptive role in challenging the supreme leader and the regime by facilitating the rapid spread of information, fostering unity among people locally and internationally. This led to the regime's decision to impose a blackout as a means of instilling fear among the people who are eager for change. Despite the Islamic Republic's efforts, the Iranian Feminist Revolution continues to gain strength with each passing day.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

To sum up, the case studies examined in this analysis highlight the significant role of social media in amplifying voices, mobilizing communities, and sparking societal change. The story of Hande Kader demonstrates how social media provided a platform for marginalized individuals to seek justice and bring attention to an overlooked case by the mainstream media. The hyper-connectivity and spillover effect of social media enabled thousands of people, including public figures, to unite and

demand justice, ultimately challenging unjust systems. Similarly, in the case of Pınar Gültekin, social media's accessibility allowed her parents to swiftly call for help and capture public attention by using hashtags and forming communities, leading to mobilization to demand justice. However, the misuse of hashtags and the possibility of news only circulation within an echo chamber diluted the intended message of the #BlackandWhiteChallenge, hindering the Turkish women's struggles to grab international attention. This instance highlights the need for careful consideration of digital tools and audience reach.

Furthermore, the Iranian Feminist Revolution exemplifies the power of social media in facilitating the rapid spread of information and fostering unity among people locally and internationally. Despite attempts by the regime to impose a blackout and suppress the movement, social media continues to play a crucial role in empowering the revolution and keeping the momentum alive.

As can be understood from the case studies, activism in cyberspace holds a great role in changing the course of a case by shaping and voicing the public opinion. Overall, these case studies demonstrate the potential of social media to inform, unite, and challenge existing power structures. However, they also highlight the importance of responsible usage, considering the limitations of digital tools, and being mindful of the possible echo chambers. Social media remains a powerful tool for amplifying voices and driving societal change, and its impact should not be underestimated in the pursuit of justice and equality.

**CHAPTER 4:**

**METHODOLOGY**

## 5.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall research and project aim is to design a product service system that would contribute to utilizing cyberactivism activity in a more structured and directed manner in order to expand the reach and receive a quicker response from governmental bodies on cases of gender-based violence and hate crimes.

The research objectives are the following:

1. To examine how social media influences public opinion and the corresponding response from governmental entities.
2. To comprehend the demographics of individuals who participate in activism, along with their motivations and the methods they employ in doing so.
3. To investigate the current landscape of cyberactivism and its utilization in addressing cases of gender-based violence and hate crimes.
4. To explore the experiences and perspectives of activists and organizations using social media as a platform for advocating against gender-based violence.
5. To design a comprehensive and structured product service system for improving the effective utilization of social media in raising awareness and prompting action against gender-based violence.

## 5.2 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

With the research aim in sight, a qualitative research methodology including autoethnography and semi-structured interviews was deployed. The research has progressed through three key phases, in order to narrow down the project and identify a specific area in which to make a meaningful impact.

These three key phases are:

1. Broad Literature Review, Preliminary Research
2. Focus on Non-Governmental Organizations
3. Concept Definition

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research is a methodology that focuses on understanding and interpreting human phenomena through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. It involves methods such as observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting characteristics, patterns, attributes, and meanings of the subject under study (Oliveira, 2023). This approach allows researchers to gain in-depth insights into the experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of individuals or groups (Himick et al., 2022). Qualitative research methods are typically framed within interpretive, constructivist, hermeneutic, phenomenological, ethnographic, critical, and poststructuralist traditions (Matta, 2019). Examples of qualitative research methods include grounded theory, critical discourse analysis, and conversation analysis (Matta, 2019). One of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability

to capture the complexity and richness of human experiences and behaviors. It allows researchers to explore subjective phenomena and gain a deeper understanding of social and cultural contexts (Green & Thorogood, 2009). Qualitative research also provides flexibility in data collection methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, allowing researchers to adapt their approach to the specific research question (Smith & Firth, 2011). Additionally, qualitative research promotes participant engagement and collaboration, as it often involves building relationships and co-creating knowledge with participants (Oliveira, 2023).

The reason qualitative research was the chosen approach as the main research methodology in this dissertation was because of the sensitive and human nature of the chosen focus. To effectively address gender-based violence and hate crimes in the studied regions, it was essential to acquire a comprehensive understanding of human experiences, and behaviors in their socio-cultural contexts.

## **5.2.1 PHASE 1: BROAD LITERATURE REVIEW AND PRELIMINARY RESEARCH**

In the first phase, the study examines the impact of social media interactions on supporting cyberactivism activities of marginalized groups in cases related to gender-based violence. To gain a comprehensive understanding of user engagement and the governmental response to social media, an extensive analysis of social media's structure



and features was conducted, drawing insights from relevant literature. Additionally, an in-depth exploration was undertaken to elaborate the definitions of activism, cyberactivism, and the role of design in activism, particularly regarding their associations with marginalized groups. To enhance the research, valuable insights were gathered from existing literature and recent case studies centered on gender-based violence. Autoethnography was used as a method when delving into the case studies. Autoethnography served as the chosen method for exploring the case studies, allowing for a deep dive into personal experiences.

## **AUTOETHNOGRAPHY**

Autoethnography is a qualitative research methodology that emphasizes a personal and introspective approach to studying social phenomena (Butler, 2016). It involves the researcher immersing themselves in the natural environment where the phenomenon of study occurs and gaining a deep understanding of it through the participants' perspectives (Oliveira, 2019). Autoethnography can be categorized into different types, such as evocative autoethnography, analytic autoethnography, and critical autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Sughrua, 2019). Evocative autoethnography focuses on personal storytelling and emotional experiences, while analytic autoethnography emphasizes theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson, 2006). Critical autoethnography seeks to bring previously silenced perspectives to the forefront and uses the researcher's identity as a way of knowing (Sughrua, 2019). It allows for the exploration of social issues and the manifestation of these

issues within a community (Lowenstein & Jones, 2020).

A mixed methodology of autoethnography was adopted when writing this dissertation. In this focused research, the utilization of autoethnography allowed me to immerse myself in the examined case studies of cyberactivism and gain an internal perspective and a deeper focus of their details in cyberspace. In all the focused case studies, I participated both as an observer and an active participant. By assuming the roles of both an observer and an active participant, I gained a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural dynamics within cyberspace and how they manifest offline, the involved actors, and their reciprocal reactions and interactions. Through firsthand involvement in online discussions and communities, I experienced the dynamics of social media and cyberactivism, including the challenges posed by phenomena such as disinformation and echo chambers. I have been part of the protests in the examined case studies both online and offline. I have used my platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized groups and victims by sharing their stories and contributing to the hashtags. Through social media, I received information about and marched in the largest demonstration for the Feminist Revolution in Iran, joining a crowd of 80,000 people in Berlin.

## 5.2.1.1 PROBLEM DEFINITION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Through the analysis of these experiences, along with desk research, the following problem definition and research question were synthesized:

### **PROBLEM DEFINITION:**

The decentralized structure and characteristics of social media lead to fragmented engagement in cyberactivism activities, thereby diminishing its potential impact.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION:**

“How can the utilization of product service system design assist intersectional feminist NGOs in harnessing cyberactivism activities to amplify their impact on public debate and effectively exert pressure on governmental bodies?”

## **5.2.2 PHASE 2: FIELD RESEARCH WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Analyzing through Phase 1, a better understanding of how Non-Governmental Organizations functioned was required in order to achieve the research aim. The target of this phase was to understand the online and offline internal processes within the associations. In order to accomplish this objective, it was necessary to comprehend the trajectory of a case across online and offline platforms, analyze the associations' utilization of social media, and evaluate its influence on public discourse and governmental actions. To explore this aim, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two of the leading Non-Governmental Organizations fighting against gender-based violence in Turkey.

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Semi-structured interviews are a commonly used qualitative research methodology that allows for flexibility and in-depth exploration of research topics (Kallio et al., 2016). This approach involves conducting interviews with participants using a predetermined set of open-ended questions, while also allowing for additional probing and follow-up questions based on the participant's responses (Atış-Akyol, 2023). Semi-structured interviews provide researchers with the opportunity to gather rich and detailed data, as participants have the freedom to express their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). The use of semi-structured interviews can be particularly beneficial when dealing with sensitive or traumatic topics, as

it allows participants to share their experiences in a comfortable and controlled environment (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). Additionally, semi-structured interviews can be conducted over the phone, which may result in more honest and authentic responses due to the familiarity and comfort of virtual communication (Trier-Bieniek, 2012).

For the sensitivity of the focused topic semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method to gather insights from Non-Governmental Organizations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two recognized Non-Governmental Organizations, Mor Çatı and Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu (We Will Stop Femicides Platform), which actively combat gender-based violence in Turkey and have a significant online presence.

The semi-structured interviews involved questions surrounding the topics of:

- » NGOs internal dynamics
- » NGOs online and offline outreach and communication
- » NGOs relation with cyberactivism and audience response
- » NGOs international presence
- » NGOs documentation of the ongoing and past cases.

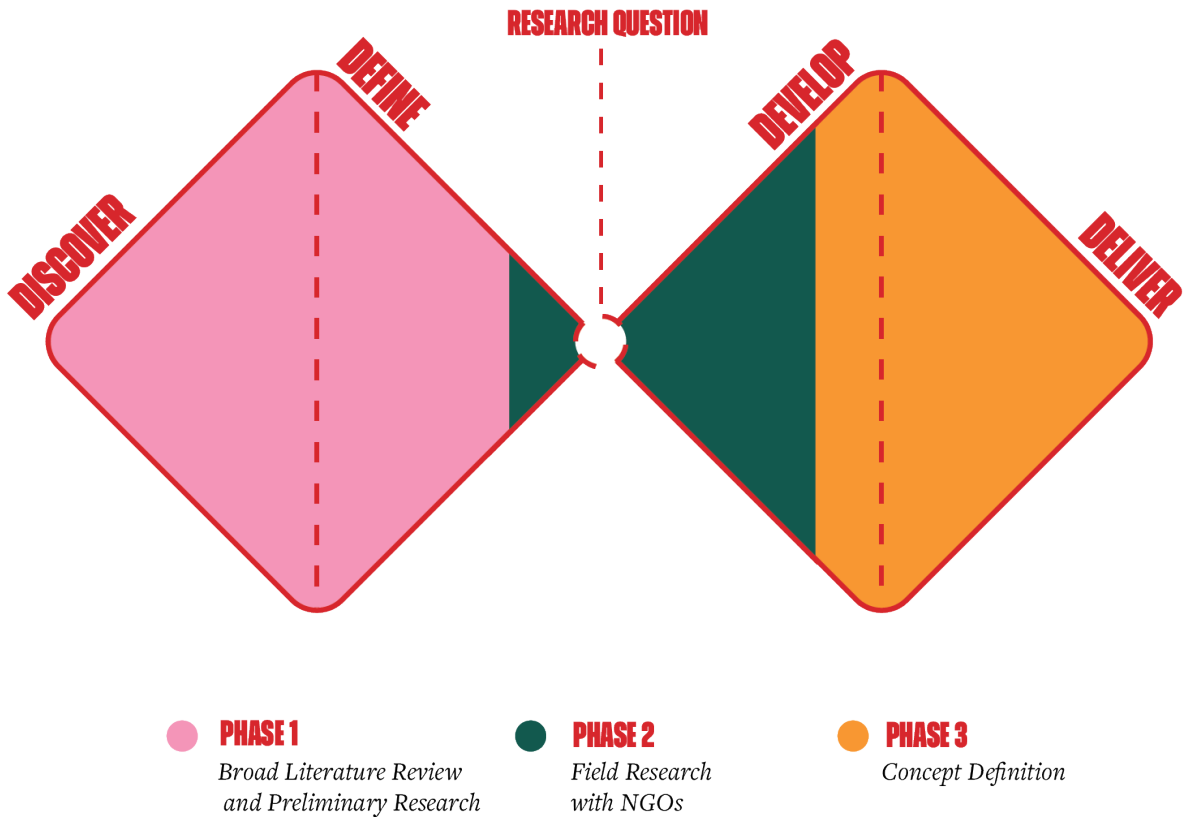
## 5.2.3 PHASE 3: CONCEPT DEFINITION

The third and final phase of this study aims to develop a thorough and well-structured product service system that amplifies the effective use of social media to raise awareness and mobilize action against gender-based violence. This phase involves the ideation of the product and structuring of a service system around the product as the result of comprehensive research done in the previous phases. Following the ideation phase, the product was prototyped and tested in an online co-design session with the interviewed NGOs. This process yielded valuable insights into the specific situations where the designed product service system would be beneficial for NGOs, empowering them to make a substantial impact on public discourse and effectively influence governmental bodies. The semi-structured interview method was adapted again for the co-design session.

### DOUBLE DIAMOND

The double diamond method was applied when shaping the design process. Design Council (2023) created the double diamond method with the intention of providing a simple visual representation of the design process. The method encompasses four phases, commencing with an initial idea and concluding with the delivery of a product or service. The Double Diamond design process encompasses four distinct phases: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver. (Design Council, 2023)

In the following figure, Figure #, the phases of this research and where they correspond in the Double Diamond method can be examined.



**Figure 32:** The Double Diamond Framework (adapted from Design Council, 2023)





**CHAPTER 6:**  
**FIELD RESEARCH WITH**  
**NON-GOVERNMENTAL**  
**ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)**



## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the insights gained through the broad literature review and preliminary research, a more focused down approach is needed to direct cyberactivism activity. For this particular reason, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) were chosen to act as a catalyst between the public and the government when directing cyberactivism activity. To ensure the alignment of the cultural and geographical context with the case studies, semi structured interviews were conducted with two prominent Non-Governmental Organizations dedicated to combating gender-based violence in Turkey. The purpose of the interviews is to gain insight into the internal processes, both online and offline, within the organizations. This chapter will delve into who the interviewed organizations are, with information gained through the interviews and their media outlets, as well as their common painpoints and the key insights gained from the interviews.

## 6.2 INTERVIEW WITH MOR ÇATI: WHO ARE THEY?

Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation was founded in 1990 by feminists with the objective of combating violence against women. Guided by feminist principles, Mor Çatı is dedicated to creating a society where women can shape their lives without the constraints of gender-based discrimination and male violence, enjoying equal opportunities and freedoms. Recognizing that male violence is deeply rooted in existing gender inequalities, the foundation actively works to foster women's solidarity and dismantle these inequalities. The Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation is deeply committed to understanding the needs and challenges faced by women seeking support to escape violence. By closely examining the experiences shared by these women and drawing from their extensive fieldwork experience, Mor Çatı not only identifies the legislative changes necessary to empower women but also highlights the gaps in the implementation of existing laws. This comprehensive understanding forms the basis of their advocacy work.

To address the implementation shortcomings, Mor Çatı diligently monitors and evaluates the actions and policies of public agencies responsible for combating violence against women. They actively submit information requests to obtain crucial data. By sharing their findings from the monitoring and evaluation processes with the public, Mor Çatı exerts pressure on public authorities, emphasizing the urgency of taking action to eradicate violence.

The foundation also ensures that their insights reach international platforms by reporting the current situation to global monitoring mechanisms like CEDAW and GREVIO. By participating in various international networks and platforms, Mor Çatı remains engaged in information and experience sharing, constantly learning from successful practices implemented in other countries. This knowledge enables them to provide informed recommendations for the effective implementation of laws.

Mor Çatı goes beyond their direct support for women by actively collaborating with women's organizations, civil society organizations, bar associations, and municipalities engaged in combating violence. Mor Çatı also recognizes the power of collective action and collaborates with independent feminist and women's organizations through joint platforms. Their membership in platforms such as Women Are Stronger Together (Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü), and the Istanbul Convention Monitoring Platform of Turkey (İstanbul Sözleşmesi Türkiye İzleme Platformu) allows Mor Çatı to collaborate with like-minded organizations, amplifying their collective voice in advocating for necessary legal improvements.

Through their holistic approach, Mor Çatı combines firsthand experiences from women seeking support, rigorous monitoring and evaluation, international engagement, and collective action to advance their mission of combating violence against women and promoting gender equality.

## **6.3 INTERVIEW WITH KADIN CINAYETLERINI DURDURACAĞIZ PLATFORMU: WHO ARE THEY?**

The establishment of the platform took place in 2010 following the tragic and heinous murder of 17-year-old Munevver Karabulut. This incident garnered significant media attention and became a shared trauma for women in Turkey. The formation of the We Will Stop Femicides Platform initially aimed to amplify Munevver's voice and later became the voice of numerous women affected by similar tragedies. The platform endeavors to halt femicide and secure women's safety by combatting all forms of violations against women's rights, beginning with the fundamental violation of the right to live.

Furthermore, the We Will Stop Femicides Platform has the distinction of being the pioneer in tallying and recording the occurrences of femicide in Turkey. Prior to their efforts, there was no official government data available on this issue. The platform gained significant visibility on social media after introducing the "Memorial Meter," which displays the names and the annual count of femicide victims.

The Platform is dedicated to preserving the lives of women and employs various strategies to achieve this objective. It offers legal assistance to women seeking protection from violence and actively advocates for the implementation of violence against women and children law, No. 6284. The Platform conducts training sessions to educate

women about their rights under this law, organizes press-related activities, and garners support from the art community. By joining court cases alongside women experiencing different forms of violence, such as physical abuse, threats, and restriction of freedom, the Platform fights for justice and protection. It also supports families affected by femicide and engages in legal assistance, aiming to generate public awareness and influence public opinion regarding femicide.

The involvement of the Platform's lawyers and representatives in femicide cases has resulted in more challenging penalty reductions and the attainment of deterrent sentences. The Platform's requests to participate in criminal cases are frequently accepted by courts, prompting it to urge the Ministry of Family and Social Policies to adopt a similar approach and participate in cases on behalf of women. Additionally, the Platform actively advocates for the resolution of legal issues related to violence against women, seeks legislative advancements and actively participates in legislative processes. It played a crucial role in the creation of the "Law for Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women No 6282" and strives to incorporate the term "femicide" into the Turkish Penal Code, imposing "aggravated life imprisonment" and eliminating ongoing reductions. The Platform has submitted a legislative proposal to The Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Since 2010, the platform has been inquiring ministries annually, exercising the right to information, to obtain data on the number of femicides. The purpose is to understand the scale

and reasons behind femicide, as well as to analyze its trends. Initially, the response was a denial of the existence of such data, the platform took the matter to their hands and started documenting the data of femicides in Turkey and has persistently reported on femicide data since then. Furthermore, the Platform contributes to justice by revealing the truth behind suspicious cases labeled as suicides and closed. It encourages local courts to establish precedent-setting judgments regarding women's protection, sexual assault, and femicide, thus shaping relevant jurisprudence. The Platform maintains records to expose femicide facts in Turkey, collecting and sharing data on femicides with the public on a monthly basis. They monitor femicide cases throughout the country and informs the authorities of significant developments. The Platform also conveys its opinions to The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, visiting the parliament with families of murdered women or by invitation to discuss topics related to violence against women and gender equality.

The Platform adopts both methods of struggle and negotiation, organizing meetings and protests to combat femicide. It establishes stands in schools, conducts publicity meetings, and carries out various protests and activities in different cities to attract new supporters and raise awareness of the Platform's mission. The Platform's views and activities are collectively determined through meetings, and it conducts a range of activities, meetings, and branch openings across various cities, universities, and high schools. Despite their relentless endeavors in the ongoing struggle, the We Will Stop Femicides Platform has been subjected to demonization by the oppressive government and continually faces the peril of being forcibly disbanded.



## 6.4 KEY LEARNING POINTS

### COMMON PAIN POINTS

1. Despite the presence of laws, their implementation in court is hindered by corruption and bias within the legal system, as some individuals within legal bodies may be influenced or take sides.
2. The mainstream media in Turkey either fails to acknowledge the efforts of the organizations or actively portrays them in a negative light.

### KEY INSIGHTS

#### **1. Role of NGOs and External Support:**

- » Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) rely on external bodies or public support to exert pressure on the government and achieve tangible actions, especially in cases involving legal corruption.

#### **2. Language, Outreach, and Communication:**

- » The choice of language used by the organizations greatly impacts their outreach and effectiveness in raising awareness and advocating for their cause.
- » Women predominantly discover and reach out to the organizations through social media platforms, which serve as essential channels for engagement and information dissemination.
- » The organizations utilize social media as a secondary means of communication but

face challenges due to the biased nature of mainstream media, which either ignores their efforts or portrays them negatively.

### **3. Empathy, Long-lasting Impact, and Recognition:**

- » Building empathy with key actors involved in the legal process leads to more enduring results and creates lasting change.
- » It is notably more challenging for the organizations to gain recognition for the injustices faced by transgender women compared to cisgender women.

### **4. Attention, Social Media, and Mainstream Media Bias:**

- » Cases that are relatable to a wider audience or involve high levels of violence tend to garner more attention and engagement on social media platforms.
- » The reliance on social media is driven by the fact that the mainstream media in Turkey exhibits bias against the organizations, either by dismissing their work or intentionally portraying them in a negative light.

### **5. International Validation, Reputation, and Government Response:**

- » The organizations benefit from international validation, as it serves as a deterrent for the government to take hostile actions against them.
- » The government places significant importance on maintaining a positive international reputa-

tion, which influences its response to the organizations and their advocacy efforts.

## **6. Documentation and Collective Memory:**

- » Social media platforms play a crucial role in documenting and preserving the injustices committed by legal bodies, ensuring that these incidents remain ingrained in collective memory.
- » The organizations did not have any strategy for online documentation and relied only on the offerings of social media platforms.



DESIGN CONCEPT

# CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENT



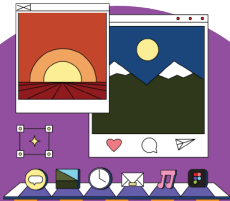
**SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES  
POWER RELATIONS, DEMOCRATIZES  
INFORMATION, AND EMPOWERS  
COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR**



**CYBERACTIVISM EMPOWERS  
MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS  
SEEKING JUSTICE BY FOSTERING  
UNITY, DRIVING INTERNATIONAL  
MOBILIZATION.**



**THE MISUSE OF HASHTAGS AND  
CIRCULATION WITHIN ECHO  
CHAMBERS CAN DILUTE THE  
INTENDED MESSAGE, HINDERING  
EFFORTS TO GAIN GLOBAL ATTENTION.**



**NGOS STILL USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS  
A SECONDARY SOURCE DESPITE  
BEING OVERLOOKED OR DEMONIZED  
BY MAINSTREAM MEDIA**

# **#IN-SIGHT**

## 7.1 VISION

While NGOs recognize the unifying potential of social media, they face difficulties in utilizing it as a primary mode of communication and unification. They encounter challenges due to the biased nature of mainstream media, which either overlooks their endeavors or portrays them negatively. Social media is also given secondary priority as their primary focus is on their core mission of assisting women in need.

After extracting, analyzing and connecting the insights from broad literature review, preliminary research and interviews with NGOs, the product service system of #IN-SIGHT was created. #IN-SIGHT aims to help organizations harness the full potential of social media platforms. For the product the format of a guide was chosen in order to let the organizations work in their own timeframe while providing them with easy and quick tips.

The service system was designed with the specific traits of social media in mind, taking into account the platform's updates. The interaction with the service system cycle was intentionally kept concise, allowing NGOs to expand their effective reach and establish themselves as a reliable source for the online audience while minimizing their time commitment with the service system.

## 7.2 SERVICE

The massive reach of cyberactivism activity for patriarchy driven gender-based violence, sexual assault and identity based hate crimes is the inspiration behind the service system of #IN-SIGHT. #IN-SIGHT was developed with consideration of the capacity of reach and social organizations current use of social media.

#IN-SIGHT is an online independent activist initiative aiming to help social organizations better navigate in the cyberspace and turn womxn's whispers into screams of the collective. #IN-SIGHT comes as an online guide for social media use with a printable toolkit. The guide can be reached through various channels, including: international non-governmental organization's websites as UNWomen, Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE), Amnesty International, ILGA Europe and #IN-SIGHT's very own website.

To become a distributor, NGOs only need to send in an email with their website and under which section they would like to have #IN-SIGHT in, they will receive a confirmation email after consideration. #IN-SIGHT's service system operates through its own website, where technicalities like independent updates on social media platforms are followed closely for the guide to be updated if there are impactful changes that NGOs can further benefit. Users and distributors of the product will receive the updates via newsletter. Users of the product can also reach out to #IN-SIGHT through the website if they need help with constructing the physical tools, #IN-SIGHT will get back to them in 1 to 2 days. The initiative of #IN-SIGHT aims to provide an up-to-date guide for social media platforms to help have an impact.



## AIM

#IN-SIGHT aims to help organizations better navigate their Social Media activity in the cyberspace by repurposing social media as a primary tool to build pressure on oppressors. #IN-SIGHT aims to help NGOs become better storytellers by organizing target organizations' Social Media accounts to expand their reach and receive faster response by their ruling government to trigger social change. On a larger scale, #IN-SIGHT will help local target organizations to effect public debate, report to international observing mechanisms as GREVIO and CEDAW with a stronger case and therefore, indirectly make it more possible to put international pressure on oppressing governments.

## TARGET

Gender-based violence, sexual assault and hate crimes are still a massive social issue around the globe today. #IN-SIGHT targets country based intersectional feminist, NGOs, CSOs and SMOs who are on social media and working towards stopping gender-based violence. Countries in Europe and Middle East which are a part of Istanbul convention, has laws in place against gender-based violence or is in trade with EU are targeted.

## OFFERINGS

#IN-SIGHT offers an up-to-date online guide for structured and expressive social media use with a printable toolkit in different languages. #IN-SIGHT's tools are divided into digital tools and physical tools. Digital tools are already existing features of social media platforms whereas the physical tools are printable to expand of the online echo chamber and help people question the system. #IN-SIGHT also offers help with help with constructing the physical tools if requested.

# SERVICE



## HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME?

IT HAS BEEN A YEAR SINCE MY DEATH AND MY MURDERER IS STILL OUT THERE.

HELP ME GET JUSTICE!



# WHAT TO FIND INSIDE *#IN-SIGHT*?

Inside the guide the user can find detailed information on:

- » How to structure their profile for their current cases and updates.
- » Social media tips on shared content to boost engagement.
- » What to post in order to inform the audience and to build empathy.
- » When and how to post to provoke or to expand.
- » Tips for moderation and engaging with the crowd.
- » A toolkit consisting of digital tools and printable physical tools.

## DIGITAL TOOLS

- » Hashtags
- » Grouping Tools for Profiles
- » Pinned Content
- » Debate Tools

## PHYSICAL TOOLS

- » Tear-off Poster
- » Informative Empathy Stickers
- » Simulator Empathy Stickers

## WEBSITE

### DOWNLOAD #IN-SIGHT

Get your guide directly from the website.

### BECOME A MEMBER

Request to become a member to provide #IN-SIGHT to local organizations.

### ASK FOR HELP

Need help with creating the printables? Contact us and we will send them ready to print.

### SIGN FOR NEWSLETTER

Learn about the updates added on #IN-SIGHT to organize your accounts up-to-date.

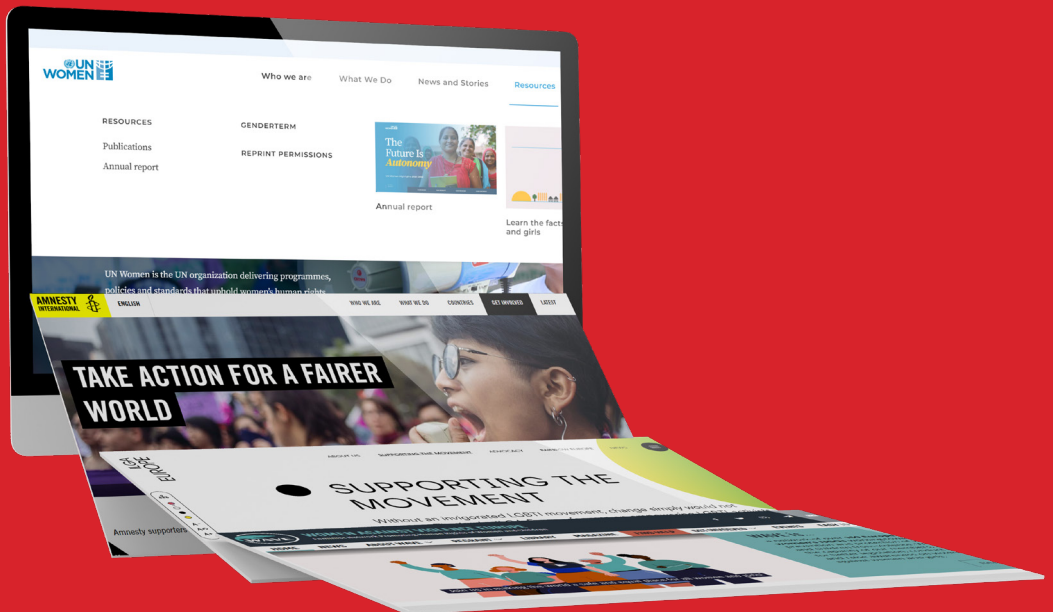
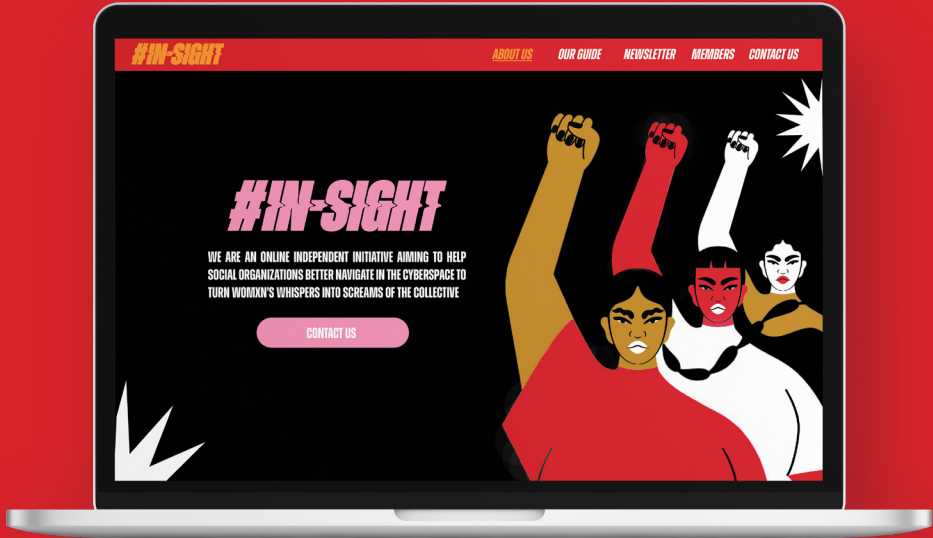
## WHERE TO FIND **#IN-SIGHT?**

#IN-SIGHT can be reached through international non-governmental organization's websites, ready to download. The mentioned NGOs aimed to be focused on gender-based violence and/or identity driven hate crimes and based mainly in Europe, including but not limited to, UNWomen, Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE), Amnesty International and ILGA Europe.

The users can also find #IN-SIGHT up-to-date through its very own website.

Through the website users can reach to the online guide, browse and learn about how social media update impact the guide, sign for newsletter or contact #IN-SIGHT for help.

Physical copies of #IN-SIGHT are also aimed to be distributed in local and international conventions surrounding gender-based violence, sexual assault and/or identity based hate crimes.



#IN-SIGHT

# NEWSLETTER

[MORE INFO](#)



GUIDE UPDATE

## NEW #IN-SIGHT GUIDE

### WHAT'S NEW?

With recent major changes in staple social media platforms we have updated our social media guide to assist you better on your social media activity. Explore how you can navigate around and benefit from the new features.

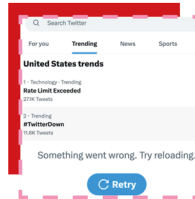
[MORE INFO](#)

PLATFORM UPDATE

## IS THIS THE END OF TWITTER?

"Rate Limit Exceeded" is the warning that is popping on every user's timeline, preventing viewing new tweets. This new feature got Twitter users questioning, is it time to leave Twitter?

[MORE INFO](#)



Something went wrong. Try reloading.

[Retry](#)

NEW FEATURE

## MEET INSTAGRAM "THREADS"

Instagram has announced a new feature up in the works. Are "Threads" a new "Stories" breakthrough? Users are skeptical about it, but let's find out how you can use it to your advantage!

[MORE INFO](#)

#IN-SIGHT

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# #IN-SIGHT

LOOKING FOR THE LATEST VERSION OF OUR GUIDE? LOOK NO FURTHER! SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER TO LEARN ABOUT THE NEWEST SOCIAL MEDIA FEATURES AND GET NOTIFIED ON OUR GUIDE UPDATES

YOUR E-MAIL

ORGANIZATION'S NAME

[SIGN UP](#)

#IN-SIGHT

2021 info@insight.org www.in-sight.org

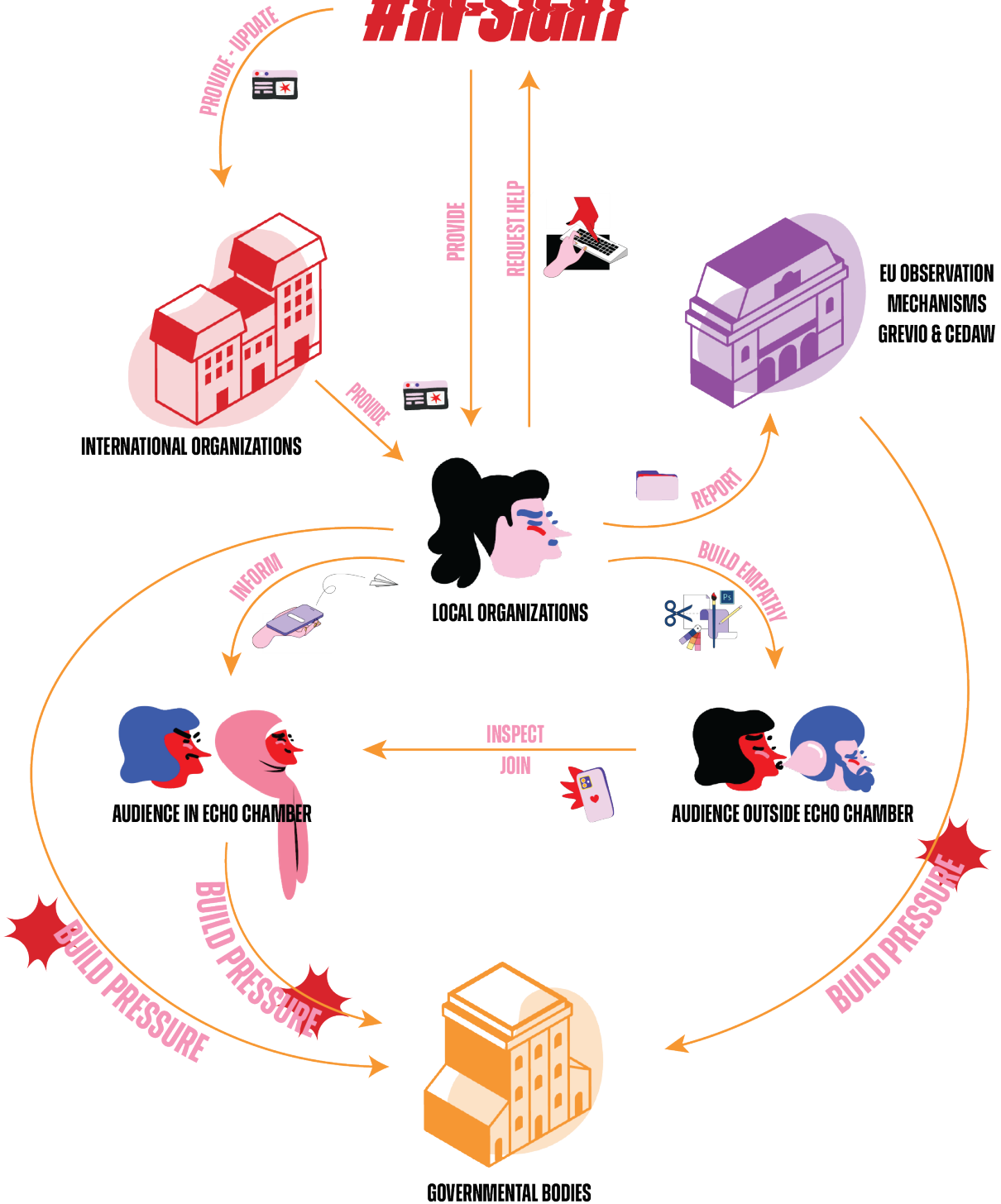
# UPDATES AND NEWSLETTER

In the digital age, social media is ever-evolving. New social media platforms emerge and the existing ones get updated. Even though the regular updates do not impact their use dramatically, new features are introduced every now and then on each social media platform. It is crucial for organizations to stay on top of their social media game in order to fully tap into the power of the platforms.

The service system of #IN-SIGHT closely tracks technicalities such as independent updates on social media platforms. This ensures that the guide is regularly updated to incorporate impactful changes that can bring additional benefits to NGOs or help them avoid potential issues.

The updated guide can be manually reached through the #IN-SIGHT's website, additionally, the organizations can sign up for #IN-SIGHT's newsletter to get notified of the updated guide and also receive in-depth articles about recent social media updates and how they can be utilized.

# #IN-SIGHT





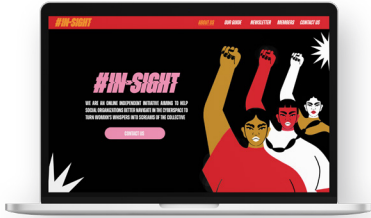
## 7.3 SYSTEM MAP

The service system of #IN-SIGHT functions through its dedicated website, which actively monitors and keeps up with technicalities such as individual updates on various social media platforms. This ensures that the guide is regularly updated to incorporate significant changes that can provide additional advantages to organizations.

#IN-SIGHT is provided to international non-governmental organization's websites as UNWomen, Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE), Amnesty International and ILGA Europe later to reach country based local NGOs, CSOs and SMOs.

#IN-SIGHT endeavors to empower NGOs in enhancing their storytelling capabilities by strategically organizing the social media accounts of target organizations. This approach amplifies their reach and facilitate prompt responses from governing bodies, thus catalyzing social change. On a broader scope, #IN-SIGHT will assist local target organizations in influencing public discourse and strengthening their case when reporting to international monitoring bodies such as GREVIO and CEDAW. Consequently, this indirect facilitation of international pressure on oppressive governments becomes more feasible.

## SERVICE PLANNER



#IN-SIGHT is an independent online activist initiative with the objective of assisting social organizations in effectively navigating the digital realm. It offers a comprehensive toolkit in addition to the guidebook and frequent updates to ensure continuous support.

## SERVICE PROVIDER



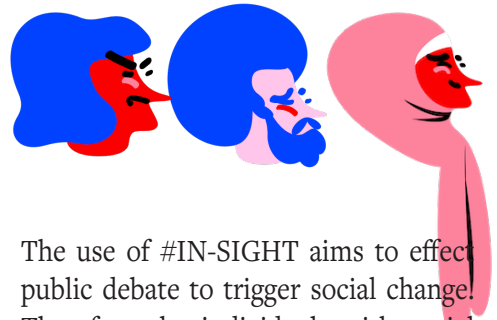
The guide is accessible through multiple avenues, such as the websites of international non-governmental organizations like UN Women, Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE), Amnesty International, ILGA Europe, and the dedicated website of #IN-SIGHT.

## SERVICE FACILITATOR

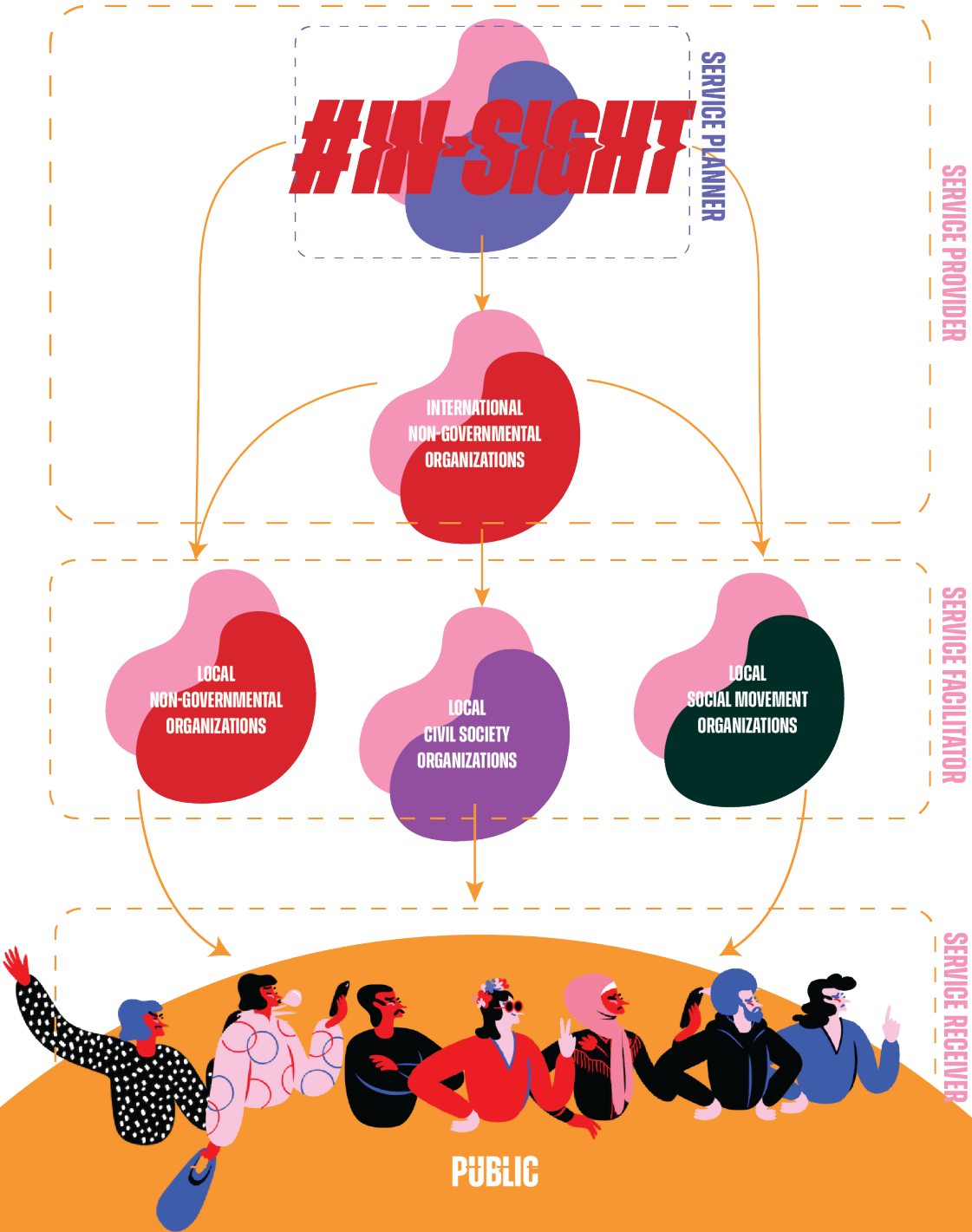


Local NGOs, CSOs and SMOs are aimed to be the service facilitators of #IN-SIGHT where there will follow the suggestions for social media moderation to provide the public with structured, verified information. They will use the physical toolkit to impact their local community

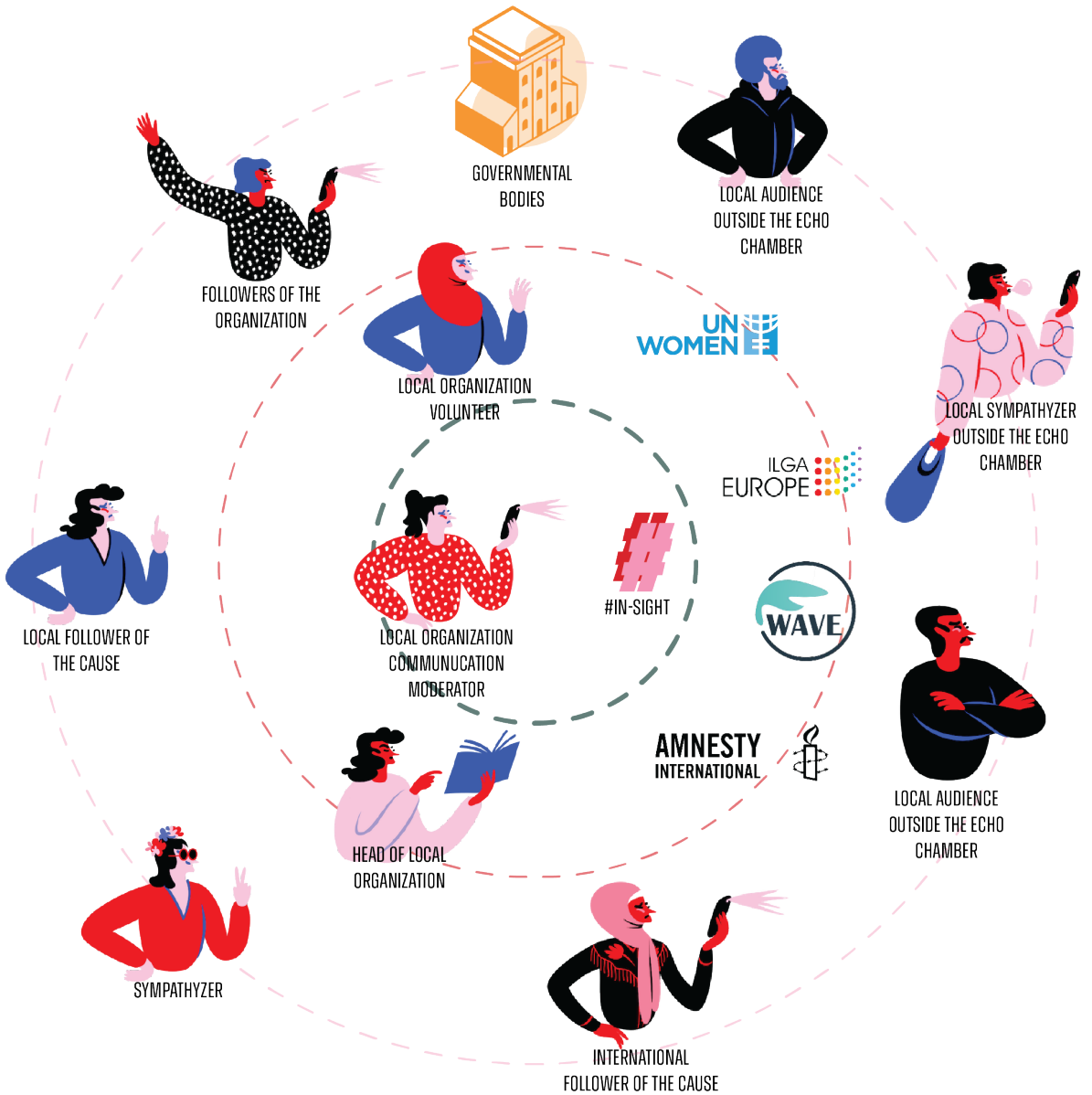
## SERVICE RECIEVER



The use of #IN-SIGHT aims to effect public debate to trigger social change. Therefore the individuals with social media access and local citizens will be exposed to information from organizations and possibly get the motivation to unite.



# 7.4 STAKEHOLDER MAP



# 7.5 STAKEHOLDER VALUE PROPOSITION

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



**BETTER NAVIGATE EXISTING FOLLOWERS**



**EXPAND REACH BY EMPATHY BUILDING**



**FASTER RESPONSE TO ONGOING CASES**

## SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE



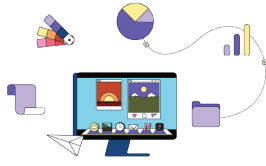
**INFORMATIVE, VERIFIED CONTENT**



**EASY TO FIND ORGANIZED, INFORMATION**



**EASY TO KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS AND UPDATES ON CASES**



## 02. STRUCTURE

- Read #IN-SIGHT and follow the guide on restructuring your social media accounts.
- Create new accounts as you see fit.

## 03. CAMPAIGN

- Following the tips from the guide, start a social media campaign, with your ongoing cases, using the digital tools suggested.
- Use the hashtag tips, either to provoke or expand, to gain more visibility and form a community.

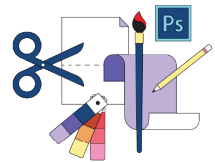


## 01. AWARENESS

- Discover social media campaign through spillover: see it from a friends story or come across the hashtag.
- Look more into local NGOs profile to get informed.

## 04. PREPARE

- In order to expand, prepare the physical empathy tools using the templates to spread your cause in your local area.
- If help is needed with preparing the physical templates, they can email the information through #IN-SIGHT page and they will receive the printables in 1 to 2 days.



## 01. AWARENESS

- Discover #IN-SIGHT through international NGOs site, through the resources section.
- After checking out its website to get further information, download the guide.



## 01. AWARENESS

- Comes across a intruding sticker with a QR code on the bus stop as they are making their way home
- They scan the QR code out of curiosity.

# 7.6 JOURNEY MAP



## 02. SPREAD

- After easily getting informed on what is going on through the NGOs organized account, they engage with the content. Whether it is liking, sharing, commenting.

## 03. ACT

- Join the campaigning online, show support, help educating the audience and share credible sources with their circle.
- Plan local protest to show support.

## 06. CALL FOR ACTION!

- Use their social media platform to demonstrate with a larger crowd and have international support.

## 05. PLACE

- Place the physical tools around town to grab attention of people on the street.
- These printables can also be easily distributed to independent activists.



AUDIENCE

LOCAL



## 02. ENGAGE

- The QR lead them to the simulator, where they are asked to upload a photo of a loved one.
- After uploading they see their loved one's photo with in a heading of a gender-based violence news spread

## 03. EMPATHIZE

- Reads the news spread in panic later to realize that they are caught off guard, and realize it is just a simulation.
- They empathize with the victim and go to the NGOs social media profile to get more information.

FOLLOW

FOLLOW

# 7.7 BRAND STRATEGY

## VALUES

### OPEN-MINDED

Be an open space for all womxn to voice their experiences and opinions, without judgement or prejudice.

- \* Inclusive
- \* Self-expression
- \* Freedom

### BOLD

Being bold means not being afraid to be the change you want to see in the world. Break the mold. Express yourself. Dynamism and ability to accept new challenges are fundamental aspects of our identity.

- \* Expressive
- \* Change
- \* Courage

### STRUCTURED

Even in chaos there is order. Be mindful of your steps, how they are organized and how you are communicating them.

- \* Order
- \* Mindful
- \* Communicative

## VISION

The cyberspace is a whole world of its own, it is a home, it is a playground, it is a warzone. Among the many uses, #IN-SIGHT proposes a new service for the organizations to help expand their audience and draw attention to their cause.

## MISSION

#IN-SIGHT brings order to chaos. It turns whispers into screams. It unites people by educating different segments of the society. #IN-SIGHT welcomes everyone that shows solidarity in inclusivity.

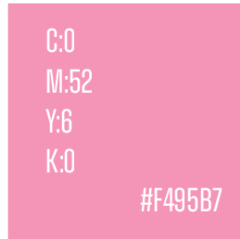
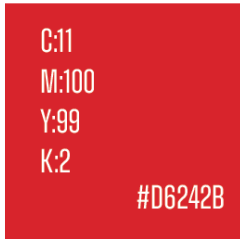


The name #IN-SIGHT comes from a word play of the phrase, "Out of sight, out of mind" The name was derived from varying the phrase to "In sight, in mind." which is used as an analogy to combine the importance of drawing attention to gender-based violence with the hyperconnectivity of social media.

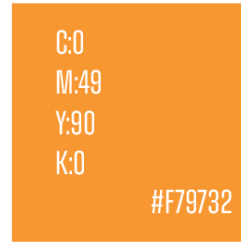
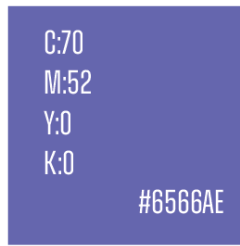
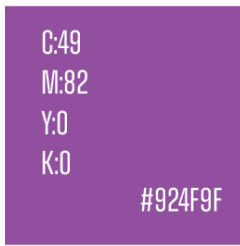
# #IN-SIGHT

The "#" is put to represent individuals coming together around a common cause, being there for each other and creating a safe space, as well as to reflect the feeling of cyberspace.

# COLOR SCHEME



*Primary  
Colors*



*Secondary  
Colors*

# TYPOGRAPHY

***ABC*** ABC ABC

**ZUUME**

*Primary Font*

Used in the logo,  
headings and graphics.

Aa Bb Cc

**FREIGHTTEXT PRO**

*Secondary Font*

Used in paragraphs.

# MOODBOARD





DESIGN CONCEPT

**CHAPTER 8:**

**PRODUCT PROTOTYPE**



A GUIDE TO UTILIZE CYBERACTIVISM

FOR FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

#IN-SIGHT  
#IN-SIGHT  
#IN-SIGHT  
#IN-SIGHT  
#IN-SIGHT

FOR FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS

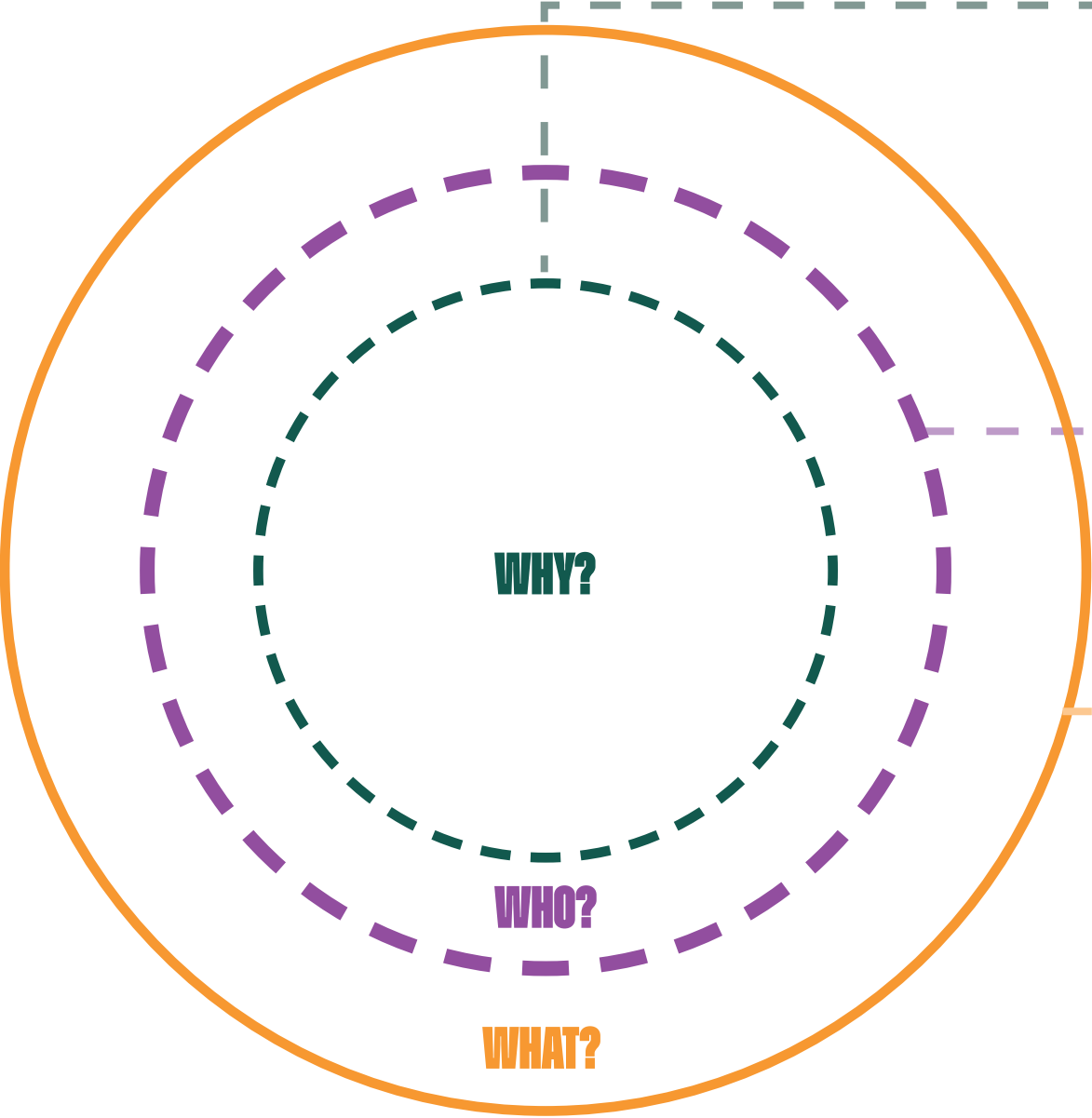
A GUIDE TO UTILIZE CYBERACTIVISM





# WHAT TO FIND INSIDE *#IN-SIGHT*?

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## WHY IS #IN-SIGHT NEEDED?

*#IN-SIGHT is created to inform, unite and impact the public.*

The fight for womxn freedom and rights to live equally has been going on for decades. With the rapid advancements in technology, our daily lives change, therefore our attention points shift focus. Social media has become a key feature in modern activism in order to inform people, build empathy and eventually mobilize to build pressure on oppressing systems.

## WHO IS #IN-SIGHT FOR?

#IN-SIGHT is designed for organizations of all sizes fighting against gender-based violence and supporting intersectional feminist movement. From NGOs to CSOs, #IN-SIGHT is for every organization who would like to better utilize their online presence and expand their existing supporters circle.

## WHAT IS #IN-SIGHT?

#IN-SIGHT is a curated guide for intersectional feminist organizations to utilize online activism to its full potential. This guide touches on topics from how to use social media to expand your circle in order to build pressure to ways on securing and protecting your organizations cyber data.

*#IN-SIGHT* aims to help organizations:

- \* To better navigate intersectional feminist organizations in the cyberspace
- \* Expand their reach outside of their existing echo chambers
- \* Repurpose social media as a primary tool for organizations to build pressure.

# WHAT IS CYBERACTIVISM?

Cyberactivism is all about using digital tools like social media, websites, and online forums to get involved in political or social activism. It's like traditional activism, but with its own unique ways of putting pressure on governments and corporations. It brings people together online who share the same goals and values, allowing them to coordinate, rally, and communicate. Cyberactivism takes many forms, from online petitions to social media campaigns and even hacktivism. Its main purpose is to unite concerned citizens in a virtual space, especially when collective action is needed. It's a way for people to become activists using the internet and social media platforms. It xchanges the game of politics by leveraging information and communication technologies, making it more inclusive and raising public awareness.

Beyond its political impact, cyberactivism also provides healing and validation for marginalized communities. It offers an outlet for individuals to address and recover from traumatic experiences and different forms of oppression. It's a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon that engages in "informational politics," exerting widespread influence and putting pressure on authorities. Sometimes, it even leads to changes in government behavior, institutional adjustments, or regulatory changes. Cyberactivism is a significant social phenomenon, particularly for women's political participation in the revolutionary process.

Schoolgirls have fearlessly led the charge against the totalitarian regime and all of its repressive ideological symbols: from removing compulsory hijabs to burning images of the Islamic Republic's former and current supreme leaders Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Khamenei in their classrooms and grafting anti-regime slogans across schools.



19 Posts 35 Followers 35 Following

#IN-SIGHT

We stand against gender-based violence.  
Contact us: +1234567890

[stopgenderbasedviolence.org](https://stopgenderbasedviolence.org)



About Us #HandeKader #PinarGulte... #SalihaTuncel #Istanbul

Edit profile Share profile

Tweet activity

#IN-SIGHT @in\_sight18 · 39m  
Worlds first feminist revolution is happening right now in Iran  
What is happening and how can you help?  
...  
[Show this thread](#)

0 1

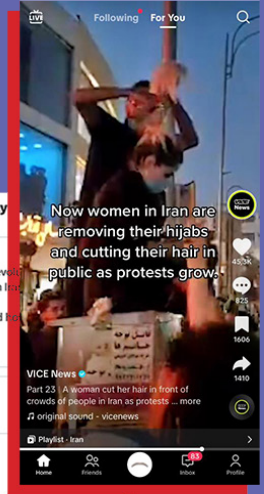
Impressions 12

Engagements 1

Detail expands 0

New followers 0

Profile visits 0

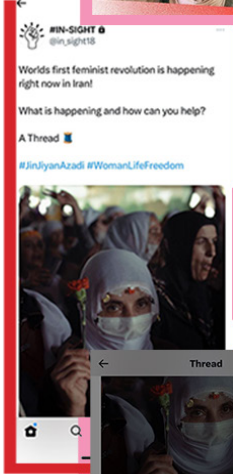


Now women in Iran are removing their hijabs and cutting their hair in public as protests grow.

VICE News  
Part 23 A woman cut her hair in front of crowds of people in Iran as protests ... more  
original sound - vicenews

Pin this Tweet  
This will appear at the top of your profile and replace any previously pinned Tweet. Are you sure?

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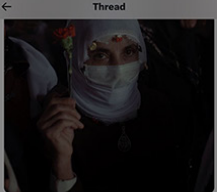
#IN-SIGHT @in\_sight18 · 4d  
We continue to march for our right to live. We stand against gender-based violence chanting #IstanbulConventionSavesLives



14:55 · 15.06.2023 from Earth · 25

Retweet Quote Tweet

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Share Tweet

Send via Direct Message

Copy Link Bookmark Share via...

Instagram Stories Messages WhatsApp LinkedIn

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# SOCIAL MEDIA STAPLES TO UNDERSTAND

Before you get started, it's crucial to understand how social media platforms work and figure out which parts of the digital world can help you succeed. At the same time, be mindful of the things that might require caution.

## 1. HYPERCONNECTIVITY

Take a moment to reflect on the notifications you receive throughout a day. Local and global news from the news app, messages from family to plan your weekend trip together, business emails, new album announcement from your favorite artist and memes from friends, all this information inside the palm of your hand. This is hyperconnectivity.

Thanks to the internet, we are constantly connected to the events happening around us. In contrast to offline interactions, online interactions have a wider and quicker reach, facilitated by weak ties and the rapid nature of social media platforms. Hyper-connectivity has revolutionized the dissemination of information, making the world's agenda easily accessible at our fingertips.



## 2. THE SPILLOVER EFFECT

Remember when you liked that funny cat video on Twitter and it ended up on your best friend's timeline? They see you've liked it so they give it a watch, they find it hilarious like you did and then send it to their coworker, their coworker sent it to their mom and their mom to her bridge group. Suddenly you have your aunt forwarding the same video to you, that she saw in her bridge chat, thinking you would be interested. This is spillover effect.

Spill-over effect is directly or indirectly sharing content with your friends and family by engagement. Spillover can work in your favor when sharing information because people are more likely to trust and share content quickly when it comes from someone they know. However, it's important to remember that this also applies to spreading disinformation.

## 3. ACCESSIBILITY

Can you picture the suggested accounts that popped up from your phonebook when you initially set up your Instagram? From your high school math teacher to the cleaning lady that comes every Thursday, from your cooperate boss in big-tech to the owner of the small kiosk down the street where you go to shop when the markets are closed.

In today's world, internet access is considered a fundamental human right. Social media platforms are more accessible than ever before, fostering a bottom-up approach to communication. The ease of entry into social media creates an environment that promotes individual self-expression and facilitates connections among like-minded individuals, allowing them to form and strengthen communities.

## 4. FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Social media is the new town hall of today. One of the most prominent features of social media platforms is that everybody has the same rights. Individuals with access to social media can freely voice their opinions and express themselves. It is a place for free speech.

However, it is important to note that freedom of speech does not mean social media lacks borders. Most social media platforms have strict regulations around violence and hate speech.

## 5. INTERNATIONALITY

All caught up with what is going on in your timeline? With just a few clicks you can see what is the hot topic of the day from United States to South Africa.

Social media provides platforms that are location-agnostic, allowing information to flow more extensively. The opportunity to connect and exchange perspectives with individuals across the globe has created more chances for people to engage, learn, and communicate online.





## 6. COMMUNITY FORMATION

Have you ever had online discussions about your favorite TV show or the latest game of your favorite sports team? Social media features, like the spillover effect, make it easier to connect with people you haven't met in real life but share similar interests or opinions on a particular topic.

People from different parts of the world, with diverse interests and perspectives, can come together in unexpected and unique ways online. As our world becomes more interconnected, technology has blurred the lines between the 'real' and 'virtual' worlds, blending them together as people interact both in physical spaces and online platforms. In online communities, factors such as race, religion, gender, and ethnicity have less of an impact compared to physical communities, where biases and judgments can prevail.



# KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE ONES BELOW!

## 1. DISINFORMATION

Sadly, we live in a world where there are some people who don't have the best intentions when they go online. While social media has incredible features that make our lives easier, it can also be a double-edged sword. It's a delicate balance, and the internet can be a harsh place when it comes to making mistakes.

Some individuals use social media to spread fake news and manipulate others to think like them. It might seem easy to spot them, but remember, anyone can be on social media, and not everyone questions what they see. It can be tough to tell apart well-crafted lies from the truth, especially when it's about emotionally charged topics. And once these falsehoods start spreading, they can go viral in no time.

## 2. SPEED

The pace of social media is a complex one. It can work in your favor when you seek exposure and prompt responses, but in the long run, it tends to outpace real-life events. While a particular piece of information may initially appear crucial, within a few days, a bigger story may emerge.

The rapid speed of social media leads to swift changes in news, often overshadowing topics that require deeper attention with each new breaking news. As people's attention spans continue to diminish, significant news can be easily perceived as trivial or be overlooked.

### 3. ECHO CHAMBERS

On social media, it often feels like the perfect content appears at the perfect moment. People who share your tastes, ideologies, and outlook on life seem to come across your feed, responding with joy to what brings you happiness and with anger to what infuriates you. Sometimes, these interactions on social media can seem too good to be true. And in reality, they often are.

If you find yourself believing that the majority shares your viewpoint, it is possible that you are confined within an echo chamber.

Echo chambers are when individuals are only exposed to like-minded people. Social media algorithms reinforce this phenomenon by promoting similar content, reducing diversity and eventually causing polarization. It is important to be cautious of echo chambers, as they not only restrict your exposure to diverse perspectives but can also lead you and your supporters into a state of delusion.



# ATTENTION POINTS

Keep in mind through your engagements and content on social media outlets.

## LANGUAGE

Choice of words and tone matters on social media, just like in real life! Additionally, in order to receive international attention we suggest you to post English along with your native language.

### TO PROVOKE:

A post with more prominent and radical language can:

+ trigger emotions in your existing supporters circle leading to a greater reaction.

-it can easily polarize people outside of your echo chamber.

### TO EXPAND:

A post with a more explanatory, objective, non-defensive and inclusive language backed by facts and possibly visual content is more likely to gain engagement both from your existing circle and draw in people outside of your echo chamber.



## TRANSPARENCY

Social Media is all about quickly getting the info you need. Being transparent is key when people check out your organization's page to decide if they can trust the information you share.

Being transparent about your work, sharing what you do, why you do it, and how you do it step by step, will make your organization more credible. It'll also help you connect with your supporters and maybe even gain new ones.



## PROTECT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Becoming a target is unavoidable for civil organizations but in order to minimize the impact, it is advised to stick to a calmer, informative language and keep your work transparent to public. These attention points can provide you local and international support for legal settings.

# HOW TO UTILIZE CYBERACTIVISM?

The ultimate goal of feminist organizations is to trigger change in the system by building pressure on the oppressors. Organizations have been successfully fighting for this cause for decades and the right use of social media outlets can help to amplify the impact and fasten the process.

*#IN-SIGHT* is here to help you and the individuals you represent scream louder, and reach wider.

## ***INFORM THE AUDIENCE***

Organizations have always played a key role in shaping public debate through educating the society. In the digital age, online platforms provide unique opportunities for the public to reach information.

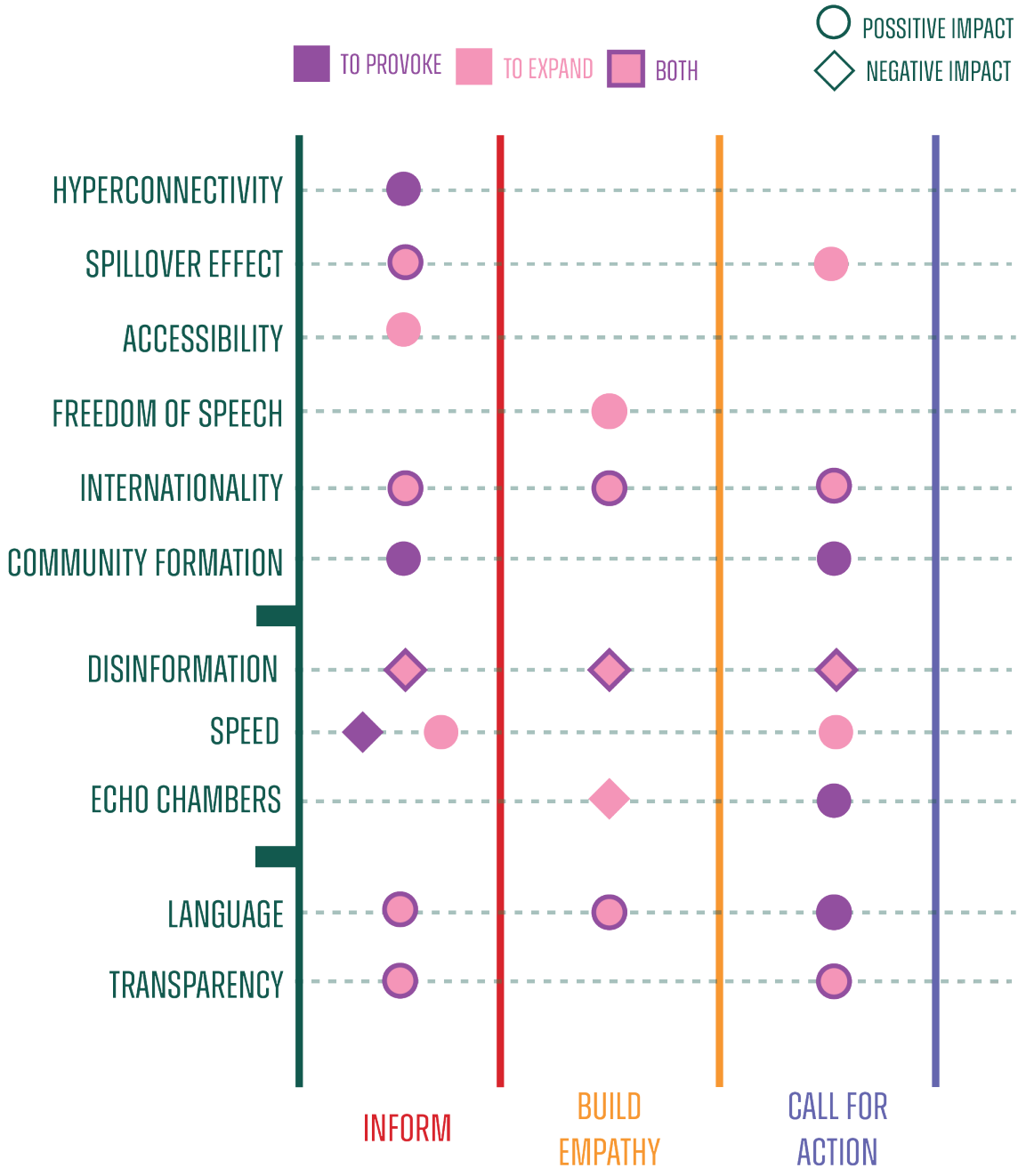
## ***BUILD EMPATHY***

Empathy fuels ideology growth, it unites people and brings us together. Research highlights social media as a powerful tool for empathy when directed properly

## ***BUILD PRESSURE***

Call for action both online and offline.  
Reach local and international audience





# TIPS TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT

Some essentials to pay attention to when crafting your social media presence to boost engagement and possibly go viral.

## 1. CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORM WISELY

Social media platforms are all different from one another, each with its own distinct qualities. To make an impact and get people talking, it's important to understand your preferred platforms inside out. Get familiar with their user base, the language they use, and how quickly news moves. Don't worry if this sounds too much, #INSIGHT is here to help you master the art of standing out and making waves on social media.

## 2. KNOW YOUR CROWD

Understanding the platform's audience is just one piece of the puzzle. Equally important is knowing your own target audience. Pay close attention to the feminist community and observe how they react to the content you share. Take note of what resonates with them and which posts they tend to repost. Engage with them openly and be receptive to their questions. This not only strengthens the trust in your work but also taps into the spillover effect: as your followers become more motivated, they may educate others within their own circles and help expand your crowd, both online and offline.



### 3. CONTENT TYPE AND CONTEXT MATTERS

What you post and how you post it really makes a difference. It's important to grasp what resonates with people and use it to your advantage. Most social media platforms are all about visuals. If you want to grab attention and gain trust from your audience, videos and images are your best bet. They catch people's eye and add credibility to your content. But don't worry if visuals aren't always possible – just make sure whatever you share relates to your point.

Additionally, research shows that emotional content gets more engagement. Strong emotions drive us to share. Whether it's excitement, anger, or awe, these intense feelings compel us to express ourselves and connect with others. Information spreads through casual conversations. People tend to share captivating stories rather than a dry list of technical facts when discussing a topic. It helps people put themselves in someone else's shoes and really connect with your message. Aim for a way that tugs at the heartstrings when narrating your stories.

### 4. GET TO THE POINT

One of the standout characteristics of social media is its fast-paced nature. It's undeniable that people's attention spans have become shorter as a result. When it comes to posting on social media, how you present your content really matters, but there's no need to go overboard. Keep it focused, keep it brief, and make sure your message packs a punch.

# WHICH PLATFORM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Each social media platform brings its own set of features, unique user demographics, and varying lifespans for news and content. It's important to choose the ones that fit your needs and share content that matches what users are looking for. In this section, you'll find the specifics of each popular platform today, and you can decide whether to use all of them or pick the ones that suit you best to build your online presence.

Managing all of them at the same time can be challenging, we suggest using accounts that you can keep active and up-to-date.



## TWITTER

Twitter is primarily driven by concise text-based posts, often supplemented with visuals, and each tweet is limited to 280 characters. It operates on the principle of a constant, ever-evolving news cycle that never sleeps. Embracing the unique language and trends of Twitter is crucial. Don't shy away from posting frequently, and it's acceptable to share content multiple times, as long as you present it in a fresh and engaging manner. Twitter thrives on immediacy, making it a go-to platform for on-the-go updates. Download the mobile app to stay connected and be ready to tweet anytime, anywhere.

In addition to its role as a social networking platform, Twitter plays a significant role in activism. Users often rely on Twitter as a reliable and unbiased source of news, particularly in authoritarian systems where access to information may be restricted. If you are limited to choosing just one platform, we highly recommend Twitter for its reach, impact, and potential to connect with a wide audience.



## FACEBOOK

Facebook stands as the biggest social media platform in existence. While the most concentrated age group of active users falls between 25 and 34, it remains a favorite among older demographics, particularly those aged 35 to 44. However, Facebook is not widely popular among Gen Z users.

This platform combines visual content with text posts and is predominantly used for staying connected with family and friends.

When it comes to showcasing your activity, Facebook is ideal for displaying updates on a weekly to monthly basis.



## INSTAGRAM

Even though Instagram has been in existence for a considerable period, its primary age demographic continues to be young, ranging from 18 to 34 years old.

Instagram is a visually-oriented platform primarily used for entertainment purposes. It thrives on the sharing of photos, videos, and engaging short video edits known as “reels,” which tend to spread quickly. Another feature that can be leveraged effectively for immediate, daily updates is Instagram Stories.

To maximize your visibility on Instagram, it is recommended to regularly post content and maintain an active presence. Using popular hashtags such as #discover and #foryou can help expand the reach of your posts and attract a wider audience.



## TIKTOK

TikTok is the latest addition to the social media landscape and has experienced tremendous popularity in recent years, particularly among Gen Z, encompassing individuals aged 18 to 24.

TikTok revolves around video content as its primary form of communication. Users can create and share their own short videos ranging from 15 seconds to a maximum of 3 minutes. While primarily used for entertainment purposes, TikTok also serves as an educational platform. It operates on a fast-paced news cycle and features its own unique trends, so it's essential to stay updated on viral trends. With the option to easily download TikToks from the app, content can be shared across other social media platforms, expanding its reach.

TikTok presents an effective way to connect with and influence the younger generation, facilitating grassroots change. It provides an ideal platform to showcase your work through concise yet impactful videos. Whether you want to discuss ongoing cases, issue a call to action, or create an edit of your latest demonstration, TikTok can serve as a powerful tool. To expand your reach, utilizing mainstream hashtags such as #discover and #foryou is recommended.



## YOUTUBE

Youtube has been a widely popular platform for a considerable period, ranking second after Facebook. It attracts users from various age groups, although the primary demographic falls within the range of 18 to 24 years old.

Youtube revolves around longer video content and serves as a hub for entertainment and educational purposes. It is particularly well-suited for hosting extended video formats such as press conferences, interviews, tutorials, and documentaries. You can also utilize Youtube Shorts same as TikTok videos or Instagram Reels.

# WHAT TO POST?

Wondering how you can construct a well rounded post for your audience? Don't worry, we got you. In this section you can find our recommendations on tailoring information packed, easy to follow posts for your audience.

## DO'S

### TRACK THE METRICS THAT MATTER

Social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook offer useful metrics to help you improve your posts. You can see who's interacting with your content the most based on factors like gender, age, and location. Plus, on Instagram and Facebook, you can even find out the best times for engagement.

For Twitter, you can check the activity of your individual tweets and see how people are engaging with them. Use these metrics to your advantage when planning your next posts and make them more appealing to your audience.

The collage features three main social media dashboards:

- Facebook Professional dashboard:** Shows 'Account insights' with a bar chart of '56 accounts reached in the last 30 days' (45 non-followers). It includes a 'See all' link and a 'Professional dashboard' notification. A 'When Your Fans Are Online' chart shows activity peaks.
- Instagram Professional dashboard:** Shows 'Next steps' like 'Find new potential customers' and 'Your tools' with a 'View insights' button and a 'Boost post' button.
- Twitter Tweet activity:** Shows engagement metrics for a tweet: 12 impressions, 1 engagement, 0 retweets, 0 replies, 0 new followers, and 0 profile visits.

Red dashed lines and arrows connect these dashboards, highlighting the flow of information and the relationship between different metrics across platforms.

## USE VISUALS

Going back to our key social media tips, if you have the option, incorporate visual content. Visuals have a greater impact, capturing attention and keeping it for a longer time. They also contribute to building credibility and fostering empathy with your audience on the platform. Make sure the visuals you share fits with the platforms format.

## POST REGULARLY

Stay active on your social media accounts! Don't leave your audience hanging. The feminist community is passionate and they want to stay informed about the cases they are supporting. Regularly posting updates also helps keep the memory alive and fresh in their minds.

## UTILIZE LINKS AND HASHTAGS

Make your posts concise and focused by taking advantage of the useful features of social media. Incorporate external links and hashtags to provide your audience with additional information when necessary. Hashtags are also effective in leveraging the platform's algorithm to increase your reach.

**DO'S**

## DONT'S

### GO OVERBOARD WITH INFORMATION

Don't overload your posts with too much information and text. People are more likely to share a story that sticks with them rather than a bunch of technical facts. Remember, you don't have to write a whole book just because some platforms don't have a character limit. In fact, shorter posts with less than 250 characters actually get 60% more engagement.

### POST EXTENSIVELY

Post regularly, but don't overdo it. Remember, your audience needs a break from heavy topics. Excessive posting can lead to follower fatigue and a drop in followers. If you have urgent or extensive content, use disappearing or brief features like stories and tweets. Stick to around three permanent posts per day to keep your audience engaged without overwhelming them.

### POST JUST TO POST

When it comes to posting on social media, it's best to follow this rule: if you can't find something genuinely interesting for your supporters, it's better not to post at all. Ensure that what you share aligns with your values and captures the interest of your audience.

### TRY TO PLEASE EVERYONE

In the vast online world, you'll come across people with all sorts of opinions, and it's impossible to please everyone. Some may not understand where you're coming from. Just try to be clear and respectful in your posts while staying true to yourself.

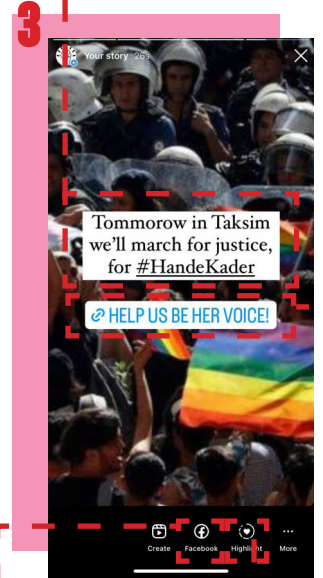
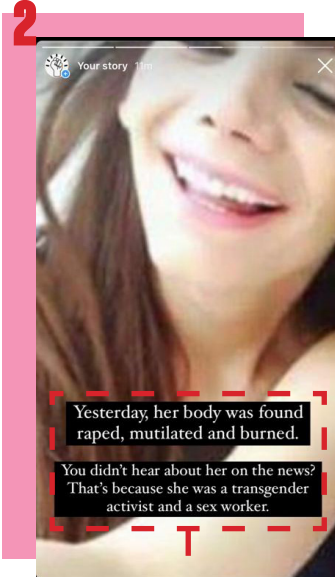
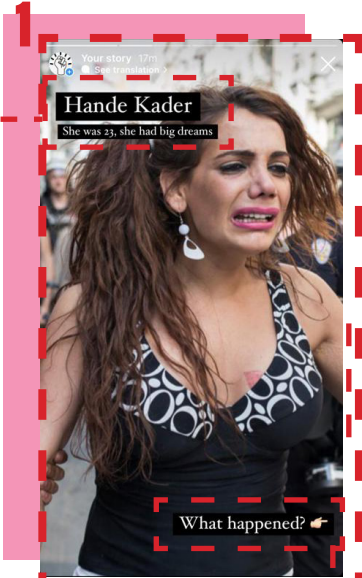
# TIPS FOR INSTAGRAM POSTS

## ACT

Call for action!  
Utilizing a hashtag  
is always a good

## LINK

To give more  
information, use an  
external link



## HEADER

Make them emotionally triggering.

## VISUALS

Simple, relevant visuals. Make sure they cover the whole space.

## NEXT

Indicator of upcoming information

## DETAILS

Give main details about the case. Keep simple.

## SHARE

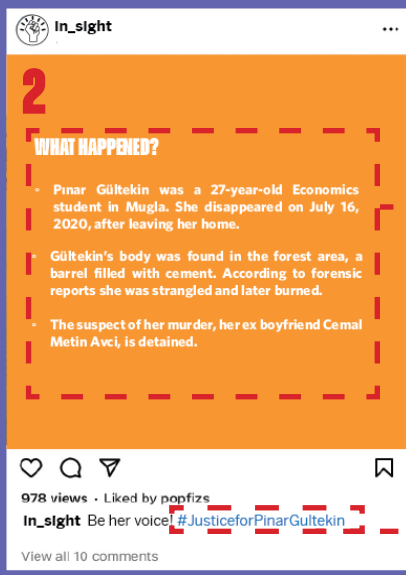
You can share the same stories on Facebook!

## HIGHLIGHTS

Group your cases for later updates!

## ATTENTION GRABBER

Make them emotionally triggering.



## DETAILS

Give main details about the case. Divide the information and support with visuals in between.

## HASHTAG

Keep the hashtags specific to your case.



# TIPS FOR TWEETS

## **THREAD**

Make a thread to post relevant information in parts



Thread



#IN-SIGHT  
@in\_sight18

“I can't choose what I wear, I don't have the right to dance in public.”

These were 22 year-old Masha Amini's words to her mom before Masha was the victim of deathly blows by the Iranian morality police.

Join us, be her voice! [#WomanLifeFreedom](#)



## **ATTENTION GRABBER**

Emotional statements work best.

## **DETAILS**

Give main details about the case

## **HASHTAG**

Keep the hashtags specific to your case.

## **VISUALS**

Use capturing intriguing visuals.



# HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR PROFILE?

A well-structured profile can have a significant impact. It allows you to convey your message clearly, provide updates on cases, and keep your audience informed about your work. While it's tempting to go with the flow of the platform, taking a strategic approach to organizing your profile can greatly expand your reach.

Finding the right organization method can be a challenge since everyone has their own preferences. Take our advice with a grain of salt and feel free to experiment. Give these tips a try and see how they work for you.

## WHAT ARE PROFILE STAPLES?

When people visit your profile, the first things they see are your profile picture and bio and a possible header, these are your profile staples. Keep them short and sweet. In your bio, mention your mission and work with a catchy slogan, contact and don't forget to include a link to a website where people can find more info.



## DO'S

### HAVE A STRATEGY

Define your social media identity: set goals, establish your voice, craft a concise bio, use links strategically, and incorporate consistent branding. Be recognizable and stand out amidst the online crowd.

### UTILIZE DIGITAL TOOLS

Utilize the digital tools at your disposal! Grouping tools and pinned content can enhance the navigation of your profile, making it easier for newcomers to familiarize themselves with your work. Additionally, using debate tools can spark conversations and draw attention to your cause.

### UPDATE REGULARLY

Coherency and simplicity are key elements. Check your profile structure every few months and see what you need to get rid of or what you need to add each time. Clear outdated content to keep your profile focused on the current issues.

## DONT'S

### CHANGE STAPLES REGULARLY

Consistency is key on social media. Stick to your profile staples like your bio and profile picture to build familiarity and trust. Avoid unnecessary changes unless you have a significant reason to do so.

### TRUST THE PLATFORM DEFAULTS

Social media platforms were originally designed for personal and commercial use, but their potential for organizational purposes has evolved over time. However, it is important not to rely solely on the default settings provided by the platforms. Take control of your profile and avoid leaving it in its generic state.

### OVERPACK POSTS

Avoid long text posts and overly packed grouping tools. Include information enough to make your message go through. Rearrange outdated elements if you feel like the posts are crowding your profile.

# TIPS FOR MODERATION

Tips to make your life easier as a moderator and make your page thrive!

## ENGAGING WITH THE AUDIENCE

### BE POLITE

Choose your words carefully, as they may be quoted by the media. Be authentic, transparent, and use casual language when engaging with others. Stay polite, even in passionate debates, and avoid abusive behavior. As a moderator, create an inclusive space and report any problematic users. Consider legal action if necessary to ensure a safe online environment.

### WATCH YOUR NOTIFICATIONS

Stay active on social media, checking your account daily and responding promptly to questions or queries. Redirect or promise to follow up if you don't have an immediate answer. Building trust with your followers is crucial, and attention to these details helps achieve that.

### PICK YOUR BATTLES WISELY

Be aware that not everyone shares your perspective, especially outside your echo chamber. Approach those with different views patiently and understandingly. Instead of direct criticism, find common ground to base the conversation on. Respect and politeness can make people more receptive to different ideas. Guide the discussion without imposing your views, allowing individuals to draw their own conclusions. Even if they don't agree, remember that your effort can still have an impact.

### KNOW WHEN TO STOP

Don't get caught up in unnecessary fights. Share your thoughts, reply once or twice and if they don't resonate, it's okay to step back. This is especially important when promoting feminist ideology, as getting into heated arguments can do more harm than good in the long term.

# MANAGING POSTS

## TRIGGER WARNING

Addressing sensitive topics like gender-based violence and sexual harassment requires utmost care. These subjects can be deeply triggering for survivors and their loved ones. While it's important to raise awareness, be mindful of potential triggers. Add trigger warnings, such as [TW: sexual violence], at the beginning of posts discussing topics like child abuse, sexual abuse, or suicide. Using (TW) as shorthand is also effective. Prioritize sensitivity when engaging with such content.

## CREDITS AND SOURCES

Giving credit to your sources is essential for organizations. Transparency plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining trust. Crediting also serves as a protective measure against criticism and government scrutiny. Make it a practice to always acknowledge and credit your sources when sharing content.

## WHEN TO DELETE

Stirring up some anger is a natural outcome of feminist activism. But what if you end up angering the wrong crowd, like your own supporters? Deleting the controversial post won't erase the impact, as the internet has a long memory. Instead, it's better to apologize and explain. Alternatively, you can stand by your position and back it up with evidence.

# TECH SUPPORT

## GET PROMOTED

Investing a portion of your savings into social media promotion can be a smart move. It expands your reach, exposing your content to non-followers and accelerating the spread of your cause. We suggest promoting emotionally engaging and informative posts that tell a story.

## ALWAYS HAVE A VPN

Keep a VPN handy at all times! Governments may restrict internet access during times of heightened activism and pressure. Don't let them wield power over you—stay online! Encourage your followers to do the same.

***#IN-SIGHT***

# ***DIGITAL TOOLS***

TIPS AND TRICKS ON HOW TO UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA ELEMENTS MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY ARE PROVIDED IN THIS TOOLKIT.

- » HASHTAGS
- » GROUPING TOOLS FOR PROFILES
- » PINNED CONTENT
- » DEBATE TOOLS

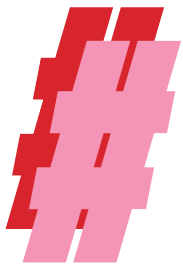
# HASHTAGS

## WHY USE HASHTAGS?

Hashtags (#) are known to be a very popular feature of Social Media. They are a very powerful tool for data collection and community formation around a chosen topic.

With the right use of hashtags organizations can:

- +Take advantage of social medias **hyperconnectivity**
- +Utilize the **speed and algorithm** of social media to their advantage
- +**Increase searchability** of their cause
- +Reach outside their community to **expand their circle**



*The widespread response to the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on social media sparked worldwide outrage, leading to demonstrations in more than 60 countries. This historic event saw the United States witness its **largest-ever protest**, as an estimated 15 to 26 million individuals took to the streets in support of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.*



## HOW TO USE HASHTAGS MORE EFFECTIVELY?

Hashtags are storytelling tools which is helping more and more social movements gain momentum.

The hashtags in many influential cases of cyberactivism have complete sentence structures rather than single words. Make sure the hashtags include your cause in the hashtag and leave out special characters so your cause will spread easily.

### TO PROVOKE:

Verbs that convey a strong feeling of action and force are used. Petitioning, demanding, appealing, and protesting are the acts. They convey their refusals, objections, and imperatives to act immediately. They frequently question conventional media narratives and are meant to agitate the audience.

**#BLACKLIVESMATTER**

**#OCCUPYWALLSTREET**

### TO EXPAND:

Hashtags that also provide a place for people to express intimate experiences related to larger societal concerns. These are known as empathetic hashtags. Organizations may provide safe spaces for individuals to share their own stories by creating empathetic hashtags. These hashtags are also more likely to foster empathy and to broaden the echo chamber.

**#METOO**

**#WHYISTAYED**

# GROUPING TOOLS FOR PROFILE

Each social media platform offers unique grouping tools for profiles. These tools allow you to gather, document, and update ongoing or past cases relevant to your organization. By utilizing these grouping tools, you can effectively organize case information, making it easily accessible and engaging for your audience in a chronological order.

Grouping tools for Profiles are referred as:



Highlights



Threads



Playlists



Playlists



# HIGHLIGHTS

Stories are one of the core features of Instagram. The stories shared can be grouped and stored as “Highlights” on your organizations profile.

It is beneficiary to keep the content visual heavy with minimum but explanatory text since stories have around 15 seconds time-span. In order to share more information, posts on profiles can be shared on stories or external links can be utilized.

Stories shared around a case can be collected and saved as a “Highlight” in chronological order. With Instagram Story Highlights, you can organize and showcase your categorized Instagram Stories on your profile permanently. New stories can be added in order to update the cases, there is a limit of 100 stories for each highlight however, we recommend up to 30-40 stories per highlight. The highlight can be named with a brief title and a cover image can be attained for the highlight.

We recommend to name and choose a cover for each highlight after the cases your organization is actively working on. We also recommend deleting or refreshing outdated stories.

## ABOUT US

Organization details included

upfront. Make sure this always stays as the first highlight.



19  
Posts

35  
Followers

35  
Following

### #IN-SIGHT

We stand against gender-based violence.

Contact us: +1234567890

[stopgenderbasedviolence.org](https://stopgenderbasedviolence.org)

## CASES

each include detailed information on ongoing cases. Update highlights as cases develop.



About Us



#HandeKader



#PinarGülte...



#SalihaTuncel



#IstanbulCo...

# THREADS

Threads on Twitter are created when a user follows up a tweet with another tweet. The beauty of threads lies in their unlimited length, allowing users to extend them as much as they want. Even if others reply to tweets within a thread, it remains uninterrupted, with replies stored beneath the respective tweets.

Threads serve as valuable grouping mechanisms for cyberactivism, particularly on Twitter, where the majority of the audience stays updated on local and global news.

Research indicates that incorporating visual content, such as images or videos, alongside informative text in social media posts boosts engagement. Visuals quickly capture attention, enhance credibility, and evoke emotions.

By including visuals strategically within thread tweets, you can attract more attention and garner support for the shared information.

To ensure the thread retains people's attention, it is advisable to present information-rich tweets in a concise manner. For more detailed information, you can include links at the end of the thread, allowing interested individuals to explore the topic further.

Threads also serve as a convenient way to provide updates and remind your audience about ongoing cases. As new tweets appear in a thread, they pop up in users' timelines, acting as timely reminders in the fast-paced world of social media.

# THREAD OF THREADS

You can even create a Thread of Threads! It's a fantastic way to gather all your organization's information and work in one place. A Thread of Threads is like a sneak peek into what you do, perfect for both your current followers and new audience

To create a Thread of Threads, follow these simple steps:

- » Post your first tweet, which will serve as the Title Tweet for your Thread of Threads.
- » Copy the link of the first tweet from each thread you want to include in your Thread of Threads.
- » Reply to your Title Tweet and paste the link of the desired thread. You can also add a title or explanation for that specific linked thread.
- » Repeat this process for each thread you wish to include in your Thread of Threads.

Feel free to add as many threads as necessary to create a comprehensive collection of your organization's work.



# PLAYLISTS



TikTok, a widely popular social media platform, particularly among the younger demographic, offers a unique way to engage with the audience through short video content. With its vast reach and the ability to download and reshare videos, TikTok provides a powerful tool for connecting with users across various platforms.

Creating playlists on TikTok is similar to Instagram's Highlights feature, allowing you to group related videos together. However, it's important to note that playlist creation is currently limited to creators with a minimum of 10,000 followers.

To create a playlist on TikTok, follow these steps:

- » Open the TikTok app and locate the video you want to include in your playlist.
- » Tap the three-dot icon situated on the right side of the video, or press and hold the video.
- » Select "Add to playlist" from the options presented.
- » Choose the option to "Create a playlist."
- » Follow the prompts within the app to name your playlist and add additional videos to it.

By organizing your TikTok videos into playlists, you can provide a curated viewing experience for your followers. This helps them discover related content easily and ensures that your videos are presented in a cohesive and meaningful way.

However, it's important to keep in mind that playlist creation is contingent on reaching the follower threshold. If your organization hasn't yet achieved the required follower count, you can still leverage TikTok's discoverability features and engage with the audience through individual videos.



YouTube is a fantastic platform for sharing longer video content, providing you with the opportunity to go more in-depth on various topics. One of the advantages of YouTube is the ability to create playlists, which can help you organize your videos based on different themes or categories.

Playlists serve as a convenient way to group related content together. For instance, if you have press conferences related to your cause, educational videos explaining key concepts, or clips from protests or events, you can create separate playlists for each of these categories. By doing so, viewers can easily navigate through your channel and find the specific type of content they are interested in.

Moreover, playlists can be a valuable tool for enhancing the viewer's experience and guiding them through a series of videos. If you have a case or a campaign that involves multiple videos, organizing them into a playlist can provide a cohesive viewing experience. Viewers can watch the videos in the intended order, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the topic or following the chronological progression of events.

However, it's important to note that creating playlists may not be necessary for every case or topic. If your content consists of standalone videos that do not necessarily require a specific order or thematic grouping, you can still benefit from YouTube's search and recommendation algorithms, which can suggest your videos to viewers based on their interests and viewing habits.

Ultimately, whether or not you choose to utilize playlists on YouTube depends on the nature of your content and how you want to present it to your audience. It's worth considering how playlists can enhance the accessibility and organization of your videos, while keeping in mind the overall viewer experience and convenience.

# PINNED CONTENT

Pinned content is yet another common feature on social media outlets today. Pinned content allows your organizations to prioritize the content you would like to show your followers as the first thing. This can be changed as frequent as pleased.



Instagram allows 3 visual content to be pinned in profile.



Tiktok allows 3 videos to be pinned in each profile.



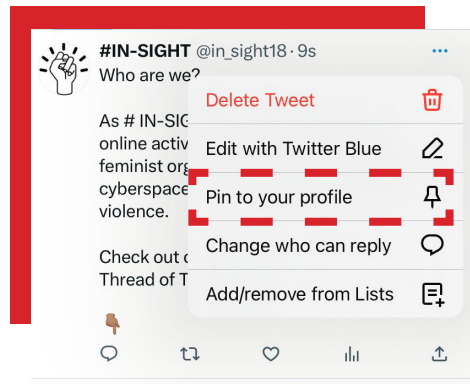
Twitter allows only one pinned tweet in each profile



Youtube allows you to “pin” one video on each profile.



**YOU CAN PIN A “THREAD OF THREADS” ON YOUR TWITTER PROFILE TO KEEP THE INFORMATION FLOW ORGANIZED, UPDATED AND IN THE CENTER OF ATTENTION.**





# DEBATE TOOLS

Debate tools on social media platforms enable users to engage in discussions on specific topics, often facilitated by one or more moderators. These tools leverage hashtags, existing followers, and individual algorithm preferences to recommend relevant debates to users.

For organizations, debate tools serve as valuable resources to initiate conversations and educate their audience. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok offer live features as their primary debate tools. These live sessions typically require at least one moderator, but the number can vary. Guests join the live stream, sharing their video content to express their thoughts, opinions, and ask questions.



Instagram allows up to three users to join a live



Twitter, on the other hand, utilizes “Spaces” as its debate tool. Spaces harness the power of audio content, resembling a real-time podcast experience. These public spaces can accommodate up to 10 moderators engaging in a debate while the audience participate as listeners.



TikTok allows for up to five users to assist in a live session.



Youtube requires a single moderator to lead a livestream

***#IN-SIGHT***

# ***PHYSICAL TOOLS***

THESE TOOLS ARE INTENDED TO EXPAND YOUR REACH BY MAKING THE OUTSIDE AUDIENCE EMPATHIZE WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAUSE.

- » TEAR-OFF POSTER
- » INFORMATIVE EMPATHY STICKERS
- » SIMULATION EMPATHY STICKERS
- » PRINTABLE TEMPLATES

# TEAR OFF FLYER

Create Tear Off Flyers by selecting victim's picture and a powerful phrase that resonates with or reminds the audience of the situation. These phrases can be chosen from examples or customized.

Include the relevant hashtag and a QR code on each tear off tab. The QR code will lead people who interact with it to your page where they can access the information and updates about the case. Make sure to include the related hashtag in your updates so the audience can interact with it.

Alternatively you can lead them directly to tweet with the hashtag with the QR taking the audience to the "Create a Tweet" page with the hashtag ready to be tweeted. To generate this QR code, use a [QR code generator for Twitter](#) and enter your chosen hashtag under the "Post a Tweet" option.

Once prepared, individuals can tear off a tab and take it with them to place it wherever they wish, becoming part of the movement.



# HOW DOES IT WORK?

## 02. ENGAGE

- They read the poster and remember her case.
- They scan the QR on the poster to be taken to NGOs thread on Twitter.



## 05. JOIN

- Join the campaigning online, tweet with the hashtag.
- They tear a overhang to stick around the campus and help spread the cause.

## 03. LEARN

- They read the thread online to get updated on the case.
- They see the hashtag the NGO shared, they interact with it to get more information.

## 04. FOLLOW

## 01. AWARENESS

- Comes across a poster with a QR code on the campus as they are walking for their next class
- They remember seeing the woman on the poster on the news some time ago.

**PREPARED FLYERS CAN BE SHARED ONLINE FOR YOUR SUPPORTERS  
TO PRINT AND SPREAD THE CAUSE IN THEIR OWN LOCATIONS.**

# EMPATHY STICKERS

Empathy stickers are a simpler version of the Tear Off posters. You can use them to empathize with or remind the external audience of the instance.

## INFORMATIVE EMPATHY STICKERS

For informative stickers, all you need to do is pick an Empathy Phrase and place it on the template. Later, generate a QR code which will take the audience to the page you would like them to connect with. We recommend the main page of a hashtag, your organizations page or a thread of a specific case.



**EMPATHY**  
**PHRASE**



**CHANGEABLE**  
**QR CODE**

# HOW DO THEY WORK?

## 01. AWARENESS

- Comes across a intruding sticker with a QR code on the bus stop as they are making their way home

## 02. ENGAGE

- They scan the QR code out of curiosity.
- The QR lead them to the organizations posts about the case

## 03. LEARN

- They are lead to the organizations posts about the case, they read about the details
- They check out the comments and hashtag for more information
- They empathize with the victim.

## 05. ACT

- Join the campaigning online, show support, help educating the audience and share credible sources with their circle.
- Join protests in their location.

## 04. FOLLOW

**PREPARED STICKERS CAN BE SHARED ONLINE FOR YOUR SUPPORTERS TO PRINT AND SPREAD THE CAUSE IN THEIR OWN LOCATIONS.**

# SIMULATOR EMPATHY STICKERS

The simulator aims to put the audience in the shoes of a victim's loved ones to trigger emotions. The QR code on the ready-made stickers are directly linked to the simulator, the empathy phrase can be arranged as pleased. The news spread titles are chosen from the most common femicides .

You can modify the text and link on the simulator in order to connect the simulator with an ongoing case's context.

## 01. AWARENESS

- Comes across a intruding sticker with a QR code on the bus stop as they are making their way home
- They scan the QR code out of curiosity.

## 02. ENGAGE

- The QR lead them to the simulator, where they are asked to upload a photo of a loved one.
- After uploading they see their loved one's photo with in a heading of a gender-based violence news spread

## 03. EMPATHIZE

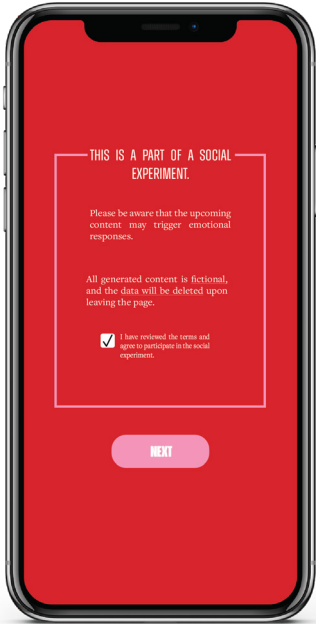
- Reads the news spread in panic later to realize that they are caught off guard, and realize it is just a simulation.
- They empathize with the victim and go to the NGOs social media profile to get more information.

## 05. ACT

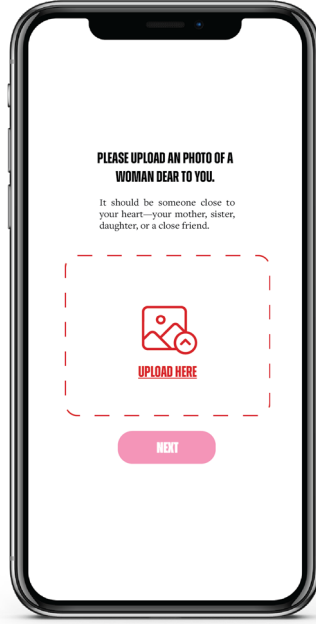
- Join the campaigning online, show support, help educating the audience and share credible sources with their circle.
- Join protests in their location.

## 04. FOLLOW

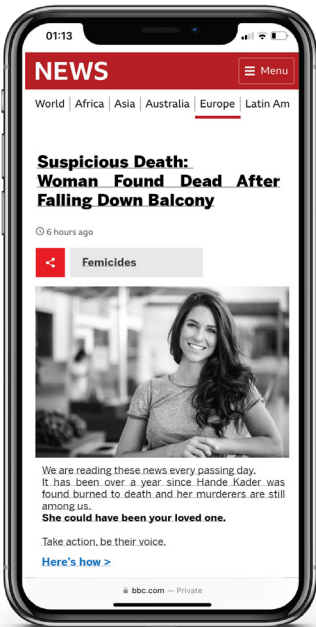




**CONSENT**



**UPLOAD**



**EMPHATIZE**



**LEARN**

# TEMPLATE - TEAR OFF FLYER

Recommended to print on a A4 sticker paper.

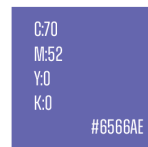
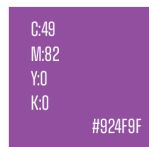
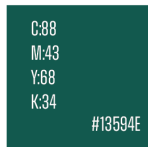
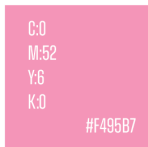
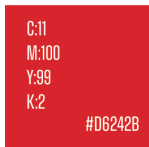
Here you will find the templates for the tear off flyers. Simply place the picture in the reserved area on the upper part of the poster. Generate a QR code, [here](#), that will lead your audience to your message and place them in the reserved area of each tear off overhang. Feel free to experiment with the attention grabber titles and color combinations. Don't forget to give some context on the reserved details area. You can find the editable files [here](#) for download.

Need help editing? Contact us at, [help@insight.org](mailto:help@insight.org)

## EXAMPLE ATTENTION GRABBER TITLES

- » Have you forgotten about me?
- » Do you remember me?
- » I need you to be my voice.
- » My murderer is still walking amongst you.
- » Don't forget my story.
- » I still exist, even if you've chosen to ignore me.
- » Remember the faces behind the statistics.
- » My presence may be invisible, but my pain is real.
- » Will you be the one to give me a voice and bring about change?
- » My life mattered, and it still does.
- » Am I invisible to you?

## COLOR SCHEME

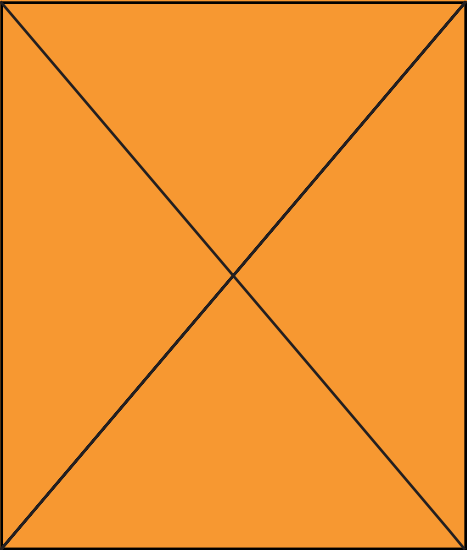


**ATTENTION GRABBER**

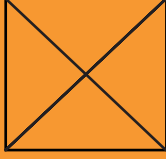
**TITLE HERE**

**DETAIL HERE**

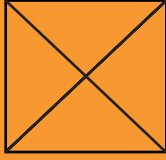
**DETAIL HERE**



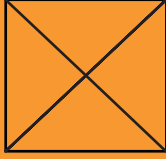
**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**



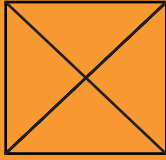
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**BE MY VOICE!**



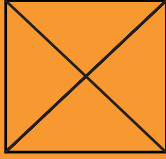
**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**



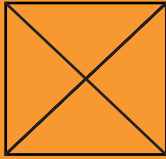
**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**



**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**



**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**



**#HASHTAG HERE**  
**BE MY VOICE!**

# TEMPLATE - EMPATHY STICKERS

Recommended to print on a A4 sticker paper.

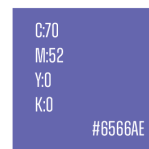
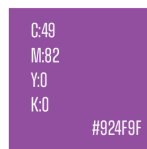
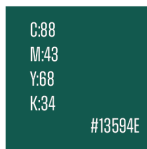
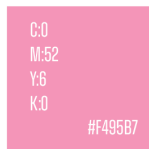
Here you will find the templates for the empathy stickers. The ones on top are for informative stickers where you can easily place your generated QR code on the reserved area. The ones below are the ones for the simulator stickers. Example empathy phrases to trigger different demographics are listed below. Feel free to experiment with the empathy phrases and color combinations. You can find the editable files [here](#) for download.

Need help editing? Contact us at, [help@insight.org](mailto:help@insight.org)

## EXAMPLE PHRASES

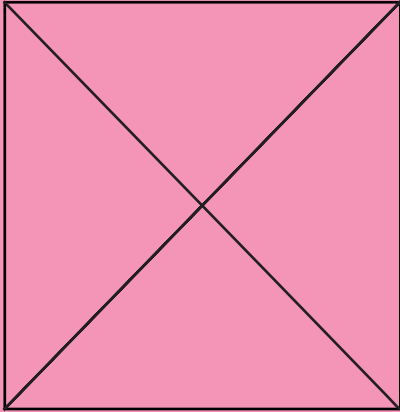
- » I could have been your daughter.
- » I could have been your sister.
- » I could have been your mother
- » Mom, I'm scared.
- » Dad, I'm scared.
- » Sister, I'm scared.
- » Brother, I'm scared.
- » My love, I'm scared.
- » Do you remember me from school?
- » We used to play together.
- » I used to come for tea when I was little.
- » I can't breathe.
- » It hurts.
- » I didn't trip.
- » I didn't jump.

## COLOR SCHEME



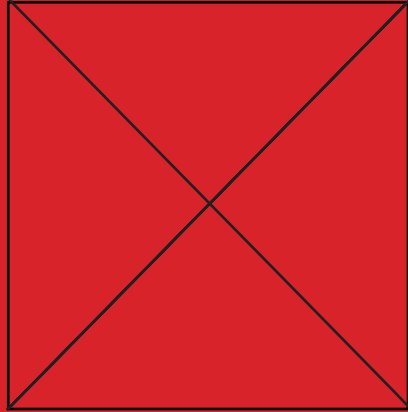
**EMPATHY**

**PHRASE HERE**



**EMPATHY**

**PHRASE HERE**



**EMPATHY**

**PHRASE HERE**



**EMPATHY**

**PHRASE HERE**



# FURTHER READS & RESOURCES

Take a look at some of the essential sources we used when creating our guide. You can access the complete research thesis behind #INSIGHT, [here](#).

- » *Barrier or Booster? Digital Media, Social Networks, and Youth Micromobilization*  
Link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/073121419867697>
- » *Echo Chambers on Social Media: A comparative analysis*  
Link: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2004.09603>
- » *Empathic Cyberactivism: The Potential of Hyperconnected Social Media Networks and Empathic Virtual Reality for Feminism*  
Link: <https://doaj.org/article/906cae2c13f8469c905f89e005874687>
- » *Narrative Agency in Hashtag Activism: The Case of #BlackLivesMatter*  
Link: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306088405\\_Narrative\\_Agency\\_in\\_Hashtag\\_Activism\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_BlackLivesMatter](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306088405_Narrative_Agency_in_Hashtag_Activism_The_Case_of_BlackLivesMatter)
- » *Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media*  
Link: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-economics-081919-050239>
- » *Social Media Elements, Ecologies, and Effects*  
Link: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-psych-010419-050944>
- » *Social Media Engagement Theory*  
Link: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299357565\\_Social\\_Media\\_Engagement\\_Theory](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299357565_Social_Media_Engagement_Theory)
- » *Social Movements and New Technology: The Dynamics of Cyber Activism in the Digital Age*  
Link: <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-92354-3-16>
- » *The Role of Social Media Content Format and Platform in Users' Engagement Behavior*  
Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1094996820300992>

# #IN-SIGHT

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[WWW.IN-SIGHT.ORG](http://WWW.IN-SIGHT.ORG)

## NEWSLETTER FOR UPDATES

[WWW.IN-SIGHT.ORG/NEWSLETTER](http://WWW.IN-SIGHT.ORG/NEWSLETTER)

## NEED HELP?

EMAIL US AT [HELP@INSIGHT.ORG](mailto:HELP@INSIGHT.ORG)

## FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS







DESIGN CONCEPT

# CHAPTER 9: TESTING RESULTS

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

After prototyping the product service system, #IN-SIGHT, co-design sessions were held in the form of semi-structured interviews with the previously interviewed Non-Governmental Organizations. During this interview, first the service system and later the product was presented in detail to the stakeholders. At the conclusion of a series of questions, their feedback was gathered and categorized according to various aspects. These aspects centered on the context and presentation of the guide, and the use of the guide and the service depending on the mission and/or the establishment status of the service facilitator NGOs. As a result of the co-design session, possible improvements and limitations were also synthesized within these contexts, which will be further discussed in the conclusion section.

## 9.2 CONTEXT AND STORYTELLING OF #IN-SIGHT

The visual language of the guide was referred to as strong, bold yet clear and simple. The complex context of social media was presented in an easy-to-understand manner. The graphics used to convey the service system were described as clear, concise, visually impactful, and highly relevant in terms of context. The focus and presentation of the product service system openly made one of the target NGO's representatives question their visual language as a political tool and encouraged them to rethink their use of media and media forms.

## 9.3 USE BASED ON THE MISSION OF THE SERVICE FACILITATOR NGOS

From the co-design session, it was understood that the extent of use of the service #IN-SIGHT would depend on the mission of the service facilitator NGO. The missions of NGOs divide into two:

**Type 1:** Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) provide assistance to victims and survivors of gender-based violence through services such as shelter, psychological support, and legal aid.

**Type 2:** NGOs associated with the independent feminist movement, working towards raising awareness about the inequalities and violence faced by women and promoting feminist ideology.

Type 1 Organizations almost always contribute to the feminist movement but on different levels and as a secondary mission. According to the feedback received, for Type 1 associations, the guide and service of #IN-SIGHT would benefit in guiding them in cyberspace, by offering tips and minimizing the time spent on social media while easily getting their message across. This is particularly beneficial for them since the time and effort saved on communication would be directed to their primary mission, which is helping women in need. Type 1 associations would get inspiration from the offered physical tools to implement the strategies aligning with their line of work, however, they are not likely to use them directly. The reasoning behind not directly using the physical tools is that it would be problematic in means of feasibility and capacity to spread uncontrollably and direct every woman in need to voluntary NGOs. The interviewed NGO underlined that they are also against this outcome politically because fighting against gender-based violence and providing for victims should mainly be the government's line of work. On the other hand, for Type 2 organizations, as Women Are Stronger Together (Kadınlar Birlikte Güçlü), besides the practicality of the use of social media, the physical tools provided by #IN-SIGHT are likely to enable organizations to spread the intersectional feminist agenda broader.

## 9.4 USE BASED ON SERVICE FACILITATOR NGO'S ESTABLISHMENT STATUS

Per the result of the co-design sessions, another factor that would affect the use of the product service system is the establishment status of the service facilitator NGO. The establishment status can be indicated by various independent factors such as their impact on the feminist movement, the NGO's duration of activity and/or size of the association. NGOs with a strong and long standing presence, such as Mor Çatı, who have developed well-defined communication strategies encompassing visuals and language, are more inclined to leverage tips offered by #IN-SIGHT after in-depth discussions on its potential impact on their brand. These organizations are more likely to consult the guide for newly emerged social media platforms or the platforms on which they don't have an existing presence. It is not very likely for well-established organizations to directly adapt their social media presence as guided by #IN-SIGHT, however, from the co-design session, it was indicated that the product service system triggered a trail of thought questioning their social media presence as well as their audience inside and outside the echo chamber thus creating space for open discussion.

In contrast, #IN-SIGHT seems to provide fundamental guidance in cyberspace for newly-founded, small organizations which have little to no media presence. Newly-founded organizations tend to have a harder time establishing a clear aim and brand strategy which can be easily predicted from their scattered social media presence. As a result

of the co-design sessions, it was understood that the guidance of #IN-SIGHT is likely to help newly-founded organizations have a better understanding of which media platforms serve their purpose best and how to structure their profiles and to direct their time and effort in order to communicate their message effectively to the online audience.

# **CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS**

Social media platforms function through user-generated content and interactions, characterized by features such as hyperconnectivity, the spillover effect, and accessibility. These characteristics have transformed daily interactions and the dissemination of knowledge, allowing for freedom of speech, global outreach, and the formation of communities. With the advent of the digital age, this transformation has also influenced activism, giving rise to cyberactivism as a new phenomenon. Cyberactivism empowers marginalized groups to find their voice and advocate for societal change in the modern era.

The thesis study contributed to the research on organizing and guiding fragmented cyberactivism activity in order to catalyze social change. Existing research analyzed what cyberactivism is and how it influenced social movements, however, there was limited research on how cyberactivism activity can be structured to trigger change. This research explored how cyberactivism activity can be effectively redirected to exert pressure on oppressing regimes using Non-Governmental Organizations as a catalyst between the public and government officials.

The main objective of the study was to develop a product service system that would support using cyberactivism activity in a more organized and targeted way in order to increase the reach and get a quicker response from governmental bodies on cases of gender-based violence and hate crimes. Through existing literature, an extensive analysis of social media's structure and characteristics was undertaken in order to acquire a thorough knowledge



of user engagement and the government's response to social media. Later on, the focus was directed to recent case studies of cyberactivism activity on gender-based violence. Based on the preliminary research, it was concluded that the cyberactivism activity was fragmented, necessitating a more targeted approach to align with the research objective. Consequently, the focus shifted toward Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as key catalysts in achieving the desired outcome. After conducting a comprehensive review of the literature and undertaking field research, a carefully designed and crafted product service system was created. This system aims to enhance the efficient utilization of social media platforms to effectively promote awareness and mobilize action against gender-based violence. Lastly, the designed product service system, #IN-SIGHT, was tested through co-design sessions, the main outcome for all organizations is the provision of guidance tips that facilitate efficient utilization of social media, enabling them to effectively communicate their messages while saving valuable time. #IN-SIGHT appears to offer essential guidance in the online realm, particularly for newly-established and small organizations that have limited or no media presence. This can be particularly advantageous in fostering the growth of well-structured local organizations and spreading the feminist ideology, especially in areas where established organizations have limited outreach capabilities. Thus, with a broader reach, #IN-SIGHT would help exert pressure on governmental bodies, speeding up the process for a lawful response. The product service system served to enhance NGOs' understanding of the significance of social media in activism and prompted them to reevaluate their existing online presence.

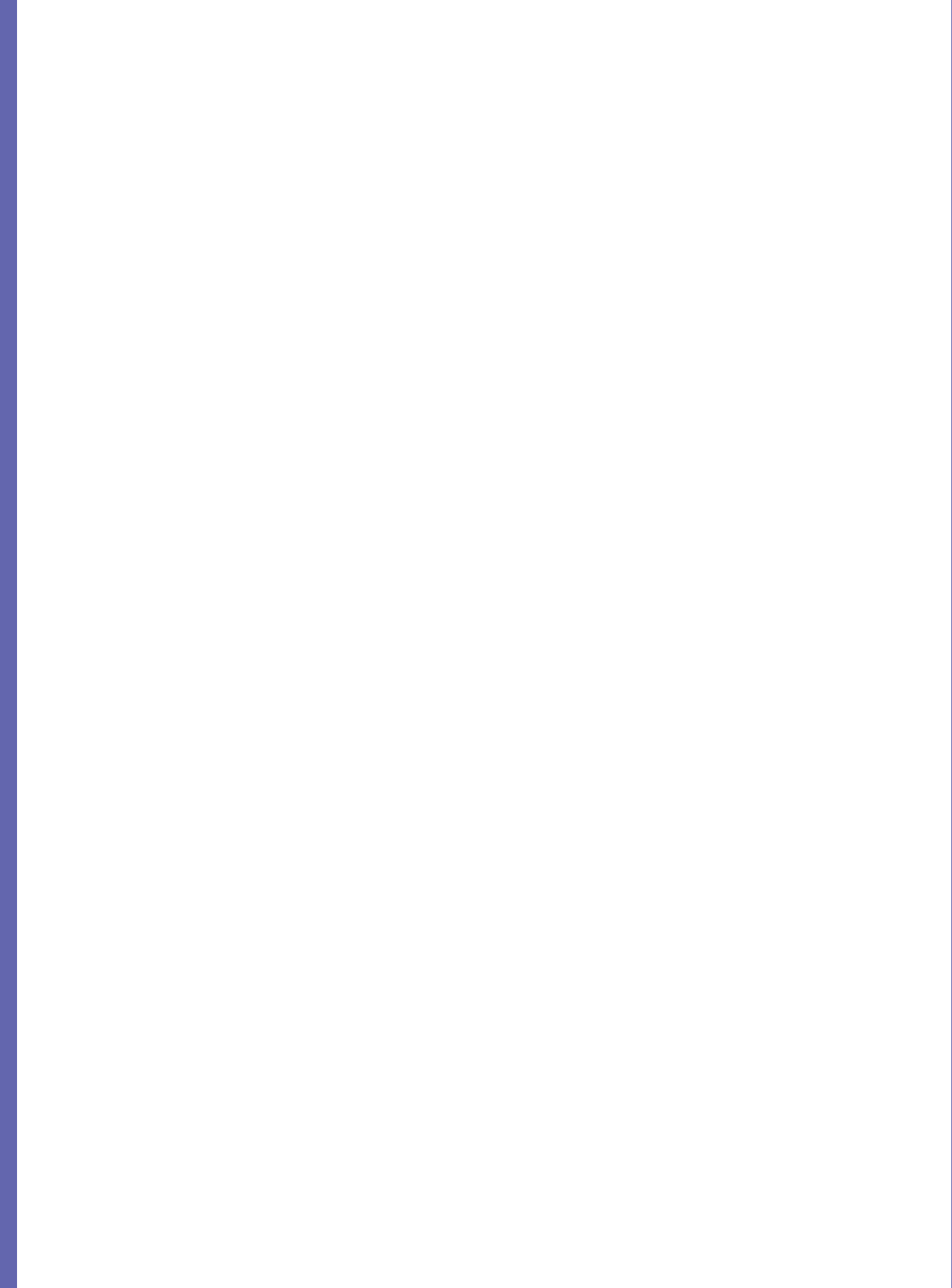
## 10.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS

The limitations of this study are mainly rooted in the validation phase. Given that the active testing of the product necessitates the cooperation of an NGO that is willing to commit their social media platforms to the research, it becomes crucial to utilize their past and ongoing cases within a timeframe that aligns with the duration of this research. Even in the event of finding a volunteer NGO, the allocated research time would still be inadequate to obtain actionable results. In order to obtain reliable results, it is necessary to conduct further field testing of the designed product service system over an extended period of time also involving quantitative data analysis.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the selected platforms as it is unlikely for NGOs to solely harness the positive aspects of social media, given the inherent structure and functioning of these platforms. Currently, it is impossible to completely avoid the drawbacks associated with social media platforms, including the spread of disinformation, the limited significance of topics due to the rapid pace of news, and the existence of echo chambers.

## 10.2 FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research can focus on minimizing the mentioned drawbacks of social media for cyberactivism alongside defining a strategic framework for social media in order to assist upcoming intersectional feminist organizations. The focus on brand strategy can be deeper developed in the product to further benefit organizations who are feeling lost in defining a strategy. The product service system can also be further explored for NGOs in other fields of activism, extending the advantages of cyberactivism to support other important causes.



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