

Analysis of Relationship between Social Media Conversation and Mainstream Coverage to Mobilize Social Movement

Sakulsri Srisaracam

Abstract—Social media has become an important source of information for the public and the media profession. Some social issues raised on social media are picked up by journalists to report on other platforms. This relationship between social media and mainstream media can sometimes drive public debate or stimulate social movements. The question to examine is in what situations can social media conversations raise awareness and stimulate change on public issues. This study addresses the communication patterns of social media conversations driving covert issues into mainstream media and leading to social advocacy movements. In methodological terms, the study findings are based on a content analysis of Facebook, Twitter, news websites and television media reports on three different case studies – saving Bryde’s whale, protests against a government proposal to downsize the Office of Knowledge Management and Development in Thailand, and a dengue fever campaign. These case studies were chosen because they represent issues that most members of the public do not pay much attention to but social media conversations stimulated public debate and calls to action. This study found: 1) Collective social media conversations can stimulate public debate and encourage change at three levels – awareness, public debate, and action of policy and social change. The level depends on the communication patterns of online users and media coverage. 2) Patterns of communication have to be designed to combine social media conversations, online opinion leaders, mainstream media coverage and call to both online and offline action to motivate social change. Thus, this result suggests that social media is a powerful platform for collective communication and setting the agenda on public issues for mainstream media. However, for social change to succeed, social media should be used to mobilize online movements to move offline too.

Keywords—Public issue, social media conversation, social media, social movement.

I. INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL movements have been implemented in many forms and collective online conversation has driven action in real life on social issues and social movements. Digital communication technologies have created new possibilities for the world to bear witness, for activists to connect to people and organize public activities, and for citizens to act and participate in issues affecting their lives. These social media tools, which have gained popularity among people over the past few years, have helped the voiceless to be heard and given them space to express their issues. Social conversations mobilizing social movements have been related to many

political events. For example in the Egyptian revolution of 2011, posts on social media brought together Egyptians with the same experience of unstable and unfair lives to move from an online movement to street protests which were able to bring down the government. During Thailand’s recent political conflict, some political movements have been driven by social media conversations, for example the ‘V for Thailand’ protest against former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and the Yingluck government. This anonymous group organized events gathering people wearing white masks to rally against the government through spreading the word on social media; news media covered the story widely, encouraging more awareness of the movement. Besides political movements, social media also plays an important role on bringing different people together to take action in society. An example is the #IllRideWithYou campaign following the 2014 hostage incident in downtown Sydney, Australia, when innocent Muslims became the target of hate and anger. Some Australians responded to discrimination by encouraging peace and harmony in the community and accompanying Muslim people who were afraid to live a normal life. The action was publicized through the Twitter hashtag #IllRideWithYou. The sympathy movement gained extensive media coverage around the world. These examples illustrate the power of social media and how it brings people together to take action on something meaningful.

In Thailand, journalists publish user-generated content by monitoring conversations and what is shared online to pick up ‘news hints’ and report this in the mainstream media. In addition, in this new media landscape, a Facebook page influencer (a page that has more than 100,000 followers) can set an agenda by breaking important news to get attention from online users; journalists also report such stories. In some cases, even issues that have been ignored get onto the public agenda and lead policy makers to take action on social problems. This rapid emergence of social media usage and issues movements in Thailand has led to questions on the role of social media and news coverage in shaping movements. There is still a lack of understanding of the relationship between mainstream coverage and social media conversations, and how these can drive movements. This article focuses on collective social media conversations, patterns of communication and public agenda-setting in social media and mainstream media to mobilize social movements.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Inter-Media Agenda Setting Involving Mainstream Media and Social Media

In recent studies, some scholars show an increasingly close relationship in agenda setting between mainstream media and social media users. Macnamara [1] explains that in the age of ambient news, anyone can report news stories at any time. Media professionals pick up content from citizens to use in mainstream media, while citizens also share and repurpose professional content online. He points out that this change in the cycle of information flowing between citizens and the mass media, social media can reflect concerns and views ignored by the mass media while mainstream media still sets the agenda of what people should know. If a high use of social media can raise awareness and set events related to issues with people joining in, it can gain more coverage from the media. Macnamara's conclusion implies that there is a relationship between mainstream and social media but they are acting on issues in different contexts. Vis [2] examined millions of tweets of The Guardian and individuals through a list of 160 UK riot-related hashtags on Twitter and suggests that journalists used content from citizens when covering the 2011 UK riots and Alan Rusbridger made a statement quoted in this study that when people participate in the journalism process, media professionals can get more engagement from the public to report in news stories. A study of the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US [3] shows that social media can set the news agenda on mainstream media. Social conversations online drive collective action in offline protests and can attract mainstream media reports spread widely to the masses. The study also found the use of user-generated content from the movement in news reporting. Adriaan van Bart [4] investigated agenda-setting theory and social media and the result shows that social media has the potential to transfer salience from the public to the mainstream media by connecting people and data; it can raise awareness and attract media attention to issues. However, he argues that social media conversations have to fight platform algorithms to make issues salient unlike mainstream media. This leads to the question in this study of whether social media conversations and mainstream coverage can work together to drive social issues in society, because social media gives the power of networks and collective action, while mainstream media can still reach mass audiences and create an impact on agenda setting.

B. Social Media and Social Movements

Goodwin and Jasper [5] defined social movements as "conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means." This echoes the well-known definition of social movements by Tilly [6] on the specific characteristics of social movements. He explains that a social movement is an action of a group of people aiming for a specific goal and it is far more than just a gathering of people for a protest. Social movements should have a level of social interaction by

different people to challenge those who have power and to change society. Morris et al. [7] points out that in social movements people have collective goals and will act on something that they think may benefit their lives. Thus, according to these definitions, a social movement is a process of having many people joining a collective action to achieve the same common goal which impacts society, and to mobilize the process, it needs to gather enough people to act toward the same goal. Movements in recent years have shown a significant rise in the importance of social media in the process of mobilizing. Clay Shirky [8] writes about social media as a new social networking tool for collective action because it is characteristic of interactivity and removes obstacles to sharing and joining action. This technology changes the face of bringing social issues to the public and of driving change. A study on social media and the Arab Spring movement by [9], suggests that social media is a tool to connect different groups of people and stakeholders in the issues. The use of social media, which has the power of speed and interactivity, can draw attention locally and internationally to gain outside support. Gamson and Wolfsfeld [10] note that a movement needs media for "mobilization, validation and scope enlargement". This means that movements still rely on the impact of mass media to reach wider audiences and to set a frame of awareness and understanding of the movement. They also suggest that the movement gives 'drama, conflict and action' of a group of people to attract the media coverage. This implies that there may be some close relationship between movements and mass media in cooperating in mobilizing social movements.

III. METHODOLOGY

To show the relationship between social media conversations and mainstream coverage that can mobilize social issues, data were gathered and coded for analysis. There were three different case studies.

A campaign to promote Bryde's whales as a protected species, a case study representing a social movement by social media influencers and on an environmental issue where it is easy to gain support.

A protest against a government proposal to downsize the Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD) of Thailand, which is a movement driven by conflict. This case had the shortest period of collective conversation among the three cases, but the result was impressive in that it forced the government to postpone the decision.

A campaign to raise awareness about dengue fever, which started as a human interest story of a famous actor who passed away because of dengue fever; this is a kind of movement with no specific leader to mobilize action, but the collective emotion over the death of the actor drove the issue to raise awareness and stimulate a review of the effectiveness of official campaigns on dengue fever.

These three case studies were chosen because they represent issues to which most members of the public do not pay much attention. However, during social media conversations, public

debate and calls to action were stimulated.

Data were collected from the Facebook and Twitter traffic of online users via hashtags and keywords related to the issues. A coding system was developed to analyze the communication patterns of social media conversations including storytelling, collective action frames, stories and information provided, as well as users' engagement and collective action on issues via social media.

Content analysis was then employed to study the news coverage of these three cases on news websites and television. The coding analysis included storytelling in news reporting, user-generated content usage, type of news report, tone of presenting issues and setting a public agenda, topics related to the issues covered by mainstream media, news agenda framing to mobilize on the issues and people's engagement with news content.

A cross-analysis between two data sets shows a relationship between social media conversations and mainstream coverage of the issues.

IV. RESULTS

Patterns of communication show a relationship between social media conversations and news coverage distributing information and reactions about issues in society. The results show narratives presenting information and provoking reactions on social media drive conversations and participation on issues. When issues become a social media buzz and news covers the topics, the process has the power to spread issues widely to explain and drive action.

A. Patterns of Social Media Conversations on Public Issues

The data show that different issues can be driven by conversations by online users and influencers exchanging information. Each case study shows that on both Facebook and Twitter, a large number of posts/tweets raises awareness and stimulates collective communication. Facebook generates more community feeling through collective communication by the exchange of information, opinions and reactions in various forms related to the same posts. Twitter serves collective communication when users use the same hashtag and exchange information. People tweet information and reactions which are spread by retweeting Twitter.

TABLE I
NUMBERS OF TWEETS/POSTS BY ONLINE USERS

Topic	FB	Twitter
Bryde's Whales	185	43
Dengue Fever Campaign	82	263
OKMD Protest	39	317

When comparing the numbers of posts/tweets for the three cases, results show that these differ depending on the topic and form of mobilization. In the Bryde's whales case, conversations on Facebook were more tense than tweets because this issue was driven by an online opinion leader who used Facebook to post information and calls to support the campaign to declare Bryde's whales a protected species. Online users therefore shared, commented and took action on

this issue mainly on Facebook.

On the other two issues, there was more interaction on Twitter. The OKMD protest was initiated by news reports of the government decision to downsize the Office of Knowledge Management and Development, and online users and opinion leaders expressed their reactions and opinions on Twitter. Within a few days, government denied shutting down the organization and announced an audit of spending and review of performance before making further decisions on the organization's future plan.

The dengue fever campaign resulted from the death of a famous actor in Thailand. The online conversation tended to be more emotional and called on officials to take action on preventing dengue epidemics. Some also shared their own experience with dengue fever and losing loved ones to the disease.

TABLE II
TYPE OF CONTENT NARRATIVE

Type of content narrative	Bryde's Whales		Dengue Fever Campaign		OKMD Protest	
	FB	Twitter	FB	Twitter	FB	Twitter
Text	117	40	37	310	22	117
Share post	103	1	10	16	22	15
Share petition	33	6	0	0	2	11
Graphic	26	0	33	1	9	1
Photo	21	2	3	0	0	1
News coverage	17	27	13	73	15	118
Clip	3	0	2	0	0	0
Infographic	2	0	0	2	1	0

Table II shows the content narrative used in collective communication on the three cases. One post/tweet can contain items in more than one category of narrative style. On Facebook, online users use a greater variety of narrative content on Facebook.

Text is the most common narrative used overall to communicate on Facebook. Longer texts are used to give supporting information and ideas. Shorter texts are 'calls to action' such as 'please sign', 'please support' etc.; shorter texts are also used to express emotions related to the issues. Language use is informal, directly communicating ideas, with a persuasive vocabulary to engage others to participate in action. Some texts are quoted from opinions and information of others.

The second most common narrative is 'sharing others' posts'. People like sharing information and strong opinions about issues, and more importantly, when sharing content, most add messages to confirm their support or opposition to the issues. Posts that tend to be shared are: 1) explanations and in-depth background of issues; 2) opinions with reasonable supporting evidence; 3) graphics, photos and visual content are another key narrative element used by people who want to drive issues. To get attention from online users, visual content has a high impact. Most opinion leaders or people who post information about the issues will use visual content to engage other online users.

On Facebook, people also share online petitions – the most

commonly used platform is change.org. On issues where supporters want to drive change, online users mobilize participation via online petitions. Two cases used this method – Bryde’s Whales and OKMD Protest. This is an official way to raise support and send a message to officials or policy makers.

Narratives on Twitter based on the same hashtag are mainly text-based information and emotional expression. Tweets with text only are used to express feelings, give opinions, ask for information and tell personal experience related to the issues. If online users on Twitter want to give reliable information, they tweet links with captions. These results show that Facebook is more about community when driving social conversations about public issues, while Twitter tends to be used to exchange information and reactions. Both can create a buzz on social media and raise awareness on issues if enough people participate in collective communication, which happens quickly and spreads widely when online opinion leaders join conversations. Stories with strong evidence supporting issues drive engagement more than those containing personal opinion and emotional expression. "Calls to action" posts get higher shares because people know how to participate in the process of driving issues. Good storytellers are key persons in driving social conversations on public issues.

TABLE III
PURPOSES OF POSTS/TWEETS IN SOCIAL CONVERSATION

Topics	Bryde's Whales		Dengue Fever Campaign		OKMD Protest	
	FB	Twitter	FB	Twitter	FB	Twitter
Provision of information	48	31	38	99	34	139
Call to action	58	7	2	42	2	11
Background to movement	35	0	1	37	0	3
Appeal for participation	18	0	2	82	6	33
Critical question	2	0	1	82	36	108
Request for further information	0	0	0	32	2	13
Statement of support	2	0	8	11	1	2
Statement of achievement	72	5	0	5	1	0

Table III shows that the purposes of posts/tweets can vary depending on the objectives of the movement. One post/tweet can have multiple purposes of communication. Analysis of content in the chronological time frame shows development of issue awareness and action among online users. It shows that in the Bryde’s whales case the emphasis was on talking about the movement to protect Bryde’s whales. The provision of information and appeals about the danger of decreasing numbers of the species were main means to encourage participation in signing a petition to support animal protection. Content analysis of each post shows that collective action where people who share the same values encourage participation in the same issues is a key to driving social movements. This type of social conversation engages all parties to join and take action. There are also offline activities where opinion leaders have meetings with policy makers to find a solution. Officials are approached in a respectful manner with the aim of seeking agreement rather than creating

conflict and anger. The posts about offline activities and meeting with officials were published on the Facebook page of an influencer driving the campaign. Reaction towards these posts was positively support for the movement. Eventually, Bryde’s whales were declared a protected species in the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act 1992.

In the dengue fever campaign, people expressed emotions and exchanged information on dengue fever, their experience on the issue and information on the death of a Thai actor from the disease. Social conversations were driven beyond the actor’s death to ways to solving the dengue fever problem in Thailand. Interesting messages on social media included questions about the high impact and danger of dengue fever, since not many people know that it can cause loss of lives. After emotional concerns about dengue fever spread on Twitter and Facebook, doctors and websites posted information on it. This led to greater awareness and calls for campaigns, for officials and for society to co-operate on preventing epidemics. However, in this case, there was no specific call to action to encourage a collective movement. The social conversations merely raised awareness.

A conversation against the closure of the Office of Knowledge Management and Development (OKMD) was started by a social media influencer who leaked information on the decision by the government that they might consider the shutdown of OKMD, an organization which supports creativity and innovation in Thai society. The conversation focused on giving information on OKMD’s work and the disadvantages of the government shutting down the organization. People joined conversation to criticize the government decision that could affect society. The tone of conversation was angry and critical of the government. A call to action message occurred shortly after people started to complain. An online petition was set up at change.org for people to join in protecting OKMD from being abolished. This social conversation had only a few days of social media buzz. Finally, the government decided to step back and study the suitability of each public organization and order for a review of the budget and work plan. This case study shows that social conversations can get policy makers to listen to the public and change decisions.

TABLE IV
ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK BY PURPOSE OF POSTS/TWEETS

	Bryde's Whales		Dengue Fever		OKMD Protest	
	Com ment	Share	Com ment	Share	Com ment	Share
Provision of information	690	11116	3440	52645	861	11511
Call to action	831	8980	43	82	211	398
Campaign	486	5443	0	0	0	0
Appeal	600	4226	2	0	87	533
Critical question	49	843	0	0	469	1293
Statement of support	2	0	433	4378	94	1784
Statement of achievement	192	509	0	0	29	548

In order to estimate the engagement level of participation

on Facebook data, the number of Likes, Comments and Shares were collected. The figures show that people respond to conversations mostly by clicking ‘Like’ to express support for an agreement with information or opinions. Data on shares and comments show how people participate on issues. Table IV shows that people like to comment on posts that provide information. The cases of Bryde’s whales and the OKMD protest have clear and specific calls to action, and so comments and shares are also higher on posts that are calls to action and about the campaign. The dengue fever campaign conversations mainly concerned exchanges of information and expressions of feeling towards the issue, and comments are common on posts that provide information and express support.

A detailed analysis of comments and shares show that in the Bryde’s whales case study, people participated by expressing support for the campaign and asking others to join and support by commenting and sharing information. The comments on dengue fever focused on giving information on how to be safe from the disease and sharing experiences. The OKMD conversations started with a protest message, and so most comments concern criticisms of the government, information about how OKMD benefits society, and calls to action to protest the government decision. The comments and shares in the OKMD case study feature anger and conflict which tend to link the issues to political conflict in Thailand.

B. Media Coverage

News coverage data were collected from online news websites and television stations during the same period as social conversations on the case studies. Once conversations on social media start trending, online news websites pick up the social media user-generated content and report on it and will then expand the story following the social media conversation and attracting attention. Data of the three case studies shows that social media sparks outcry about issues and then mainstream coverage follows-up issues in detail. Television news follows online news, but also covers issues on social media. The results also show that after news is published online, more people will post links and share information from news sources again with a reaction message supporting and commenting on issues. This keeps the conversation going on social media and stories are developed in more meaningful details to drive action. Sometimes, there is in-depth news coverage moving the conversation to other angles or level of participation. People tend to share updated information and news coverage that gives further explanation of issues.

Table V data and analysis of the chronological timeline between social media conversation and media coverage shows that journalists tend to cover stories by expanding what has already appeared on social media by giving explanations and context of the issues. Journalists monitor online conversations and choose user-generated content related to the stories as elements of the news coverage narrative. The user-generated content that is most commonly used is information from online opinion leaders’ posts, pictures, clips and online users’

reactions to and opinions on the issues. If online users take different angles, journalists tend to include user-generated content and stories in their reports without further information. In contrast, if there is not much information online, journalists will gather more from different sources such as experts and officials.

TABLE V
 TYPE OF NEWS COVERAGE ON TELEVISION AND NEWS WEBSITE

Type of News Coverage	Bryde’s Whales		Dengue Fever		OKMD Protest	
	TV	Web	TV	Web	TV	Web
Quotations of online talk	0	4	1	1	3	8
Adding further information to social media stories taking the same angle	4	2	0	2	4	17
In-house coverage (using UGC)	13	14	28	26	3	2
Emphasis on emotional reaction rather than the facts	1	0	2	4	0	4
In-depth coverage	6	14	9	4	9	2

The data on news coverage on two platforms – television and website suggest that media coverage focuses on giving facts and expanding on online information. The media still plays a role of connecting online movements to society. These three case studies yield similar results in that the media tends to cover online movements by following issues unfolding online. Different comments can be made on each case study.

- 1) In social movements on issues where most people agree, such as environmental issues (the Bryde’s whales case in this study), the media is interested in covering movement activities, campaign information and achievements while giving context about the movement. Media coverage plays the role of giving sufficient information for people to make a decision to respond to calls to action such as signing petitions.
- 2) Where people are confused about the issues, social conversations are dominated by expressions of emotion and requests for information (the dengue fever case in this study), news organizations take the role of verifying facts. Journalists also try to give context and solutions in order to create understanding, raise awareness or encourage action to solve the problem.
- 3) If issues raised by online conversations focus on conflicts and disputes (the OKMD protest in this study), the media give space to different opinions to raise public debate. If the issue is related to government, some coverage investigates government actions and opposing political views.

C. Relationship between Online Conversations and News

A comparison of the frames of communication of media and online conversations can explain the relationship between the two in mobilizing social movements. The charts illustrate that media and online conversations use the same frames to communicate on the same issues. There is a correlation between topics in online talk and media reports. Stories developed by online users are picked up by media reports. The results show a close relationship and inter-media agenda

setting between online conversations and the media. Online users may raise an issue to gain a mass interest, while the media expand stories to the core of its value by giving context and up-to-date information, following the same frame as the online conversations. Then, the news coverage is seen by online users who share and comment on issues, providing continuous momentum for the issue to gain public attention.

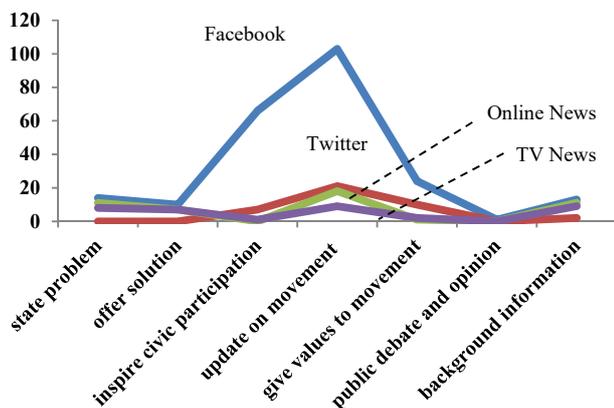


Fig. 1 Comparison of framing agenda of media and online conversations on the Bryde's whales case study

In the case of Bryde's whales, the main conversation occurs on Facebook where most content consisted of information about the movement and calls for civic participation in signing online petitions for official recognition of Bryde's whales as a protected species. As seen in Fig. 1, the media reported information about the movement and it happened along the development of issues and movement by online users. Journalists get up-to-date information and user-generated graphics on the danger faced by Bryde's whales to use as an important element, adding interviews with experts and officials to get more comprehensive coverage. The impact of this movement was that the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources proposed Bryde's whale be recognized as a protected species and communities were encouraged to help protect them.

In the case of the OKDM protest, conversation occurred mainly on Twitter with tweets expressing conflict, disagreement and anger. Online opinion makers played a role in giving reliable information and online users expressed reactions and opinions. The most common communication frames used by online users and the media were expression of opinion and explanation of context. Expressions of emotion among online users wanting to protect OKDM as an agency to promote creativity in society spread rapidly across Twitter and Facebook, and the media took up the issues in reports focusing on questioning the government decision, and some coverage found links to other cases of political conflict in Thailand. After a short period of social media conversations and media coverage on the issue, the government changed its decision and called for more research before further reforming the OKDM. These two cases are examples of social movements with clear goals which call for civic participation. The analysis

shows communication patterns that are designed to include online opinion leaders, online users, journalists and policy makers in the movement. Movements that have the goal of making change or stimulating action will focus on two main frames: calls for civic participation by giving sufficient and reliable information, and giving information of latest news and activities of the movement to share values and encourage support. Information and emotion materials are provided for people to make a decision to participate in the movement or its activities. This type of movement has set clear goals. The media tends to take up stories about a movement and campaign achievements and to provide a context for the issues

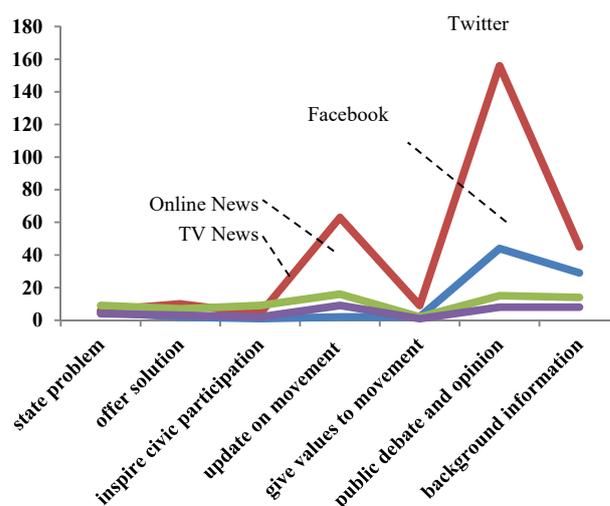


Fig. 2 Comparison of framing agenda of media and online conversations on the OKDM protest case study

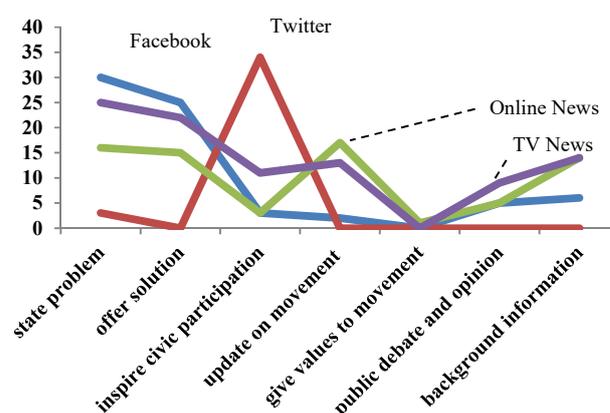


Fig. 3 Comparison of framing agenda of media and online conversations on the dengue fever campaign case study

The most common frame of communication in the dengue fever case study is statements of the problem of the disease in Thailand. After public sorrow over the death of a famous actor, people expressed feelings, shared their own experience of the disease and asked questions on how to prevent something like this from happening. Meanwhile, the media covered the dengue situation and number of patients in many

cities across country. This stimulated fearful and worried conversations as data shows that online users share news and express fear over the situation. Online users tried to find solutions and encouraged civic participation in getting rid of breeding sites for mosquitoes at home. Websites and opinion leaders on Facebook published information, which turned into an awareness campaign of online users sharing information. This was the first time dengue fever had been widely discussed and people felt that the issue was close to home and their lives and that everyone should stand up and help their communities. Collective feelings from uncertainty encouraged people to take collective action on issues. Content analysis of the texts showed that people talk about joining the dengue campaign and clean potential breeding sites at their home. Frames of communication to raise awareness focused on giving useful information, updating the situation and offering solutions to fight against the incident or how to protect one's self. The media played a role of explaining the context of stories and verifying sources of information to ease public worries, curiosity or fears.

A comparison of the online conversations and media coverage reveals that the media monitor and hear of news stories from collective conversations on social media. Journalists add more information from interviews and information on the context which gives a more comprehensive picture and can raise awareness in a mass audience. Collective conversations and action on social media encourage civic participation in powerful ways. The relationship between mainstream media and online users gives a voice to the public and spare media space to the issues raised by ordinary people. The power of people joining together can raise awareness and create change on issues impacting and affecting their lives. These two players – online users and journalists – are now in a tied relationship on agenda setting of public issues. Online conversations have potential to open debate, while news media bridge the stories to mass audiences to join and drive collective action or movements.

V. CONCLUSION

Social media is an important platform to mobilize social movements in a digital age and generate public debates that can encourage the media to pay attention and drive movements to achieve the goals of social change. Social media provides a platform for conversation, but the design of communication patterns to mobilize movements needs collective communication for people to share their collective experience and stimulate collective action. Storytelling and patterns of communication are important keys in building proximity to everyone's lives so people share values and want to participate in sharing, commenting and taking action on issues. Social conversations related to issues affecting people's lives can lead to public debate which is an important step toward mobilizing social movements.

If there is a call to action and clear goal of the movement, the synergy of mass media and engagement on social media mobilizes social movements. Communication on social issues should be a designed process and narrative to gain experience

and encourage feelings of participation because of shared values to achieve the goals of the movement. Content analysis reveals three steps in the process to drive social movements via online media.

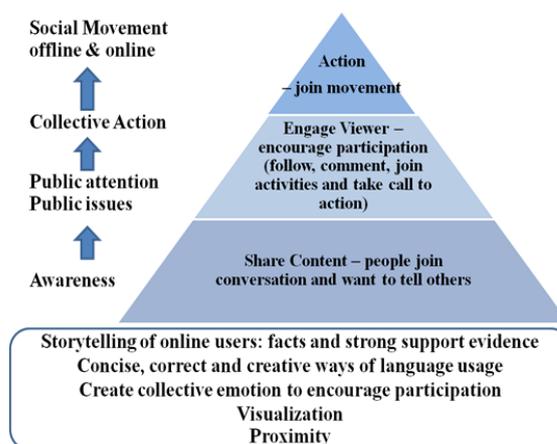


Fig. 4 Process of mobilizing social movements via social media

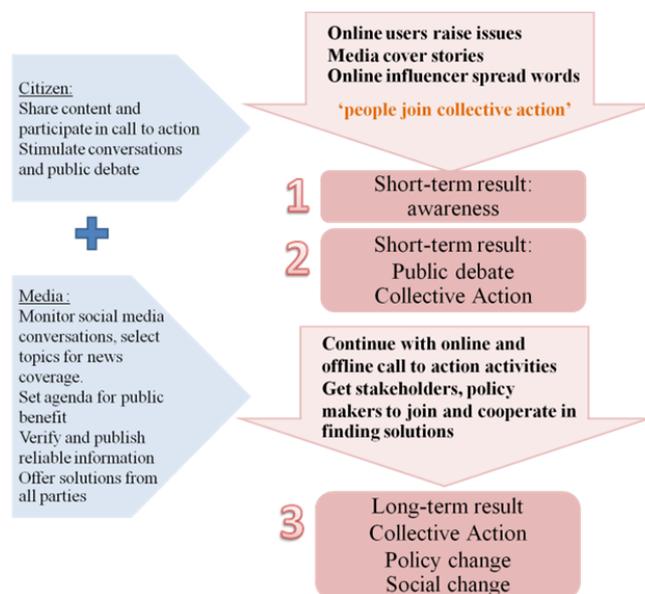


Fig. 5 Model of relationship between social media conversations and mainstream coverage to mobilize social movements

Fig. 4 outlines the process of social movement mobilization using social media. Online users who want to create movements must create content with good narratives – correct and concise facts with strong supporting evidence and a creative narrative, which can encourage a sense of proximity. When people feel an issue is important to them, a social media conversation begins. People will share content and join conversations, which helps raise awareness. Gaining public attention to make social conversations into public debates is the second step of engaging citizens. The engagement step requires participation, and so there should be a clear call to action or activities for people to join. Collective action in this step stimulates shared values within a group of participants. If

more stakeholders on an issue participate in collective action online and offline, the process moves to the next step of social movement, where people actively push toward the goal of the movement, for example, changing government policy or developing or changing something in society. This study also reveals that collective conversations on social media can stimulate public awareness and debate on important social issues on three levels, public awareness, public debate, and collective action towards policy and social change.

Social media conversations and mainstream news coverage can play a joint role in this process. Online users and online opinion leaders are able to raise topics and help to stimulate collective conversations. Debates and opinions on social media have some potential to raise public awareness in some situations, and when the media reports news, it validates and confirms the importance of the issues. It leads to another short-term result of public debate and collective action such as online petitions and campaigns.

If social conversations and collective action continue with online and offline activities and the movement can engage different stake holders in conversations and action to find acceptable solutions, then it is possible to achieve long-term results of policy change or social change.

In conclusion, social media conversations play a role in starting conversations and engaging people to drive issues. Meanwhile, online movements need media coverage to spread the word to the mass, to get policy-makers' attention, to connect the public to officials, to set a public agenda and to verify reliable information supporting public decisions. Communication designed to combine the two functions of online users and media can mobilize a social movement need to be research in further details to understand the process of cooperation between social media and mainstream in more cases. This is a starting point to as an overview of the relationship between social media and mainstream media professionals. Further research is suggested to examine the factors for the success and failure of mobilization to understand the pattern of new social movements driven by social media in various situations and circumstances. To understand this will show how to drive change in society when issues are ignored, and to benefit from the opportunities of a networked digital society.

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