A=A: A Change in Social Movement Engagement and Leadership Should Equal a Change in Civic Education

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A=A: A CHANGE IN SOCIAL MOVEMENT ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SHOULD EQUAL A CHANGE IN CIVIC EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

It seems as if almost everything in our world has changed with the introduction of the internet, personal computers, iPhones, and social media. We write emails instead of letters. We listen to podcasts and read articles online instead of buying a newspaper. Presidents communicate with the world on Twitter. The way we engage with politics has entirely changed. Yet, we are still going about civic education in schools the same way, teaching students to give speeches in city council meetings, write letters to their representative, and find current events from traditional news sources. This study offers new statistical evidence that the way people interact with social movements, how they rise to lead them, and who it is that gets to lead has all started to change in correlation with onset of widespread social media use. This study looks at the socioeconomic status (i.e., a combination of their education, job prestige, and income) of the leaders of social movements, showing that on average their status has lowered since politics has moved to be increasingly conducted online. We are seeing a wider age-range in social movement leadership as leaders operate behind screens. This study also looks at two case studies to decipher the differences between movements that started before social media and movements that began after the most common platforms were already in place. The change is happening, and it’s time it reached our schools as well.
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A=A: A Change in Social Movement Engagement and Leadership Should Equal a Change in Civic Education

1. Introduction:

So much has changed over the last 50 years. Telephones are cordless; cars are electric, smart houses can talk; groceries are delivered; most people carry computers in their pockets; news stations have all but abandoned traditional print news in favor of websites and podcasts. Presidents communicate with the world on Twitter. Politics has gone from a topic too impolite for the dinner table and “not good business” to something more closely resembling a sports match. Everyone chooses their favorite side, discusses who they think will win, cheers when they score a point, boos the other team when it’s reversed, and remains loyal even after a bad game or a terrible season. It seems now to be as common to fly a hateful or supportive political flag as it is to wear a team jersey. People create, share, like, dislike, retweet, and cancel posts, tweets, memes, gifs, and tik tok videos to show their support for their “team.” These actions revolve around a set of verbs and nouns that either didn’t exist or whose definition has radically changed over the past 16 years. It seems as if almost everything in our world and how we do politics has change, except how we teach civics.

Civic engagement used to look like people reading the newspaper, going to town hall meetings, writing letters to their local representatives, and running for office (which involved traveling and giving speeches). The way we taught civics looked very much the same. Students were asked to read about current events, engage in polite public debates, practice writing professional letters to their representatives, and give speeches about political topics.
Today civic engagement is more about people scrolling through social media to find out about an action, plan, or controversy that they then react to on social media, where all of their friends, family, and distant acquaintances can see. Instead of handing out flyers about an event or an issue they want to draw attention to, people will create posts, pages, Facebook events, or hashtags to spread the word. The problem is that civic education hasn’t changed to reflect this new form of civic engagement. It is still about having polite, mediated debates, writing papers, giving speeches, and finding current events from traditional news outlets.

The catalyst for these changes is social media. Social media is the new political engagement platform (González-Bailón, Borge-Holthoefer, Rivero, & Moreno). To demonstrate the problem, this paper will look specifically at how people start and engage with social movements. The average socioeconomic status of the leaders of social movements has lowered since the onset of social media. In order to be able to best engage in politics, we need to be teaching students in ways that reflect what they actually see happening in the world around them. We need to prepare them for the ways they themselves are most likely to engage with politics.

To do this, we will first look at two case studies comparing and contrasting the old and new forms of civic engagement. Then we will look at what contemporary scholars have to say on the topic. Next, new statistics will be introduced, illuminating the shift in who is able to control and influence politics (specifically social movements).

2. Traditional Case Study:
We will look first at a case study of a social movement that occurred before the onset of social media. We will look at who came to power and how, as well as how people discovered and joined the movement. We will be looking at the Warsaw Uprising of WWII as its leader, Tadeusz Komorowski, came to power in a very traditional way. The uprising museum in Warsaw has made public transcriptions of interviews with hundreds of surviving rank and file members of the uprising.

There is mild debate about who is responsible for the decision to start the uprising, but it is clear that Tadeusz “Bór” Komorowski issued and implemented the official order and led the troops (Komorowski). Komorowski was born in 1895 in a polish province of Austria-Hungary on a family estate that he was expected to inherit which, at the time, belonged to his Baroness aunt (Komorowski, xiii). He had a family history of insurgency and always had his sights set on the military, growing through the ranks as he grew with age (Komorowski, xiii). Komorowski graduated from the Franz Jósef Militar-Akademie in Vienna as a cavalry cadet. He became a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Mounted Rifles during WWI, fighting on the Italian and Russian fronts. He led the 12th cavalry division of the Polish forces against a Soviet invasion in 1920, just two years after Poland gained its independence from Russia, Germany, and Austria. In 1923, he rose to the rank of Major and the following year represented Poland in the Olympics as a member of their equestrian team. He was appointed Deputy Commander of the 9th lancers and shortly thereafter obtained full command. Komorowski became a Lieutenant-Colonel in 1929 and a full colonel in 1933, adding up to a rather impressive military career before the breakout of WWII. By this time, Tadeusz Komorowski had earned a good deal of status through a variety of opportunities. He was a respected, recognized, and notable figure long before he became involved with the Warsaw Uprising.
After WWII broke out, Komorowski became separated from his men at some point on his trek between Lublin and Krakow. He hoped to cross the border, head to France and join the remnants of the Polish army fighting abroad. He was being aided in his escape by a Mr. Surzycki who mentioned to him that instead of going abroad, he ought to consider staying. A resistance movement had risen, led by one Colonel Elper. Elper, however, was being hounded by the Gestapo and would have to leave the country. Surzycki suggested that Komorowski take over the underground and fight the Germans from within. Komorowski agreed, was promoted to Brigadier General, and put over the Krakow-Silesia area (Komorowski, 19-20). His command grew until he was responsible for the entire Polish underground army, whose eventual goal was to stage an uprising and take back control of the country and aid the Allies.

Komorowski rose through the ranks in a more-or-less traditional manner. He was a military commander who was promoted due to his length of service and proven tactical ability. The way he heard about and joined the underground is a classic story repeated time and again throughout generations of social movements. He was told secretly by someone who trusted him.

As mentioned, Poland’s Warsaw Uprising Museum has a vast collection of interviews with surviving members of the insurrection. A study of a random selection of these interviews showed that most young members joined because they overheard family members talking about it, they heard about it from trusted friends, or they joined up after it started by walking to a sign-up station in territory occupied by the insurgents. Jadwiga Wiśniewska, code name “Śroka,” heard her father and brothers talking about what time the uprising was to start, so she snuck out with a group of her girl scout friends who were to deliver a message, got caught in the middle of the action, and became a liaison (“Jadwiga”).
Józef Podlaski, code name “Małpka,” knew about the underground before the uprising because they had a front shop across the street from his vegetable stand. However, he didn’t join up until after the fighting broke out. Then he went with his brother and some friends to a hospital where people were joining (“Józef”). Zbigniew Pec, code name, “Lew,” had a father in the Armia Krajowa. His father had frequent meetings in their home. During one such meeting, Zbigniew overheard his father tell some men when, where, and how to swear into the Home Army. Zbigniew and his friends took the oath before the end of the school year (“Zbigniew”). Wiktor Abrahamer, code name, “Grom,” was a Jew in hiding when the fighting broke out. He immediately wanted to fight, so he went to join. Since he was 15, they asked him if he wanted to fight or be a liaison. Since he wasn’t a very good shot, he chose to be a liaison (“Wiktor”). Andrzej Dławichowski, code name “Andrzej,” had a father and an older brother who fought with the underground from the beginning (his dad was friends with some of the original organizers). Andrzej wasn’t allowed to join because he was too young. Once the uprising was in full swing, he and a friend went down and lied about their age to sign-up with a company (“Andrzej”).

Word spread slowly at first because members could only tell those they trusted for fear of being found out. News spread by word of mouth from person to person. Commands got bungled up. The lives of hundreds of liaisons were put in danger to deliver commands and reports. The original outbreak was a mass of confusion as Colonel Antoni Chruściel ordered mobilization while General Komorowski canceled his orders, leading to mass confusion. The initial coded command was ready to deliver on August 1st at 8:00 p.m., but wasn’t issued until the next day, because the liaisons couldn’t go out after curfew to deliver it (Before). Such a complex, secretive system is not easy for a layman to organize or an outsider to rise to the top of.
3. Contemporary Example:

Next, we will look at a case study of a social movement that occurred after the onset of social media. We will again focus on who came to power and how, as well as how people discovered and joined the movement. This time we will be looking at Greta Thunberg’s #Schoolstrike4clime and #FridaysforFuture climate change movement. We will be looking at this movement because Greta got the lowest socioeconomic status score of all the leaders selected for the statistical part of this study (to come later) and because she utilizes social media to boost participation in and awareness of her cause, making her a good contrast.

Greta began to be concerned about the climate after watching a film about drowning polar bears in school. For years she was depressed and anxious to the point of not eating or speaking because she was so upset by global warming. When she was 15, she decided to do something about it. She decided to go on a strike from school to sit in front of the Swedish parliament building, hoping that this would raise awareness and force to upcoming elections to focus on the environment as a key issue (I am). It didn’t work. The elections came and politicians emphasizing climate and the environment were soundly beaten. Not giving up, Greta switched her focus to weekly strikes pushing for the Swedish government to come in line with the Paris Agreement. Those weekly strikes continue, but their focus has broadened. Not only do Greta and her followers want Sweden to come into line, but they want the whole world to start living sustainably and stop greenhouse gas emissions (Heidrich and Nakonieczna-Bartosiewicz, 6).

A study of Greta’s social media shows her posting pictures at every strike she attends, starting with the first strike on August 20, 2018 (Thunberg ‘Vi Barn’). The very next day she was joined by at least
9 other people, started responding to strong hate speech, and invited others to join her (Thunberg ‘Några Bilder’, Thunberg ‘Skolstrejk Dag’). She continued to invite others with nearly every subsequent post. She used her Instagram account to post about times and locations of strikes as well as to share pictures and stories as people started striking in other locations (Thunberg ‘Vi Har,’ Thunberg ‘Bild Från’). The movement became international after 13 days with support coming from Rome and the Netherlands. This is when the real power of social media starts to show. Greta did not know the people supporting her and joining her strike in Rome or the Netherlands (Thunberg ‘Bild Från,’ Thunberg ‘KLIMATSTREJK’). These people heard about her movement and decided to join. The algorithms behind social media don’t just connect people who know each other, they connect people who like the same things and have the same ideas across the world (The Social). People who have never met before and probably never would meet due to barriers such as distance, cultural barriers, and age differences are suggested to each other as possible friends by complex algorithms. Stories and ideas are spread to people statistically inclined to interact with them. Time and effort spent on people who won’t care is mitigated by these algorithms, making ideas spread like lightning. As the movement expanded, Greta began to share news stories and articles (Thunberg ‘Det Här,’ Thunberg ‘Idag Är’). Within the first three weeks, she also promoted a charity concert held in support of climate, the school strike, and an upcoming climate march (Thunberg ‘Imorgon Är’).

It seems Greta must have recognized the influence and importance of social media to some extent, because she starts posting on Twitter by September 7, 2018 (Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Twitter: @GretaThunberg’). Just over a month after her initial protest, Greta was posting about strikes in 12 cities across 7 countries and 3 continents. Over that same period, she tweeted interviews with news agencies in 9 different countries (Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Twitter: @GretaThunberg’). The
interesting part is that between the 7 countries with strikes and the 9 countries with press interviews, the only overlapping country was Sweden. This shows that the strikes were not spreading internationally due to news coverage. The people joining the movement and organizing protests had to either be reading lots of international news stories or hearing about it somewhere else, like social media.

Greta created her official Facebook page in December 2018 (Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Facebook’). Though she seemed to favor this platform less than the others, it too had its organizational strengths. A current Facebook search for “Fridays for Future” pulls up at least 15 different pages based out of different locations (“Fridays”). Those pages post things like this (“Fridays”):

Groups calling themselves School Strike for Climate created events like these (“School”):
Events like this can be sent to targeted groups to inform them about local events. It would be very difficult to organize such a large international movement without a platform that allows local groups to make pages where they can communicate and plan events while also following the larger international movement so that everyone presents a united, coherent message no matter where they are.
Social media tracked the continued growth of the movement. On March 13, 2019, Greta posted on Instagram a map showing planned strikes in 1,325 places in 98 countries for the upcoming Friday (Thunberg ‘1325’). On September 27, 2019, she posted 45 separate times to highlight 45 strikes happening across the globe (Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Facebook’). Currently more than 3 million people like her Facebook page, 12 million people follow her on Instagram, and she has 5 million followers on Twitter (Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Facebook,’ Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg on Twitter,’ Thunberg ‘Greta Thunberg’s (@Gretathunberg) Instagram’).

Greta was a teenage girl who just started showing up in front of the Parliament building. Her focus was not on verbally spreading the word, she posted online and her following grew exponentially. It wasn’t people telling other people that they trusted to join, it was random people telling others they didn’t even know to join. This entire movement is focused on teenage and young adult involvement. Due to age restrictions on voting and limited opportunities (due to having to ask parent permission), as well as their by-nature low socioeconomic status, youth are not the traditional leaders of social movements. Joan of Arc and King Tut both stood out as leaders largely due to their youth. Yet, with social media, age seems less relevant when deciding who should lead a movement.

Greta and her movement show us that civic engagement and social movement leadership are changing. Is social media allowing for more equitable involvement? How is this change in leadership changing the nature of social movements themselves? How has this change in platform influenced how everyday people interact with politics? Is it just Greta or are there other examples of this trend?
4. Other Examples:

Though we don’t have answers to all the questions above, we can see that Greta is not an outlier, she is part of a new trend. Starting in 2001, there was a political protest during which people texted out vital information (Browning). Things escalated after Facebook was invented in 2004 and Twitter went online in 2006. Social media was said to have been used in protests about the 2009 Moldovan and Iranian elections (though the involvement is disputed) (Browning, Gladwell). However, there is no disputing the use of social media during Arab Spring, starting with Tunisia in 2010 when a video of a frustrated citizen lighting himself on fire went viral, leading to protests. Within a month there were 196,000 mentions of the “Tunisian revolution” on Twitter (Browning). In Egypt a man was beaten and killed by police after posting a video about their corruption online. Photos of him with a bruised face went viral. A Facebook page titled “We Are All Khaled Said” started and grew to 800,000 members. Social media was used here to stay connected, organize protests, and spread word of atrocities. It was also used to tell protesters how to bypass checkpoints, get across bridges, and how to get to places where people wanted to demonstrate (Browning). Anti-Putin protests were organized via social media in Russia in 2011 (Browning). In the August 2011 London Riots participants used social media to plan rendezvous points, but also to warn others about spots where the police had gathered in force (Browning). A 2011 protest in Spain, formed in response to a financial crisis, recruited through social media. Hong Kong’s 2014 Umbrella Movement was largely student-led and student-organized, utilizing social media (Chu). The 2014 Ukrainian Euromaidan movement advertised times and places, shared inflammatory stories and images, and recruited movement members on Facebook and Twitter (“Народне”). Venezuela had an uprising in 2019 after opposition leader Juan Guaido tweeted a three-minute video saying he had the backing of the military. The internet was shut down (as is now common
in many countries during violent protests) and President Maduro tweeted that he still had control of the military commanders (Newshour).

These examples show that Greta is not alone in using social media, and that the political platform is changing. However, they don’t show how the socioeconomic status of social movement leaders is changing. For that we must turn to statistics.

5. Statistical Analysis of a Changing Demographic:

Not only has the way we engage with civics changed, but the demographic of who is leading that engagement and challenging the status quo has changed. It used to be that people of a high socioeconomic status were the ones with greatest access to the means of social change. They could reach and persuade the largest audience. However, social media has changed the rules for who has the ability to gain a following. To get a large following on Facebook or Twitter a user doesn’t have to hold a high office. They don’t have to be rich or already famous. They don’t have to be highly educated. Those things may certainly help, but someone of obscurity can still gain a large following without them. As of January 2020, 4.54 billion people, or 59% of the world’s population, were active internet users (Clement). Of those 4.54, 1 billion have a Facebook account (“Company”). One hundred forty-five million Twitter accounts are active daily (Lin). In comparison, the top 50 U.S. newspapers average 12.5 million monthly subscribers (“Trends”). Users of Facebook and Twitter who can gain a large following have access to a larger audience than most major newspapers. Who gains those followings? The list of most liked pages on Facebook includes YouTube, Harry Potter, Samsung, Candy Crush Saga, Jerusalem Prayer Team, several soccer teams, and a handful of celebrities (“List of most”). Entertainment draws followers. The algorithms put in place by social media companies help leaders find followers. Social media is
designed to help people build followings and find an audience. It seems that these criteria and this access, which is so different from the previous requirements needed to reach a large audience, have allowed people of a lower socioeconomic status to push their ideas and create and/or take leadership positions in social movements.

To test this theory, I performed a one-tailed hypothesis test with a .05 level of significance on a set of data I created of 12 social movement leaders from 8 different movements that came to power before the rise of social media and 23 leaders from 10 movements that came to power after. I assigned each of those leaders a socioeconomic status score based on their income, education, and job prestige. Using those scores in our hypothesis test, I found a critical t value of 4.84, which is greater that the corresponding t* value of 1.699. This data provides evidence that there has been a significant decrease in the socioeconomic status of social movement leaders (see Appendix A for full calculations, methodology, and operationalization of variables). Not only that, but I also discovered that the age of social movement leaders has become more diverse. A person is less restricted by age now when trying to start a movement.

I theorize that another aspect of social media allowing for these changes, especially the change in age, is the remoteness inherent in dealing with someone online. The criteria for judging the trustworthiness of someone online is much different than judging someone in person and it runs on a different set of stereotypes, therefore nullifying some existing stereotypes of in-person interaction. This difference also necessitates conversations with our students about online “stranger danger.” Who are we really following? Who is really following us? What are the credentials of the people we are listening
to? While social media is helping us cast off certain stereotypes, we should not let it blind us to internet catfish wishing to cause us harm.

6. Conclusion:

Civic engagement has changed in at least two ways. People are finding and engaging with social movements differently, and people are starting and rising to the top of movements differently. We have found a direct correlation between this change and social media use, though we cannot prove causation. However, since the change is clear, it becomes clear that if we want to prepare our students to engage in this new political world, we need to change what we are teaching them to better reflect the online world they will be navigating. We don't pretend to be experts on the best way to do that, advice would require its own study, but perhaps we can focus with our students on how to navigate online debates, write civil posts, and create meaningful events in support of causes we care about.

Not only could classroom instruction focused on online civic engagement better prepare our students, but it could improve the quality of engagement we see online. Perhaps it could make online political commentary more civilized, better researched, and more meaningful. Who knows how civic engagement and online political platforms could change if we would only update the way we approach education?
Reflective Writing

My experience with this capstone project has been a rocky road to say the least. I was thrilled beyond belief to be accepted into the USU honors program at the end of my senior year of high school. If that wasn’t enough, I had also been offered a prestigious research fellowship. To hear I had been selected as one of only 100fellows on all of Utah State’s campus as someone who seemed promising and would succeed at research was a huge boost to my confidence. I started my freshman year with a goal and endless amounts of enthusiasm. I wanted to study the intersection of all the social sciences. How did political science, psychology, sociology, geography, and economics all come together to create important historical moments? Wanting to find the answer, I started meeting with faculty, trying to find someone interested in the same things I was so that I could assist and learn from them.

It took the entire year. I had to meet with Scott Bates, the director of the Undergraduate Research Program because after meeting with over 15 faculty members across several departments, I couldn’t find anyone studying specifically what I was interested in, nor did anyone seem to want my help with their projects. I guess it’s hard to have an assistant when you’re studying history. Finally, I was directed to Dr. Cathy Bullock in the JCOM department who had done some work with the Civil Rights movement. As soon as I sat down at her desk, things were different. She radiated sunshine and confidence. She said she had finished her Civil Rights project and her current project would probably be of no interest to me, but that didn’t matter because she said she saw no reason I couldn’t start my own project if I already knew what I was interested in. It was all the go ahead I needed. I told her I loved the American Revolution and I was particularly interested in how people started revolutions. How could you get the word out to just the right people so you wouldn’t get caught, but still enough people that you had a big enough force to fight? With her approval, I decided to study Sam Adams, the on-the-ground leader of the American Revolution.
After that initial bibliography about Sam Adams where I learned a lot about how to research and even more about online newspaper databases, I left on sabbatical to Poland. When I returned, I had grand dreams of finding a way to make my research about Poland so I could return and study there for a summer. I started looking heavily into the Warsaw Uprising and it was largely through interviews with survivors that I read online that I answered my first question about how information was spread. I shared the answer with Dr. Bullock and we talked about secret meetings and liaisons for a while, but the conversation quickly turned to how things have probably changed. With Dr. Bullock’s background in journalism and communications, she started spouting off questions about how new forms of media might have changed things. For example, how might social media have had an impact?

So the project took another turn. Still wanting to tie things back to the Eastern European land and culture I had come to love, I decided to look into the Euromaidan incident in Ukraine. I formed the question: “On average, has the socioeconomic status of the leaders of revolutions changed with the onset of widespread social media use?” I wanted to look into this question broadly and use Euromaidan as a case study. Dr. Bullock mentioned I would have to find a way to operationalize my variable, so she sent me to talk to Dr. Pechenkina and Dr. Blings in the political science department. Dr. Pechenkina was very helpful in giving me definitions for different kinds of movements and politely informed me that Euromaidan was not a revolution, it was a coup. She said she didn’t know how I ought to operationalize things but wished me the best of luck. Dr. Blings suggested I steer away from statistics and attempts to operationalize and focus more in on case studies. The project became harder here as it seemed that everyone had a different opinion about my project, what my focus should be, and how I should go about it. It took a good amount of time and frustration for me to really learn and realize that I didn’t have to take everyone’s advice. In fact, it would be impossible to take everyone’s advice as they all led in different directions. I expanded my question to include all social movements, because the Euromaidan conversation had made me realize that I was, in fact, interested in more than just flat out revolutions.
However, I was stuck. I couldn’t figure out how to operationalize things, and therefore didn’t know how to move forward with my project. There’s where Dr. Cann came into the picture. I signed up for POLS 3000 because it was required for my major, but it became an integral part of my research process. In that class, Dr. Cann taught us how to operationalize variables! He also assigned us a term project where we had to use statistics to evaluate a set of variables. This was my time. I operationalized all the terms needed and created my very own database of stats that I compiled from intensive research about social movements both before and after social media became widespread. I analyzed this research to write my term paper and was excited to move forward.

Unfortunately, this is where I hit my next road bump. Dr. Bullock entered a much deserved retirement after many years of valued service and I was left without a mentor. Remembering how terrible my experience had been trying to find a mentor the first time, I dreaded having to repeat the process. Fortunately in my yearly meeting with department honors advisor Scott Hunsaker, I asked if he had any recommendations and he sent me to Dr. Knowles. Dr. Knowles willingly accepted my request to mentor me and a weight was immediately taken off my shoulders. However, I didn’t exactly know what to do next with my project. Should I present it? Should I aim for publication? I sent it to Dr. Knowles for advice and he suggested that I take it in, yet another, slightly different direction. As Dr. Knowles was in the education college and I was getting my degree in education, he suggested that I find a way to tie my research in to my future career. I spent months stewing over this suggestion with no idea how to relate the two. Previously, I had met with Dr. Bullock almost monthly to update her on my progress and she would offer me suggestions. However, as we were now in the midst of Covid, I only met with Dr. Knowles over zoom once or twice and was struggling to find direction. Trying to work out that angle along with living through a pandemic and planning my wedding stumped me for the better part of a year.
When I finally really dove back into things, I still agonized over how to tie things together. There just wasn’t much research about using social media as a classroom tool for ages younger than college, and the rules between high school and higher education are vastly different. I stumbled through a rough draft that I sent to my brother to look over. My brother was the one who finally helped me organize things and make the connection. With this finally in hand, I wrote a second draft, which I sent over to Dr. Knowles. This is where I started to regret my heretofore lack of communication with my new mentor. I had originally told Dr. Knowles that I wanted to publish my research eventually and that I needed to at least present it before I graduated in order to earn credit for an honors capstone. However, I had only given him a shaky timeline, which I altered multiple times as I went along. Since I was extending deadlines to meet unforeseen circumstances, I was hesitant and embarrassed to reach out much with questions. Since we didn’t have regularly scheduled meetings, it was easy for our expectations to be unclear and disjointed. When I sent in my second draft and asked what I should be doing to prepare for publication and where might be best to publish, Dr. Knowles was surprised. It seemed we wouldn’t have enough time to publish, and he was worried about making sure I even had a chance to present. What kind of presentation was required? Here I find it important to also mention a miscommunication I found prevalent between honors, faculty, and students. Whenever I talked to the honors people it seemed like all faculty were aware of the program, the requirements, and would be thrilled to invite honors students on board their projects, followed by a mentorship that would result in a project that was really life changing. However, at least half of the faculty I talked to were confused about why I was there to talk to them about their research, had no idea what a mentorship entailed, and didn’t exactly know how to help me. I really stumbled through the last part of my project as I struggled to find, set, and meet clear expectations.

The last major hurdle I encountered was the timing of my presentation. I am an education major and am therefore scheduled to spend my last semester in college doing my student teaching. Because
student teaching is so time-intensive and stressful, it was recommended to me that I finish my capstone the semester before so I wouldn’t have to worry about that and student teaching at the same time. I happily accepted as that seemed like the most logical plan. However, as the time drew nearer, I received my student teaching placement a few months early. When USU had reached out to a local high school about whether I would be able to student teach there in the spring, they asked if I could start early (November of the fall semester) and be a long-term substitute as well as a student teacher because one of their faculty was going out on sick leave. I accepted as this offered me an opportunity to get paid for my student teaching, an experience I would normally pay a lot of money for and not be able to work during, even though it meant student teaching while still finishing up my current semester. Yet, that meant I would be student teaching at the time I was scheduled to give my final capstone presentation. I was nervous as I knew I would only be allowed to miss three days of student teaching and we were still living during a global pandemic. Could I afford to miss a day to present my research? Additionally, as I started I saw that I really had little to no time to finish my project. The stress brought me to tears. I realized I never had found a way to research back in Poland. My project that I had worked so hard on and that I had been told was so ground-breaking would never be published and hardly be seen. What was so life-changing about a project like that? My picture had never gone up on the library wall as an example of a research student doing something truly amazing because what I had done didn’t seem to have amazed anyone at all except my mother.

I asked the honors staff how I could switch my presentation plan to be defending my thesis in front of a committee as I could at least schedule that around my student teaching, or perhaps I could move my presentation to next semester now that I would be completing my student teaching early and would be left with an abundant amount of free time at the end of spring semester. They simply told me to talk to my mentor, who told me it would be impolite to inconvenience other professors unfamiliar with my project this late in the game, so I suffered through. I didn’t meet almost any of my final
deadlines as I struggled to stay afloat in with all the things I had agreed to do. I learned a tremendous amount from this journey, but there are a GREAT many things I would do differently next time. I walk away from this project feeling a mixed sense of failure and success.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Statistical Analysis

Method and Operationalization of Variables:

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, a social movement is a:

“loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society’s structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.

“... When short-lived impulses give way to long-term aims, and when sustained association takes the place of situational groupings of people, the result is a social movement” (Killian “Types”).

There are different kinds of social movements including reform (“does not try to overthrow the existing government but rather works to improve conditions within the existing regime”), revolutionary (“seeking to overthrow the existing government and to bring about a new one and even a new way of life”), reactionary (“tries to block social change or to reverse social changes that have already been achieved”), self-help, and religious (21.3). I used an existing list of social movements found on Wikipedia (“List of Social”). I did this in an attempt to avoid the bias involved in creating my own list. The creators of this list excluded artistic, independence, revolutionary, religious, and spiritual movements (“List of Social”).

The leaders of a social movement are defined as, “strategic decision-makers who
inspire and organize others to participate in social movements” (Morris). There are charismatic leaders who symbolize the values of the movement, intellectual leaders who develop the ideology of the movement, and administrative leaders who handle organization and strategy (Killian “Social”). Influence usually shifts between these types of leaders (Killian “Social”). A distinction will not be made in this study. To determine the leaders of these movements, the name of the movement was put into a google search. If the founder lived within the designated time frame, the founder was considered the leader. If no founder and no current leader pulled up with a google search, a google search was conducted for the most influential members of the movement in the time frame. Some movements like the environmental and gay rights movements don’t have one designated leader. This is how leaders were determined for these movements.

Socioeconomic status was deduced to be a combination of education, occupational prestige, and income (Ahlborg and Evans). An overall socioeconomic score was calculated for each leader by assigning values to each category. A person’s education was determined by reading available online biographies. When a college or degree was mentioned without specifying the level of degree (BA, MA, etc.) it was assumed to be a Bachelor’s. Points were awarded for educational achievement as follows: less than high school-0, high school-1, some college-2, Bachelor’s-3, Master’s-4, Ph.D.-5, multiple Ph.D.-6. Occupation was once again found in online biographies. Occupational prestige was assigned according to the NORC scores for occupational prestige (NORC). A score on the NORC scale from 30-40 was given a value of 1 for this study; 40-50 a value of 2, 50-60 a 3, 60-70 a 4, 70-80 a 5. Students were given a prestige score of 1. Income was estimated to be the average income of a person in that occupation as found on google. Income was calculated at what that person would earn today to offset inflation. Foreign currencies were converted to USD and adjusted for purchasing power using a cost of living calculator (“Cost”). Student
income was calculated as $15 an hour for a 24 hour work week. The minimum wage in California and Massachusetts is $12 according to google. It was assumed that college students would make a few dollars above minimum wage. Greta Thunberg was excluded from this assumption as no official occupation for her could be found, most Europeans her age don’t have jobs, and statistics for average income by age in her home country began at age 18 (Arnett and Jürgensen). Therefore her estimated yearly income was $0 for this study. Yearly income was compared with a breakdown of social class based on income to break it down to 5 ordinal values (“Where”). People making $29,999 or less a year were assigned a value of 1; $30,000-$49,999 were assigned a 2; $50,000-$99,999 a 3; $100,000-$349,999 a 4; and $350,000 and up a 5.

Social media for the purposes of this study means Facebook and Twitter and they are considered to be widely used beginning in 2009 (Editors and Hall). The time frame considered for this study to avoid other variables that would come into play by looking at movements over an extensive period of time is 1993-2004 for the before treatment group because this is when Facebook was invented. The years 2009-2020 were considered for the post treatment group. Any leader who came to power in the years between 2004 and 2009 was not considered as treatment (social media use) was not fully in place.

The numbers for education, occupational prestige, and income were added together to get one socioeconomic score for each leader (12 leaders before treatment, 19 after for a total of 31 scores). Leaders of the Indigenous Peoples Movement, which is led by a board of leaders of several indigenous peoples) were given an estimated socioeconomic status score of 11 as that was the average score of politicians in the study and specific information for these leaders could not be found. Scores were generated for the leaders of ten randomly selected movements from before treatment and ten after. If
the movement had more than one leader, all were included as far as information for them could be found. The scores were averaged to get one socioeconomic status score of 10.1 with a standard deviation of 1.08 for leaders before and a mean score of 8.5 with a standard deviation of 0.76 for leaders after.

**Statistical Analysis**

To compare these numbers, I used a one-tailed hypothesis test as it is the best method I know to compare means from two groups to see if there is a difference between the two. A .05 level of significance with 29 degrees of freedom gives us a $t^*$ value of 1.699, these numbers can be used to calculate a critical $t$ value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| 1 | $H_a$: Socioeconomic status before is higher than it is after  
$H_o$: There is no difference |
| 2 | A t-table will be used because we are measuring mean values |
| 3 | A 95% level of confidence is desired, so: $\alpha = .05$, degrees of freedom = 29, so $t^* = 1.699$ |
| 4 | $t = \frac{(\bar{x}_b - \bar{x}_a) - 0}{\hat{\sigma}_{\bar{x}_b - \bar{x}_a}}$  
$\hat{\sigma}_{\bar{x}_b - \bar{x}_a} = \sqrt{\frac{n_1s_1^2 + n_2s_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}} \cdot \left(\frac{n_1 + n_2}{n_1n_2}\right)  
S^2 = \frac{\sum (x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}$  
\[\bar{x}_b = 10.1 \quad s_b^2 = 1.16 \quad \text{Calculated in excel} \quad n_b = 12\]  
\[\bar{x}_a = 8.5 \quad s_a^2 = 0.58 \quad n_a = 19\]  
\[\hat{\sigma}_{\bar{x}_b - \bar{x}_a} = \sqrt{\frac{12(1.16)+19(0.50)}{12+19-2}} \cdot \left(\frac{12+19}{12(19)}\right) = \sqrt{\frac{13.92+11.02}{29}} \cdot \left(\frac{31}{228}\right) = \sqrt{.86(1.36)} = 0.34\]  
$\hat{t} = \frac{(10.1-8.5)-0}{0.33} = \frac{1.6}{0.34} = 4.71$  
$t(4.84) > t^*(1.699)$ We reject the $H_o$ |

The critical $t$ of 4.84, which is greater than the corresponding $t^*$ value of 1.699 leading us to reject the null hypothesis of no difference. Meaning we can be 95% confident that the socioeconomic status of the leaders of social movements actually is lower since the onset of
social media or that in repeated samples of the same size from the same parent population, fewer than 5% of samples would yield a difference this big by chance alone if there were no true difference in socioeconomic status.

However, it is very important to state that this finding shows a relationship and not causation. There is a way to state causation with confidence, but it requires the comparison of the standard deviations of many more samples than the one we have. For now, we can say with 95% confidence that the socioeconomic status of the leaders of social movements has decreased in the same timeframe that social media use has increased. Another interesting statistic gleaned from this research is the change in age of the leaders of social movements over this same period of time. The mean for leader age in the 1993-2004 period was 36 with a standard deviation of 9.07. The mean for leader age from 2009-2020 was 40 with a standard deviation of 16.27. The distribution of age for the second group was much more dispersed than the first. The average distance from the mean in the first group was 5.67 years with a standard deviation of 6.65 years.

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\[ x = 5.67 \quad \Sigma = 486.53 \sqrt{\frac{486.53}{11}} = 6.65 \quad S^2 = 44.22 \]
The mean distance from the average age in the second group was 12.05 years with a standard deviation of 10.27 years. A hypothesis test with a .05 level of significance gives us a critical t value of 1.849. This value is larger than the $t^*$ value of 1.699, leading us to reject the null hypothesis and say that there is a difference in the distribution of age in the population of leaders before social media and leaders after social media.

This is another display of a relationship and not necessarily causation, but these two calculations show us that the demographics of the leaders of social movements are changing.
Appendix B: Data Set

Leaders and Movements Before the Onset of Social Media

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before selected</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Age at the time</th>
<th>Year leader Title</th>
<th>Income Score B Adjusted for cost</th>
<th>Income adjusted</th>
<th>Education score education</th>
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<td>119,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia &quot;Butterfly&quot;</td>
<td>Wanger Moths</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1997 Founder of the C</td>
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<td>176,675</td>
<td>71,619</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice Nion</td>
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Leaders and Movements Before the Onset of Social Media
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2.684210526 | 0.527705882 | 0.035 | 8.4842 | 8.8 | 0.5786552196
Tess Tureson is a senior at Utah State University working towards a Social Studies Composite Teaching degree. During her time at Utah State, she has been in the Honors program, the Undergraduate Research program, and the Writing Fellows program. She is humbled to admit that her schooling has been paid for by over $39,800 in grants and scholarships, for which she is extremely grateful. She hopes to graduate in the spring with honors and a research distinction. Tess is currently doing a student teaching internship at Sky View High School, where she is an alumna. Tess enjoys serving in the community and is constantly looking for ways to be involved. She is excited to start her life as a teacher after she graduates in the Spring of 2022.