

SOCIAL NETWORKS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND DISPERSED LEADERSHIP: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EMERGENT LEADERSHIP IN AFRICAN NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide new insights into organizational leadership and social interaction in networks. The article reports the findings of qualitative research investigating the emergence of a new social movement among Twitter users in Nigeria with wide-ranging ramifications for transformational change and sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa. Data for the study was collected using a variety of interview methodology as well as responses from users of Twitter to a qualitative questionnaire designed specifically to accommodate Twitter's 140-character limit. The results indicate an innovative use of Twitter as a virtual public sphere, the development of a new civil society identified with the Arab Spring and Occupy Movement, an informal network organized through social media and an ambiguous relationship with the old civil society comprised of formal organizations like trade unions and Non Governmental Organizations. This new online social network is characterized by an emergent, dispersed, distributed and participatory leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Networks, Social Media, Arab Spring, Occupy Movement, Civil Society, Social Movement, Online Social Network.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is widely researched and generates an extensive literature although there are very few studies on leadership in networks. The rise of the Network Society (Castells, 1996) in an era of globalization implies that leadership is increasingly situated in fluid networks and this requires careful analysis and elaboration. The Arab Spring and Occupy Movement have served as networks for the emergence of a new generation of dispersed and distributed leadership using social media, especially Twitter, to communicate and to coordinate collective action.

These new developments require a multidisciplinary approach to the study of leadership and networks. This article aims to provide new insight into leadership in network forms of organizations, informal coalitions and online social networks through qualitative research focusing on identifiable new social movements in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, with implications for transformational change and sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa drawing on a range of disciplinary fields such as management theory, organizational studies, sociology, Critical Theory, Critical Management Studies and international relations.

AFRICA AND THE NETWORK SOCIETY

The winds of change suggest that modern society is changing in times of flux in ways fundamentally different from those of its predecessors. The 'New Society' is the subject of much analysis and debates not least the extent to which it is new and to which it is a worldwide phenomenon (Tonkiss, 2006). The concept of the Network Society (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998) seeks to label the essence of the new society and the social change resulting from a range of economic, social, political and cultural forces. Such a label is useful in understanding the nature and character of social structures and human agency notwithstanding any narrowing of discourse arising from definitive labels. According to the narrative of the Network Society, the future society has already arrived (Castells, 2000), globalization has resulted in the rise of the Network Society in present times emerging to different degrees across the world and defining the future shape of social relations. This is a qualitative change in the very essence and character of society and not merely one of quantitative increases in the degree to which networks define social relations.

The sociologist Manuel Castells is the major advocate of the Network Society, he has pointed out that it is made up of "networks of production, power and experience, which construct a culture of virtuality in the global flows that transcend time and space" (Castells, 1998, p. 370). This implies social relations embedded within and interacting with existing economic and political arrangements creating tensions between established and emerging forms of social relations. The Network Society has two important characteristics (Barney, 2004), firstly the presence of information and communication technology (ICT) that form the basis for new economic, social, political and cultural practices and processes, the new technology connects people globally across time and space as never before, knowledge and information become the prized commodities demanded in exchange relations. The second dimension is the dominance of networks as the basic form of human interaction and social organization. Networks have always existed but never before have they been the pervasive form of social activity and social configurations, social, political and economic relations are conceived, institutionalized, reproduced and transformed within and between networks.

Networks are made up of nodes, ties and flows. Nodes are distinct points connected by ties, flows are what pass along ties on their way to other nodes and ties forming the network (Barney, 2004; Castells, 1996). Flows such as information, money and goods pass through nodes which are often ICT (such as the internet) or transportation systems to nodes (computers, humans, organizations etc). Socio-economic relations flow through the Network Society making the participation of Africa in global flows an important condition for sustainable development in Africa. The unequal access to new technologies and the unequal use of ICT poses a challenge for the sustainable development of Africa in a globalised world characterized by liquid flows (Bauman, 2000; Mansell and When, 1998). Africa makes up approximately 15% of the world's population, however it accounts for only 6.2% of internet users (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012) which is both a consequence and a result of an imbalance in economic and political power in the Global Network Society.

The digital divide experienced by Africa is linked to global inequality and human development. The United Nations Human Development Report (2005) provides evidence of strong correlations between African countries with internet access of less than 1% and low scores on measurements of life expectancy, education and income (UNDP, 2005). Research has focused on the gap between Africa and the rest of the world (Fuchs and Horak, 2008) and on barriers to access ICT in Africa and in particular, differences in access along dimensions of material, mental, skill and usage access between developed and developing countries (Van Dijk and Hacker, 2003). The effect of focusing on who uses ICT and the *level* of usage of ICT in Africa has resulted in a dearth of studies on *how* ICT is used in Africa and its transformational implications in the public sphere. The use of social media in particular has resulted in the emergence of a new civil society and new social movements, which have acted as spaces for the emergence of a new generation of leadership organized in and through social networks.

SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS IN AFRICA AND A NEW CIVIL SOCIETY

One major implication of the Network Society is the digitalization of space and the compression of time allowing for a virtual public sphere, the space for democratic discourse is an important element in the relationship between the state and society (Gramsci, 1992) and a necessary pillar for sustainable development and democratic governance. The public sphere is at once a political arena, forum for communication, debate and action but also a realm of governance and leadership. It provides a democratic space for civil society to form public opinion, test the legitimacy of government and conduct the roles and responsibilities of liberal democratic citizenship (Habermas, 1989). The public sphere reduces the agency dilemma by creating a space for joint accountability and governance between leaders in formal positions of authority and the citizenry on whose behalf they claim to lead.

The public sphere provides the opportunity for citizens to interact with the state and its policies beyond the limits of cyclical elections, state propaganda and hegemonic interest groups, the Network Society makes the public sphere an accessible space (within the limits of the digital divide) for wider participation by citizenry and an arena of accountability for government and citizens alike. Social media has become an important component of the public sphere (Cardoso, 2006; Castells, 2008; Chester, 2007; Lull, 2007; McChesney, 2007; Thompson, 2000). The virtual public sphere is a new source of power for civil society with a potential to test the legitimacy and to reconfigure the leadership and governance interactions within the state and the network as a political and organizational space. If civil society is the process through which the citizenry negotiate, argue, struggle against, or agree with each other and with centers of political and economic authority (Kaldor, 2007), then the

Network Society encapsulates a digital civil society as flows of information, knowledge and action between individuals, voluntary associations, social movements, political parties, interest groups and public officials.

To fully understand the contemporary African socio-political situation a fundamental distinction is necessary to distinguish between democratic forms and functions. The occurrence of elections does not necessarily equate to the existence of democracy in Africa, therefore the future of Africa's sustainable development must be underpinned by a range of new and emergent democratic forms that fulfill the foundational function of democratic participation and governance.

One such space for democratic discourse and action of growing importance in Africa is the array of networks using social media and Web 2.0 technology to participate in governance projects and sustainable development initiatives. Online social networks provide a new landscape for civil society, social media such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have started assuming importance as new avenues for democratic participation in a virtual public sphere. This article focuses on the use of Twitter in particular because this has been the public sphere of choice through which the new social movement explored by this research project spontaneously emerged and engaged in democratic action and a vibrant civil dialogue.

TWITTER IN AFRICA AND EMERGING ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Twitter is a microblogging service and online social network created in 2006 that had 500 million users as at 2012 (Dugan, 2012; Kwak, Lee, Park and Moon, 2010) with an average of 2,200 new Tweets every second (Twitter Inc, 2011), users send or receive messages (Tweets) about any topic within a 140 character limit and can 'follow' other users to receive their Tweets, unlike other online social networking sites such as Facebook there is no requirement for reciprocity in the relationship, so users follow other users voluntarily and can do so even when they are not themselves being followed by other users. This creates space for emergent leadership in user networks based on consensual relationships and a reciprocal power of choice, leader-follower relationships where they exist are voluntary and democratic interactions.

The first ever methodological analysis of the use of Twitter in Africa was recently published in the research report *How Africa Tweets* (Portland Communications, 2012), it analyzed over 11.5 million geographically located Tweets in the last quarter of 2011 supplemented by survey data of users of Tweeter in Africa. Despite limitations around the absence of data on Tweets that are not tagged by location due to users not enabling the tagging function and the low level of information on usage released by the management of Twitter (This is Africa, 2012) the statistics present an insightful picture into the way Twitter is used and the networks and discourse in the public sphere in African countries. This article will proceed to analyze the statistical results of the *How Africa Tweets* report through the theoretical framework of the Network Society discussed above.

The report indicates that South Africa is the country with the highest volume of location tagged Tweets (5,030,226) followed by Kenya (2,476,800), Nigeria (1,646,212), Egypt (1,214,062) and Morocco (745,620). The top 20 African countries by Twitter usage collectively account for 70% of Africa's population and 88% of internet users in Africa. All the major countries involved in the social movements and waves of protests beginning in the last quarter of 2010 popularly known as the "Arab Spring" feature in the top 20 African countries and Egypt which was pivotal in turning the localized political

protest in Tunisia into a global protest movement (popularly known as the Arab Spring) is ranked 4th on the list by volume of geographically located Tweets.

The profile of African Twitter users indicates a majority of young, technology savvy Africans characterized by high usage of mobile internet connectivity, multitasking and preference for instant digital communication fitting descriptions of Generation Y and Millennial Generation research profiles (Berk 2009, 2010). The report findings reveal that in Africa 60% of twitter users are between 21- 28 years old which suggests a significantly younger age profile for African Twitter users compared to the average age of Twitter users worldwide which is 39 years. African Twitter users also predominantly Tweet on-the-go, 57% of African Tweets are sent from mobile devices (BlackBerry, iPhone, Android etc) although the report fails to state if this is caused by individual preference or socio-economic conditions such as poor electricity supply resulting in rechargeable battery powered mobile phones being more reliable than electric mains-powered desktop personal computing devices. Social Media is a dominant form of communication for African Twitter users, 94% also use Facebook and 69% also use YouTube in addition to Twitter.

African Twitter users primarily use Twitter to network, the study reports that 81% use Twitter to communicate with friends and 60% mainly follow fellow African Twitter users. A network with a majority of nodes located in Africa will suggest a strong emphasis on flows of communication, discourse and action relevant to the current socio-political reality of Africa. As an online social network Twitter in Africa presents the opportunity to connect and reconnect with real and virtual friends, an extensive opportunity to expand an individual's network and significant growth in potential connectivity as the population of Twitter users increase. The African Twitter network also functions as a public sphere for democratic discourse free from overt domination by the state and market, the report reveals that 68% of Twitter users in Africa use Twitter as their primary source of information on national news and for 76% it is the main source for international news. Social media is widely used for entertainment and Twitter in Africa is no exception with 69% of users relying on Twitter as their primary source of entertainment and gossip. However, the public sphere is also an important feature of the African Twitter cyberspace, 55% of users primarily follow politics through Tweets and this is more than the corresponding usage for sports (43%).

In functioning as a public sphere Twitter in Africa provides a platform for vibrant debate and action for an emerging cyber civil society. The report shows that it is a network of flows within civil society with very little active participation by public leaders, the majority of political leaders and public figures are outside the Twitter in Africa public sphere, a few notable exceptions who are incumbents in top political leadership positions in Africa with a large Twitter following include Raila Odinga (Prime Minister of Kenya), Paul Kagame (President of Rwanda) and Jacob Zuma (President of South Africa). Apart from this handful of political leaders who meaningfully engage in discourse with civil society in the virtual public sphere of Twitter it would seem that the rest of Africa's political leadership are either out of touch with Twitter users or have no meaningful and open democratic discourse through a presence on Twitter. Business leaders generally don't have a notable presence on Twitter in Africa, the CEO of Safaricom, Bob Collymore, with 38,000 Twitter followers, is a rare exception (Karanja, 2012). Mark Flanagan, the Partner for Communications at Portland Communications (the authors of the *How Africa Tweets* report) has commented that:

“One of the more surprising findings of this research is that more public figures have not joined Africa’s burgeoning Twittersphere. With some notable exceptions, we found that business and political leaders were largely absent from the debates playing out on Twitter across the continent. As Twitter lifts off in Africa, governments, businesses and development agencies can really no longer afford to stay out of a new space where dialogue will increasingly be taking place.” (CP Africa, 2012)

The absence of leaders in government, business, development agencies and established civil society organizations (such as trade unions and NGOs) on Twitter in Africa public sphere creates a vacuum of socio-political leadership that is critical to the sustainable development of Africa. This vacuum is rapidly being filled by the emergent leadership of informal networks and new social movements providing leadership, democratic discourse and activism which fit Kaldor’s definition of civil society as the process through which the citizenry negotiate, argue, struggle against, or agree with each other and with centers of political and economic authority (Kaldor, 2007).

The analysis of *How Africa Tweets (2012)* through the theoretical framework of The Network Society enumerated above can be summarized as follows:

- The majority of users of Twitter in Africa display evidence of the characteristics of Generation Y and Millennial’s, they are mostly young, technology savvy internet users. They are important *nodes* on Twitter in Africa network. This generation of young users communicates predominantly through mobile devices and a range of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. These social media act as *ties* connecting the nodes in networks.
- Twitter in Africa is an online social network that functions as a public sphere for political and democratic debate. These are important *flows* in the Twitter in Africa network which is part of the worldwide Twitter network. There is a marked absence of formal leaders in government, business, development agencies and established civil society organizations participating in the network.
- A new generation of civil society is emerging to fill the sustainable development and leadership vacuum created by the absence of formal leaders in government, business, development agencies and established civil society organizations on Twitter in Africa public sphere. The *flow* of emergent and distributed leadership is an important outcome for Africa’s future development.
- Informal social movements are an emerging source of change and transformation in the socio-political dynamics of Africa, Twitter is an important *network* for such informal social movements. All the African countries involved in the Arab Spring feature in the top 20 countries by volume of geographically located Tweets in Africa.

Africa’s digital civil society has emerged with birth pangs that must deal with its historical, cultural, socio-political and economic legacy (Bratton, 1994) while negotiating the globalised world as an often marginalized voice. However, this new space has produced a new generation of social movements that have transformed local and global social and political configurations. The events of the Arab Spring originating in North African countries around the end of 2010 provides a poignant reference point to analyze the power of informal social movements organized around virtual networks, such as Twitter in Africa, in facilitating social and political change.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA, THE ARAB SPRING AND OCCUPY MOVEMENTS

Social Movements are a distinct form of civil society actors, they are informal and loose groupings of individuals organized as a network, who communicate and act together to transform society and institutions. They can be contrasted with more formal civil society groups and political organizations like Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), formal social and community organizations, political parties, militant revolutionary or terrorist groups, special interest groups and associations such as religious, ethnic and nationalist groups.

Mary Kaldor (2003) identifies unique characteristics that differentiate informal social movements from other forms of civil society such as the organization form being loose horizontal networks and coalitions as distinct from vertical networks, bureaucracies, cells and formal hierarchies. Their social composition is made up of activists, committed individuals and a high proportion of students. There is no card carrying membership and they lack formal employees, professional staff or contractual workers. Social movements organize around an emancipatory mission and a concern for the poor, excluded and marginalized. There is more space for distributed leadership and their activities are usually around protests, demonstrations and direct action in contrast to organizations which act through service provision, lobbying, mobilization through formal media or violence. As informal networks they can experience rapid growth often in spontaneous reaction to social situations and can decline when the movement is no longer cohesive or their aspirations have been met or 'tamed' by mainstream acceptance of their concerns and integration into political processes and institutions (Tarrow, 1998).

At the heart of social movements are actions by people who fundamentally challenge authority or advocate alternate views, who propagate new claims which are often unacceptable to the status quo and who lack regular access to institutions, public figures and positions of authority. Consequently 'contentious politics' is at the core of social movements and they rise and fall following cycles of contention (Bayat 2010; Tarrow, 1998).

This article extends Kaldor's (2003) typology of the historical occurrence of international social movements since the beginning of the twentieth century in three waves to include more recent and distinct evolutions of social movements. The first wave according to Kantor's typology was concerned with social justice and included the international labor movement, anti-colonization and independence movements from about the start of the twentieth century. The first wave can be traced from the first labor international in 1864 and the founding of the International Federation of Trade Unions in 1901 to the period between 1960 and 1970 marked by the winds of change and independence that swept across much of the British empire. The second or 'new' wave of social movements started after 1968 and focused on new issues such as human rights, gender, third world solidarity, the environment (the Green Movement) and world peace (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Kaldor, 2003; Melucci, 1996; Touraine, 1981). The third wave, according to Kaldor, is often labeled the 'anti-globalization movement' emerging at the end of the twentieth century and is a revival of social justice concerns in an era of globalization, the 'Battle of Seattle' in 1999 against the World Trade Organizations and writers like Naomi Klein (2000, 2002) and Noam Chomsky (1999) have articulated the third wave movements ideas. This movement is perhaps more appropriately categorized as the global justice movement to reflect the overriding concern of its actors who are not necessarily opposed to all forms of globalization (indeed the movement is itself a global network) but protest against certain social effects of corporate capitalism.

The 'new' civil society made up of the second and third waves that emerged after 1968 are often contrasted with the 'old' civil society (Melucci, 1988, 1996), the new civil society is predominantly organized through loose coalitions and horizontal networks. They promote individual autonomy through decentralized leadership and participatory organizational structures while the old civil society organized around mass membership, bureaucratic hierarchies, centralized leadership often replicating the state and market organizational structures with which they sought to negotiate with.

The three waves of Kaldor's typology are a useful starting point and it is important to extend this typology to cover two additional and important historical waves of social movements with democratic and emancipatory agendas which are distinct from but connected to the three waves of Kantor's typology. The first addition refers to the social movements that spread across Eastern Europe with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as they formed an important moment in time for civil society to spread democratic transformation in Eastern Europe. The Arab Spring comprising waves of protest culminating in changes to government which began in North Africa (in particular Tunisia, Egypt and Libya) is the second important emergence of social movements in modern times with democratic and emancipatory objective. It has many parallels with the 1989 social movements (Aarts, P, Van Dijke, P, Kolman, I, Statema, J, Dahhan, G, 2012) such as the rapid fall of authoritarian regimes, the rapid rise of national social movements, mass mobilization and the key role played by an emergent generation of civil society leadership filling the vacuum of a public sphere where public figures were disconnected from meaningful participation in open dialogue with a citizenry hungry for democratic and socio-political change.

The Arab Spring was characterized by popular nonviolent protest involving symbolic actions such as the strategic objective to occupy Tahrir Square (now Martyr Square) in Egypt until the protesters demand for socio-political change were met. The "Occupy Movement" that arose as a spontaneous response to the Global Financial Crisis that started in 2007 drew inspiration from the Arab Spring and sought to protest by occupying symbolic social, economic and political spaces such as Wall Street in America. The Arab Spring was a protest against dictatorship and deteriorating socio-economic conditions especially youth unemployment and the perceived lack of opportunities for development. It was set against the backdrop of a Global Recession as was the Occupy Movement which drew inspiration and strategy from the Arab Spring. The Occupy Movement in the protest against the perceived excesses of the liberal market economy variety of capitalism (Hall and Soskice, 2004) and is an expression of the anti-globalization (global justice) movement, thus the boundaries between the anti-globalization (global justice) movement of which the Occupy Movement is a manifestation protesting against the excesses of global capitalism and the Arab Spring movements focusing on democratic and socio-economic changes in specific national contexts are blurred. There are strong links between the networks, actors, resources, strategy and objectives of both sets of new civil society movements and they both share the same social media space and global public sphere.

New developments in ICT provided a forum for civil society actors in the Arab Spring to network through social media unavailable to the 1989 and Color Revolutions of the previous century, flows of communication and leadership galvanized a young generation of internet users to form the core of the social movement (Stepanova, 2011). Social media plays a pivotal role in coordinating action, connecting individuals and groups and enabling communication and debate across the various Occupy Movements worldwide (Caren and Gaby, 2011; Skinner, 2011). These social movements and civil society leadership networks have had significant local and global impact through Twitter in Africa, as Beatrice Karanja, Associate Director at Portland Communications (the authors of the *How Africa Tweets* report) points out:

“We saw the pivotal role of Twitter in the events in North Africa last year, but it is clear that Africa’s twitter revolution is really just beginning. Twitter is helping Africa and Africans to connect in new ways and swap information and views. And for Africa- as for the rest of the world- that can only be good” (CP Africa, 2012)

The context of the Arab Spring and Occupy Movements was a crisis of legitimacy faced by the political and economic leadership in specific historical moments and geographical spaces. The crisis of legitimacy was exacerbated by an absence of meaningful presence and engaging dialogue on the part of formal socio-political leaders in the virtual public spheres where a new youthful generation of civil society actors is debating issues of transformational change. Social media and in particular Twitter were the ties used to connect the online social networks and create flows of information and a new emergent civil society leadership distributed across networks and concerned about democratic change and social justice issues. These social movements resulted in significant local discourse and action that have shaped the development trajectories of African states. The Arab Spring did not spread to Sub Saharan Africa (it largely spread across the Arab world) but there has been an emergence of local social movements and Occupy Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa (such as Nigeria) that show the beginnings of the emergence of a new civil society leadership characterized by distributed, dispersed and emergent leadership forms which are patterned after and galvanized by the Arab Spring and Occupy Movements.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP IN NETWORKS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Leadership is recognized as the use of power and influence over others but is a difficult concept to define. Stodgill (1974) comments that:

“There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Stodgill, 1974; p. 259)

There are an estimated 35,000 definitions of leadership in academic literature (Dubrin, 2000; Pye, 2005) and this article does not intend to add to the plethora of definitions. Northouse (2004) in a review of leadership theory pinpoints themes common to the definitions and writing on leadership. His analysis presents leadership as being a process involving influence occurring in a group context and involving goal attainment. A useful working definition that emphasizes these main themes is that leadership “is a social influence process that involves determining a group’s objectives, motivating behavior in aid of these objectives and influencing group maintenance and culture.” (Lewis, Goodman and Fandt, 1995). Leadership therefore involves a process of social interaction between individuals often categorized as either leaders or followers, it involves power and influence over others and occurs in group contexts which may situate leadership individually or collectively. While various concepts of leadership advocate different approaches for leaders to influence followers underlying these conceptions of leadership as Peter Gronn points is that ‘leadership is basically doing what the leader wants done’ (2002; p. 424). This involves getting others to pursue goals followers may not ordinarily have committed themselves to and this raises issues of power relations, control by an elite group of experts or privileged class and organizational hierarchy. Leadership therefore cannot be divorced from the wider socio-political and organizational context within which the social interaction labeled ‘leadership’ occurs; the structure of relationships, the organizational form in which they take place and the social conditions which give rise to these relationships are important subjects of study.

Leadership occurs in numerous group settings such as the family, workplace, civil society, political and social institutions. However the research and discourse has centered on formal leadership in political and business contexts. Much of the literature on leadership is produced by business schools and this hegemony defines leaders as an elite and powerful group closely linked with bureaucratic forms of organizations. While there has been a growing separation in leadership research and theory between leadership in the political and business spheres, in practice political leaders are keen to tout their business leadership credentials as signs of leadership competence and business leaders look to copy the leadership styles of iconic public figures.

Over the past century scholars and practitioners sought to identify the characteristics of the ideal leadership figure. Subsequent research built on the early work of the psychologist Gordon Allport in distinguishing leaders from followers based on personal traits. According to Allport (1936), these traits can be grouped as cardinal (dominating the personality), central (foundations of personality) and secondary traits (attitudes and preferences). While some writers suggested that such traits are not a reliable predictors of future leaders (Stodgill, 1948; Mann, 1959), advocates of Allport's views have shown that those traits have a strong influence on the general perception of whether someone is a leader or not (Lord, 1986). The traits approach to leadership has proved enduring (McCrae and John, 1992) and is the basis of transactional and transformational leadership theories (Burns, 1978) which have widespread usage.

Leadership styles were the subject of much research in understanding behavioural models of leadership (Blake and Mouton 1979; Fleishman, 1953; Lewin, Lippert and White, 1939; Likert, 1967; Reddin, 1970). According to McGregor (1960) a leader's style is often influenced by a leader's assumptions about human nature. Based on this assumption the leadership figure will either be autocratic (Theory X) or participative (Theory Y). However there has been a shift in emphasis from the generic characteristics and behaviours of the individual to the imperativeness of responding to different situations. According to the contingency theories, leadership is dependent upon situational factors and other environmental variables (Fiedler, Chemers and Mahar 1978, Hersey & Blanchard 1982; House and Mitchell 1974; House, 1996) and varies along a continuum (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973) According to the contingency theory leadership is therefore a refinement of the situational viewpoint and focuses on identifying the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular circumstances.

These leadership theories frame the discussion of leadership around the leader with scant regard to leader-follower relationships. Simon Western (2008) has outlined the historical development of the popular discourses of leadership as starting from the leader as controller to the leader as therapist to the now dominant discourse of the leader as messiah or hero. According to Western (2008), the leader as messiah discourse creates an environment and culture that is resistant to critical reflection and diversity and it creates a totalizing way of thinking and acting.

One leadership theory within the dominant leader as messiah discourse and has gained widespread credence among academics and practitioners (writing and practicing in both the state and market spheres) is the distinction between transactional leadership and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass 1985). Heroic leadership is described by Burns

(1978) as a relationship between a leader and followers where the followers place great faith in the leader's capacity to conquer barriers and crises. This distinction implicitly portrays the transformational leader as the hero or messiah, full of charisma and capable of inspiring and bringing about radical change who are distinguished from *laissez-faire* leaders who are 'hands-off' in approach allowing things to take their due course, transactional leaders who maintain the status quo and 'managers' who attend to the mundane administration of running efficient and effective organizational processes. Transformational leadership privileges 'visionary' leaders above transactional leaders, managers and followers. Transformational leadership has subtle overtones of Weber's theory of the charismatic leader (Weber, 1947), Nietzsche's concept of the superman and the enduring fascination with a 'Great Man' hero leader in the popular imagination and academic literature.

A more nuanced view drawing on Critical Theory and Critical Management Studies challenges the orthodoxy of the leader as messiah or hero in leadership studies and the overt or covert dominance and power structures implied by transformational leadership. Critical scholars have recently started shedding their hesitancy to engage with leadership research because of its perceived impositional nature and are engaging constructively with leadership theory (Alvesson and Spicer, 2011; Alvesson and Willmott, 2012; Fryer, 2012). The emancipatory and ethical perspectives of the Frankfurt School (Scherer, 2009) points to a critical understanding of leadership as a social process involving politics and power which highlights empowerment, autonomy as well as individual and collective agency. The emancipatory aims of Critical Theory, according to Habermas, promotes "the autonomy of the individual, with the elimination of suffering and the furthering of concrete happiness" (1974, p. 254). The negative effects of instrumental rationality are checked by an emancipatory commitment to promote democratic freedom, social justice, environmental sustainability, collective solidarity and human agency in a wider social and historical context (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012). Modern critical writing also promotes non-western centric perspectives and emphasizes gender and feminist narratives which have been traditionally excluded in mainstream narratives (Ashcraft, 2009; Banerjee, Carter and Clegg, 2009). Thus a new understanding of leader-follower relationships is needed that affirms the agency of followers and examines the power structures of various forms of leadership. A critical approach to leadership will include views of leadership that go beyond the leader as messiah or hero to a post-heroic discourse of leadership.

The narrative of the leaders as hero or messiah restricts leadership to single individuals and elite groups occupying positions of formal authority ignoring the wider social and organizational context within which leadership relations occur (Mintzberg, 2010; Western, 2008). The reality is that leadership can result from formal authority or informal influence. It can be top down or bottom up, hierarchical or networked, autocratic or democratic, overt or subtle or any combination of these. Post heroic views of leadership (Crevani, Lindgren and Pakendoff, 2007; Huey, 1994; Pearce and Manz, 2005) emphasize leadership as distributed (Gronn, 2002; Woods, Bennett, Harvey and Wise, 2004), dispersed (Gordon, 2010) facilitative (Fryer, 2012), team leadership (Day, Gronn and Salas, 2004; Manz and Sims, 1987) eco-leadership (Western, 2008) etc. Leadership is dispersed among members in groups and teams rather than being the exclusive preserve of a 'leader' or a few 'leaders'. This shifts the focus from leadership traits, characteristics, styles and attributes of the leader as a 'person' to the social interaction involved in leadership as a 'process' (Grint, 2005; Gordon, 2010). Post heroic leadership is connected to the concept of emergent leadership which emphasizes the process through which leaders emerge from group interactions and peer

recognition rather than by exerting influence through formal positions of assigned authority (Souza and Klein, 1995; Yoo and Alavi, 2004).

In post-heroic leadership theory there is more recognition of the role of followers in influencing the group in often hidden ways, in participatory decision making, the empowerment of group members in taking personal responsibility for group tasks and objectives, the sharing of praise and blame across the group for outcomes and the self-management of resources without the emphasis on a hero leader to provide resources and heroic intervention. Post-heroic leadership offers an alternative to the abdication of human agency by follower to assigned leaders perpetuated through hierarchical structures. Post heroic leaders aim to empower others within the group to function as co-leaders. Empowerment in post-heroic leadership results from co-creation and co-participation in group objectives and tasks in contrast to empowerment in transformational leadership theory and practice which is conceived as paternalistic and unidirectional delegation of power to followers to implement a leaders pre-formulated vision (Western, 2008)

Post heroic leadership seeks to critique the binary categorization of leaders and followers which privileges leaders and legitimizes existing power structures, socio-economic arrangements and organizational goals. This article does not deny the presence of leaders nor critique leadership from anarchist perspectives advocating leaderless and structureless organizations where leadership may re-emerge in hidden and insidious forms (Freeman, 1972), neither does it seek to privilege followers over leaders or argue that equal power relations currently exist between leaders and followers. Rather it provides research evidence to show that in the absence of assigned leaders in networks of social movements who have formal positions of authority or a monopoly of resources, there is the emergence of informal leadership which coordinates and influences behavior based on democratic principles and the willing and voluntary co-operation of group members. This emergence of more participatory and democratic leadership locates leadership as a process which is dispersed among a network of individuals often having multiple identities as leaders and followers. This emergent leadership implies a re-distribution of power in networks and society with implications for the sustainable development of Africa and wider organizational and socio-economic leadership processes.

Social movements are characterized by decentralized structures, self-government and volunteer commitment. The implications are that leaders have no recourse to coercive compliance and leadership flows from the voluntary recognition of leaders by followers (Ganz, 2008). Leadership in social movements remains largely under theorized (Aminzade, Goldstone and Perry, 2001; Barker, Johnson and Lavalette, 2001; Klandermans, 1989; Melucci, 1996; Morris, 1999; Zurcher and Snow, 1981). A focus on the great leaders in the social movement literature (such as William Wilberforce, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jnr, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Betty Friedman, Cesar Chavez, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel etc) has privileged charismatic and transformational leaders while marginalizing the contribution, influence and power of followers (Barker *et al*, 2001). This emphasis on hero leaders in social movements replicates the privileging of leaders in the business school and management literature and ignores the multiple levels, identities and roles involved in leader-follower relationships in reality. An alternative narrative presents leadership in social movements as not restricted to an elite minority. Notions of distributed leadership (Brown, 1989), leadership teams (Ganz, 2000) and bridge leaders (Robnett, 1997) present a post-heroic alternative to leader-follower interactions. Leadership is understood to involve democratic participation in decision making which fosters leaders who are accountable to the members of the social movement.

The post-bureaucratic organizational literature indicates a rise in the network form of organizations as part of a new Knowledge Economy underpinned by ICT and information networks (Bolman and Deal, 1997; Clarke and Clegg, 1998; Clegg, 1990; Colling, 2005; Fairtlough, 2007; Gordon, 2002; Miles, Snow, Matthews, Coleman, 1997). These new organizational and socio-economic configurations require a new analysis of leadership processes within networks. Political and business leaders are continually looking to win the hearts and minds of their followers, in the market it is the constant search for employee engagement, discretionary effort, commitment to corporate goals and values, building organizational culture etc and in political arena it is the never ending campaign for votes, higher opinion polls, support for policy, political activism and commitment to political agendas. The business school and management literature have largely overlooked leadership research in the context of civil society and social movements despite these social networks leading the way in winning the hearts and minds of highly committed members who often make significant personal sacrifice to pursuing their goals and interests in the face of mercurial challenges.

The first wave of social movements such as the international labor movement largely mirror the bureaucratic and hierarchical organizational, leadership and power structures of the main institutions and corporations they seek to influence such as corporations and government agencies. They often have a symbolic figurehead leader at the top of a leadership and organizational pyramid and leaders would be perceived within transactional and transformational conceptualizations of leadership. The other waves of social movements in contrast often have a network form of organization; their decentralization allows them respond flexibly and with great speed to issues in their environment (Castells, 1997). This article provides research evidence of network leadership within a new social movement in Nigeria. It emerged in a context which lacked assigned leaders with formal positions of authority and developed emergent leaders who filled a leadership vacuum because they were voluntarily recognized by others in the network as meeting specific leadership and organizational needs, such recognition could be withdrawn, upgraded or downgraded at any time. The network leadership was distributed and dispersed with different members simultaneously assuming influential roles at different times, over different issues and tasks and in different ways. Several parallel leaders operated in the same space and time with members having multiple identities as leaders and followers to different degrees. Social movements arise as a spontaneous reaction to social, economic, political and cultural circumstances, the next section explores the unique historical context that gave birth to an online social movement in Nigeria with implications for re-conceptualizing leadership and sustainable development through the emergence of a new generation of distributed, democratic and participative leadership in Nigeria's new civil society.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

Achebe (1988) has stated that failure of leadership is the root problem facing Nigeria as a nation and this allows corruption to attain alarming proportions. Leadership is central to sustainable development, it provides a moral direction and channels energy in a coordinated manner to achieve collective socio-economic goals, a nation lacking in good leadership consequently lacks an enabling environment for socio-economic development as resources are misdirected and misapplied. Furthermore, a leadership that is able to manage resources effectively with a long term view, ensuring a just and equitable allocation of resources is required to change the status quo and to manage environmental resources and development in such a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987)

Given the interwoven nature of society, a deficit of good leadership in the political and public spheres has isomorphic effects on the rest of society as it enables replication of questionable leadership and governance practices and behaviors in organizational leadership, corporate governance and wider social relations resulting in a lack of democratic participation and consensus building as well as the undermining of accountability and transparency in political, economic and social institutions. These negative effects of bad governance and dysfunctional leadership are most acute among the poor, underprivileged and most vulnerable in society (Ake, 1995; Toyo, 2006).

Weak legitimacy as well as the now popular patron-client relationship between politicians have been identified as implications of the current leadership climate and dysfunctional state institutions within the Nigerian polity (Ayittey, 2006; Kesselman, Krieger and Williams, 1996). Increasing poverty, decadence of social infrastructure and public utilities, political turmoil and social tensions are the adverse effects of Nigeria's increasingly dysfunctional state and its precarious leadership culture (Ake, 1995).

An equally disturbing effect is the alienation of the citizenry as identified by Mayer, Burnett and Ogden (1996). This has manifested in the nature of leader-follow relations marked by an expectation of subservience authoritarian tendencies of public leaders, according to Kew (2006). The Nigerian government remains distant from serving the interest of its people. The absence of spaces for democratic discourse and participatory citizenship creates a disconnect between political leaders and the citizens. The introduction and diffusion of ICT in Nigeria, especially social media, has provided opportunities for the emergence of a virtual public sphere and a new civil society to engage in democratic discourse and activism, enabled by a new and emergent leadership with qualitatively different leadership characteristics from those of the current leaders who influence through assigned positions of authority. This emergent bottom-up leadership has evolved mainly through the new social movement network on Twitter and other online social networks rapidly gaining popularity in Nigeria.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN NIGERIA

The evolution and impact of social media in Nigeria is difficult to assess and appreciate except viewed against the backdrop of the country's internet history. Nigeria is Africa's largest nation with an estimated population of 162 million people, the country with the largest population on the African continent (World Bank, 2012). According to statistics released by the International Telecommunications Union (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2012), Nigeria ranked eleventh (11th) with 45.2 million internet users among the Top 20 internet countries worldwide in the first quarter of 2012. Nigeria is the only African country to appear on the Top 20 list.

A major result of the diffusion of the internet in Nigeria is the emergence blogs about Nigerian by Nigerians. Bloggers have grown steadily in influence especially those who chose to comment and write on topical issues related but not restricted to politics and this growth is facilitated by integrating Facebook and Twitter activities with their blogs. Facebook usage in Nigeria surpassed the four million mark by November 2011. Statistics released by social media analytics company, Socialbakers, indicates that Nigeria, with 80% Facebook *mobile* penetration is at the top of the list of countries worldwide accessing Facebook via mobile devices (Socialbakers, 2012). This is in spite of the country's relatively low Facebook penetration (2.72%) compared to its population and number of internet users (9.40%) highlighting the fact that mobile

internet (e.g. BlackBerry, iPhone, Android etc) is widely used in Nigeria. The micro-blogging social platform, Twitter, is growing in importance in Nigeria with statistics from Portland Communications placing the country as the third most active in Twitter usage in Africa in the last quarter of 2011 and confirming that over half (57%) of the tweets sent from Africa are sent from mobile devices (Socialbakers, 2012).

The symbiotic relationship between mobile telephony and social media created new vistas for information dissemination and opinion sharing, usually in real-time. It deepened access to information, aroused interest in political issues, encouraged democratic discourse and stimulated civil society involvement in the development and governance of Nigeria. Blogging, Tweeting, sharing and commenting on Facebook took a new dimension during the general elections in 2011. A major contributor to the potency of the social media within the election period was its adoption by traditional media organizations as well as civil society organizations.

The general elections that took place in April 2011 especially the Presidential elections saw the emergence of Twitter as the most popularly used social media channel to discourse the election with 77% volume of Twitter content using key words relating to the election, well ahead of SMS which had 22% by volume of content (Asuni and Farris, 2011). Increased social commentary and democratic discourse in Nigeria's virtual public sphere provided the opportunity for bloggers to increase their Twitter following as well as their influence. This has led to the formation of an identifiable new social movement in Nigeria with an emergent and dispersed leadership. This movement influences the new civil society and virtual public sphere in Nigeria primarily through Twitter. A few politicians as well as celebrities in the entertainment industry have attempted to leverage social media to connect with and engage Nigerian citizens. The network is however characterized by the distribution of leadership power and influence among 'ordinary' citizens and by participatory decision making rather than being dominated by leaders with pre-assigned political and social status who have joined the online Twitter network. A brief description of the research methodology used is followed by the research findings beginning with an outline of the key points in the evolution of the new social movement in Nigeria and the evidence of the development of a virtual public sphere and a new civil society in Nigeria characterized by distributed and emergent leadership through a Nigerian Twitter network.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research findings disseminated through this article are part of a wider research project aimed at exploring the social processes and network interactions shaping the use of ICT in Africa, this specific sub-project focused on the leadership characteristics of civil society networks among Twitter users in Nigeria. A qualitative research methodology was adopted that was flexible and inductive in approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The first stage was to identify the social media networks that were widely used in Nigeria and what common interests and motivations provided the attraction for users to stay connected. This was carried out by an analysis of open networks on the internet identified as Nigerian and it revealed that Twitter was the social media of choice for democratic discourse in Nigeria following the 2011 elections. A review and selection of Twitter hashtags was then undertaken to analyze the nature of democratic discourse and the characteristics of the leadership phenomena among Twitter users in Nigeria identified through geographical tagging.

The selection of hashtags provided an opportunity to analyze the social interactions on Twitter and a new social movement as a distinct network was identified as evolving. A shortlist of the most active and widely followed Twitter users in this network was conducted based on the size of the network, frequency of postings, topics tagged and orientation of Tweets towards a discussion of current socio-political issues. The second stage involved ethnographic studies (Bell, 1969; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) of the shortlisted Twitter users, by following (and being followed by) the identified Twitter users, a sub-set of the researchers were able to initiate direct contact with the shortlisted Twitter users and participate in an emic analysis of the network behavior using participant observation and diaries while the other sub-set of researchers maintained a distance from the Twitter networks to provide an outside etic account of the network (Bryman, 2008; Marvin, 1976). This led to connecting with yet more Twitter users sharing a commonality of interests within and outside Nigeria. After sufficient time to build a degree of trust and acceptance, the ethnographic researchers introduced themselves in person where possible to the shortlisted Twitter users and negotiated access for more in-depth research studies through interviews and questionnaires.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted involving a sample of the Twitter users who actively replied to or Retweeted information about selected topics (involving democratic dialogue, governance in Nigeria, sustainable development, leadership, social media, etc) and were actors in the various protests and initiatives that dominated the Twitter network under study between the last quarter of 2011 and the second quarter of 2012. Additional interviews were also conducted on a sample of individuals outside the Twitter networks who were impacted by the activities of the networks or collaborated on joint initiatives with members of the networks. The interviews were a mix of face to face interviews, electronic interviews and telephone interviews.

A qualitative questionnaire was sent out as series of Tweets to obtain more data across a wider span of the networks, the questionnaire was specifically designed to accommodate Twitters 140 character limit. Responses were within the 140 character Tweet limit and were analyzed using content analysis to identify common themes (Bryman, 2008) Due to the restrictive character limit of Tweets and the use of colloquialism specific to Nigerian discourse the Tweets presented in the findings will be accompanied by a fuller explanation where appropriate.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An outline of the key points in the evolution of the new social movement in Nigeria is presented below through the Twitter hashtags which coordinated the democratic discourse and socio-political activism beginning from the #OccupyNigeria coalition which was influenced and inspired by the global Occupy Movements in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis and the Arab Spring which was widely covered in the traditional news media and on online social networks in Nigeria, across Africa and the rest of the world. Subsequently evidence of the nature of the network and leadership characteristics are presented and discussed.

#OccupyNigeria

The dynamic and often tense political landscape in Nigeria provides the context for constant political discourse. Twitter as the most popularly used social media channel to discourse the 2011 Nigerian elections, 77% of Twitter content used key words relating to the Nigerian elections during the election period (Asuni and Farris, 2011). In a post election statement, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria acknowledged the impact of social media and the positive use by young people of ICT during the elections (Asuni and Farris, 2011).

The dominance of Twitter in providing a space for open and democratic discourse in Nigeria evidenced during the 2011 election was used by civil society to discuss and mobilize the citizenry on a large scale when the government announced a 117% increase in the price of fuel in Nigeria on 1st January 2012 (fuel prices in Nigeria are controlled by the government). The rationale for the removal was the withdrawal of an unsustainable subsidy on some petroleum products in Nigeria.

The subsidy had been implemented by previous governments to provide a means of alleviating the poverty and reducing the cost of living for Nigerians through a cheaper price for petroleum products supported by the vast petroleum resources of Nigeria given the backdrop of the failure of successive governments to provide basic public infrastructure and a functioning public transportation system. This absence of public goods increased the cost of living for the generality of Nigerians.

The fuel increase occurred at a time when many Nigerians had travelled from cities to visit friends and family in villages and to other cities and towns. Many citizens were stranded as they could not afford to return to their homes due to the sudden, immediate and unexpected meteoric rise in the cost of transportation. Nigerians were largely vulnerable to the effects of a steep rise in the prices of foodstuff and basic amenities without a corresponding increase in income. Many Nigerian citizens questioned the rationale for the removal as being driven by an outside IMF/World bank agenda and believed that the fuel subsidy was sustainable if properly managed but had been an avenue for corruption by successive Nigerian leaders who mismanaged the subsidy funds for personal gain.

This was one of the biggest shocks to the Nigerian economy in recent years and the effect was the immediate galvanization of the civil society in Nigeria to protest and change the course of action embarked upon by the Nigerian government. While the labor organizations operating under the aegis of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) attempted to mobilize their members and the wider citizenry in protest action in partnership with other 'old civil society' organizations like NGOs. The Twitter public sphere which had grown rapidly during the 2011 elections became a forum to connect, debate and organize protests by many ordinary Nigerian citizens especially younger people. This coalesced into an identifiable 'new civil society' network organized around the #OccupyNigeria hashtag, this new social movement was inspired and influenced by the global Occupy Movement protests in various countries (which was influenced by the Arab Spring) and they adapted the popular protest brand by naming the movement Occupy Nigeria.

On Twitter, the hashtag #OccupyNigeria became an online rallying point for sharing information, experiences and opinions. Twitter, Blackberry messenger and blogs became potent channels for mass mobilization nationwide. Photo sharing sites like Flickr, Yfrog also enabled citizens to upload pictures taken during protests thus enlightening others across the nation of activities at other rally points across the country and were disseminated through Twitter links. Video sharing was also

included as citizens used Youtube and Batterbox to share views and experiences with the world. Prominent bloggers who had significant Twitter followings saw their influence grow with the rise of informational power and their moral authority as they provided a stream of information and social commentary to Nigerians via social media channels especially Twitter and their blogs. They were achieving a feat the government at various levels has failed to achieve; citizens engagement. Public leaders were largely absent from the democratic discourse about the protests, fuel subsidy removal and wider political and social change conducted on Twitter by the new social movement. Physical street protests were coordinated and citizens mobilized through Twitter by the new civil society and the trade unions and NGOs quickly came to partner with the new social movement informally organized as #OccupyNigeria. This is because of the ability of the new social movement to mobilize and coordinate physical and online protests effectively sometimes in larger numbers and among segments of the wider population than the old civil society organizations could muster.

Nigerians also came to rely significantly on Nigerian-owned but foreign based blogs (such as Saharareporters.com) for information about the Occupy Nigeria movement within Nigeria and in the Diaspora as Nigerians outside the country organized protests such as the #OccupyNigeriaLondon and other external #OccupyNigeria protests taking place in New York and The Netherlands. As the protests continued, news of extra-judicial killings circulated and traditional news media confirmed incidents of the extra judicial killing of protesters by the Nigerian police. Given the scale and effectiveness of the protests the Nigerian government was forced to negotiate with the citizenry on the price of fuel and the fuel subsidy. The #OccupyNigeria movement was an informal and nascent network characterized by the absence of formally assigned leaders and so the leaders of the trade union organizations undertook their traditional role of negotiating with the government over fuel prices (which determines the cost of living in Nigeria). The leadership of the Nigerian government and old civil society organizations agreed a reduction in the fuel price (the increase in the fuel price was reduced from 117% to a 49% increase). The new civil society was divided as to whether this was enough of a concession from the government and based on the predominant view on the Twitter network the trade unions pushed for and succeeded in getting a commitment from the government to investigate allegations of corruption and mismanagement of the fuel subsidy, this became the next focus of the new social online movement.

#Fuelsubsidyprobe

The subsequent compromise reached between government and the labor unions included commitment to conduct a probe of the fuel subsidy regime in Nigeria by the government. The lower house of the National Assembly commenced the probe and the new social movement discussed the progress made by committee and citizens with access to privileged information acted as ‘whistleblowers’ by providing evidence of corruption and mismanagement of relating to the fuel subsidy on internet websites and members of the network drew attention to these through Twitter organized informally around the Twitter hashtag #fuelsubsidyprobe. Subsequent government action and inaction resulting from the investigation into the allegations of corruption and mismanagement of the fuel subsidy was well circulated among citizens via social media, especially on Twitter network which provided a virtual public sphere for democratic.

#DanaCrashAction

On June 3rd 2012, Flight 992 in Nigeria, a McDonnell Douglas MD83 commercial aircraft belonging to an indigenous airline, Dana Air, en-route Lagos from Abuja, the Nigerian capital crashed into a densely populated Lagos suburb. All one hundred and fifty three passengers on board the aircraft were killed along with about six persons on the ground and an unascertained number of injured persons, many people in the vicinity of the plane crash were displaced from their homes due to building collapsing or in imminent danger of collapsing. This accident was the second deadliest aircraft accident in Nigerian aviation history and the highest number of fatalities (at the time) in worldwide aviation in 2012 (Johanson, 2012).

The Federal and Lagos State governments as well as the airline made efforts to provide relief to the internally displaced victims of the crash, but it was soon apparent that government agencies were unable to effectively cope with the scale of internal refugees due to logistical difficulties and an ineffective and overwhelmed emergency response agency. Many young people in Nigeria who had been involved in the political activities of the new social movement and many people new to the network organized around a hashtag, #DanaCrashAction and initiated a citizen organized relief program. The objective of #DanaCrashAction was to sensitize Nigerians to the plight of internally displaced persons, solicit relief materials, ensure the relief materials reach the victims (and were not diverted by corrupt individuals involved in official relief efforts) and help in the resettlement of the refugees. Many young people took the initiative to organize local collection centers for relief materials and an emergent, decentralized and distributed leadership characterized by participative decision making was evidenced in the coordination and social interactions informally organized around the #DanaCrashAction effort. By providing vital information and coordinating a massive campaign, #DanaCrashAction yielded dramatic results as relief donations in cash and materials poured in from within and outside Nigeria. The initiative succeeded in providing relief for a number of families and ultimately helping them settle with comparative ease while attempting to resume their lives.

#SaveCitizen

The #OccupyNigeria and #feulsubsidyprobe phases of the new social network highlighted the emancipatory potential for the online social network to transform traditional power relations and the potential for democratic discourse to bring about sociopolitical change and sustainable development in Nigeria. The #DanaCrashAction provided a space for the coordination of socially responsible and philanthropic behavior among members of the network. The political dimension continued to flourish on Twitter through democratic discourse as a virtual public sphere and the social dimension was extended through the creation of the #SaveCitizen hashtag. By substituting the 'Citizen' in the hashtag with the patient's name, campaigns have been created to raise funds to pay for critical and lifesaving medical treatment for individuals who are unable to afford such treatment. In an exhibition of a continuing pattern of citizens taking leadership responsibilities, these campaigns have also been spearheaded by young people who by virtue of their activities, have grown in leadership and influence in the Nigerian social media scene through voluntary recognition by their social media peers. The nature of the network and the characteristics of the leadership in the new social movement are reported below.

THE NATURE OF THE TWITTER NETWORK

The research findings broadly correspond with the results of the *How Africa Tweets Report* (Portland Communications, 2012) report with high rates of mobile internet use and a young demographic profile. Twitter users also frequently made references to other social media and would send links to photos on Flickr and Yfrog and links to videos on Batterbox and Youtube. The Tweet extract below also shows an embedded YouTube link as well as a link specifically formatted for mobile devices. It demonstrates how social media was used to encourage people to vote and asks that the message be Retweeted.

" *Pls RT. Help Spread the Message of ONE MAN, ONE VOTE!!! LINK <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsD5vV> AND MOBILE LINK<http://bit.ly/Nqkj3C> " [Twitter User 1]*

Videos from the occupy protesters were uploaded and Twitter was used to 'advertise' the latest uploads, social media content that presented socio-political debate through humor and satire had the most Retweets. Twitter and other social media were interwoven together and used as an arena for public dialogue.

The findings indicate that ICT is not unremittingly colonizing (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012), the absence of state or corporate censorship and the use of social media to communicate subversive material, challenge the legitimacy of the government and current socio-economic practices as well as conduct public and critical dialogue show that the communicative action in the 'lifeworld' is capable of resisting the colonization by the system through the flows of liquid modernity in social movements (Bauman, 2000; Habermas, 1981, 1996). Indeed the very attempt to subjugate the lifeworld and censor the communicative action of the protesters in Egypt and other countries during the Arab Spring galvanized collective action to depose dictatorial leaders.

Without minimizing the causes and consequences of the global digital divide and its effects on Africa (Fuchs and Horak, 2008) the research evidence suggests Twitter and other social media are used by many young people in Nigeria to engage in political and social dialogue, however there is no evidence to suggest that the sample was representative of the Nigerian population or even of Nigerian youth, the use of Twitter may be the exclusive privilege of a segment of the Nigerian population who can afford a computer or mobile device, internet connectivity, electricity to provide mains power or recharge batteries and have access to educational institutions that can provide basic literacy education. No Twitter user identified themselves as permanently located in a rural area or village in the network which are predominantly less developed than urban spaces, although some Twitter users from less developed urban areas posted Tweets. The hegemony of the English language was observed to the exclusion of indigenous Nigerian local languages, this makes the non English speaker the Other (Said, 1978) who is excluded in communication on Twitter, class and social differences that determine language differences therefore play out in who is able to speak and listen to the public dialogue on Twitter.

Twitter has an emancipatory potential (Habermas, 1974) in providing free access to communication, public dialogue, political activism and group solidarity but the underlying social structures that divide society into the 'haves' and 'have-nots' along class lines and socio-economic power differences limit the extent of mass participation in the public dialogue enacted on social media networks for every person in the villages and cities of Nigeria. Equitable and fair sustainable development thus becomes both a cause and consequence of democratic discourse on social media networks. The potential for the African

social movements on Twitter to have a globally influential voice and be truly representative of the continents population is limited by the global digital divide.

A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

The research findings indicate that a new virtual public sphere was created in Nigeria, in which citizens engaged in democratic discourse, formed and influenced opinions on political matters and questioned the actions of the state and market actors. It lies between the state and society as a space for political discourse and a “network for communicating information and points of view” (Habermas, 1996, p. 360). As the events surrounding the #OccupyNigeria activism outlined above demonstrate, the Twitter network was able to act as a public sphere that ultimately influenced the decisions of the Nigerian government (Stewart, 2001).

One theme emerging from the findings was the *freedom from fear* in engaging in political discourse, given the fairly recent transition from a military dictatorship in Nigeria, Twitter users felt that a safe space for public dialogue was lacking in Nigeria outside of social media as the historic legacy of successive military dictatorships had discouraged free and open debate. It was perceived that criticism of the Nigerian government was done at the risk of personal danger to life, liberty and property, the case of state sponsored suppression of traditional media was often referred to in interviews. Twitter provided a safer space to engage in critical public dialogue about the government and the political leadership of Nigeria which was unusual in Nigeria due to the dictatorial rule of successive military regimes that had instilled a reflex of fear within large segments of the citizenry. Twitter thus was helping the psychological transition to democracy, respect for human rights and free speech among ordinary Nigerians.

Tweets like the ones below show a greater absence of fear and the courage to discourse publicly the use of public funds by specific government agencies, and to criticize actions by the President of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (often referred to as GEJ on Twitter).

“If govt is serious abt 'No work, no pay', it should start with them. None of the people in power should b paid again #occupynigeria #jobless “[Twitter User 2]

(Explanation: if the government is serious about its policy of ‘no work no pay’ it should start with them. None of the people in power should be paid again)

people are going to profit from this millions splashed out by the FG this morning. And pple will definitely steal frm it too #NGflood [Twitter User 3]

(Explanation: People are going to profit from the millions splashed out by the Federal Government of Nigeria this morning and people will definitely steal from it too)

and

Now that GEJ decided to set up Flood Committee, which I will hold my judgment till I see what they come up within next 24 hrs #NGflood [Twitter User 4]

Twitter users valued the *freedom to communicate* and the absence of state control over digital communication. Comments like the one below revealed a widespread belief that social media was providing the opportunity for individual citizens to share information regarding bad governance and to ‘expose’ corrupt leadership without the same degree of personal danger, although there was still some degree of caution when it came to debate or activism outside the virtual public sphere:

This theme also reflects in this interview quotes:

"...On Twitter, I have freedom of expression without fear because most people are doing the same. I cannot say those same things outside the internet...You never know who's listening "[Respondent 1]

Another theme that emerged was the sense of *empowerment and voice* among Twitter users, there was a prevalent feeling that Twitter and other forms of social media were the only platforms through which their views on governance and the social, economic and political issues could be heard. They perceived their voices to be marginalized within society outside of their online social networks as the Tweets below exemplify:

"... I can't put it better. It's rather perplexing that we claim we have a government in place in Nigeria yet nobody listens to us. Some young people now feel the only way they can be heard by government and society is through violence, so pathetic." [Respondent 2]

There was a growing sense of personal and political empowerment from following and being followed on Twitter, a sense of greater power in networks and the belief that socio-political change would result from collective action. There was a widespread perception that the political and social problems of Nigeria could be solved by ordinary Nigerians through the power of the social network and not by a dependency on the government which was perceived as ineffective as illustrated by Tweets from members of the Twitter network below:

"...The #SaveCitizen hashtags calling for crowdsourced funds towards urgent medical bills further demonstrate that Nigerians are on their own " [Twitter User 5]

Yesterday it was #SaveOke ,#SaveJude... Today it is#SaveFUNMI... Tomrwr will be #SaveCitizen ... We don't ve a govt.. Let us #SAVEOURSELVES [Twitter User 6]

(Explanation: Yesterday it was #SaveOke, #SaveJude...Today it is #SaveFUNMI...tomorrow it we will need to save another citizen...we don't have a government...let us save ourselves)

"Remember, that we do this ourselves. No #PDP, #ACN, #CPC and certainly no religion. We will #SaveFunmi,#SaveMeka. #SaveCitizen, & #Nigeria " [Twitter User 7]

(Explanation: Remember that we do this ourselves. No PDP, CAN, CPC [the main political parties in Nigeria] and certainly no religion. We will #SaveFunmi, #SaveMeka, #SaveCitizen and save Nigeria)

There was a marked absence of meaningful engagement by public figures with the public sphere on Twitter, there was a perceived *absence of accountability and transparency* on the part of leaders in positions of formal authority because of their

failure to engage in dialogue on Twitter about public policy. Very few incumbent political leaders had active Twitter accounts and the few that had accounts avoided participating in democratic debate. There was a significant space for debate and critique of public policy (and public leaders) but with little meaningful participation by members of the ruling political party or public leaders, the government was perceived to be experiencing a crisis of legitimacy by members of the Twitter network who demanded meaningful engagement with public leaders on Twitter as illustrated by the comments below:

"...where are those supporting the government and its wicked policies? Why not come out and debate on Twitter?..."
[Respondent 3]

"The President is on Facebook and refused to talk with on Twitter. All the political leaders are opening Facebook accounts to avoid criticism and real dialogue on Twitter" [Respondent 4]

The findings correspond to the function of a public sphere as an arena to form public opinion and test the legitimacy of public authority (Habermas, 1989), the users of Twitter sampled valued a virtual public sphere which was safe, provided empowerment and voice but decried the lack of meaningful engagement with public leaders. The absence of a meaningful presence and engagement by public leaders with the new virtual public sphere on Twitter resulted in a communication gap between the state and civil society resulting in a crisis of legitimacy (Dalton, 2005, 2006; Sassen, 2006) as citizens challenged the stability of the status quo with activism for socio-political change (Castells, 2008; Habermas, 1976).

COOPERATION AND TENSIONS BETWEEN THE 'OLD' AND 'NEW' CIVIL SOCIETY

There was evidence of a collective sense of identity as a *new social movement in Nigeria* among the Twitter network, they perceived themselves both as individual actors and in collective solidarity with other members of the network. A common theme emerging was that socio-political change was possible and imminent in the Nigerian nation state and many users carried a sense of responsibility to initiate the change. A typical Tweet illustrating this perception and identity is quoted below:

"...Nigerians have tasted power using peaceful means. Who is going to stop them. The days of their oppressors are numbered #occupy Nigeria "[Twitter User 8]

"...A New Nigeria is possible. Let's build together. What nation will we have if we FAIL TO ACT? The time is NOW. ARISE! #lets talk "[Twitter User 9]

"...We tweeted, we broadcasted, we came out, we protested. Soon we shall say, WE CONQUERED.#OccupyNigeriafrog.com/ "[Twitter User 10]*

The Twitter users identified with the Arab Spring and Occupy Movements worldwide, they saw themselves as part of a wider global movement with local roots operating in different contexts. This sense of identity was used to draw inspiration and models but not necessarily to organize through formal global institutions preferring to distinguish between a global camaraderie and local responsibility. Members of the Twitter network took pride in local participation and decentralized leadership in contrast to the established civil society dominated by Non Governmental Organizations who were sometimes

perceived as removed from local realities, lacking grassroots legitimacy and too closely linked to Western interests and agendas. They often emphasized links between the Nigeria social movement and other global civil society actors as illustrated below:

"Representative from the American Labor Union speaking against the #FuelSubsidy removal#occupyNigeria #DC mypict.me/mwn53 " [Twitter User 11]

and

"Nigerians & Americans protest fuel price hikes at @whitehouse, Washington DC. #fuelsubsidy#OccupyNigeria pic.twitter.com/TGyo6HwR "[Twitter User 12]

There was evidence of an ambiguous relationship between the 'old' and 'new' civil society in Nigeria. The old and established civil society was dominated by formal labor organizations in particular the two big trades unions, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) as well as a range of NGOs. Some Twitter users actively participated in dialogue and coordinated protest action with the trade unions and NGOs in a symbiotic relationship in which the formal structures, power to strike and influence of the leadership of the old civil society was combined with the informal network, energy, popular support, knowledge, influence, technology savvy and grassroots activism of the new civil society. There were conflicting views about the relationship between the new and old civil society among the Twitter users, many in the Network saw the old civil society and its leadership as credible and having legitimacy and ceded the negotiation of new fuel prices to the leaders of the trade unions including demands for greater transparency and accountability by public leaders as well as for an end to the corruption connected with the fuel subsidy as indicated in the quotes below:

"...well, we needed the clout of the NLC to fight this battle. They've been there before and can force govt to act on our demands" [Respondent 5]

"...All hands have to be on deck to achieve this victory. Let's join hands with the NLC and others to secure our future!" [Respondent 6]

Other Twitter users were skeptical and believed the old civil society lacked legitimacy, was itself prone to 'selling out' and lacked the will to demand fundamental and deep rooted structural changes as illustrated below:

"...Can these guys be trusted?? they've sold us out before & might do it again...let's beware, a word is enuf & exp is d best teacher..." [Respondent 3]

(Explanation: Can these guys be trusted? They have sold us out in the past and might do so again! Lets beware, a word is enough [for the wise] and experience is the best teacher)

"...We MUST watch the trade union leaders with eagle eyes and ensure that all their actions are in line with the mandate we gave them. Naija (Nigeria), be vigilant!! "[Respondent 1]

Sequel to the compromise reached between the Federal Government and the Trade Unions, some members of the network expressed their dissatisfaction with the negotiations and disappointment with the old civil society leadership as indicated in the comments below:

“NLC had a great chance to be the voice of the people. Were they intimidated, promised OON or just tired of smoking garri?” [Respondent 14]

(Explanation: The NLC trade union had a great chance to be the voice of the people. Were they promised the prestigious Officer of the Order of the Niger award or just tired of eating a poor diet from the salary freeze due to the strike[smoking garri refers to a very basic and limited diet comprising a cheap staple food made from cassava])

and

“We waited 5 hours to hear Presidential address and were rewarded with NLC capitulation. Na wa o! (Colloquial expression of disappointment and frustration) [Respondent 15]

The findings demonstrate that the differences between the old and new global civil society (Kaldor, 2003; Melucci, 1996; Touraine, 1981) are replicated in the local Nigerian context and these give rise to tensions between the two. Despite broadly common objectives they differ in membership, organizational structure and there are specific instances of tensions and disagreement. Local and historic conditions influence the relationship between both expressions of civil society resulting in a reduction in civil society’s power to influence the state and market. On the surface it may appear that the tension is between an old, traditional and bureaucratic civil society and a younger, tech savvy, innovative social network, however, there are underlying issues of legitimacy and representation. Given the limits of access to social media caused by the digital divide *within* Nigeria, it may be that the old civil society is more representative of the wider population, for instance, many workers who lack the literacy, income and access to participate in a Twitter network are represented directly or indirectly by the trade unions and NGOs. A truly representative and legitimate civil society voice will need to incorporate actors from local communities, traditional village and tribal institutions, trade unions, NGOs, women groups, new social movements and other stakeholders.

Keith Grint has pointed out that social movements need not be rooted in a consensus to achieve effective solidarity (1995). The differences between the old and new civil society may indeed become a source of strength in public dialogue that provides space for multiple perspectives and democratic representation, differences in identities and organizational structure become secondary to broader collective solidarity and emancipatory objectives. To work together the leadership of both the old and new civil societies will need to move away from the transformational leadership approach because rather than use power and influence as a source of energy that enables participatory decision making, transformational leadership uses power and influence to overcome resistance emanating from differences in perspectives and identities (Western, 2008; Yukl, 1999).

EMERGENT, DISPERSED AND PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP

The perceived lack of legitimacy among leaders in formal positions of authority, the aura of bad governance and the lack of meaningful engagement with users on Twitter by public leaders combined with the ambiguous views towards the leadership

of the old civil society by the new civil society combined to create a leadership vacuum in the virtual public sphere. This was filled as a necessity by the emergence of a new generation of civil society leadership spontaneously seeking to coordinate a range of collective political and social actions such as mass protests and humanitarian relief initiatives. The leadership organically emerged as certain Tweeter users increased their Twitter following, shaped public opinion or engaged in concerted action with other members of the network.

The emergence was as a result of voluntary and consensual recognition and acceptance by other members in the network of the contributions of the emerging leaders and this recognition of leadership roles was bestowed, withdrawn, increased or decreased in degrees as the network evolved. In contrast to quasi-consensual leader-follower relations in bureaucratic organizations and corporations, the consent evidenced in the network went beyond mere acquiescence due to unequal power relations (Fryer, 2012; Knights and Willmott, 1992) to a fundamentally voluntary recognition of leadership roles that could be withdrawn. There was no preoccupation with formal leadership positions and leadership was democratic rather than autocratic. Informal influence and collective decision making characterized the network as illustrated below:

"We are flooding all the senators private phones with 1 million SMS each. What do you want the message to be? Pls reply. #occupyNigeria "[Twitter User 13]

The Tweet above indicates the participatory nature of decision making, everyone in the network was asked to send an SMS text message as part of the Occupy Nigeria protest to elected senators in Nigeria's National Assembly and it was open to all members of the network to decide on a common message as well as or individual content, everyone was empowered to take action by sending the text messages and recruiting others to do the same. Distributed leadership in the network tended to empower people to make decisions and influence the course of action rather than the delegate tasks which is often passed off as 'empowerment' in the practice of transformational leadership (Western, 2008). The lines between leader and follower were blurred (Gordon, 2010) and constantly shifting.

" There was constant communication via email on each issue & on Twitter... everyone who wanted to contribute and shape our common action was free to do so to the extent they wanted to... we don't have formal leaders as such... everyone is a follower and a leader at the same time" [Respondent 1]

and

" While a few people may seem like the leaders on twitter when we organize protests or coordinate donations to save a citizen, in reality it's just that they have a large Twitter following and often they are just Retweeting a suggestion by someone else on Twitter or following recommendations from someone in the network , they don't have a monopoly over what we decide to do, everyone can influence because it's almost like your Tweet is your vote on each and every topic and you can tweet more than once...it's not just the quantity of your Tweets either, people follow you on Twitter because of the quality of you Tweets, you have to make sense for people to listen and agree to follow your suggestions" [Respondent 7]

Leadership was distributed and dispersed across the network without a strong demarcation between followers and leaders as the comments above suggest. Twitter users often experienced simultaneous multiple identities as followers and leaders to

different degrees and at different times as they chose their level of engagement regarding specific forms of collective action and as their influence was recognized by other members of the network. Leadership was enacted as a democratic process rather than as embodied in a hero leader (Crevani *et al*, 2007; Huey, 1994; Pearce and Manz, 2005; Western, 2008; Woods, 2004) whose traits, leadership style, attributes or characteristics influenced a subaltern and rigidly defined group of followers. Leadership was not distributed in such a way as to privilege experts or the instrumental rationality of expert knowledge in meeting the movement's objectives (Habermas, 1981; Woods *et al*, 2004), thus leading to more democratic inclusion in public debate and the distribution of leadership responsibility arising from participation in communicative action. The democratization of communication through social media resulted in the democratization of leadership in the social movement as evidenced in the democratic recognition, selection, development, conduct, removal and evaluation of leadership in the Twitter network. The success of leader-follower relations in the network went beyond narrow instrumental performativity to include broader dimensions of sustainable development, democratic participation and social justice (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012).

In order to coordinate the political activism such as street protests and humanitarian initiatives such as the #SaveCitizen, there was a perceived need to organize through more tangible but informal network structures. The #OccupyNigeria street protests resulted in the organizing protesters around geographical zones and many individuals took responsibility to ensure the protests remained nonviolent which was a core principle of the network and the wider Occupy Movement. This involved volunteer local coordinators whose leadership role was temporarily recognized on Twitter for the geographical protest zones agreed on Twitter. During the #DanaCrashAction phase local collection points were set up and the relief materials donated were collated at larger collection stores for onward distribution to the internally displaced persons. Temporary bureaucratic and semi-formal structures emerged during that time period but they continued to evidence informal and horizontal leadership networks, participatory decision making and dispersed leadership across a wide population of members. These empowered members through decentralized decision making, local action coordination which provided a space for personal initiative, voluntary team formation, self-management and network patterns of organization. While formal hierarchies provide power for leaders to legitimate their vision and impose it on followers (Fryer, 2012) horizontal networks in which leadership is temporary, fluid, consensual, voluntarily recognized and de-recognized provides spaces for democratic relations and decentralized power structures which define distributed and dispersed leadership. The temporary bureaucratic and semi-formal structures co-existed with the dispersed leadership and participatory decision in the Twitter network as evidenced in the quotes below:

and

"We created zones & assigned coordinators who organized activity in that area & reported to the appropriate Team member for relevant action" [Respondent 5]

"The first thing was always to determine our objectives then how we can achieve them. Second, form a core coordinating team" [Respondent 6]

and

" Well, we drew up distinct components of the initiative...in reality we had to work together and no one could boss anyone else...it was at times very disjointed we achieved so much more than the government bureaucracy and we lacked their resources... we had willing people who believed in what they were doing and had the freedom to go about it as they wished within our jointly agreed guidelines and objectives and anyone could suggest changes to the guidelines at anytime, it was up to the others to agree or not to any changes " [Respondent 3]

and

"Zonal coordinators had free hand to organize the volunteers within their areas but in line with agreed guidelines to avoid complications" [Respondent 2]

The new social movement displayed evidence of a network form of organization, decentralization allowed them respond flexibly and with great speed to issues in their environment (Castells, 1997) and the leadership was distributed and dispersed with different members assuming influential roles at different times, over different issues and tasks and in different ways simultaneously. Several parallel leaders operated in the same space and time with members having multiple identities as leaders and followers to different degrees. The leadership was more about a process of coordination and influence than about specific persons in positions of authority, power to influence came from peer recognition of emergent leaders rather than assigned leaders occupying formal positions of authority.

There was an emancipatory and ethical idealism among the dispersed leadership across the network manifesting in a concern for fundamental changes to governance in Nigeria resulting in political activism and a concern for the individual human condition expressed through humanitarian initiatives. There was a desire among the emergent leadership to distinguish their leadership style from the leadership models of the prevalent political leaders and as such they emphasized participatory decision making, transparency and accountability in their actions and use of collective funds as illustrated in the quotes below:

"We were stepping into the breach created by government shortcomings so we were extremely careful about our actions and utterances..." [Respondent 4]

and

"Public trust is way too delicate so we were walking on eggshells but we made sure we had a transparent system in place for public assurance" [Respondent 5]

The research findings provide evidence of the transferability and applicability of dispersed, distributed and emergent leadership theories between academic disciplines of management studies, industrial relations, organizational studies, politics and sociology.

CONCLUSION

The rise of the Network Society has been an influential narrative describing social change across the world (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000). ICT plays an important role in the development and shaping of the Network Society, despite the global

digital divide (Fuchs and Horak, 2008), Africa plays an influential role as a part of the Network Society. The Arab Spring began in North African countries and where enabled by the use of social media which subsequently contributed to the growth of the global Occupy Movement (Aarts *et al*, 2012). . Equitable and fair sustainable development is both a cause and consequence of democratic discourse on social media networks. The potential for the African social movements on Twitter to have a globally influential voice and be truly representative of the continents population is limited by the global digital divide.

The use of Twitter in Africa has grown significantly (Portland Communications, 2012) and has resulted in the development of a virtual public sphere which serves as a space for socio-political dialogue, formation of public opinion and testing the legitimacy of public leaders and government (Habermas, 1989). This research study, part of a wider research project on the impact of social media on social processes and interactions in Africa, has identified the growth of a new civil society among users of Twitter in Nigeria. This new civil society operates as a social movement (Kaldor, 2003; Kaldor, Selchow, Deel and Murray-Leach, 2012) through an online social network. It draws inspiration from the global Occupy Movement but has followed a local trajectory of growth, focusing on local social and political activism and communication. This new civil society is a loose online social network that has demonstrated evidence of significant influence within Nigeria through effective mass political protest and collective humanitarian intervention (sometimes in more effective ways than government humanitarian relief agencies). It exists in an ambiguous relationship with the old civil society (such as trade unions and NGOs) which are characterized by centralized and assigned leadership, formal bureaucratic structures and often lack an influential social media presence. While there are common interests and evidence of cooperation between the old and new civil society there is also evidence of mutual distrust and differences in objectives and aspirations.

The new civil society is characterized by emergent leadership (Souza and Klein, 1995; Yoo and Alavi, 2004) whose influence is based on voluntary peer recognition rather than assigned positions of authority. The leadership across the network is dispersed and distributed (Gordon, 2010; Gronn, 2002) with members having simultaneous and multiple identities as leaders and followers. Members participate in democratic decision making and there is evidence of the empowerment of members across the network as well as fluid and voluntary recognition and de-recognition of leadership influence. Leadership in the network was dispersed across its members and embedded in democratic organizational processes rather than concentrated in a single or few heroic or charismatic leaders. This is an important contribution to the new and growing body of research on post-heroic leadership and leadership scholarship from a Critical Management Studies perspective (Alvesson and Willmott, 2012; Fryer, 2012; Western, 2008). The emergence of dispersed leadership, the creation of a space for democratic discourse in the virtual public sphere and the development of a new civil society in the form of a social movement organized through a Twitter network all contribute to the potential for sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa.

The research findings raise significant opportunities for further research into the nature of leadership in networks. The extension of the research into the leadership process in government and commercial corporations would provide a significant development of leadership theory and practice. The nature of social interactions in networks could provide a better understanding of the nature of leadership in both bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic organizations within the fields of Management Studies, Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management. The role of personal branding and communication in influencing others in the context of social media networks and interactions and the nature of power in

networks are also points of departure from this research project into fertile avenues of further research. The role of social movements and civil society in sustainable development and the relationship between the old civil society (such as trade unions and NGOs) and the new civil society (such as informal social movements using social media networks) provide an opportunity to better understand potential avenues for the revitalization of industrial relations and civil society actors.

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