

**The Gen Z Activism in Nepal: A New Social Movement Perspective**

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**Abstract**

A social movement is an organized and collective effort by people aimed at bringing about or resisting social, political and cultural changes. It is characterized by a shared purpose, sustained collective action and the objective of influencing society and public policies. This manuscript analyzes the emergence of the Gen Z activism in Nepal from sociological perspective of new social movement theory. The main objective of the study is to examine the nature, ideological basis, organizational structure and social impact of the Gen Z movement. The research adopts a qualitative and descriptive design based on secondary sources, including sociological theories, academic articles, policy reports and published materials on digital activism. The study justifies the use of secondary data by emphasizing the exploratory nature of emerging Gen Z movement, where primary data remains limited and fragmented. Theoretical frameworks such as new social movement theory, the concept of generational consciousness and digital sociology are employed to interpret the phenomenon. The findings reveal that Gen Z youth in Nepal are increasingly challenging traditional party-centric politics by promoting issues such as identity, good governance, social justice and accountability through digital platforms. The non-leadership and network-based structures of these movements denote a decentralized and flexible form of mobilization, which enhances inclusivity but may weaken long-term organizational sustainability and institutional transformation. It offers new insight by linking Gen activism with broader transformations in democratic participation and digital political engagement in Nepal. However, the study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and the lack of empirical field-based evidence. Overall, it provides a theoretical foundation for future research and contributes to understanding Gen Z movements as a significant dimension of contemporary social change and democratic practice in Nepal.

*Keywords:* Gen Z movement, new social movement, digital activism, youth politics

## **1. Introduction**

A social movement is generally understood as a sustained and organized collective effort aimed at promoting or resisting social, political or cultural changes. Particularly, three basic components of social movements have been identified: networks of relations between a plurality of actors; collective identity; conflictual issues (Diani, 1992). In contemporary sociology, the concept has evolved to include decentralized, identity-driven and network-based forms of mobilization, often referred to as new social movement. Within this framework, the emergence of Gen Z activism in Nepal's contemporary socio-political context can be interpreted as more than a momentary expression of youth dissatisfaction or sporadic protest. The independent and unorganized political activism of the young generation, born in the digital age, technology friendly, familiar with global political consciousness, has further reinterpreted traditional political behavior, values, and citizen-state relations in a challenging way (Magar, 2025). Rather, it represents a deeper and evolving social process shaped by structural inequalities, changing political consciousness and digital transformation.

In various historical periods, different forms of inequality and injustice have acted as catalysts for youth mobilization. Nepal has witnessed significant strides in digital adoption in recent years, driven by increasing internet penetration, mobile connectivity, and the expansion of digital services (Shah et. al., 2025). In the case of Nepal, the widespread use of digital technology, increasing distrust of traditional political institutions and growing awareness of rights have contributed to the rise of new forms of collective identity and resistance among young people. It would be so early to conclude that there is a complete paradigm shift in the youth movement (Lamichhane, 2021). These dynamics have enabled Gen Z to engage in alternative modes of political participation that extend beyond conventional party politics. The movements made the youth the key political forces in struggles for democracy and institutional change (Adhikari, 2026). As such, it becomes analytically important to examine the Gen Z movement from a sociological perspective, not also as a restructuring of social relations, cultural values and power dynamics.

Digital platforms appear to have democratized cultural production (Magar D. P., 2026). Unlike traditional social movements, which largely focused on class struggle, economic redistribution and state-centered demands, emerging Gen Z movements in Nepal emphasize issues such as identity, inclusion, freedom of expression, digital access, good governance and social justice. To foster greater youth engagement, priorities should be focused on initiatives that increase youth representation and create inclusive governance mechanisms (Acharya, 2024). These

movements are characterized by decentralized, leaderless and network-based structures that facilitate flexible and inclusive participation. However, such organizational forms may also pose challenges in terms of long-term sustainability, institutional impact and coherent leadership. From a theoretical perspective, this transformation can be linked to the ideas of Alain Touraine, who emphasized the role of identity and culture in contemporary movements, Manuel Castells, who highlighted the significance of networked digital communication and Jurgen Habermas, who conceptualized the role of public discourse in democratic participation. The diversification, politicization of mass media within itself and also societal pressure created by mass media at the social level has caused changes in the social structure (Çöteli, 2018). In this sense, Gen Z activism in Nepal reflects a shift from hierarchical, party-led mobilization to more fluid, participatory and digitally mediated forms of engagement.

Despite the growing visibility of Gen Z activism, there remains a lack of systematic academic inquiry into its nature, ideological orientation and broader socio-political implications in Nepal. Therefore, this study seeks to address the following research question: How can Gen Z activism in Nepal be understood as a form of new social movement and what are its implications for democratic transformation and governance? By addressing this question, the study aims to contribute to the emerging discourse on youth politics, digital activism and social change in Nepal.

## **2. Review of Literature**

The concept of social movements has been interpreted differently across classical and contemporary sociological traditions. Classical theorists such as Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim provide foundational but contrasting perspectives. Marx conceptualized social movements primarily as class-based struggles rooted in economic exploitation and aimed at structural transformation of the capitalist system. In contrast, Weber emphasized the role of ideas, values and leadership in shaping collective action, while Durkheim focused on social solidarity and the ways collective consciousness sustains or disrupts social order. Although, these perspectives differ, they collectively highlight that social movements emerge from tensions within social structures; however, they remain largely centered on material interests, institutional power and formal organization.

In contrast, contemporary theorists of new social movements such as Alain Touraine and Jurgen Habermas, shift the analytical focus from class and economic conflict to culture, identity and communicative action. Touraine argues that modern movements are driven by struggles over cultural meaning and social identity rather than purely economic redistribution. Similarly, Habermas emphasizes the role of

the public sphere and communicative rationality, where citizens engage in discourse to challenge dominant power structures. These perspectives are further transformative role of digital networks in enabling decentralized, horizontal and leaderless forms of mobilization. Compared to classical theories, new social movement theory provides a more relevant framework for understanding contemporary, digitally mediated and identity-driven activism. Within this theoretical shift, the Gen Z movement can be conceptualized as a form of new social movement characterized by post-materialist values, decentralized organization and digitally networked activism. Unlike traditional movements focused on class struggle and state power, Gen Z activism emphasizes issues such as identity, inclusion, climate justice, gender equality, digital rights and participatory governance. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Discord, and Facebook facilitate rapid mobilization, enabling flexible and often leaderless forms of collective action. This transformation indicates a shift from hierarchical, party-based political participation to issue-driven, hybrid forms of engagement that combine online and offline activism.

Empirically, emerging studies on youth activism in Nepal suggest that Gen Z engagement reflects growing dissatisfaction with traditional political institutions, governance failures and limited opportunities for meaningful participation. At the same time, these movements demonstrate new forms of citizenship that are expressive, participatory and technologically mediated. However, the decentralized and leaderless nature of such movements also raises critical concerns regarding their long-term sustainability, institutional impact and capacity to produce structural change. Despite the increasing visibility of Gen Z activism, the existing literature remains fragmented and largely descriptive, with limited efforts to integrate classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives in the context of Nepal. Therefore, this study operationalizes Gen Z activism along three key dimensions: (1) conceptual-as an identity-driven and post-materialist form of collective action, (2) theoretical-as situated within new social movement and network society frameworks and (3) empirical- as manifested through digital activism, decentralized organization and issue-based mobilization in Nepal. By doing so, the study seeks to bridge the gap between theory and empirical reality and provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z movements as an emerging force in Nepal's socio-political transformation.

## **2.1 Development of Sociological Debate on Social Movements**

The study of social movements has long been a central topic in sociology. Early sociological approaches focused mainly on class struggle, economic exploitation,

and the transfer of power. The New Class that eventually does come to power will have a sense of agency, a position of structural power and be conscious of itself as a class, (Cormier, 2005, p. 3). Marx interpreted social movements as the development of class structures and historical struggles against capitalist exploitation. According to this approach, movements are guided by the relations of production and the economic structure. Similarly, Max Weber attempted to understand movements in a multidimensional way through the concepts of power, legitimacy, and social action. Although these classical approaches explain movements as the result of structural inequalities and power struggles, they only include cultural and identity-based aspects to a limited extent. The Durkheimian tradition seems to explain social movements by linking them to social cohesion, moral crisis, and anomie. The view that the imbalance that arises when social norms weaken gives rise to movements is central here. However, while these classical approaches help to understand movements in modern industrial societies, they do not seem to explain post-industrial, digital, and identity-based movements.

## **2.2 New Social Movement Theory**

After the 1970s, new social movement theories developed in European sociology brought a new turn to the study of social movements. In the new movements, therefore, identity becomes the emblem of group or individual particularity (Vahabzadeh, 2001, p. 620). Scholars such as Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci, and Jürgen Habermas came to analyze movements not simply as economic or class struggles but as politics of cultural meaning, identity, and lifestyle. Touraine's new social movement theory was formed in the heat of the May 1968 events in France and was influenced by his own engagement in these events, (Waters, 2008). According to Touraine, new social movements are more concerned with cultural dominance and social meaning-making than with the control of production.

Alberto Melucci (1980) has interpreted movements as processes of network, symbol and collective identity construction rather than permanent organizations. This perspective provides a more theoretical basis for understanding leaderless, decentralized and temporary movements. Habermas's concept of the public sphere, highlighting the role of civil society and communication processes, claims that new movements develop outside the state and the market. It has also received detailed critique and generated extremely productive discussions of liberal democracy, civil society, public life, social changes in the twentieth century, and other issue (Kellner, 2014) . Since the gender movement emerged with these characteristics; network-based, identity-centered and cultural resistance.

### **2.3 Generational Analysis and Karl Mannheim's Perspective**

The sociological phenomenon of generations is ultimately based on the biological rhythm of birth and death (Mannheim, 2009, p. 168). To properly understand the Gen Z movement, it is essential to analyze the generation as a sociological category. Karl Mannheim has defined the generation not only as a biological age group but also as a social consciousness formed by shared historical experiences. His argument that generations raised in the same historical-political context develop similar values, aspirations, and resistance behaviors is clearly visible in the Gen Z movement.

### **2.4 Digital Sociology and Network Movement**

Manuel Castells has described modern movements as a product of the network society. According to him, digital media have redefined the structures of power, information, and resistance. Now in the social and political movements, observers find diverse changes in terms of language, performance, and ideology. Social media has further challenged traditional concepts of organization, leadership, and time and space. It is particularly important in societies that are in the process of transformation, in a globalized world (Tymoshenko, 2022, p. 9). In Nepal, the Gen Z movement seems to be organized, promoted, and even legitimized through social media.

Studies in digital sociology have shown that online space is not only a place of reflection but also a place of political socialization and the creation of collective consciousness. Hashtag activism, meme culture, and viral discourse have served to bind young people into a common identity. In this context, the Gen Z movement can be seen as an extension of the digital public sphere.

### **2.5 Existing Studies on Social Movements in Nepal**

Most studies on social movements in Nepal have focused on caste movements, people's movements, Madhes movements, women's movements, and indigenous tribal movements. These studies have highlighted state-society relations, inclusivity, and identity politics, but most of the literature seems to consider youth as only supporting actors. In Nepal, the size of various ethnic/caste groups in the total population was hardly known before 1990 despite Nepal being a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural country, (Upadhyay, 2013, p. 65). Nepal is a tapestry of more than a hundred different castes and ethnic groups, like about eight dozen linguistic and various regional groups, and many of these groups, they are now becoming politically active.

The social movements still face grave challenges, the most serious of which is the current upsurge of conservative resistance to inclusion and equality (Tamang, 2017, p. 106). Although, some recent studies have raised the issue of youth political participation, unemployment, and migration, there is very little literature that analyzes Gen Z as an independent social movement in depth. This highlights a clear literary gap in the current study.

## **2.6 Debate on Power, State, and Legitimacy**

According to the Weberian perspective, movements are the result of a legitimacy crisis. In the context of Nepal, distrust of the governance system, corruption, and policy failures seem to question the legitimacy of the state. Gramsci's concept of hegemony highlights the ideological struggle between the state and civil society. Institutions within civil society, such as the media, education, and religious organizations, play a significant role in shaping public consciousness and promoting the hegemony of the ruling class (Ali et. al., 2025, p. 155). The Gen Z movement can also be understood as a counter-hegemonic resistance against hegemonic politics.

Although the literature as a whole, highlights the structural, cultural, and digital dimensions of social movements, studies that analyze Nepal's Gen Z movement within the overall sociological framework of new social movements are rare. In addition, attempts to study digital technology, generational consciousness, and power relations in an integrated manner are limited. This study aims to address this gap. This literature review has shown that the combination of new social movement theory, generational analysis, and digital sociology provides a framework capable of understanding Nepal's Gen Z movement in a deep sociological way. While the existing literature provides a foundation, the Gen Z movement appears to require a reinterpretation in the specific Nepali context, which this study attempts to address.

## **3. Methodology**

This manuscript adopts a qualitative research design to analyze Nepal's Gen Z movement as a new social movement from a sociological perspective. A qualitative approach is appropriate because this research seeks to explain the meanings, narratives, ideological orientations, and patterns of digital activism rather than qualitatively measuring variables. Since the study focuses on textual, visual, and discursive materials available on published and digital platforms, a qualitative design allows for in-depth interpretive and contextual analysis.

This research is based entirely on secondary sources, as its purpose is theoretical and analytical rather than empirical field-based research. The use of secondary materials here is justified because the Gen Z movement in Nepal has already generated considerable academic discussion, media stories, policy commentaries, and digital content, which provides rich data for sociological interpretation. Relying on secondary sources enables the study to situate the movement within broader theoretical frameworks such as new social movement theory, generational analysis, and power and identity perspectives.

This study using entirely secondary sources such as journal articles, sociological theory books, working papers, policy analysis reports, and published research on youth politics, social movements, and digital activism in Nepal. These materials were selected from databases such as NepJOL, Google Scholars, university journals and other recognized academic repositories. This study uses thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis to analyze the data. The analysis is applied to examine how language, narrative, and digital expression construct political meaning and collective identity. By triangulating multiple scholarly sources and interpreting them through established sociological theories, the study further strengthens analytical depth, conceptual clarity, and academic rigor.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

The results of this study confirm the emerging Generation Z movement in Nepal as an important expression of contemporary new social movements. The analysis based on existing research in secondary sources, media analysis and theoretical frameworks shows that the Gen Z movement has adopted different strategies, expressions and forms of participation than traditional party-centered and organizationally rigid movements. Likewise, Magar argues (2025), Moving away from traditional leader-oriented, party-centered, and structurally complex political practices, the Gen Z movement has given rise to a new political consciousness that promotes issue-centered, transparency-oriented, and ethical leadership (p.113). Rapid mobilization through digital platforms, horizontal leadership structures and issue-focused temporary coalitions have emerged as key features of this movement. The results presented in this section are discussed in relation to new social movement theories, political opportunity structures, and cultural identity debates, which highlight the complex interrelationships between Nepal's social structure, generational consciousness and contemporary democratic practices.

#### 4.1 Social Participation of the Gen Z Movement

The overall analysis of the secondary sources of the study, including journal articles, media analysis, policy reports, etc., shows that the youth participating in the Gen Z movement are mainly concentrated in the 18-29 age group. This new generation, raised under the influence of social media, digital technology, and global values, is expressing its dissatisfaction with the traditional parties through both street protests and digital movements (Magar, 2025). In this, the numerical presence of youth from urban and semi-urban areas is seen to be higher. With the expansion of access to digital networks, rural youth also seem to be ideologically connected to the movement. As indicated by the literature, the educational background of the participants is relatively high. University students, recent graduates, and youth involved in temporary and informal employment are seen at the forefront of the movement. This provides ample grounds to interpret the Gen Z movement as a social expression of 'Educated but Precarious Youth'. Nowadays the focus of the media turns towards the youth, newer and newer “generations” are discovered and the media write about their “fantastic” traits (Töröcsik et. al., 2015).

From a social class perspective, the movement is predominantly dominated by the urban middle class, but it is not entirely class-specific. However, their visibility in leadership and public discourse is comparatively low. This indicates that there is a problem of unequal social capital and representation within the Gen Z movement as well. In this context, Bourdieu's concept of social capital (1986) seems relevant where youth with cultural and digital capital are at the forefront of controlling the discourse of the movement.

**Table 1**

*The nature of the youth participating in the movement*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Feature</b>
Age group	18-29 years
Geographical areas	Urban, semi-urban and rural
Educational condition	University's students, bachelor
Class background	Mainly: medium class, divers social groups
Employment condition	Un-employee, informal jobs

*Note:* Based on secondary sources

## **4.2 The Main Issues and Demands of the Movement**

When analyzing the demands of the Gen Z movement, it is seen that all three dimensions are combined. Although unemployment, lack of opportunities, corruption and state inaction are central issues of the movement, these demands are not limited to material amenities. What the literature shows is that the core voice of the movement is connected to dignity, identity and voice. In this sense, the Gen Z movement should not be understood as a result of economic dissatisfaction but as a cultural and symbolic resistance.

According to the new social movement theory, modern movements tend to focus on the politics of lifestyle, identity and cultural values. Like all new social movement theory, this version has a model of the societal totality in which new social movements arise, but this version is likely to emphasize the (advanced) capitalist nature of that totality over any other designation (Buechler, 1995, p. 457). The slogans used in the Gen Z movement, digital symbols such as hashtags, memes and public performance styles further confirm this fact. These practices have made the question of state intervention in the daily lives of young people, digital freedom and the right to expression central issues.

## **4.3 Organizational Structure: Leaderless and Network-Based**

The results of the study show that the Nepali movement does not have a clear formal leadership, membership or organizational structure. The movement is mainly organized through social media and informal networks. They employed online discussion forums, prototype blogs, email lists, instant messaging, online donations and volunteer audio and video to disseminate information but also to organize their activities and demonstrate a participatory ethos (Tsatsou, 2018). According to Melukki's concept of collective identity, such a movement is based on shared feelings, symbols and temporary unity more than permanent organizations. The gendered movement fits this characteristic well.

However, although the leaderless nature seems to have made the movement flexible and inclusive, it has also created certain limits in its ability to create long-term strategies and policy pressure. The literature also shows that although the demands of the movement are clear, the mechanisms to transform them into institutional politics are very weak. This also highlights the institutionalization dilemma of new social movements.

#### 4.4 Digital Media and the Reconstruction of the Public Sphere

According to Castells's network society theory, both power and resistance are conducted through information networks. In Nepal, the Gen Z movement has played a significant role in the creation of emotional solidarity and collective identity through platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and X. Through these platforms, the youths are able to raise their voices, disseminate information, and plan protests or advocacy campaigns (Bukhari, 2025, p. 2).

In this context, Habermas' concept of the public sphere seems to need to be redefined. The Gen Z movement has created a digital public sphere that is different from the traditional public sphere. Through it, discourse spreads quickly but also changes quickly. However, it has expanded democratic participation, and challenges such as misinformation, ephemeral activism, and the digital divide have emerged.

**Table 2**

*The role of digital media in the Gen Z movement*

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Major Characteristics</b>
Organization	Informal, network-based
Communication	Social media, hashtag etc.
Participation	Fast, extensive but temporary
Impact	Expand public consultation
Challenge	Misinformation, the digital divide

*Note:* Author's development.

#### 4.5 Generational Consciousness and Political Socialization

Mannheim's concept of generation as social location provides theoretical clarity for understanding the Gen Z movement. The results of the study show that the Gen Z generation has experienced a different political socialization from previous generations. They are more influenced by digital information, global movements, and online discourse than by direct experience of armed conflict and mass movements. Discussants are representatives of governments, non-governmental agencies, the private sector, civil society, the mass media and the academy (Martin,

2013, p. 275). This has made their political language, symbols, and expectations different.

This generational awareness has been found to increase distrust of political parties, a critical view of the state, and an attraction to alternative political practices. However, it also seems to be accompanied by a reluctance to build long-term organizations, which raises questions about the sustainability of the movement.

#### **4.6 State Response and Legitimacy Crisis**

From the perspective of Weberian legitimacy theory, the Gen Z movement is a social manifestation of the legitimacy crisis of the state. Generation Z has emerged as a formidable, if paradoxical, protagonist in the drama of contemporary global change (Sangwa, 2025). The available literature shows that the state's response to the movement has often been reactive and controlling, sometimes dialogue, sometimes repression. This seems to create an environment of further distrust among the youth.

According to Gramsci's concept of hegemony, when the state fails to build consensus within civil society, counter-hegemonic movements arise. Gramsci's hegemony hinges on the production of active consent through cultural and ideological leadership, so when that consent fractures, emerging identities like those shaping Gen Z political consciousness, can generate counter-hegemonic pressures rather than immediate structural rupture. The Gen Z movement reflects this early-stage contestation: it challenges dominant narratives and exposes cracks in legitimacy, but remains largely situated within civil society rather than organized into durable institutional powers. As a result, it exemplifies a pre-institutional phase of counter-hegemony, where identity construction and dissent are visible, yet insufficiently consolidated to reconfigure the hegemonic order itself. Seen in this light, hegemony involves active consent and approval on the part of the ruled. Gramsci was already aware of the constructiveness of identities, (Wullweber, 2019). The Gen Z movement can be understood as a counter-hegemonic exercise against the current political hegemonic structure. However, it has not yet transformed into an institutional challenge.

#### **4.7 Social Inclusion and Internal Inequality**

While the Gen Z movement appears to be inclusive and open, studies show that it also contains racial, gender, and class inequalities. The apparent inclusivity of the Gen Z movement masks an internal stratification where formal openness coexists with unequal access to visibility, leadership and agenda-setting power; this reflects

how entrenched social hierarchies, gendered authority, class privilege and racial positioning, quietly reorganize themselves within new participatory spaces rather than disappearing. The dominance of men in leadership and the relative silence of rural and marginalized youth, shaped in part by unequal digital access, indicate that what looks like horizontal mobilization is still mediated by material and cultural capital, reproducing asymmetries in who gets heard and who shapes the movement's direction. Consequently, the movement illustrates a classic tension in social movement theory: counter-hegemonic energy can challenge external power structures while simultaneously mirroring them internally, limiting its capacity to function as a genuinely egalitarian alternative. While women's participation is significant, leadership and public representation are dominated by men. Similarly, the voices of young people from rural and marginalized communities appear weak due to limited digital access. This provides grounds for not considering the Gen Z movement as a fully egalitarian movement, and the literature has shown the risk of old social structures being reproduced within new social movements.

**Table 3**

*Achievements and limitations of the Gen Z movement*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Limitation</b>
Participation	Increase youth activism	Temporary attachment
Discussion	The emergence of a new issue	Weak in policy transformation
Organization	Flexible network	Lack of long-term structure
Inclusivity	Open participation	Internal inequality

*Note:* Author's development.

#### **4.8 Gen Z as a New Social Movement**

Overall, the results of the study confirm that the Gen Z movement in Nepal bears the key characteristics of a new social movement. It is identity-centered, network-based, cultural and symbolic resistance. This movement has presented a social practice that is different from traditional class-based and party-based movements. In addition, questions of the sustainability, policy impact and institutional transformation of the movement are still open. This portrays the Gen Z movement

as a ‘potentially transformative but structurally fragile’ social movement. Sociologically, this movement is an important sign of the new political-social consciousness being generated in Nepal. Which has opened the door to redefining future democratic practices. This section has shown that the Gen Z movement in Nepal is a new social movement born from the interaction of social structure, generational consciousness and digital technology. It has directed the social role of youth, state-society relations and public discourse in new directions. Although limitations exist, the Gen Z movement has clearly highlighted the potential for long-term social transformation in Nepali society.

## **5. Conclusion**

This manuscript sociologically interprets the Gen Z movement in Nepal through the lens of new social movement theory, demonstrating a clear shift from class-based and party-centered mobilization toward identity-driven, culturally mediated and digitally networked forms of collective action. In line with the theoretical insights of Alain Touraine and Jürgen Habermas, the findings highlight the centrality of communicative action, decentralized organization and the expansion of a digitally mediated public sphere in shaping contemporary youth politics. The movement reflects a post-material orientation in which symbolic resistance, identity construction and networked participation redefine youth agency within Nepali society. However, the study moves beyond mere theoretical alignment by identifying a critical tension within such movements: while decentralized and leaderless structures enhance flexibility and inclusivity at the level of participation, they simultaneously constrain institutional consolidation and long-term policy influences. This reveals a gap between cultural-symbolic disruption and structural transformation, suggesting that digitally mediated counter-publics alone are insufficient for sustained political changes. Furthermore, persistent internal inequalities, particularly along gender, class and rural–urban lines, indicate that the movement reproduces elements of the very social hierarchies it seeks to challenge, thereby limiting its claim to full egalitarianism.

Theoretically, this study contributes by extending new social movement theory into the context of a Global South democracy, showing how digital infrastructures and uneven access to them reshape the dynamics of communicative action and collective identity formations. It argues that in such contexts, networked movement must be understood not only as spaces of resistance but also as sites where structural inequalities are reconfigured rather than eliminated. Future research should focus on how such movements can transition from digitally driven mobilization to institutional engagement, particularly by examining pathways for

leadership formation, policy intervention and organizational sustainability. Longitudinal and comparative studies would be especially valuable in assessing whether and how these movements evolve into durable political actors capable of influencing governance and democratic consolidations.

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