


Chapter 17

The Use of Social Networks as a Tool in the Protests of Iranian People Against the Taliban Regime

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ABSTRACT

In September 2022, worldwide media were fulfilled of news about the terrifying death of a young woman called Mahsa Amini. She died in a hospital after being arrested and beaten by the Morality Police and it caused thousands of protests not only in Iran, but all around the world. The revolution that started on Iranian women fighting for their rights was an historical event that brought all Iranian women and men, who were against the regimen, together to protest. These events were shown in different social media sites such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, etc. So, everyone could know what was happening. Late in 2023, The European Parliament awarded Sakharov Prize posthumously to Mahsa Amini and the ‘Women, Life, and Freedom’ movement so the authors have created a proposal to show at schools the importance of this historical event and how to inform themselves by using social networks.

INTRODUCTION: THE MURDER OF MAHSA AMINI— PROBLEM OF GLOBAL DIMENSIONS

Since September 16, 2022, the media has been closely watching the social changes unfolding in Iranian society. On that day, the young Iranian woman Mahsa Amini died in a hospital after being arrested and beaten by the Morality Police for not wearing the hijab correctly (Beatrix, 2022). Not only the press

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and newspapers reflected the changes experienced, but also the social networks which, as we will see through this paper, have become an essential tool for the dissemination and disclosure of the protests. Not only in Iran, but in the rest of the world because it is crucial to understand the world and how interconnected problems are, as stated by Boix-Mansilla & Gardner (2007). Our current society has undergone profound changes in the last decade with the arrival of social networks and their almost daily use by a large part of the population.

Throughout our most recent history, it has been possible to understand how society has evolved in response to different social changes by adapting to the needs that have arisen. One of these changes is the use of new communicative strategies and how social movements are essential in social transformation (Pleyers and Benavides, 2019). For this reason, we are going to investigate about how social networks are being used in the protests, to inform about what is happening and how the Iranian society tries to coexist and move forward despite the conflict; thus, analyzing the social transformation that Iranian society has undergone recently. With this information, it would be easier to obtain data to spread what is happening around the world through a historical and sociological perspective which are crucial as explained by Gómez-Barreto et al., (2020) in their research about reflective learning through multicultural dimensions.

It is crucial to understand the development of this chapter as a teaching tool because, as it has been explained before, social media is used by children and teenagers from an early age. Young people are considered 'digital natives' but, even though this consideration is spread in society, they do not really know how to use or interpret all the information shown in their social media. Romero-López et al., (2022) explained the knowledge these new generations have regarding everything related to the internet and social media but also how unaware of all their dangers they are. For the reasons stated above, teachers must state in their methodologies the importance of globalization for interconnecting what is happening in the world to understand our current history and even the future events that might occur (Boix-Mansilla & Gardner, 2007) and how they can be critically informed by using social media.

Theoretical Framework

Recently, social networks and worldwide press have been showing the horror and desolation of civilian not only from the Iranian protest but from other social conflicts: videos, live broadcasts on different platforms and thousands of photos have flooded the social networks. As Della Porta & Mattoni (2014) have previously explained on their research, other social conflicts and protests have been spread all around the world by news and social networks too. This phenomenon is called transnational diffusion of protest and it is crucial to create mobilizations that can help to influence nations to create international policies to stop or to take part for solving the conflict (Della Porta & Mattoni, 2004).

With the passage of time and after different campaigns carried out by different Iranian activists and organizations, it has been possible to observe the ongoing struggle and social transformation after the brutal and tragic death of Mahsa Amini by the 'Morality Police'.

The 'Morality Police' is an institution created by the regime that has been punishing Iranian citizens for decades for not complying with the established dogmas. The news was fulfilled with news but later, nobody really knew outside Iran what happened or why; that is why the social networks became the most useful tool during this conflict to inform people outside Iran. Thanks to different posts, they were able to share what was happening and to make the voice of the Iranian women heard worldwide. Nashat (2021) research shows the importance of understanding how women influenced Iranian revolutions and how the civil population of the Middle East countries are evolving to fight against ancient religion traditions

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