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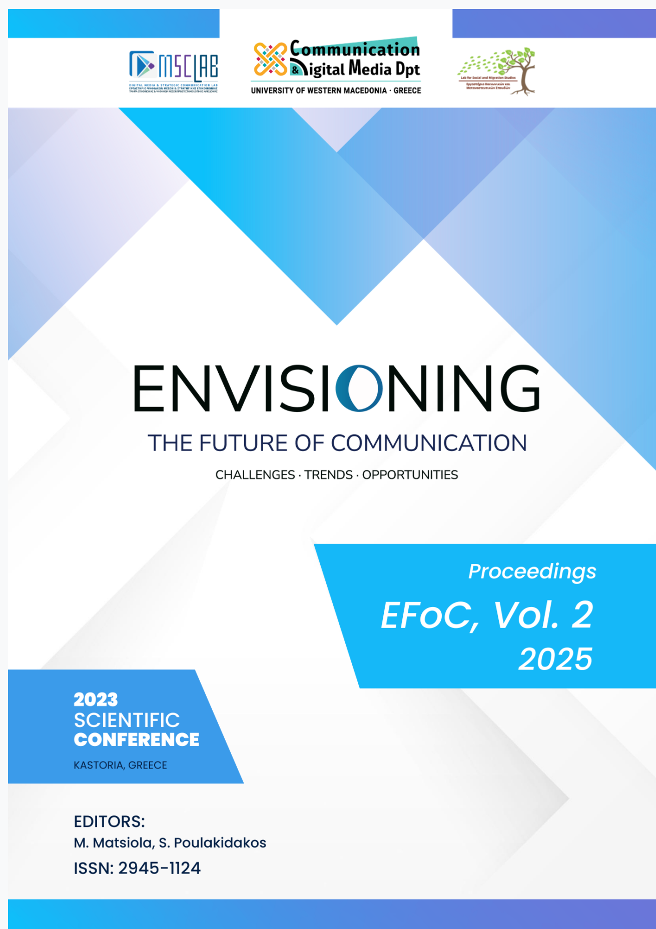


# Keynote Speech 1

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# Keynote Speech 1

# Envisioning Social Justice as a Communicative Framework: Communicology Ethics in a Post-Truth World through Theory and Praxis

Anastasia Christou*

The talk aims to draw attention to the grappling with concepts and contemporary issues in communications studies during a post-truth context as an exploratory process of delving into one of the most significant paradigm shifts in public discourse. Post-truth politics have exacerbated cultures of fear, the blurring between truth and falsity, as well as enabling deliberative strategies of lying to become a central concern in public life and academia. Such occurrences are especially potent in how new communications and social media technologies are operationalised. Post-truth environments appeal to emotionalities and fragile belief systems, frequently devaluing scientific expertise and such social vibrations have significant implications far beyond communications in how politics and social justice are challenged by the historicity of contempt for expert opinion.

This presentation will explore through an interdisciplinary and theoretically informed overview the social and communicative dimensions of a socially just world by taking a communicative framework that centres ethics, acting, organising, resisting and rejecting as a set of tools that not just visualise, but also, craft the foundations for equitable and just societies.

Some of the key questions the presentation will address are the following:

- Do academics/activists have a special role to play as public historians in preserving public memory from 'alternative facts'? And,
- Do academics more generally have an obligation to combat fake news/fake history within universities, social media and publics?

Looking at theoretical dimensions and some case studies from around the world, this presentation will ultimately question the violent potential of post-truth societies and how futurities of social justice can be imagined as resistance to dystopian potentialities.

In the era of Donald Trump and Brexit, Oxford Dictionaries had declared "post-truth" to be its international word of the year. The US election and EU referendum drive popularity of the

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adjective describing a situation ‘in which objective facts are less influential than appeals to emotion’.

So, ‘post-truth’ was nominated word of the year by Oxford dictionaries in 2016, to describe ‘circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief ‘. A year later, Collins dictionaries declared ‘fake news’ to be the next word of the year, to refer to ‘false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting’. The concern with truth – or indeed its absence – was largely triggered by two political events in 2016 that had global ramifications and that arguably involved an unprecedented extent of deception and misinformation: the Brexit referendum in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the United States. Editors said that use of the term “post-truth” had increased by around 2,000% in 2016 compared to the year before.

Oxford Dictionaries’ word of the year is intended to “reflect the passing year in language”, with post-truth following the controversial choice the year before of the “face with tears of joy” emoji. The publisher’s US and UK dictionary teams sometimes plump for different choices – in 2009 the UK went for “simples” and the US for “unfriend”; in 2006 the UK went for “bovvered” and the US for “carbon-neutral” – but in 2016 teams on both sides of the Atlantic chose the same word. Contenders for the title had included the noun “alt-right”, shortened from the fuller form “alternative right” and defined as “an ideological grouping associated with extreme conservative or reactionary viewpoints, characterised by a rejection of mainstream politics and by the use of online media to disseminate deliberately controversial content”. First used in 2008, its use “surged” that spring and summer, said the dictionary, with 30% of usage in August alone. Brexiteer was also in the running for the prize, along with non-political terms including coulrophobia, the fear of clowns, and hygge, the Danish concept of cosiness.

But the increase in usage of post-truth saw the term eventually emerge ahead of the pack. “We first saw the frequency really spike this year in June 2016 with buzz over the Brexit vote and Donald Trump securing the Republican presidential nomination. Given that usage of the term hasn’t shown any signs of slowing down, I wouldn’t be surprised if post-truth becomes one of the defining words of our time,” predicted Oxford Dictionaries president Casper Grathwohl.

“It’s not surprising that our choice reflects a year dominated by highly-charged political and social discourse. Fuelled by the rise of social media as a news source and a growing distrust of facts offered up by the establishment, post-truth as a concept has been finding its linguistic footing for some time.”

According to Oxford Dictionaries, the first time the term post-truth was used was in a 1992 essay by the late Serbian-American playwright Steve Tesich in the Nation magazine. Tesich, writing about the Iran-Contra scandal and the Persian Gulf war, said that “we, as a free people, have freely decided that we want to live in some post-truth world”.

“There is evidence of the phrase post-truth being used before Tesich’s article, but apparently with the transparent meaning ‘after the truth was known’, and not with the new implication that

truth itself has become irrelevant," said Oxford Dictionaries. The publisher pointed to the recent expansion in meaning of the prefix "post-", saying that "rather than simply referring to the time after a specified situation or event – as in post-war or post-match", in post-truth it had taken on the meaning of "belonging to a time in which the specified concept has become unimportant or irrelevant". The nuance, it said, originated in the mid-20th century, and has been used in formations such as post-national (1945) and post-racial (1971).

Post-truth has now been included in OxfordDictionaries.com, and editors will monitor its future usage to see if it will be included in future editions of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Writing a keynote speech for a conference that celebrates/interrogates/explores the 'future' of something, in this case communication, a paramount activity of human interaction, is always a challenging endeavour, but especially so in turbulent times. We are aware that generations of scholars have tended to believe that they are facing unprecedented change, have seen theirs as a time of disruption, as being on the verge of something entirely new, still hidden in the fog. More or less, the post-pandemic context has left many of us in a state of permanent brain-fog with medicalised and social implications of the term. Without resorting to exaggeration or hysteria, however, we have good reasons to diagnose our current time as unsettled: enormous challenges lie ahead, for example, halting the destruction of our planet and providing a relatively safe space for generations of all and especially those forcefully displaced people to live. All these challenges have an organizational dimension. They call for more research on the organizing, the organized and, indeed, the disorganized and the unsettled. They lay open massive fields of work for critical researchers, not only to provide insights that positively contribute to addressing them, but also to help us comprehend what is happening and the power dynamics entangled and embedded within these social, cultural, political and policy local and global processes.

At the same time, however, a series of humanitarian and financial crises, and most recently a pandemic and a number of wars, have shaken trust in our core institutions and organizations, including universities, and add to a longstanding trend that challenges our understanding of the world and how we inhabit it. We have come to the point at which alternative realities that defy the most basic consensus on our everyday life world proliferate and spread worldwide. The opportunities afforded by new technologies and big data, rather than providing a more solid basis for theory building and decision making, are undermining belief in scientific and professional expertise. Rather, as Swidler (1986, p. 278) highlighted, ideological activism thrives and myths play a powerful role shaping social life during unsettled times. If, following Luhmann (1992), truth is the symbolically generalized communication medium of science and the distinction between true and untrue is its Leitdifferenz (leading difference), unsettled times provide even more precarious conditions for the possibility of knowledge and the credibility of knowledge claims and their producers.

We are said to live in a post-truth world. The label itself is, in fact, a sign of our times, in which everything tends to be considered in binary terms: fake as the opposite of true news; right as

the opposite of left policies; science as distinct from fiction; us versus them. Grey areas of compromise, once the quintessential skill of every organizational, social and political actor (Fumurescu, 2013; Gutman & Thompson, 2012), have become perilous to the point of constituting the threshold of what counts as human (Levi, 1986). The more one knows about the way science works, the more one understands that doubt rather than certainty, and dissent rather than consensus animate researchers (Lyotard, 1979; Woolgar, 1988; Berger & Zijderveld, 2009), that openness rather than closure and the rejection of an ultimate authority are the ground rules for scientific knowledge (Rauch, 2021). Imaginative speculation and inquiry, the very essence of research, happen in grey areas but inhabiting that space no longer makes science legitimate. As the recent pandemic has shown, science is being called upon to deliver unequivocal truths, and when it delivers doubts instead, people wonder how little difference there is between politics and science. This is why rulers of various 'institutions' – from politicians and states to scientists and universities, passing through discourse of argumentation – have lost their unquestioned authority and legitimacy. Rather than being a new condition, however, it is a path that we have been walking for quite some time and one that, some argue, had already begun with the invention of the printing press, whereby authors lost their authority (Barthes, 1967/2002; Foucault, 1969/1984). Think about Collins and Yearley's (1992) criticism of the reflexive approach of the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK): 'Typically [...] the sociologist knows less than the natural scientist, while the sociologist of science knows still less. Those engaged from day to day with the problem of reflexivity would, if they could achieve their aims, know nothing at all. We might say that the sociology of scientific knowledge has opened up new ways of knowing nothing.' (p. 302) This problem, they continue, inevitably destroys the possibility of any knowledge – an argument that provoked the same type of critique they voiced (Roth, 1994). But knowledge must not be confused with numerical objectivity or statistical probability. Knowledge is always a journey into the unknown and a battle to reach unreachable peaks. This battle is fought not only by the sociology of scientific knowledge; communicology theorists, we could add, are equally well versed in it. If we engage in it, it could be claimed that academics are somehow accomplices in making the concept of post-truth travel from journal articles to the mainstream press and into social media – accomplices also in providing arguments that inform the logical underpinnings of various movements that deny the importance of expertise and science. Some of these movements even challenge the basic, commonly taken-for-granted Lebenswelt (Schütz & Luckmann, 1975/1989) as a matrix of conspiracies veiling an alternative truth that is seen only by a small 'enlightened' group. This was clearly not intended, but there is no doubt that the genie is now out of the lamp and we cannot put it back in.

Recent events, from the pandemic to past (and likely future) global financial and local economic crises, reveal the fallacies of science as a predictive practice, and the relevance and validity of communication studies to make sense of ambiguities. We do not live in a world where science dominates nature, and markets act as near-perfect mechanisms of valuation, but rather in a world of crowd and political rationalities, and of complex serendipities. To be sure, the

pandemic has shown the power of science and technology; but it has also demonstrated their limits. It has shown how science has informed politics, but also how politicians have used science and scientists to their own ends and to avoid facing the very essence of dealing with social issues: the need for judgement. Communication ethics is of paramount relevance in this domain. Just as the atrocities of World War II decreed the end of modernity (Arendt, 1973), the pandemic should surely constitute a moment to reflect, if not on the end, on the need to rethink globalization, capitalism, the imperative of growth, our relationship with our planet and how we want to be linked together in 'socie-ties' (Latour, 2005). Communication scholars were right all along. But what do we do with this victory? Are policy and decision makers aware of the value of this conceptual work? How do we ensure that it does not turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory?

And a brief parenthesis to contextualise the term: A Pyrrhic victory is a victory that inflicts such a devastating toll on the victor that it is tantamount to defeat. Such a victory negates any true sense of achievement or damages long-term progress. A pyrrhic victory is a victory that comes at a great cost, perhaps making the ordeal to win not worth it. It relates to Pyrrhus, a king of Epirus who defeated the Romans in 279 BCE (before the common era) but lost many of his troops. Pyrrhus (Greek: Πύρρος Pýrrhos) was born in either 318 or 319 BCE, only five or six years after the death of his second cousin Alexander the Great in 323 BC. He was born into the Molossian tribe, one of the three Greek tribes together with the Thesprotians and the Chaones who unified the kingdom of Epirus. The Chaonians (Ancient Greek: Χάονες, romanized: Cháones) were an ancient Greek people that inhabited the historical region of Epirus which today is part of northwestern Greece and southern Albania. Together with the Molossians and the Thesprotians, they formed the main tribes of the northwestern Greek group.

And, closing the parenthesis, back to our communicology connections, if truth were fiction anyway, and any construction of a reality were equally valid, Luhmann's true/untrue codes would become indistinguishable, subject to individual choice, or a matter of popular vote. This road would indeed lead toward knowing nothing (but not in the Socratic dialogic sense) rather than making the need to investigate this void the very reason for our existence as researchers and communication scholars. This is a dangerous journey that would debilitate not only communication research, but also the legitimacy of academia that simply. This type of nothingness opens the door for new and old populist ideologies to fill the emptiness. Truth instead is a constant struggle to interrogate this ephemeral nature of knowledge and questioning its constant becoming through nurturing dialogue, disputes, curation, explanation, and love for researching what is intrinsically transient.

The questions many communicologists have asked and that remain as valid as ever are what and how can we claim to know while simultaneously acknowledging that all knowledge is from this world, embedded in a historical and cultural a priori, positioned and embodied, and hence political in its very production? How can we defend the quest for knowledge without retracting into the rule of a single, authoritative and final truth nor falling into the trap of vacuous

relativism? What chances do we have to defend intellectual pluralism while fighting off the great destructive force of arbitrariness that leaves nothing but ruins? How can a lack of solid ontological grounding become the territory of an academic debate that is still worthy of the name, rather than leaving us with nothing to anchor even this debate? And, just to clarify, communicology is the scholarly and academic study of how people create and use messages to affect the social environment. Communicology is an academic discipline that distinguishes itself from the broader field of human communication with its exclusive use of scientific methods to study communicative phenomena.

Although a researcher may also be an engaged policy advisor or activist, obviously not every such act performed by a researcher qualifies as research. Moreover, uncomfortable truths are not the currency that wins elections; and truth becomes incontrovertible only when instrumentalized to work in power's service. As Hannah Arendt (1961/1993) so powerfully emphasized, we forfeit our position and with it our credibility if we try to interfere directly in politics. Research remains most credible if it remains distant from the desire to exert power directly or to praise those with resources. By no means does this separation of roles catapult researchers back into their infamous ivory tower or demand that they remain silent. Rather, we are emphasizing that, as researchers, we have multiple tasks and multiple constituents, but not all of these tasks are accomplished and not all constituents addressed in the same fora. One forum is obviously the classroom, where we teach future leaders, policy makers and decision makers. There are also many fora where public intellectuals need to share their research insights in public debates. But the place where scientific insights are presented, debated and validated is in academic outlets – journals and books – thanks to the work of academic peers in the roles of writers, reviewers, readers and editors. The scientific quality of academic insights is to be judged by peers, and by peers only.

Undeniably, the study of history in a Post-Truth World along with communication theory and social justice Praxis explores one of the most significant paradigm shifts in public discourse. A post-truth environment that appeals primarily to emotion, elevates personal belief, and devalues expert opinion has important implications far beyond Brexit or the election of Donald Trump, and has a profound impact on how history is produced and consumed. Post-truth history is not merely a synonym for lies. We would argue that indifference to historicity by both the purveyor and the recipient, contempt for expert opinion that contradicts it, and ideological motivation are its key characteristics.

Taking a multidisciplinary approach, this kind of conceptual work explores some of the following questions: What exactly is post-truth history? Does it represent a new phenomenon? Does the historian have a special role to play in preserving public memory from 'alternative facts'? Do academics more generally have an obligation to combat fake news and fake history both in universities and on social media? How has a 'post-truth culture' impacted professional and popular historical discourse? Only by scrutinising theoretical dimensions and case studies

from around the world, can we explore the violent potential of post-truth history and call on academics and activists to resist.

I now turn to the second thematic area of my talk, that of ‘Communicative Praxis and Spaces of Subjectivities’.

This area spans the fields of philosophy and communication, illustrating how the amalgam of discourse and action, and language and social practices, is constitutive of the way that we define ourselves and makes sense of the world in which we exist.

This approach provides an elaboration of an original concept in which communication and praxis are commingled, which allows discourse and action to be viewed as twin halves of the constitution of meaning in our personal and social existence. The interwoven texture of discourse and action and language and social practices accommodates novel notions of reference, self-implicature, and rhetoric. These notions are developed against the backdrop of an entwined hermeneutical understanding and explanation. Communicative praxis is multifaceted saying, writing, and doing that is about something, by someone, and to and for someone.

The interlacing moments of hermeneutical reference, self-implicature, and rhetoric display an interface of the fields of philosophy and communication studies. The economy of communicative praxis is stimulated by the forces of philosophical analysis and interpretation coupled with an acknowledgment of the transactional dynamics in the rhetoric of the ongoing community of investigators and concerned citizens. The art of thinking, which philosophers—by mandate of their tradition—have been called upon to develop, proceeds hand in glove with the contextuality of thought as it emerges from the rough and tumble of everyday social and political interactions. It is thus that Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity can properly be viewed as conceptual work that integrates the disciplines of philosophy and communication studies in such a manner as to enrich the contributions of each.

In 2017, James Ball published a book entitled: Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World. London: Biteback Publishing. As the author contends: “Bullshit gets you noticed. Bullshit makes you rich. Bullshit can even pave your way to the Oval Office. This is bigger than fake news and bigger than social media. It’s about the slow rise of a political, media and online infrastructure that has devalued truth. This is the story of bullshit: what’s being spread, who’s spreading it, why it works – and what we can do to tackle it.”

So, going to this issue of ‘de-valuing truth’, I want to focus on another study, fresh off the print, a recent publication (2023) by academics based at the University of Linköping, Sweden, in the Journal of Research in Personality by Julia Aspernäs, Arvid Erlandsson, Artur Nilsson, entitled:

“Misperceptions in a post-truth world: Effects of subjectivism and cultural relativism on bullshit receptivity and conspiracist ideation”.

The highlights from that article are the following:

- We find two forms of truth relativism: subjectivism and cultural relativism.
- Subjectivism yields higher receptivity to misinformation than cultural relativism.
- Subjectivism predicts receptivity to misinformation over and above other predictors.
- Cultural relativism is positively related to bullshit receptivity.

So, back to bullshit, and I don't mean this study in Sweden and the UK which is quite informative, instead, I wish just to highlight the empirical aspects of the study:

This research investigated whether belief in truth relativism yields higher receptivity to misinformation. Two studies with representative samples from Sweden (Study 1, N = 1005) and the UK (Study 2, N = 417) disentangled two forms of truth relativism: subjectivism (truth is relative to subjective intuitions) and cultural relativism (truth is relative to cultural context). In Study 1, subjectivism was more strongly associated with receptivity to pseudo-profound bullshit and conspiracy theories than cultural relativism was. In Study 2 (preregistered), subjectivism predicted higher receptivity to both forms of misinformation over and above effects of analytical and actively open-minded thinking, profoundness receptivity, ideology, and demographics; the unique effects of cultural relativism were in the opposite direction (Study 1) or non-significant (Study 2).

Furthermore, academics and activists may want to look more closely at the connection between subjectivist beliefs and dogmatic views. The positive association the researchers found between subjectivism and dogmatism could seem surprising, as subjectivism seems to entail that every individual has a "right" to their own "truth" which, at face-value, seems less dogmatic. Dogmatic relativism may seem like a contradiction in terms, but the study findings suggest that it is a real and under-researched psychological phenomenon.

This research demonstrates that truth relativism is a unique predictor of belief in conspiracy theories and receptivity to pseudo-profound bullshit. It shows that the belief that truth is no more than a subjective intuition is likely to be more harmful, yielding higher vulnerability to misinformation and lower likelihood of deliberative scrutiny of evidence, compared to the belief that truth is relative to cultural context. Future attempts to understand why people fall for misinformation should take the role of epistemic beliefs concerning the nature of truth into consideration.

And, now to the third and last layer of this talk, let's focus on social justice through communicology ethics in a post-truth world, by bridging theory and praxis, and finally, I will conclude with what can be done in the current global context to envision change.

The recently published volume (2024) entitled, Social Movements and Everyday Acts of Resistance: Solidarity in a Changing World, edited by Stamatis Poulakidakos, Anastasia Veneti and Maria Rovisco is an excellent collection of important contributions focusing on everyday forms of grassroots resistance, manifested both offline and online. More specifically, it focuses on small- scale social movements, which implement a variety of solidarity activities, such as –

but not limited to – symbolic (online and offline) acts of resistance, small- scale cooperatives, solidarity economy initiatives, alternative health centres. Even though these initiatives are not new (Sutton, 2000), they have been increasing and expanding in number and scope since the beginning of the 21st century, alongside acts of civil disobedience, in order to respond to social and political challenges. In addition, such activities have remained in the shadow of mass demonstrations, since they tend to receive little attention in the mainstream media (Fominaya, 2017; Karyotis and Rudig, 2018). Thus, this book is an indispensable source shedding light on offline and online, small- scale (prefigurative) solidarity initiatives in various world sites.

According to the editors, the practices of prefigurative politics and solidarity are central to small-scale social movements. “Prefiguration” or “prefigurative politics” refers to a political action, practice, movement, moment, or development in which certain political ideals are experimentally actualized in the “here and now”, rather than hoped to be realized in a distant future (Raekstadt and Gradin, 2020). Overall, forms of prefigurative politics are broadly “progressive” in the sense of being opposed to unjust political structures and committed to individual equality and freedom of expression (Jeffrey and Dyson, 2021, p. 644; Steinmetz et al., 2019; Raekstadt and Gradin, 2020). Closely bound to non-hierarchical (pre¬figurative) practices, solidarity is a (political) ethos and a scope – at the same time – permeating small-scale grassroots initiatives (Scholz, 2008; Arampatzi, 2017; Siapera, 2019).

The various chapter contributions of this excellent volume examine notions of prefigurativism and solidarity through a range of case studies drawn from different world sites including Greece, Italy, Argentina, India, Scotland, Latin America, Syria and the UK. So, I hope that Dr Poulakidakos’ co-edited book is on your Christmas reading list!

However, I also hope you are able to indulge me a celebration of a people close to my heart, and constantly in my thoughts since I departed the country on the eve of the current genocide they are enduring; the Palestinian people. I am thus going to draw attention, literally, to the Art of Resistance in the Palestinian Struggle.

I thus connect Art as a communicative tool in envisioning non-violent acts of resistance for social justice and make some core connections before I highlight some key contributions in this area in concluding my talk.

Creative non-violent action is about leveraging the intersections of art, protest, and information along with communications technologies for social change. Nonviolent public protest is a vital sign of life in a healthy democracy. It is the act of protest that signifies that citizens are engaged in the political process and that we have a stake in the direction in which our countries move, for some as stateless for others as citizens or denizens. When we rise up, declaring outrage at injustice and at that which is outdated and harmful, when we speak up, collectively proclaiming a new vision and course for society, this is when a democratic system is truly thriving. In particular, when we choose to protest in both creative and nonviolent ways, we invite others to

participate with us in a collective process of social, political, and cultural revolution that is as powerful as it is peaceful.

Within this context, some of the core questions that pre-occupy me are the following: are visual and performative media central to nonviolent protest movements today? What is the relationship between creative expression through the arts and nonviolent direct action with political purpose? How have new technologies been incorporated into the production and distribution of activist art and to what effect?

These questions require a meaningful analysis to deepen our understanding of the intersections between art, nonviolent protest, and new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). They also require an ongoing inquiry and to the practice of building and sustaining future social movements. Perhaps the ultimate goal of any future project is to provide insight into the capacity afforded by combining these media and leveraging them to create lasting social change.

I contend here that the practice of creative nonviolent protest is an accessible and transformative process for advancing any campaign that aims to achieve greater social justice and peace within society. Within that, audience members experience the political messages carried by creative media in intimately personal ways. Indeed, the power of the arts in movement building and nonviolent direct action is linked to the capacity of creative media to personalize that which is public, and to weave profound connections between maker, medium, viewer, and the broader sociopolitical issue at hand. We should be cognisant of the ways in which new ICTs and the mobile-social network function as a unique creative medium for political expression operate in tandem. Furthermore, we should maintain awareness that this medium facilitates the rapid expansion and increased participation in social movements because of its quality of timeliness and its capacity to synthesize the expressions presented through multiple media—traditional and digital—simultaneously.

Nonviolent protest movements that grow in strength are usually perceived as threats to the institutions of power and the established status quo that they relentlessly resist and vigorously challenge. As soon these activities, and the people participating in them, are identified as opponents they are often targeted, suppressed, and rendered obsolete by those institutions that they publicly threaten. Although this is true of many movements historically, and of course it is not always the case, altogether abandoning nonviolent protest as a viable means of challenging structures of violence and creating structures of peace is not productive. Rather, the incorporation of creative cultural production with political purpose in nonviolent protest is a communicative method of change making that warrants further exploration.

What role do visual arts, theatre and other types of cultural production play in creating outcomes of social justice and peace? The creation and replication of imagery, script or song as an aspect of nonviolent protest activity allows for rapid dissemination of information and serves as a protective shield of anonymity through which artist-activists and the general public alike can

participate in nonviolent protest. Of particular interest are the myriad examples of nonviolent processes and creative mediums working in harmony to engage people in the hard work of changing predominantly violent aspects of society into predominantly peaceful forms. I was enormously privileged to have experienced this in my two weeks in Palestine culminating with my departure on the dark date of October 7th. The students at Dar-Al-Kalima University in Bethlehem where I was based gave amazing performances, dance and theatrical, held incredibly illuminating exhibitions of their drawings and crafts and gifted me a hand sculpted name display carved in Arabic and English on the healing materiality of a piece of Palestinian olive tree, that I proudly keep in my University office visually meaningful along with the cultural programme during my visit. Carrying these concepts throughout provides a framework with which to analyze the intersections between nonviolent protest and creative expression. This framework may serve to illuminate the dynamic relationship between these mediums—political and artistic—so as to clarify the transformative power that they may have to influence cultural revolution.

Art for social justice has long challenged notions of whose stories are told, how, and by whom, positioning it as a key body of practice to combat neoliberalism and other structures of domination. In the global struggle for liberation, art and social justice practices must be contextualized, requiring approaches and pedagogy that address the cultural landscapes in which they are rooted. Against this backdrop, the artivist-academics should explore two questions: 1) In what ways do practices in the arts and social justice differ and intersect across cultural contexts? and 2) What lessons can be gleaned from grassroots and systems-level approaches to arts for social justice?

Some key Highlights include:

- Artistic activism (artivism) contributes to organizational strategies of the movement.
- Artivism expands the demographics of the movements and promotes inclusiveness.
- Education, social cohesion and expression of ideas are main effects of artivism.

And, although Banksy, the UK-based artist, is known for his political activism through his absurdist and dystopian street art and has extensively worked in Palestine in the last two decades, I want to make this platform solely about the Palestinian people.

Many artists whose work stands as a testament to the enduring Palestinian struggle for justice and their yearning for a peaceful homeland. Through their artistic vision, many Palestinian artists actively participate in the global conversation about building a better, more just, and peaceful world. Their dedication to these goals makes them not only celebrated artists but also catalysts for change.

How Palestinians are using art as a form of resistance against Israel is more relevant now than ever. As Israel's war on Gaza continues, artists across the world have been using their work to show support and solidarity with the Palestinian people. From graffiti to skateboarding,

Palestinian artists have found their own way to connect and share experiences and ensure that their culture and identity are not erased.

So, we'll end with just a few minutes of current art and art in the streets of Palestine as resistance, two short clips, a total of about six minutes and then we'll move into discussion and questions.

(1.45 mins)

https://www.tiktok.com/@aljazeeraenglish/video/7304719296914050346

Global Street Art Episode 3 - Palestine - Art in the Streets – MOCAtv (4.45 mins)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TUivH2oSAo

In concluding, I want to thank you for your attention and participation.

Peace, light, love and social justice for all.