

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This thesis sets out to answer the question “How could Anonymous’ Project Chanology in 2008 itself identify as a new social movement?” The question was inspired by how recent social movements show distinction to its traditional predecessors. They have new characteristics, new targets, and new methods of activism. Among recent social movements was a movement against the Church of Scientology by the entity known as Anonymous under the name Project Chanology in 2008. The event was a massive show of transnational social movement showing dissent against controversies from the Church of Scientology. The movement shows a similar distinction between recent social movements and traditional social movements. Hence, the writer took the decision to analyze and identify the phenomenon as a new social movement.

Before analyzing Project Chanology, the research analyzed the background of Anonymous as a social movement actor. The analysis includes the origins of Anonymous, their activities prior to Project Chanology and an analysis of these findings to identify Anonymous’ eligibility as an actor. The analysis was done through Polletta and Jasper’s concept of collective identity, stating that the presence of collective identity helps understand the emergence of a social movement. The analysis manages to show that Anonymous poses a collective identity as an actor to start a social movement. The collective identity then became the contributing factor

for Anonymous to start Project Chanology during the disappearance of Tom Cruise's Scientology video from YouTube.

With the confirmation of identity driving Anonymous' actions, the thesis continues to analyze Project Chanology and how it could be considered as a new social movement. The first analysis was to understand the progression of Project Chanology through Blumer's stages of social movement. Finding shows how the movement started, how it was done, and how it slowly declined to failure due to the fragmentation of participants from the clash of identity. From the information provided by the first analysis, the research continues by matching Project Chanology's characteristics to new social movement characteristics and how the method of cyber-activism was utilized in conjunction with the fourth characteristic of new social movement. The analysis shows that Project Chanology poses the Characteristics of social movement and utilized all three forms of cyber-activism during their progression against the Church of Scientology. Thus answering the research question of this thesis.

This Thesis contributes to the study of International Relation in two ways. First, it referenced for further analysis of social movements in International Relations. Analysis of the thesis shows a change of social movement from their traditional predecessors through the case of Project Chanology by showing not only new characteristics, but how sociological liberalism theory contributes to studying a potential change in global structure social movement could bring; although this thesis has shown an example of a failure within the scenario as Project Chanology did not manage to change the Church of Scientology's agenda to seize itself from

existence. In addition, this thesis shows how collective identity influenced transnational interaction between a community and other actors of international relation, both state and non-state, through the analysis of Anonymous' identity and how it translates their decision to conduct a social movement against the Church of Scientology.

There are, however, several shortcomings that this thesis displays. The first is due to the lack of data and evidence. The reason behind this weakness is the fact that: a) it was done in 2008, to which some of the news articles that would help serve as data are missing; b) the disorganized structure of *Why We Protest*; c) Anonymous does not have a centralized source of information where their lack of organization has made it difficult to find original sources from Anonymous and thus, had to resort to re-upload and secondary sources; and d) not many journals and articles are provided for an in depth research on the reality of Project Chanology since most of the research only identify Project Chanology as a turning point for Anonymous to constant activism. Second, Anonymous as a collective, constantly underwent dynamic changes. From events tied to them, it's apparent that some traits Anonymous said to retain keeps evolving depending on the situation. Even during Project Chanology, Anonymous' identity underwent changes midway through its progression. This was evidenced with their transition from ignorant freedom of expression and information fighter who uses online disruption methods, to a genuine activist that would protest against the Church of Scientology like any other social movement would. To improve from these shortcomings, future analysis of phenomenon and events that are tied to Anonymous should be done in two

conditions. First is the need to collect primary data by interviewing known members of Anonymous. Future research regarding Anonymous is recommended to include interviews as a data collection method to fill the loopholes on some secondary data. One example of an interviewee with abundance of primary data perfect for studying Anonymous is Gregg Housh. Second, an in-depth analysis of Anonymous should be limited to singular events due to the fact that their nature between events may have vast differences.

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