

**How Does Social Media Affect The Freedom Of Press In Iran, Specifically With The
Women's Movement?**

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Introduction

In upcoming years social media has become gradually more prominent in our society, and not just as an online place for people to connect with one another. Social media not only provides a platform for people to speak openly, it allows news to be spread quicker and easier, as it is accessible to billions of people. In recent years we see social media being used to unveil news in real time and in some cases show the full story without edits rather than just snippets that are normally shown on the news. Iranian women have been fighting for their rights for many years now and have always been using social media as an outlet for recognition but in recent years social media has become crucial in their movement (Lamensch, 2022). As it has allowed a platform for more and more people to see what they are going through, therefore increase support in their movement. Social media is used in their movements to help create positive legal change for women in Iran. It allows for this movement to gain attention on a bigger scale rather than just within the country. This study will explore the influence social media has on the freedom of press in Iranian women's movements. Specifically this study will follow the use and effectiveness of the social apps, Instagram and TikTok, and analyze how helpful they are in these movements.

Purpose

In this study I aim to analyze the effect social media has on the women's movements in Iran. Social media is used constantly in these movements but is it the best form of communication with the public? When gathering research I found that social media is used to guide and aid women's movements in Iran, and in some cases has helped gain positive legal change for women in Iran. This study will use feminist criticism methods to gather data on the

effects of social media versus without the use of social media. My hypothesis is that: Social media has a positive effect on the women's movements in Iran. How does social media affect (influence) the freedom of press in Iran specifically with the women's Movement? Does social media give a significant contribution to the women's movement in Iran? I believe that we will find a correlation between the use of social media in women's movements in Iran and positive legal change. My thesis statement is, there is a correlation between positive legal change for women in Iran and the use of social media throughout the movements.

Research

In research done relating to the topic of the use of social media in the Iran women's movements it shows that in most cases social media had a positive effect towards gaining recognition and legal change. In a 2021 article by Daghigh et al. they write that women's rights were first advocated and fought for in 1905 and are still fighting for them today (Daghigh et al. p.231). However now they have the use of the internet and social media to help aid these movements. The internet and social media allows young people to create a platform where they can gain recognition and connect with others around the globe, gaining more attention to the issue at hand, and increasing support in their movements (Lamensch, 2022). In the research many journal articles were analyzed and provide information on social media being used in these movements. In the 2019 article by Willis it discusses the use of Twitter in the Iranian women's movement, and even mentions that the legal change that related to this movement was directly linked to the use of social media (Willis, 2019, p.148). Causation cannot be proven between the removal of stoning as a punishment but a clear correlation between the Twitter hashtag and the removal of stoning is present (Willis, 2019, p.148). Another article, by Rajabi in 2014 shows the

use of YouTube, a graphic video of members of the Iranian government shooting a peaceful protester was uploaded and gained global support, leading to widespread concern for women in Iran (Rajabi, 2014, p.16-19). Women face many battles in the struggle for democracy in Iran, including employment, education and the roles they play in society (Povey & Rostami-Povey, 2016, p.1) . Women not only utilized social media but also film. In a 2014 article by Antic they analyze a film used to portray unified women in the Green Movement to comment on Iranian cultural identity (Antic, 2014, p.1). However research shows that the Iranian government is using their power to decrease the amount of social media used in these movements (Ali and Fahmy, 2013, p.59). This limits the amount of recognition these movements are getting. Social media may not have created legal change but there is more optimism for the Iranian women now that the issue is more globally understood.

Theory and Methodology

Feminists criticism is an ideological method that seeks possibilities for change and strategies that can disrupt hegemonies in different ways. Early feminist criticism looks at artifacts that oppressed individuals and brings them into research on how these have shaped our beliefs and ideologies. The key objective is to decolonize minds or disconnect minds from the hegemonic ideas and ways of living (Foss, 2018, p.144). I will take this approach in my research and analyze the use of social media platforms like Instagram and Tiktok while identifying and exploring the strategies that are used in social media to disrupt hegemonies. To follow this method I will select an artifact, analyze it, formulate a research question and then write the essay (Foss, 2018, p.146). I will be utilizing critical theory in my research. Part of critical theory is to analyze power structures and critique how society can be transformed. This is a clear issue and

important in this study as power structures are a factor in the struggle for equality rights for women and hope for societal change over time.

Limitations

We are looking for results of things that will happen in the future for women's rights in Iran, as a result the main limitation to this study is the time it would take. Movements and legal change does not happen overnight, they take years to develop and create reliable data with results. With the immense amount of time this study may take, the women in Iran could be facing different problems by the time the research is done. This would make the study less conclusive and relevant when discussing social media and its effect on the women's movement in Iran.

Implications of This Research

This research on the overall use of social media in women's movements in Iran can aid these movements in gaining more positive change for women in Iran. If the research can show that social media is in fact helpful this can provide potential solutions for campaigning in social movements not only for women in Iran. To achieve ethical goals this study will take diverse samples of the use of social media. Ethics are extremely important in research, especially when dealing with social justice movements. Social justice movements were hugely important as they represent underrepresented groups. To reach these goals one will have to understand intersectionality and the impact this can have on the research done for this study.

Intersectionality is the intersection where different types of discrimination overlap and meet.

There are many layers to the category for women; race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality etc.

and this study will take this into account when studying the effect of social media on the freedom of the press of women's movements in Iran.

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