Feminism and media, opportunities and limitations of digital practices

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Abstract:

Researches done on social movements and media are often conducted at a micro-level, focusing on the individual activity (Klandermans 1997), or the macro level, excluding the meso level, linking the two first levels together. Furthermore, studies focusing on the relation between feminism as a social movement and media often neglect to identify the opportunities and the limitations of such an intersection. The aim of this research is to increase knowledge in this gap, offering a comprehensive conceptual framework that focuses on the three levels of interaction between media and feminist activism. Attention will also be paid to the intersection between offline and online as it '*helps us question the bias towards online and always connected forms of activism*'. (Fotopoulou 2014) The research questions of this thesis are: How women in Great-Britain perceive the limitations and opportunities in media, to connect with the feminist movement? And How can we understand these experiences through the role of ICT linked to macro-processes such as mediatization?

The findings are that the relatively new online platforms and media practices of digital and networked media are changing the landscape of how feminist activists think and fight for gender equality. They both carry the opportunities and the limitations of such a relation. Indeed, the assumption that social networks and online media are central in women's organization is correct, however, they are not the only way of doing so and they should remain complementary. The concept of 'digital sisterhood' helps us to understand that complex balance and it allows us to question the different levels of activism that are being reconsidered.

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1. Introduction

The quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in this study aims to understand the role of media in the feminist movement, describing its opportunities and limitations. The findings can also give us an insight into the role of Information Communication Systems (ICTs) in the feminist movement.

In a very fast-growing and changing environment where media is a part of our everyday life due to the increase of ICTs (Shulte, 2011) and its '*invisibility, normalization and ubiquity*' (Fotopoulou, 2017), it appears that being connected on online platforms is a necessity for political voices to be heard, recognized and raised. Media, and online media particularly are infrastructures that position themselves in a social, cultural political and economical context (Mattoni & Treré, 2014). With a '*culture of connectivity*' (Van Dijck, 2013) where technology is making fast and important changes at all levels and in every area, we are now facing the following debate: Empowerment versus Vulnerability (Fotopoulou, 2017).

This study focuses primarily on the feminist social movement, which is being reconfigured with media, especially digital media, on three levels: macro, meso, and micro. Feminism is considered as a political movement and a social movement due to its immense diversity and its '*passionate commitment*' (Fotopoulou, 2017), thus it is undoubtedly being changed by the fast-growing digital environment, as Harcourt stated '*online networks (…) emerge as political tools that can assist in pushing forward change*' (Harcourt, 2013, p442).

The first popular feminist media appeared in the 19th century with non-online media, examples being newspapers (La voix des femmes - *The voice of women*; 1848) and radio stations (Pageant Protest Sparked Bra-Burning Myth; 1968).

Scholars tend to refer to the different periods of feminist protest as feminist waves, The idea of currently being in the fourth wave is still unclear and disputed by scholars, and goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. We can however certainly talk about at least three waves of feminism, all of which started in the USA. Starting during the 18th century, the first wave was primarily focused on the right to vote, ending in 1919 with the Amendment to the US constitution that conferred women the right to vote. The second wave began in the 1960s focusing this time on equality and discrimination issues. Governed by the well-known slogan '*The personal is political*', the wave presented itself as definitely political. The third wave began in the early 1990s, and was oriented more towards the definition of feminism and the promotion of diversity. There is no single objective in this third wave, making defining the movement difficult. However, that uncertainty is, according to Elizabeth Evans (2017), one of the elements that define the wave itself.

The intention of this study is to understand the effects of media on the feminist movement, focusing on the opportunities and limitations of the movement. Thus all the research and studies that have been investigated in this paper are to explore the two following research questions:

1- How women in Great-Britain perceive the limitations and opportunities in media, to connect with the feminist movement?

2- How can we understand these experiences through the role of ICT linked to macro-processes such as mediatization?

2. Background

The purpose of this section is to offer an overview of feminism, empowerment and media in order to understand the environment that will in turn help in replying to the research questions. I will start by discussing feminism and online feminism and their definitions. Following this, I will discuss the factors that allowed feminist media to increase drastically in recent years. Then the key role of online groups in movements will be discussed, eventually concluding with the aim of this study and its contribution to Media and Communication studies.

2.1 Gender, feminism and online practices

Taking a basic definition of feminism in the Oxford Dictionary, feminism is defined as: '*The advocacy on women's rights on the ground of equality of the sexes*' (Oxford dictionary by Lexico Dictionaries, 2019). In addition to this, activism is defined by Cambridge's dictionary as '*The use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one*' (Cambridge dictionary, 2019). (10) As this study focuses on feminist activism, this concept will therefore, be referred to as the aggregated noticeable actions made by people looking for a change in our society in order to achieve gender equality. Following the principle of intersectionality, the term gender will be used instead of sexes in the study, in order to include everyone as they refer to themselves and not as society refers to them. The term 'sexes' refers only to the chromosomes and resultant organs, which is only biological-based whereas the term gender considers the identity, choices and the freedom of the person to decide, and refers to what she/he/they identify as. Thus we will talk about the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of equality of the genders when discussing about feminism. We can however go further in the definition and follow Mikayla Gratz's that states that feminism:

> '*It has at its central focus the desire to understand and dismantle the concept of patriarchy.*
>
> *This can be described as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its*
>
> *social, political, and economic institutions.' characterizing the concept of patriarchy as 'a*

system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political, and economic institutions.' (Gratz, 2017)

Feminism and online feminism share the same goal, fighting for gender equality. Taryn Riera proposes a definition of online feminism, identifying it as:

'online spaces (that) are built as communities of validation and support, education and empowerment, as well as spaces of radicalization and contention'(Riera, 2015).

This definition echoes to the aim of this dissertation, discussing the limitations and opportunities of online feminist activism. These online spaces, that can also be referred to as feminist online networks are sharing a '*Social imaginary*' of their political engagement. These digital networks are sharing information and claiming a voice and recognition (Couldry, 2008) which confirms the idea that they are also positioning themselves in activism. They are a part of feminist media, a media specialized in feminism.

2.2 The increase of media through new technologies

In her work, Ohiagu describes the internet as a mass medium, a global medium that is the unique channel for mass communication.(Ohiagu, 2011) Indeed, with a small knowledge of the internet, it can easily be defined as something that is: reaching people easily, enhancing simultaneity, keeping anonymity for both creators and consumers, allowing very flexible usage (the internet can be used as a radio, a television, a newspaper, and so forth) and promoting heterogeneity. So, even if some users are from a different part of the world, they can still find a subject they are interested in on the internet and connect with others. These are the characteristics that promote the internet as a unique channel for communication and define it as a global medium.

Ohiagu asserted that the World Wide Web

'brings the Internet into the realm of mass communication and reverses the traditional pattern of one-to-many communication. Web sites offer everybody the chance to become mass communicators, mass communication is never guaranteed, but the potential is there....The affordability of this channel can make anybody an electronic publisher with access to a potential audience of millions, thus creating a whole new type of mass communicator' (Ohiagu, 2011. 225-232).

The internet needs to be considered as something relatively new that totally changed the landscape of traditional media. Moreover, with the emergence of ICT, in the mid 80's, many platforms and groups appeared on the Internet, creating an online universe with specific rules and identities. (Smith and Kolloch, 2008). However, even if the techno-enthusiasts hoped in the past to create a totally new area, is it safe to say that today, the internet can be classed as a reproduction of our

society. It is not an exact copy, (Huhn, Ferreira, Freitas & Leão 2018) but a derivation where it is easy to see the same inequalities and oppressions perpetuated such as racism, fascism and sexism. In his book *Media, culture and society 2nd edition*, Paul Hodkinson wrote that

> 'The media industry is regarded as a product of the broader capitalist political economic system in which it operates'.

He also adds that for the majority of contemporary users, the internet is not an alternative to our offline world but more like 'tools that would increase existing identities'. (Hodkinson, 2009. p275)

In his work, Honglei Li defines the three main categories of motivations that are pushing people to use the internet and media. (Li 2012) Motivation is defined by Mitchell and Daniels as a psychological state, in opposition of behaviour that is the outcome of that state. (Mitchell and Daniels, 2003)

The first category is self-related motivation. It is composed of four sub-categories. The first of these is the need of information, humans need to get and share information through three different ways: information retrieval, information giving and conversation capabilities. (Chaffee and Metzger 2001) The second sub-category is the instrumental need, such as the generation of an idea, solving a problem or influencing a group of people. The third sub-category is the need for self-discovery that derives from the value of self-realization, the need to create a personal identity (Waterman 1984). Finally, the last sub-category is the need for entertainment, the research of relaxation through interaction with others. This last category is often linked to the instrumental need. (McKenna and Bargh 1999)

The second main category is social relation motivation which is composed of two sub-categories: the need for maintaining a connection and social status and the need for exerting social influences.

The third and final category of motivation is a mix of both, the social and personal motivation, driven by the need to fulfill social cognitions.

Hansen stated that "the thing that makes computer-based communication so powerful is that it includes virtually every level of communication, from the interpersonal communication of email and instant messaging to the mass communication and World Wide Web". (Hasen, 2005. p272)

If the internet is such an important tool and can bring people together, we should now consider the reasons why people are drowning and staying in particular online groups.

2.3 The need for online groups

With the increase in the use of the internet, computer-mediated groups became more and more accessible and easy to use. These computer-mediated groups quickly became an everyday habit for most people, checking the news through different mediums such as their mobile phone or computer in order to get informed. (Räsänen, 2015) In industrialized countries, activities like playing online

video games or social networking that include interaction with a peer are the main reason why people go online (Lehdonvirta et al. 2009). Traditionally, people were mostly engaging and thus identifying themselves with their family, local communities or workplaces (Putnam 1995, Miles 2000, Schor 2004). However, relatively recent studies show that participants from online communities were developing strong ties (Rheingold 1993, Bruckman 1998, Williams et al. 2006). According to the social-identity theory of Tajfel and Turner, the reason why individuals anchor themselves in particular online groups is a need to categorize themselves and group themselves with people in a particular environment, also identifying the contrast between that microcosm and others. (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) This is a typical need for psychological anchoring point referring to the self-esteem and self-realization process. Robert Nisbet conducted his research in that direction, stating that the deepest and most fundamental idea in sociology is the community (Nisbet, 1996).

As strong ties can be created among people, online communities become a source of friendship, emotional support, categorization, social comparison and other social processes that are usually found in offline traditional interactions.

We could categorize online groups as 'communities of choices' in contrast to close geographical groups that link people primarily by geographical proximity (Rheingold 2005). People would thus connect through these communities of choices as indicated in its name, it is a choice that the user makes, thus the user can interact and position themselves in an environment that allows them growing, learning and sharing by choice. As online media and networking are today making the flow of information very easy (Mutz & Wojcieszak 2008). the dense connections between people allow the creation of new communities online, creating an exponential creation of content on the internet, satisfying more people day after day. In the end, everyone should be able to find their place in an environment that is pleasant and useful.

Cantoni and Tardini's definition of community will be used. This states:

> 'a group of persons who share something more or less decisive for their life, and who are tied by more or less relationships.'(Cantoni & Tardini, 2005)

Community can be split into two main behaviours : the paradigmatic, '*a set of people who have something in common*' and the syntagmatic, '*a group of people who interact*' (372). As online feminist networks are groups of people aiming at the main goal, we could say that this particular community fits in the paradigmatic definition. (Riera, 2015)

3. Literature review and existing research

3.1 The aim of the research and research questions

Studies related to social movements are traditionally oriented toward the manipulation of the masses, leaders, and dictators. The use of media related to social movements is starting to be looked

at by scholars and is mostly characterized by ''Temporal and spatial interdependencies' (Tilly 2008, p.134).

As stated previously, our society is entering a new digital era where the use of online media is a necessity for activism, and this '*Revolution 2.0*' (Coco & Albagli 2012) is yet to be examined and understood. Researches done on social movements and media are often conducted at a micro-level, focusing on the individual activity (Klandermans 1997), or the macro level, excluding the meso level, linking the two first levels together.

Furthermore, studies focusing on the relation between feminism as a social movement and media often neglect to identify the opportunities and the limitations of such an intersection.

The aim of this research is to increase knowledge in this gap, offering a comprehensive conceptual framework that focuses on the three levels of interaction between media and feminist activism. Attention will also be paid to the intersection between offline and online as it '*helps us question the bias towards online and always connected forms of activism*'. (Fotopoulou 2014)

The research questions that will guide this research are the following :

1- How women in Great-Britain perceive the limitations, and the opportunities in media to connect with the feminist movement?

2- How can we understand these experiences through the role of ICT linked to macro processes such as mediatization?

3.2 Paradigm

After much research in order to choose the proper paradigm for this research, I decided to follow the feminist empiricism paradigm for diverse reasons.

Catherine Hundleby describes this paradigm as a '*tradition of empiricism, which can be defined as epistemology that gives primary importance to knowledge based on experience*'. (Hundleby, 2011) Empiricism as a whole is more commonly associated with some British philosophers of the 18th century such as John Locke, George Berkeley or David Hume. It discusses people's ability to gain knowledge and understanding, depending on their social and psychological background. The sensory experience has an important role in knowledge collection -through data, evidence and facts, the paradigm minimizes the concept of innate ideas and inborn skills, in contrast to the rationalist movement that highlights these.

During its strong development in the early 20th century, many empiricists wanted to develop a science invented specifically for social purposes that would include socio-political emancipation, e.g feminism, that we could call today an intersectionality science. Empiricism fits with the common feminism cause due to its rhetorical power that engages with scientists and scholars,

offering the movement a serious and academic base.

Moreover, the naturalist form of empiricism is pretty close to feminist theories because it highlights the social and physical embodiment of knowledge expression, just like feminism.

Thus knowledge is often considered as a wide domain that includes an everyday understanding and constructs itself on a diverse source of experience by feminist empiricists. (Code, 2006) Furthermore '*the experiences from which we gain knowledge do not all arise from scientific methodology and may even include reading fiction*'. (Code, 2006B, 39) The theory constructs itself like a human would construct themselves: based on facts and personal experiences, bringing more content, knowledge and volume to the initial situation. This is exactly why I chose this paradigm and why I think it fits perfectly with this research.

However, this paradigm has some limitations. Hundleby writes about the Conservative Quality of Empiricism and the misunderstanding of the paradigm. Indeed, this paradigm is not one of the most used in research and is sometimes controversial regarding its legitimacy as it mostly focuses on facts and experiences. Furthermore, the writer discusses this in her work and defends the feminist empiricism paradigm with legitimate arguments that resonated with me regarding the research conducted in my whole work :

> "*The patriarchal social system produces almost all of the science available that might provide empirical standards for evaluating knowledge claims. As a practical political resource, science has a history of resisting social explanations for gendered differences and seeking instead accounts based on biology that portrays the differences as relatively immutable. The tendency in the scientific study of knowledge to accept gender as given and a historical seems to be especially strong when women's capacities have been judged to be inferior. (...) Yet researchers persist in looking for biological reasons for gendered differences in understanding (Fausto-Sterling, 1985, 1992), such that cognitive science seems bent on justifying women's low social status. Psychologists resolutely search for differences, even when empirical results consistently reveal gender parity in verbal ability.*' (Hundleby, 2011, p39)

Using the feminist empiricism paradigm offers accountability in a dominant culture and link my research to scientific resources. However, we need to keep in mind that both of these advantages acknowledge positives and negatives in the paradigm, which is the root of the controversy for scholars discussing this particular paradigm.

3.3 Media, communication and information technologies: a permanent change

As mentioned previously, in recent years the world has experienced a significant increase in the proliferation of information and online content creation. The increase is exponential as we are not able today to limit the creation of data and the online cloud storage seems bottomless. As creations cannot be perfectly copyrighted or kept secret, we participate in a perpetual renewal of what already exists on the internet, however as every human has a different reality, the copy is never exact thus it offers a large panel of content that looks the same but which is in essence, different and unique to everybody. Media and ICT are always changing and growing because they are a part of the internet which is a constantly changing environment, and a change on the internet means creation. Anybody can be an actor in this '*mediation of everything*' (Lievrouw & Livingstone 2006) and it is particularly that point that makes the internet a powerful place with many subcategories.

However this exponential increase in the '*mediation of everything*' influences our offline life and impacts the way we see culture and society on many levels such as politics, religion, ethnicity, etc.

Since its first emergence, media is one of the main actors of our general understanding of the world, our general knowledge and a great shaper of our identity. The internet and media are in the heart of our lives and we could push that idea and say that they are also the heart of our societal world. The movement #MeToo is a great example on how an online movement can have great repercussions on the whole modern world no matter the different cultures, countries and social classes. Every dimension of our life is impacted by the development in communication: we have Linkedin for our working life, Facebook for our personal life, Youtube for education or recreation, and almost every newspaper offers an online version. These environments are moving, growing, changing, and as our lives are deeply connected to them, lives, knowledge and opinion are also fast-changing. Indeed, media and communication is the world's fastest-growing industry which are the main source of the "recent explosion in the stock of human knowledge". (Seligman, Steen, Park, Peterson, 2005)

Parks stated that with our society entering the electronic era, more people are communicating online not just to access more information but also to create content that will be a reflection of that person's reality.

Media production has changed, everyone can be an actor today and people can shape their identities in this diversity of production as stated in Media Life. (Deuze, 2012). The internet and media are a source of a multiplicity of knowledge and this is exactly why they are such powerful tools. As media and communication are influencing every part of our lives, it has also had a strong effect on the different waves of feminism, especially the third wave. (Taylor Blair Johnson, 2017)

3.4 Empowerment from a group and feminism

Rheingold stated that communities play an important role in creating and maintaining significant social relations. (Rheingold, 2005) With the emergence of the third wave, feminist communities arose on the internet as groups of women interacting through their computers, bonding and sharing their experiences as women in our society. The internet itself offers the technology to feminists and allows them to both reconfigure and rethink activism. However, before affirming that online feminism is empowering women, the idea of empowerment will be discussed.

Moscovitch and Drover started to describe empowerment with the examination of two concepts: power and powerlessness. (Moscovitch and Drover 1981) Cornell defines power as the 'capacity of some persons and organizations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others'. (Cornell, 1989, 2) Power could arise from many different sources such as personality, wealth, and so forth. In feminism, the power is coming from intense networking, sharing and diversity.

In most academic papers, empowerment is linked with personal control. Rappaport goes further and states that 'by empowerment I mean our aim should be to enhance the possibilities for people to control their own lives'(Rappaport, 1987, 119). Empowerment becomes a process of change in a matter of self-acceptance and self-identity shaping, offering people the ability to shape their identities and accept themselves through changes.

McClelland conducted interesting studies and suggested that people would first need to gain information about themselves and their environment in order to take power over other people and hope for a change. (McClelland 1975) Along the same lines, Whitmore defined empowerment as an interactive process where people go through social and personal change, enabling them to then take actions over other people or organizations. (Whitmore 1988, p13)

Keiffer goes a bit further into this dynamic process and describes four stages: entry, advancement, incorporation and, commitment. (Keiffer 1984). The first stage of the process, the entry is motivated by the conditions or the experiences of the participant that Keiffer refers to as an act of 'provocation'. In the feminist context, that provocation could be related to the motivation of breaking the rules of patriarchy. The second stage of the process, advancement, is composed of three major aspects that will be determining keys for the whole process: a mentoring relationship, strong relation with supporting peers from a collective organization, and the acquisition of knowledge from a social or political situation. In online feminism, that step could be related to the moment where a feminist decides to join online communities to be a part of a validating community and to gain knowledge in order to start validating identity and beliefs, created in the first step of the process. The third stage of the process, incorporation, is seen as the development of a growing political and social consciousness. The ideas, beliefs and identity are confirmed and strong. In the

fourth and final stage of the process, the commitment step, the participant applies their new ideas, beliefs and identity to their everyday life. The informations they first gain on the first step are now their new reality.

Through these steps, we can clearly see that empowerment is a social-action process where participation and organized communities are necessary (Wallerstein, 1992). The goal of this dynamic process can be related to politics, community life, social justice or simply control over individuals or networks.

Rappaport enters into this idea, that empowerment 'conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights' (Rappaport 1987, p.121). Following his work, we understand that empowerment comes from three levels: personal, public and a mixture of the aforementioned.

The concept of women's empowerment comes from different debates and analyses generated by the feminist movement throughout the world around the 1980s. Indeed, in the 1980s, women's empowerment spread as not only a challenge but also a necessity to change the oppressive society of the time, in regard to class, race, ethnicity and religion. Intersectionality is the keystone of that growing movement.

For all the reasons cited above, the internet looks to be the most adequate tool to fit with the feminist movement.

3.5 Intersectionality in feminism

Martha P. C. Salgado wrote that:

'(the) *most remarkable traits of present day feminism is its capacity to embrace, with which it proposes to achieve ever deeper levels of understanding of the multiple forms of interaction between sex, gender, class, race, ethnic original and other social conditions which become articulated into forms of social organization, cultures and localized ideologies*'. (Salgado, 2019, p1)

Once again, we come across the idea of intersectionality, stating that feminism is not only focusing on one cause but on a plurality of societal problems and discrimination.

In her work, Anna Carastathis states that the feminist movement has for a long time lacked intersectionality. (Carastathis, 2014) Furthermore, feminist activism has been seen for a long time a fight for and by women. However, voices are starting to be raised and scholars like Hooks argue that feminism is not a movement for and by women but:

> '*a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. (…). Practically, it is a definition which implies that all sexist thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult.*' (Hooks, 2000)

The black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw is known to be one of the first scholars to discuss that special term in her work from 1989 called '*Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex : A black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics'*. She defined intersectionality as the way multiple oppressions are experienced by people.

The idea is that women of colours are discriminated in more than just one way, they live a combination of racism and sexism.

The intersectionality concept has been massively adopted because it was key concept regrouping simultaneous discriminations and oppressions, however, it is important to note that this concept, even if it was not named in this way previously, had been used during the time of slavery under the name of '*simultaneous oppressions*', '*double jeopardy*', '*interlocking oppressions*', and so forth. We discussed earlier the definition of patriarchy and we concluded that it was a way of describing the three main oppressions women are experiencing: social, political and institutional. Thus we can really see there the connexion between the forms of patriarchy feminist are fighting against and the idea of intersectionality that became central.

This intersectionality concept within the movement is then the key of empowerment. As empowerment is an interactive process of change in a matter to self-acceptance and self-identity shaping, we create ourselves, once again through echo-chambers of like-minded people.

4. Theories

4.1 The three different levels of the relation between media and feminist activism

Mediatization is a key concept in the area of media. This theoretical framework is supposed to enable the interplay between media, culture and society. Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby conducted very in-depth studies about this concept in *Mediatization: Theorizing the Interplay between Media, Culture and Society (2015)* which will be looked at now.

This concept has been expanded from many different perspectives, especially from the cultural and sociological area, which leads to a more defined and furnished definition. Indeed, mediatization is defined by the three scholars as '*an attempt to build a theoretical framework that will allow us to discuss the influences of media and communications in other social and cultural domains with researchers from other disciplines*' (Hepp, Hjarvard, 2015, 4). It places emphasis on the role of the media, which can lead to some questions such as: how 'communicative figurations' are shaped by social interaction and media or how media are influencing traditional institutions like religion or politics (Hjarvard 2013). Far from the idea of media colonising all the other fields, mediatization should be seen as 'both the development of the media and the dynamics of a variety of other
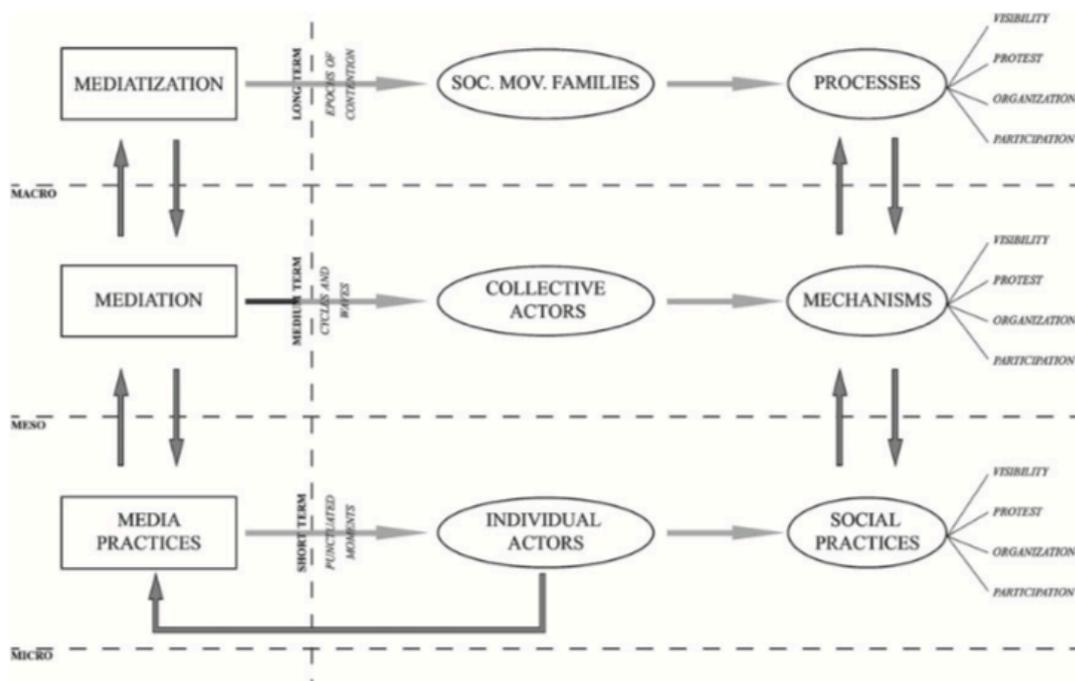
Figure 1 A conceptual framework to study social movements and the media

institutions in which social agents try to make use of the media's resources for their own purposes' (Hjarvard, 2014, 223).

The 'long-term structural process' concept that identifies historical and organic changes as transformation (Schulz, 2004)must be differentiated from mediation (Couldry, 2008; Linvingstone 2009) which is a more general term '*denoting regular communication processes that do not alter the large-scale relationship between media, culture and society*' (Hjarvard, 2014:125). The two concepts are known to be different and complementary (Hepp, 2013:31-38).

Despite the literature not always being clear on this subject, mediatization and mediation are two different concepts that lead to media practices. The relation between media and feminist activism positions itself on a three levels scale. This is what Mattoni & Treré's work is about, thus we will use their theory to build on our theoretical framework.

This scheme from their work '*Media practices, Mediation Processes, and Mediatization*' is a good starting point to understand the interactions between the three concepts discussed.

Media practices are short-term '*Punctuated events*' (McAdam & Sewell 2001), mediation is a medium-term developing cycle (Tarrow 1998) or waves (Koopmans 2004) whereas mediatization is a long term '*cultural epoch of contention*' (McAdam & Sewell 2001).

The macro-level is mediatization, it is composed of processes of social movement groups, that are linked by their political culture. These processes are '*able to shape mobilization and the relation between media and activism*' (Mattoni & Treré, 2014). This is a long process and directly connects with Mediation which is on the meso-level. Mediation regroups the collectives, and this is where the feminist waves are being placed. That collective formation allows some individuals to join groups of similar minded people and interact on a stable basis. Mediation helps us understand how activist media practices enable actors of social movements like feminists, to '*engage with the reconfiguration and remediation of media technologies and meanings*'.

The mediation mechanism allows mediatization (macro-level) and media practices to connect (micro-level). Media practices are referring to each individual that compose the meso-level's collective, and their use of the media. These '*Activist media practices*' (Couldry, 2004, 2012)are recurrent social practices where feminists can interact, generate messages. This is the scale where the media consumers can become media producers.

These three specific levels also have three specific temporalities.

Thus we have the feminist waves that are long term processes regrouping the collective actors. The collective actors are cyclic mechanisms related to mediation, on a meso-scale and linking mediatization to media practices. Media practices, on a micro-scale refer to punctuated events made by individuals in their social practice.

4.2 Hypermediacy, Bolter and Deuze

The second important point regarding the research conducted is the hypermediacy of the media.

We will first go through Jay David Bolter's work, *Remediation and the Desire for Immediacy*, to understand the starting point of the concept, then we will discuss Mark Deuze's work *Media life*, to understand the consequences, the evolution and the link with the work conducted.

The concept of remediation is composed by two representational strategies: transparent immediacy and hypermediacy. The first one refers to an attempt to hide the process of remediation in the media by making it invisible. The latter is defined as the process of remediation highlighting the media by itself. That combination of transparent immediacy and hypermediacy leads to an important exchange of information in the digital field.

Due to the fast-growing ICT industry, we need more and more speed in our everyday lives and in every fields : fastest internet, fastest access to information, and so forth. Thus our desire for digital

media, which are by definition very fast, is growing while our desire for traditional media is decreasing. Bolter stated that we have an 'insatiable desire for immediacy' and its logic is that 'the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented'. (Bolter 2000, 64) This desire is causing the producer of media to produce ever more data on digital media.

One of the reasons human beings are asking for more and more content online is firstly to fulfill their need of immediacy but also because the digital medium can 'erase itself, so that the viewer stands in the same relationship to the content as he would if he were confronting the original medium', which at the end makes the experience fast, almost real and unlimited.

Mark Deuze is one of the references when it comes to media and globalization research in the scholar's world. In his work, *Media life* (2012), Deuze questions our relation to media: do we live with the media or in the media? (Deuze 2012) He states that media today is multitasking in order to fit in our everyday life and our desire for ubiquity. That huge daily consumption of media makes them 'pervasive and ubiquitous', increasing their invisibility and, through a vicious (or virtuous?) circle, makes us consume even more media as we are not able to put barriers on it and we developed a dependence. Regarding that invisibility, Botler also states that 'the increasing invisibility of media is exemplified by their disappearing from consciousness when used intensely by their logic of immediacy'. (Bolter, 2000, p.63)

Deuze goes even deeper in his analysis of the media, stating that they 'become the playground for a search of meaning and belonging- not just consumption'. In other words, through the invisibility, the media are completely changing their roles or we are completely changing the role of media, they are today 'experienced' not just consumed like they used to be. Today, everyone with access to the World Wide Web can create content online, and as media is now experienced and thus shaping our lives and reflecting our reality, we can find a bit of everyone on the internet. Indeed, people are now 'producing themselves' and by extension, through the concept of remediation producing also each other.

The objective here is to highlight the fact that these two major works highlight the increase of the media's invisibility, enabling everyone with access to the internet to be a content creator and to share it with anybody interested. The fact that everyone can produce content brings as many different points of view as people sharing their work, which could explain the diversity and wide spectrum in certain online communities.

4.3 From offline to online, entering the digital sisterhood?

A common assumption is that in feminism and in any other form of activisms, there is a need for digital networking and media technologies in order to reply and compete on the same scales as the opposition, gain recognition and do advertisement (Fotopoulou, 2014).

The feminist movement on all the three scales discussed earlier, positions itself within a neoliberal society where alternative choices such as feminism are seen as a confrontation. Feminism is fighting for big societal changes and uses digital networks to do so. Digital Networks are an efficient way of sharing information and gaining knowledge (Couldry, 2010), and it became so common that scholars such as Fotopoulou started to ask if feminism moved to a '*digital sisterhood*' era (Fotopoulou, 2014). That notion of sisterhood was primarily defined by Robin Morgan in 1970 by digital networks where feminist groups connect to see support. Located at the intersection of online spaces and offline interactions, the notion of sisterhood has been criticized more recently, notably by Hooks in 1986. Being based on that intersection, between the online world and the offline world, the concept points out the fragile balance between opportunities and limitations in the relationship with media and feminism. This is why this concept is 'digital sisterhood' is important for this study, it points out that intersection that has not been studied enough by previous scholars.

Regarding the opportunities, it is clear that social media and online networks enabled a massive dissemination of information everywhere in the world, to anyone willing and able to read about the movement. Since that proliferation of data in all countries, the feminist movement is now constituted of transnational networks.

Digital media and digital networks totally changed the shape of the traditional feminist structures, the flow of information is made easier and the potential seems bottomless. Moreover, the hyper accessibility of the online networks enable activists to discuss a wider range of topics, thus it flourishes the social movement with new aspects that have not been discussed before.

However, online media for feminism also has its limitations and they should be considered as well as the opportunities. While the digital activisms are often celebrated as milestones for the movement, anxiety about these new technologies is increasing among communities that do not have access to the internet. Ellen Helsper writes about these '*Digital underclass'* that are arising in our society,and excluding (2008:2). Indeed some feminist activists were already fearing the gap between them and the new generation of feminists and that gap seems to grow due to digital networks that they do not have access to. In that case, online networks are a source of the fear of exclusion from political and social life. That fear can lead to anxiety and a self-questioning about the self-construction and the self-legitimity.

To characterize these limitations, Fotopoulou uses the term of '*Biodigital vulnerability*' (Fotopoulou, 2017).

These three theories helped us to understand that the intersection between offline and online is significant, and acting on every level (macro, meso, micro). That '*Complex overlap of empowerment and vulnerability*' (Fotopoulou, 2017, p113) characterize the relation between media and feminist activism.

5 - Research methodology

5.1.1 - Quantitative Survey

To begin with the research, I decided to conduct a quantitative survey.

A research survey is used "to answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posted or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context." (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 136)

Through my survey called "How feminist media are potentially empowering women in Great Britain in 2019?", I wanted to observe the relation between media and empowerment among the women that would have replied to my survey in Great Britain in 2019. My aim was to understand the uses of this sample towards media and online media, related to feminist activism.

I chose to use a quantitative survey as this form of research is capable of offering replies from a large sample of the population, and offer the possibility to gather demographic information about the sample such as gender, age, and so forth. However, it is important to note that surveys only offer an estimation of the reality through the sample used, the results from a survey can not be taken as an exclusive truth characterizing every woman in Great Britain. It is just relevant regarding the sample proposed. In addition to that, the way questions are asked and the manner that the subject accessed the survey can be parameters that will influence the subject result. We can also add that the women in that 'digital underclass' discussed previously did not have access to this survey, thus the results might be oriented toward digital activities more than offline activities. In this sense, the perfect survey can not exist, so every survey has a margin of error. I tried to minimize that margin of error as much as possible by following the protocol described below.

5.1.2 Method and Participant

My survey was launched on April the 9th, and was open until April the 17th, which results in nine days. I needed a short period in order not to be late in the interpretation and writing of this dissertation but I also wanted to have a consequent and valid number of participants. I had a target

of 100 participants minimum, and I ended up with 118 participants, with only 111 achieving my criteria, which was enough for me to close the investigation period. As I had to select the population I wanted to target carefully, the first three questions, out of the 21 present, were compulsory. That allowed me to get rid of people who identify themselves as men and people not living in Great Britain. My 111 participants are thus, supposed to be people identifying as women and living in Great Britain.

The questions asked were :

	Question	Objectives
1	How old are you?	Demographic purpose question
2	What country do you live in?	'closing gate' question
3	What is your gender identity?	'closing gate' question
4	Do you consider yourself as a feminist?	Understand the percentage of feminists in the female population*
5	In few word, what is feminism for you?	Understand how they consider feminism as there are as many forms of feminism as humans
6	Do you think there are different types of feminism?	Understand their opinion on my previous declaration
7	Generally, do you feel empowered by the movement?	Understand if the population feels empowered (aka feeling stronger) by the feminist movement*
8	Would you say that feminist medias help you to feel more empowered in your offline life? (e.g not on the internet)	Understand feminist media have an impact in their offline life
9	How often do you engage with feminist media?	Understand the frequence of consultation of feminist media, thus the degree of impact it could have
10	Do you think feminist online media and online groups are necessary for the movement?	Understand the necessity of support within the community
11	Do you see the internet as a place of empowerment or harassment?	Understand how the internet is perceived*
12	Do you think feminist media generally empowers women?	Understand the point of view of the effect of feminist media on women globally
13	Have you ever meet someone in real life through a feminist group/media?	Understand if the support is also in real life or can mostly stay online
14	If yes, would you do it again?	Understand the habit
15	Have you ever defended the feminist cause you defined previously online (through a comment, a like, a share, etc.)?	Understand the level of engagement of the population*
16	If no, why?	Understand the reason of a non-engagement of the population*
17	Have you ever defended the feminist cause you defined previously offline (discussion, meeting, etc.)?	Understand the level of engagement of the population*
18	If no, why?	Understand the reason of a non-engagement of the population*
19	Do you feel safer talking about feminism offline or online?	Understand what way is preferred to talk about feminism by the population*

| 20 | Do you think feminists are extremists? | Understand the point of view of the moment |
| 21 | Do you think there is a popular feminist leader? Who? | Linked to question 5 and 6, understand what are the different leaders to everyone if there is/are one/many |

Legend :

- The questions with the font in red were compulsory and eliminatory for non-women and non-living in Great Britain
- The questions with the number in light grey were closed questions (no comments were possible)
- The questions with the number in dark grey were opened questions (I asked people to shortly develop their ideas)
- * : from the survey conducted here

I chose to create a fast survey, to be sure I would not be losing participants through the research, which explains why I only wrote 21 questions and made them mostly 'closed'. The results prove that I was right to do so as the part where people could express themselves were mostly empty, except for the question 5.

I used the first three questions to determine my population and forbid access to irrelevant participants e.g male people not living in Great Britain.

In order to collect replies, I published the survey in Facebook Groups such as "International Women Connected/London" or "Women in Networking Edinburgh (WiNE)" in order to have total strangers replying to my survey, doing so, I hoped that they will not feel guilty to share their true thoughts and opinions.

I decided not to divide the participants by social class as it was not the point of my survey, but I did decide to divide them by age, in order to see any difference between the different age categories. From the survey, 40 women are between 15 and 20 years old, 28 are between 21 and 25 years old, 13 are between 26 and 30 years old and 28 are over 30 years old. Only two of them preferred not to communicate that information.

5.1.3 Results

I exported the results in an excel file (which is available on-demand) and proceeded to the analysis. A hundred of women considered themselves a feminist and only eleven declared not referring to the movement as a feminist.

Exactly 103 women replied feeling empowered by the movement itself and 8 said that they were never feeling empowered, including 6 of the non-feminist women while only 75 women replied feeling empowered by feminist media and 36 others replied no. This means that of the sample, potentially 28 women feel empowered by the feminist movement but not by the media related to it. However, on the next question, only 10 women replied that feminist groups and media were not important for the movement and 99 replied that they were necessary, including 6 women referring themselves as non-feminist. That answer could be linked to Andreas Hepp, Stiff Hjarvard and Knut Lundby's work on Mediatization. Indeed, the fact that media are necessary for the perennity of the movement shows that they are central in this institution, a crossover between media, culture and society. Referring to the internet itself as a place for discussion, 72 women (≈65%) described the internet as a place of harassment and empowerment. While 49 women think that it is as safe to discuss feminist topics online and offline, 50 declared feeling more comfortable discussing it offline and only 9 have a preference for the online world. The last question of the survey, 'Do you think there is a popular feminist leader, who?' Confirms the complexity of the movement: 45 women replied no, 25 women replied there were more than just one. Emma Watson, with 16 votes is the most cited, Malala Yousafzai and Germaine Greer come second with 6 votes.

From this analysis, I had a global picture of how this sample was positioning itself as feminist and what their feelings were according to the panel of feminist media offered. For a reminder, out of 111 replies, 3 think feminism does not exist, 16 think there is just one type of feminism and 92 agreed that there are different types of feminism. On question 21, I had a broad range of results, from singers like Pink, to actresses such as Emma Watson, also seeing a Nobel peace prize winner Malala Yousafzai. Such results offered me the possibility to connect all the points of this dissertation and encouraged me to push the study in order to confirm a new theory : as we are all content creators on the internet and as there are many different types of feminism, the feminist media accessible on the internet could be fragmented and diverse, like the producers. This table sums up the results of this last question.

Name of the potential leaders

Name of leader	Mentioned
Emma Watson	16
Malala Yousafzai	6
Germaine Greer	6

The conclusion that the quantitative survey allows is to draw is quite clear. Most of the women from that sample consider themselves as feminist and feel empowered by the movement. The engagement with feminist media is quite high as only eight participants stated that they never engage with them. Feminist media are definitely a tool for empowerment for most of the women interviewed, however as the survey has been made online, different results could have popped up if people that are mostly engaging offline replied to it.
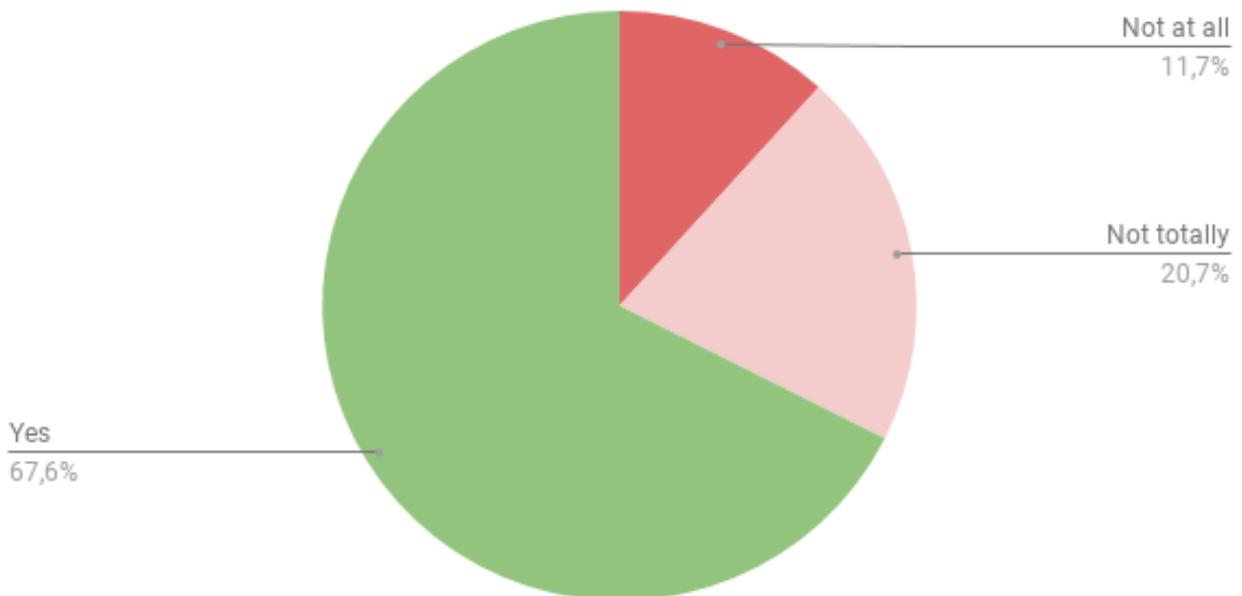

FIGURE 2 : FEMINIST MEDIA AND EMPOWERMENT

The survey highlighted the point of the research question and confirmed that the intersectionality between online and offline is complex and contains both opportunities and limitations. This is the only question of the survey where the replies are the most diverse. However, the conclusion tends to lead to the idea that women feel safer to discuss about feminism offline, as is it, according to their

replies, a safer place. This draws a conclusion on the idea that the online feminist media are empowering and a great tool to empower women in their everyday lives but that the offline networks are still a necessity for feminists to discuss and share theirs believes as it is a safer place.
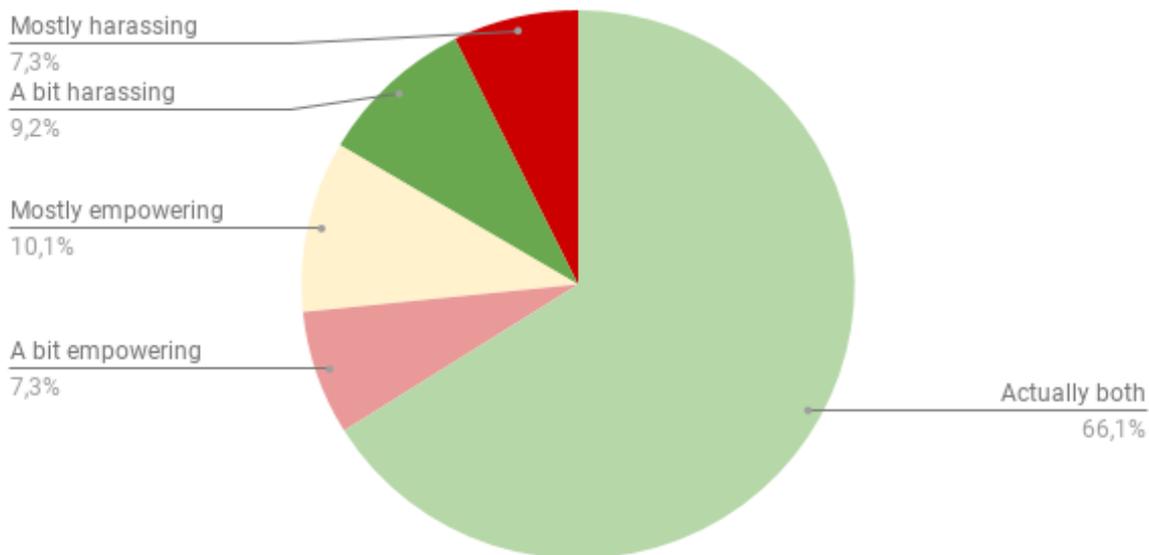

FIGURE 3: LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE INTERNET

5.2 Qualitative interviews

5.2.1 Sample and method

I decided to conduct the study with two women from Great Britain that participated in my survey. I knew they were participants as they replied to an official post I made asking to meet some people for an interview. They both wanted to remain anonymous but allowed me to divulge their demographic identity.

The first woman I interviewed, which is going to be called 'J' to make the discussion easier, is 28 years old from Scotland, living in Liverpool and currently working.

The second woman I interviewed, that is going to be called 'F' is a 17 years old from Bath, England, still studying in high school.

It was important for me to interview women from different countries across Great Britain and at two very different ages. I tried to reach some women over 60 but had no positive replies.

I conducted both of the interviews on April the 28th 2019 through Skype and recorded the audio on my phone. Both of the interviews are approximately 15 minutes (15:42 and 15:59).

I started to thank them for participating in my study, trying to create a safe atmosphere where the discussion is wide open. I connected the interview to the survey done a few weeks ago, but I tried to let the discussion go as much as possible in order to open the discussion and let the participant talk without my intervention.
Beforehand, I wrote some questions that would help me to conduct the interview if the discussion was not successful.

This was the list of question :

-Do you consider yourself as a feminist ?
-Do you think there are many types of feminism?
-Why do you think there is not one big form of feminism?
-Do you think it divides the movement or strengthen it ?
-Without considering the media, do you consider yourself empowered by the feminist movement itself?
-Why do say it helps you in your everyday life?
-Do you think you are empowered only by the type of feminism you refer to or by the whole spectrum ?
-Do you feel empowered by the feminist media?
-What does it brings to you?
-Do you think feminist media are really a part of the movement or it should be considered more like a trend where people capitalized on ?
-Who came first feminist media or feminist ?
-Do you think there is one popular feminist leader? or do you think there are many?
-Do you think having some famous figure can somehow put all the rest of the spectrum in the shade (ex : Emma Watson being accused of white feminism)
-Do you think it's a good thing there is not one single person representing the movement ?

Then, I transcribed the interview and started to work on the results.

5.2.2 Results

The results were interesting and corresponded well with what I deduced from the previous quantitative analysis. Being pressed for time, I was not able to do more interviews, I am also very satisfied with the quality of the interview and the results, which are in my opinion, confirmation of the hypothesis.

I will summarize the results of the two interviews separately even if the questions were the same then summarize the reply as a whole.

5.2.2.1 J's results

J considers herself a feminist and agreed on the assumption that there are different types of feminism.

She argues that it is because individuals are different thus they have different opinions on the same subject, the idea of the different waves of feminism could also be the reason for that plurality. The idea of feminism as a prism appeared when she said that "some types of feminism make it sounds like men are in any way involved at all whereas I think we have to think about the entire picture of the norms of the world we live in". That sentence was initially a way of saying that there are different types of feminism but behind those words lies the idea that there is a lack of intersectionality in some sorts of feminism. I decided to push in that direction and J said that the new phase of feminism we are experiencing is more based on intersectionality and also "involves a lot of media which it did not in the past". Indeed, she stated that intersectionality is better considered today because feminist media are educating people and offer more visibility to small voices.

J said that she is empowered by every type of feminism even if that specific form (for example the Femen movement) is not what she refers to, because "all parts of the spectrum are making what feminism is in its essence". Feminist online media is definitely empowering J as it is the only way she is gathering feminist news and her source of empowerment. However, she agreed that feminist media is surfing on a capitalization trend, where the craze is wealth-based instead of being justice-oriented. That being said, she stated that feminism would not be as important today without the intervention of the media, thus she agreed on the idea of a virtuous circle. Feminists are making feminist media grow, and the rise of feminist media allow some women to realize that they are feminists.

While talking about Emma Watson and telling her that her name appeared many times in the

previous survey, J elaborated a theory on why some icons were created, even if these people were not able to reflect the movement: "The media loves to make Icons leaders". Some leaders do not choose to be leaders but they are made as such due to the media, she also stated that: "Some women just want to do something good, not to be a leader".

5.2.2.2 F's results

F considers herself as a feminist and agreed on the fact that there are different types of feminism, she illustrates her opinion pointing out extreme feminism as a part of feminism she can not refer to. F started the discussion on the idea that some individuals are degrading the whole movement, she pointed out some of her close friends that do not want to be labeled as feminist because of extreme feminism that they can not identify to. They basically "do not want to be seen in a bad way".

After that brief moment, she quoted that easy access to online media is beneficial for most feminists that can find types of feminism that fit their ideas as the panel is wide, especially on social media. I then pointed out the fact that she mentioned online media and asked her feelings toward the offline feminist movement. She said she mostly get empowered through the online movement, thus I asked her to develop what online feminism was bringing to her. She said that "education is one of the main changes I experienced thanks to feminism, I feel way more respected at school for example (...) there is (also) definitely a sense of unity between the girls".

She finally stated that she feels empowered by the whole movement: online and offline. She gave an example saying that she "is not a Femen and it does not inspire me (her) to act but it does give me (her) more essence of unity in myself (herself) (...) it (feminist media) makes me feel proud".

F agreed that feminist media could a marketing trend rather than an educational point, however as feminism has always been there, "media is (now) a place where (feminism) can be express more, it's way more powerful" and they are "necessary because they offer a lot about education".

Regarding the question about a possible single feminist leader F stated that "there is not only one popular leader as there are different types of feminism, but there are few role models that are present on social media". The platform offers a variety of forms of expression, it's a collective strength. Indeed she supported her opinion adding that "You do not really know many feminists off social media because they can not reach as many people" thus "Media is definitely a catalyst for the movement".

To sum up that interview, the following sentence could be used. "Feminism is such an objective thing to each person, we do not all see feminism in the same way (...) there are many different feminists on social media that offer different things (...)and a lot of people do not like the big

figure, but they like small figure that they can relate too easier. I think the movement would not be like that without them".

5.2.2.3 Group results

Both of the women I interviewed considered themselves a feminist without any hesitation. They also both agreed on the fact that there was a plurality of feminist forms within the movement, which could allow us to talk about a prism of feminism. J and F both agreed that all the forms of feminism -online and offline- were empowering them. A strong statement has been made on the idea that we are living in a new phase, if not wave, of feminism that is involving more and more media, offering easier access to information to media consumers. That easy access to information brings wider access to education, which has been said to be one of the main changes experienced in the everyday lives of the two interviewees. However, a point has been made on the lack of intersectionality of the current phase, indeed the media are mostly talking about white feminism, creating icons like Emma Watson who is white, rich and probably heterosexual, putting aside women of colours, transexuals, underprivileged social classes, and so on.

5.3 Analysis and conclusion of both researches

This section aims to draw a conclusion on the two researches conducted in this work in order to understand how women in Great-Britain perceive the limitations and the opportunities in media to connect with the feminist movement and how we can understand these experiences linked to processes such as mediatization.

This analysis is strictly based on the sample selected for the researches.

There is a huge increase in the use of media within feminists as individual and the feminist movement, especially on digital media which is the most common way of information gathering. However, increasing use of the media and especially digital media connected to the feminist social movement is revealing opportunities and limitations that such an intersection -offline and online- offers.

The increasing use of the media makes feminists feeling more empowered in general, bringing a distinctive education to individuals and on a larger scale to society. However, online networks are not perceived as safe as the offline world, where most of the discussions tend to take place. A point has been made on the fact that online feminist media are now trending thus forcing some content to consumers, for example, the creation of feminist figures by the media, and losing its essence in the

way that the movement is now more socially accepted and less seen as a confrontation of the society. That evolution has certainly been brought by the fast spread of feminist online media. Women are mostly being empowered online but most of the interactions take place offline, in a safer place than the internet, probably due to the fact that offline interactions take place between people that already know each other.

6. Ethics and validation
6.1 Limitations

As for many researchers, the ultimate goal of this dissertation was to remain ethical, true, and honest, which is the least I could do on a work talking about inequalities. I believe no study can be perfect when it is conducted on humans as many parameters can interfere with the result. Thus I listed the seven main points that could have influenced my research:

1. Participation in my survey could have been influenced by the feminist trend. Indeed, it has become mainstream to be a feminist. For example, we can see many tee-shirts or jumpers with the word 'feminist' written on. The hashtag 'feminist' has also exploded in social media like twitter or Instagram during the last years. The two participants also agreed on the idea that it became a capitalized trend.

2. When looking for participants, I posted my survey mainly on groups reserved for women as the study is limited on women. Indeed, it was the only online spaces were people cared about someone's study, the idea of sorority was very strong. Everyone was willing to help me.

3. An online survey can potentially not be taken seriously by the participants.

4. The results, even anonymous could be influenced by a 'willing to do good', thus the answers might not totally reflect the reality of the participants. Indeed, it is possible to reply sometimes with what we would like to be or to do instead of what the reality is really.

5. The survey could have been shared among feminist women that are interested in the topic and willing to make the movement grow. Thus the answers will be more oriented. But it can also be interesting as feminist are more educated on the cause, thus the discussion could be more interesting as it could have brought some important element in the study.

6. The survey may have been shared among non-feminist women that are willing to erase the movement and provide false information, as a willing 'to do bad'.

7. Due to the lack of time, the survey does not have a great number of replies. It would have been nice to be able to share the survey massively on diverse groups. Deeper analysis with equal participation of all the Great-Britain countries could be more interesting.

Regarding the two interviews conducted, I listed four important points that need to be taken into consideration:

1. Due to the lack of time, I could not interview more women. For a deeper analysis, it would be nice to have at least 20 interviews. That could really offer a deep understanding of the process and probably offer another axis of studies.

2. The questions were oriented to make my interviewee think about my theory as it might not be something you think about of your own accord. It could be a good idea for future research to give a background to the interviewees, depending on what you are looking for in the answers. I wanted here as much honesty and spontaneity as possible.

3. I conducted the two interviews through Skype. A face to face meeting even online can be intimidating for some people. However, it also gives good information about body language that can also be used to analyze the situation. Although I tried my best to make my two interviewees comfortable, some effort could have been made in order to fit into a norm and not being judged.

4. The interviews are too short and not in-depth enough.

6.2 Ethics

I paid particular attention to ethics while I conducted my study. I believe that all studies, big or small, should follow a code of ethics in order to offer to readers the most qualitative and honest analysis. Ethical decisions could be also defined as "the result of a weighing up of a myriad of

factors in the specific complex social and political situations in which we conduct research"[1]. All factors must be taken into consideration during a study. Of course, no work can be perfect, especially in social sciences and of course not all factors can be controlled, however, taking them into consideration is a necessity.

The aim of ethical principles is to protect the "participants from harm or in some cases on empowering them". I focused on ethics especially during the interviews I conducted as I wanted my interviewees to be safe and able to discuss freely and express themselves. I wanted to do more than "doing no harm" but to push a bit further and to do good, offer the possibility to think about subjects that might not come without my input.

Even if this study is a master's dissertation and there is no intention of this being published, I offered the possibility to my two interviewed to use the principle of confidentiality or anonymization on their statements. Confidentiality is defined by Piper and Simons as "a principle that allows people not only to talk in confidence but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might harm them in any way. Anonymization is a procedure to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality."

They both appreciated the possibility and asked to remain anonymized, thus their name will not be divulged.

7. Discussion

7.1 Feminist media: the role in the movement

After a discussion of the literature reviewed and the two researches conducted in this work, the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews, we can make the assumption that media are a catalyst in the feminist movement. With the increase of ICT media became omnipresent in our everyday life, particularly through online technologies, and are now serving us in diverse ways. Thus, this confirms Bolter and Deuze's work on hypermediacy. Indeed, as previously stated, we use social networks for work and friend relations, we check the news on an online application, and so forth. The internet has totally changed the picture of media, it has become easier to connect with, and accessible for most people in privileged countries. This increasing invisibility of the media, makes it disappear from our consciousness and thus, make it easier for everyone to be a content creator.

Media is co-constructed in various fields, such as politics, economics, education, and so on. Being linked to every field in that way, we can reconnect it to the mediatization concept, discussed earlier

with Andres Hepp, Stif Hjarvard and Knut Lundby. In its plurality, online media became a political tool that can help people to gather information and learn about a specific movement, in this case, feminism. Online media are thus, the global medium of feminism and it has become so important that today, media and communication are one of the main actors of our understanding of life, they are very useful for people in order to create themselves an online identity if not also an offline identity. We speak about an interplay between media, culture, and society and that reflects in the fact that the media has the power to influence institutions and movements.

Indeed, individuals have a need to anchor themselves in various groups in a way that they can categorize themselves among others, have a defined identity that can be shared and grown in social circumstances. In other words, they need a psychological anchoring point, that can be found in online groups, as previously discussed. Deuze sums up that part of my dissertation in his work 'Media life', explaining that the potential power of people to shape their lives and identities can be found in the assumption that people portray themselves, and therefore each other, in media.

That identity construction is enabled by the fact that the internet is made of 'echo-chambers' by people with the same outcome of life. In that way, what they see online, on the internet they decide to explore, reinforce their initial predilections, and comfort them in their identity. (Davis 1999).

As previously stated, in their work '*Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation*', Bolter, David and Gruser write about the concept of hypermediacy (2010), describing this particular concept as an increase of the media invisibility for its consumers. Linking that concept of hypermediacy to the work of Deuze '*Media Life*', we can state that this invisibility of the media combined with the very accessibility to ICTs, welcome everyone to be a content creator on the internet, therefore write and produce about a subject shaping his identity.

However, it has been proven that digital media are also a way of excluding activism. Moreover, as being connected is today a necessity to stay at the heart of any political movement, the 'digital underclasses' are being put apart which makes them lose the strength and the empowerment that online media could offer to some other connected activists. Indeed, a 'biodigital vulnerability' arises related to the anxiety digital underclasses activists feel. That anxiety can bring brakes in the self-construction and the self-representation activists have from themselves. The intersection between offline and online media is fragile and yet important to understand today's identity of the feminist movement. Moreover, online platforms are necessary for the movement, they are complementing existing activist practices but are not fully replacing them as most of the interactions still take place offline. The forms of exclusions are just more sophisticated and related to productivity, immediacy, and visibility. However, despite the different practices individual activist do, the aim of feminism remains the same and the concept of networks online or offline remains a necessity.

7.2 Intersectionality as key

The intersectionality concept has been massively adopted because it was key concept regrouping simultaneous discriminations and oppressions, however, it is important to notice that this concept, even if it was not named in this way previously, has been used during the time of slavery under the name of simultaneous oppressions, double jeopardy, interlocking oppressions, and so forth. We discussed earlier the definition of patriarchy and we concluded that it was a way of describing the three main oppressions women are experiencing: social, political and institutional. Thus we can see there the connexion between the form of patriarchy feminists are fighting against and the idea of intersectionality that became central.

As for the feelings of my two interviewees, we are in a new phase of feminism, that has not one single aim and tries to be more inclusive, for all humans no matter their colour, age, social class, sexual orientation, and so on. Intersectionality could then be the idea that makes our movement greater and richer, as everyone can find in the phase, something that makes sense to fight for regarding their experience. It has been proven in the study that being together makes us stronger as we are not the same, and the growth is coming from our differences and different points of view that have been shaped regarding our background and experiences.

This intersectionality concept within the movement is then the key to empowerment. As empowerment is an interactive process of change in a matter of self-acceptance and self- identity shaping, we create ourselves, once again through echo-chambers of like-minded people.

However, the studies conducted in this paper showed that another form of intersectionality was appearing in feminism activism: offline and online media.

As stated previously, many scholars have celebrated the digital feminism era as a massive change in social media. Yet not many of them really questioned what was the nature, the consequences and the starting point of such an intersection.

7.3 Macro, meso and micro: interconnected changes

We saw that social movements such as feminism were interacting on a three levels scale: macro as a whole movement (mediatization), meso as waves or phases (mediation) and micro as individuals (media practices). The macro scale, being linked to the micro-scale through the meso one, can influence media practices and also be influenced by them and that is because social movements are by essence 'ongoing and evolving processes' (Mattoni & Treré, 2014). These spatial and temporal interdependencies are changing during the time. As stated in the interview, some extremists, through their media practices can influence the whole movement and weaken them if they become common among other individuals. The examples of young women not wanting to be labeled as feminist because of Femen was a good illustration of such an assumption. That is a relatively new consequence emerging in the social movement that is made possible due to the normalization and invisibility of the media. As everyone can be a content creator and consumer, other opinions are starting to emerge. This is linked to the concept of hypermediacy analyzed earlier in this research.

The idea of 'Digital sisterhood' (Morgan, 1970 and Fotopoulou, 2014) is an interesting way of naming this digital environment that links feminist together in order to keep building the movement, in size and in-depth. This 'Digital sisterhood' finds its place right at the crossover of online spaces and offline practices. The concept carries the opportunities and the limitations of such a complex intersection.

8. Replying to the research questions

The feminist movement would not be what it is today without online media and online groups. The point here is that media is more than simple access to news in this movement. They are a catalyst as they are central in the movement. Media and feminist groups for the feminist movement are a crossover between all forms of media, our culture and the society we are living in. Both F and J stated that online media were their only source for gathering information about the feminist movement but also a place to learn more about their condition and other people's conditions all over the world. The reason that has been said behind that is that they are really easily accessible and you are confronted by them, even without our consent as they appear in your 'feed' without necessarily looking for it.

The point that has been made here is that the media are becoming more and more invisible, we gather information from it without even noticing anymore as they are everywhere. Bolter and Deuze's work is explaining the process on how we end up being a content creator without noticing. Indeed, it has become so easy to share an opinion on the internet, write an article, publish a video that it has become normal and transparent as we are not used to live with them. As Bolter and Deuze often ask in their work, do we live with or in the media?

According to the sample and the analyses conducted, it is possible to reply to the two research questions.

Women in Great Britain are using online media as a complementary and necessary option to gather information, feel empowered by the movement. Online spaces are seen as 'democratic spaces of visibility identity formation and debate' (Fotopoulou, 2017, p.114) but these opportunities are being contrasted with limitations. These limitations are more relevant to some people than others, especially to the people being less connected or having less knowledge of online media and social media. Indeed, as seen previously, some activists are left behind due to their inactivities online and some role model is being put under the spotlight by media, imposing activists new figures that did not raise especially for their ideas but mostly for who they are. This contrast between empowerment and vulnerability highlights the subtle limits that cross online and offline. Most of the women from the sample agreed on the fact that digital media were necessary for the feminist movement, but they also agreed on the fact that they were feeling safer offline to debate and discuss feminism. This highlights the fact that online media are central but not unique ways for a social movement to grow and sustain. One of the reasons a social movement must be and stay online on the three-level scales (macro, meso and micro) is to compete with the opposition and advertise its own ideas. The concept

of 'digital sisterhood' is relevant in this idea and makes us reflect on our own vision of activism.

The limitations and the opportunities of the relation between media and the social movement will be perceived differently regarding who you are asking. The feminist that are not taking part in the 'Revolution 2.0' might not understand the objective behind that digitalization of the movement and/ or are not able to access such data. On the other hand, the activists already enrolled in the digital world might find it an absolute necessity.

However, they both agree on the fact that activism must keep an offline practice.

These experiences are understood differently regarding different activists. As seen previously, the background of the activist can be a setting that makes the difference in the practice, but other settings can be held responsible too.

The three levels, macro meso and micro are interrelated and influencing each other. If the society we are living in, at the macro level is changing, it is sure that the meso level will also change and that will have an impact on the media practices at a micro-level. On the other hand, small changes made by individuals in their media practices can on the long term influence the meso-level and thus the macro level. The increase of ICT shaped new environments for individuals and our society, they are both moving at the same time and in the same direction. Mediatization is an interesting starting point to understand the relation between media and social movement, however, scholars need to focus also on the two other levels that are often left apart: mediation and media practices. This relation is essential to study in order to grab every detail of such complex interconnectivity.

Understanding how media practices intersect with other social practices is a key concept that says a lot about the identity of a social movement.

9. What could be done next

Focus on this specific relation within may other different social movements would be interesting in order to understand if the processes and mechanisms are interesting in the same ways. That could highlight some differences between social movements and allow to identify if some of them are strongly different from the other ones or if all social movements follow the same path and experience the same mechanisms.

Related to this study conducted here, more in-depth qualitative interviews would be beneficial in order to understand and illustrate in a better way the concept of 'sisterhoods'. Having interviews with offline activists will be a better point to understand all the points of view and avoid excluding the offline communities. It would also be interesting to conduct the two studies with wider sample groups and divide people into different categories, such as social situations, and to see if it is possible to link the theory to what was discussed in the background. That being said, it might be ethically difficult to justify the classification.

We could question ourselves on the feminist trend growing up and try to understand in what limits this is influencing the feminist movement. There is also a need for understanding how feminist icons are created by media and why.

Furthermore, studies focusing exclusively on online practices and their limitations will be necessary

as some concerns about data mining are starting to be raised.

10. Conclusion

The relatively new online platforms and media practices of digital and networked media are changing the landscape of how feminist activists think and fight for gender equality. They both carry the opportunities and the limitations of such a relation. Indeed, the assumption that social networks and online media are central in women's organization is correct, however, they are not the only way of doing so and they should remain complementary. The concept of 'digital sisterhood' helps us to understand that complex balance and it allows us to question the different levels of activism that are being reconsidered.

The feminist movement is not one homogeneous concept, but a diverse one with different directions and different small goals but with one main objective: equality for all, no matter what sort of feminism you are fighting for. Because there are so many different ideas and opinions on feminism, activists do not refer to the same norms.

The intersectionality feminism is building on is what makes the movement bigger, stronger and more educated. It offers the possibility for everyone to join and understand more about other people. Having only one leader would mean that there is just one form of feminism, meaning that intersectionality is gone.

On another point, a huge increase was observed in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with the development of the internet and networking platforms that enable a deep exchange of information among people. We saw that the omnipresence of online media, relayed by all these new technologies, was a necessity for the growth of the feminist movement and that it made them -the media- invisible. That hypermediacy linked to the hyper-accessibility of these platforms allow people to be their own content creator and to share their creations with like-minded people on the internet. We also saw that people mostly document themselves on subjects they are already interested in, in order to keep their self- identity construction, which keeps feeding the movement and makes it greater and more diverse.

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