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Stateless Nations Political Presence in Digital Era: A Comparison of Palestine, Kurdish and Uyghur Muslim

Qaisra Batool

BS in Department of communication and Media Research, School of communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Dr. Tanveer Hussain

Assistant Professor, Department of communication and Media Research, School of communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Correspondence: tanveerlabar.dcmr.scs@pu.edu.pk

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Abstract

The digital connectivity and crackdowns from authoritarian governments, stateless nations have adapted by making networked platforms critical spaces for political visibility, cultural survival and collective remembrance. This study investigates how three marginalized communities, Kurds, Uyghur Muslims and Palestinians, construct political visibility and sustain digital resistance across major social media environments between 2020 and 2024. Guided by Networked Public Sphere Theory and Connective Action Theory, the research uses these frameworks as a combined analytical lens. The population for this study consists of the platforms themselves (X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram and YouTube), while the sample includes publicly accessible posts, hashtags, testimony videos, symbolic imagery and protest materials circulating across these spaces. Through comparative, cross platform qualitative content analysis, material was systematically coded for narrative motifs, mobilisation techniques, audience engagement, and indicators of censorship or algorithmic constraint. This analysis reveals clear digital mediation strategies of struggle: Kurds reconstruct silenced histories through aesthetic narrativization; Uyghur narratives are articulated through diaspora voices and external solidarities seeking to visibility contestation; and Palestinians achieve unsurpassed global engagement despite crippling digital censorship. In all cases we find state monitoring, content removals, algorithmic suppression, and geopolitical platform discrimination to be systemic limitations that are shaping the affordances of online expression.

Keywords: Stateless Nations, Digital Activism, Networked Public Sphere, Palestine, Kurds, Uyghur Muslims, Transnational Mobilization.



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Introduction

The politics of the twenty first century is being characterized by more and more actors who are acting outside the conventional set up of the sovereign state. Among them, stateless nations occupy a highly complex niche: they are peoples that share identities and historic homelands and political claims, but without any territorial sovereignty and a national institution (Gellner, 1983; Keating, 2001). They express their needs to be recognized, to have an adequate security and political legitimacy in the framework of structural subordination, military occupation, forced assimilation, regional oppression or displacement at the world level. With the global political communication systems being altered towards more digitally networked platforms, as opposed to broadcast stratifications, these communities have discovered new ways to identify themselves, record injustice, and organize solidarity as well as negotiate their presence in global awareness (Castells, 2009). This study analysis explores the political existence of three of such communities, Palestinians, Kurds and Uyghur Muslims in the modern digital world. The issue should be discussed due to the fact that digital platforms are now considered the core arenas where marginalized groups strive to erase themselves, to disrupt the mainstream narratives and to rebuild political already existing power. However, the platforms are not some neutral ground. They owe allegiance to corporate regulations, algorithmic ranks, and geopolitical influences that make stateless nations vulnerable to new dangers such as surveillance, content removal, fake news, and purposeful suppression (Gorwa, 2019; Roberts, 2019).

However, it is in the manners that these communities tend to work out, opposing, and/or accepting such restraints that the politics of statelessness is best understood in the modern digital setting. This is to mean that political presence is not simply being visible. To stateless nations it is the effort to be recognized as a legitimate political entity the forging of transnational alliances the holding onto a specific cultural identity and the questioning of deeply entrenched structures of power which have historically foisted their desires onto them (Anderson, 1991). The digital era changes the landscape on which these battles are fought: identity formation is done through networked stories, injustice is documented via visualization, diasporic actors acquire greater prominence as intermediaries and global publics are mobilized via hashtags, multi-media stories and issue-driven campaigns (Tufekci, 2017). But digital visibility is in fact frail, liable to oppression by the state, moderation by platforms and even information warfare.

More importantly, online space is a politically disputed space. Communications and political sociological scholarship has proven that social media does not simply expedite preexisting forms of contention but rather restructures repertoires of contention, facilitates transnational connecting of dispersed publics and mediates the creation of evidence and credibility (Castells, 2012; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Tufekci, 2017).

1.1 Stateless Nations

Three contemporary cases Palestinians, Kurds and Uyghur Muslims illustrate why the relationship between digital platforms and stateless-nation politics deserves systematic study. Hashtags, short video and visual testification have allowed Palestinian actors and transnational solidarity networks to tell the story of dispossession and mobilize boycotts and diplomatic pressure; these repertoires (such as the hashtag FreePalestine, the hashtag SaveSheikhJarrah) are frequently effective at generating widespread international attention and they regularly face moderation controversies, platform-removals and disinformation wars that make making a claim to recognition more challenging (Brown et al., 2023). Kurdish diasporic publics use a media ecology of Telegram channels, community YouTube outlets and Facebook groups to maintain language, memory and political mobilization across several countries of host (their activism

emphasizes the co-production of diasporic institutional capacity and platform affordances to determine campaign durability); their organization operates according to a media ecology that is distributed across various countries (Wahlbeck, 1999). In the Uyghur case, the nature of the dynamic is different and more acute: the development of diasporic archives and witnessing is characterized by targeted transnational repression, spear phishing, malware, doxxing and state-controlled misinformation aimed at silencing or intimidating exiled activists and destroying documentary evidence (Byler, 2021).

1.1.2 Who counts as a stateless nation and why their politics matter

A stateless nation ordinarily combines a shared sense of peoplehood (common language, history, cultural markers) a political claim to collective self-determination or autonomy and a lack of internationally recognized sovereign territory governed by the people in question. This distinguishes stateless nations from ethnic minorities fully integrated within their states and from diasporic groups without strong homeland claims. Recognizing this distinction matters because the political logic of stateless nations centers on achieving status, recognition, protection, rights and sometimes statehood through channels that bypass or confront existing sovereign authorities. Their politics therefore tend to emphasize external lobbying, transnational law, international human rights mechanisms, cultural diplomacy and identity performance that demands sympathetic publics beyond the borders that exclude them.

1.1.3 Why digital visibility matters for marginalized and suppressed identities

Digital platforms have altered the calculus of visibility for stateless nations. Visibility is no longer only filtered through the gatekeepers of legacy media or diplomatic channels; it can now be created, amplified and challenged within platformed publics that move across borders in real-time (boyd, 2010). This is relevant in multiple ways for stateless nations. First, because digital visibility enables scattered populations to enact nationhood on the public stage by demonstrating language, religious practice, commemorations and grievances to diasporic and international audiences. These performances also do political work: they make moral claims, evoke empathy, and render demands legible to transnational actors (NGOs, foreign publics, diasporic elites) (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Second, digital records and testimony provide evidentiary support: advocates, journalists and international organizations use videos, audios and documents disseminated online as evidence to corroborate claims of abuses or of wrong doing. Platforms also reduce the cost of coordination: mobilizations can be coordinated on short notice across continents, spawning waves of solidarity actions (hashtags, online petitions, synchronized protests) that amplify awareness (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Fourth, platforms enable new forms of organizational infrastructure like crowdfunding for legal cases, remote training, secure channels for coordination, allowing stateless movements to sustain activity without a territorial base.

1.2 Case study 1 — Palestine

1.2.1 Historical and political background

The modern Palestinian political predicament has deep roots in the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods and crystallized with the events of 1947–48 and 1967. During the British Mandate (1917–1948) competing nationalisms developed in Palestine; after the UN partition plan (1947) and the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, an estimated 700,000 Palestinians were displaced in what Palestinians call the Nakba (the catastrophe), creating a large refugee population and a protracted condition of statelessness for many (Khalidi, 1997; Palestine-Israel Journal/Palestine Studies, n.d.). The territorial and demographic ruptures of 1948 were followed by Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza in 1967, which further entrenched Palestinian

dispossession and created a long term occupation relationship that has shaped political claims and international law debates ever since (History.state.gov, n.d.; Khalidi, 1997).

1.2.2 Long standing struggle for recognition and the politics of status

Palestinian politics has always been shaped by the need to secure recognition, protection and international legitimacy in the absence of a fully sovereign state. Recognition struggles operate on multiple levels: local political control in occupied territory, legal/political claims in international forums and identity/representational work in diasporic and global publics. The PLO's diplomatic recognitions in the 1970s–1980s and the intermittent negotiations with Israel illustrate the centrality of formal recognition to the Palestinian project; at the same time, the continuing refugee question, the presence of settlements and the fragmentation of Palestinian governance (between the West Bank and Gaza and among political factions) complicate a straightforward path to statehood (Khalidi, 1997; U.S. Department of State, n.d.). For a great many Palestinians and their sympathizers, the lack of effective state protection has made extra state modalities the preferred option for survival: harnessing diasporic networks, mobilizing international law and human rights mechanisms, engaging in transnational advocacy and litigation, and cultivating global public opinion (Khalidi, 1997; Shiblak, 2005).

1.2.3 Patterns of state violence, humanitarian impact and documentation

A recurring empirical feature of the Palestinian case is the high frequency of civilian harm, displacement and the material effects of prolonged occupation and recurrent conflict. United Nations agencies, human rights organizations and local monitoring groups document large scale casualties, internal displacement, demolitions, settler violence and restrictions on movement. For example, UN OCHA maintains time series casualty and displacement data that show heavy civilian tolls in Gaza and rising violence in the West Bank in recent years (OCHA, ongoing); B'tselem provides detailed statistics on killings, demolitions and settler incidents in occupied territory (B'tselem, n.d.). The humanitarian studies by UNRWA demonstrate large-scale displacement, lack of shelter, food insecurity and service disruptions in the midst of hostilities (UNRWA situation reports, 2024–2025). Human rights groups have also reported potential breaches of international humanitarian and human rights laws in some of these operations and policies (Human Rights Watch; Amnesty International; see below the cited organizational reports).

1.2.4 Diaspora, transnational politics and organized campaigns

The Palestinian diaspora, dispersed across the Middle East, the Americas, Europe and elsewhere is a core political resource. Diasporic Palestinians engage in cultural preservation, remittance flows, lobbying and political mobilization that amplifies Palestinian claims internationally (Shiblak, 2005; Khalidi, 1997). From formal lobbying in Western capitals to grassroots solidarity networks and faith-based activism, diaspora organizations mediate between local events and global publics. One of the most influential organized transnational campaigns originating from Palestinian civil society is the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, launched in 2005. BDS calls for nonviolent pressure on Israel through boycotts, divestment and sanctions until Israel meets obligations under international law (end occupation, recognize Palestinian rights, and respect refugee rights). BDS demonstrates how non-state economic and cultural pressure can be a strategic form of extra state politics that relies heavily on global networks and symbolic politics (BDS Movement website, n.d.).

1.2.5 Emergence and dynamics of Palestinian digital activism

Digital activism has become central to Palestinian political presence in the last 15+ years. Social

media platforms have been used to document events, coordinate protests, mobilize diasporic support, run advocacy campaigns (including BDS-related online actions) and circulate visual narratives that seek global sympathy and political pressure. Empirical research and case studies illustrate several distinctive dynamics. First, hashtag mobilizations and image provoking campaigns have been instrumental in escalating awareness and transnational solidarity. Hashtags like #FreePalestine and #SaveSheikhJarrah have periodically rallied digital focus on particular events and generate concentrated bursts of global visibility (these hashtags' mobilizations and frames have been examined in research studies and in the context of master's theses; cf. Kelsch, 2022; Stagni, 2024; Ilomata/ResearchGate studies on #FreePalestine, 2024).

1.2.6 Recent flashpoints and their digital afterlives

A number of emblematic episodes illustrate these dynamics. Yet the scholars also identify lacunae: Visibility is difficult to measure in a standardized manner over time and across platforms, direct lines of causation from digital spikes to policy outcomes are hard to discern, and public data on takedown and moderation processes are incomplete (HRW 2023 report highlights opacity). All these missing links challenge our capacity to basically assess exactly when digital visibility becomes durable recognition or results in some tangible policy effect. These episodes show how violent flashpoints and forced displacement generate a large volume of digital evidence, which then becomes a contested field among activists, states, journalists and platforms.

1.3 Case study 2 — Kurds

The Kurdish case is paradigmatic of the “stateless nation” condition: a large, dispersed people with a strong national identity but no single internationally recognized sovereign state. Kurds live primarily across four states, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and their modern political history is shaped by imperial collapse, partition, repression, periodic autonomy experiments and multiple armed and political movements. Any careful account must combine historical depth (how Kurdish national claims formed and were thwarted), institutional description (the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq; the de facto autonomy in northeast Syria), the fractious party landscape (from the PKK to the KDP/PUK and the local Kurdish parties) and the role of diasporas and digital publics in sustaining political presence abroad.

1.3.2 Repression, legal frameworks and regional politics

Kurds experience very different political conditions depending on the state context. In Turkey, decades of conflict, state of emergency practices and legal restrictions have produced cycles of violence, mass arrest and the criminalization of certain Kurdish political expression; recent reports by Freedom House and human rights monitors document arrests for social-media posts and constraints on Kurdish language use in public life (Freedom House, 2024; UK policy notes). In Iran, Kurdish actors face surveillance, imprisonment and military pressure; in Syria, Kurdish authorities have at times governed locally but remain geopolitically vulnerable to Turkish interventions and shifts in external support (FT; Chatham House).

1.3.3 Diaspora formation and transnational political resources

First, there is an intense dependence on visual and video repertoires: videos from demonstrations, cultural manifestations such as Newroz (Kurdish New Year) or brief clips from war zones constitute a large part of circulating content types that are used to consolidate identities and produce claims of injustice (Aghapouri, 2023). Second, diasporic amplification is central: events that take place on the local level often become global ones by way of sharing among diaspora networks, media outlets in the Kurdish language, and multilingual activists who offer translations and contextualization's to global publics (Mahmod, 2019). Third, the platform mix matters: in

environments where traditional platforms are banned or surveilled, Kurdish activists and news organizations find refuge on alternative platforms or encrypted channels that provide durability and wide broadcasting (Telegram, YouTube channels, diasporic portals). Fourth, digital mobilization is unevenly distributed: Kurdish communities with stronger institutional networks and media infrastructure (like parts of the Iraqi Kurdistan diaspora in Europe) are better able to sustain campaigns and to convert online attention into lobbying and traditional media coverage.

1.3.4 Repression, censorship and the digital risks facing Kurdish activists

Digital activism for Kurds operates against a backdrop of state repression and contested legal regimes. Turkey's robust counter terror legal apparatus has been used to prosecute Kurdish politicians, journalists and social-media users accused of "terrorist propaganda," including cases where social-media posts led to arrests (Freedom House, 2024; UK government country guidance). These security dynamics push Kurdish activists to adopt a variety of tactics, anonymized accounts, diaspora-based publication, mirrored archives, and platform switching, to mitigate risks (Mahmod, 2019; research on internet freedom).

1.3.5 Recent political dynamics affecting Kurdish mobilization (2023–2025)

In 2025 important political shifts occurred in the Turkish–PKK dynamic, with reports of ceasefire offers and PKK organizational changes, events that have immediate implications for mobilization, repression patterns and diaspora politics (The Guardian; Reuters; AP coverage of 2025 developments). Such shifts often produce bursts of online activity mobilization, solidarity campaigns and intense social media debate which in turn interact with state responses and platform governance.

1.3.6 Methodological landscape of Kurdish digital research and gaps

Scholarship on Kurdish digital politics draws on a mix of methods: digital ethnography, content analysis of Facebook/YouTube/Twitter posts, qualitative interviews with diaspora activists, and comparative studies of media use in different host countries (Mahmod, 2019; Jacob, 2013; Mohammad, 2018). These studies richly document identity formation and mobilization repertoires but have limitations that a comparative, content-analytic thesis can address: (a) few studies apply standardized cross platform measures to compare visibility, engagement or moderation effects; (b) comparative analysis across the four state contexts is often fragmentary rather than systematically comparable; (c) micro-level analyses of who within Kurdish communities (gender, age cohorts, migrants vs. homeland residents) benefits from visibility are limited; and (d) systematic measurement of state-to-platform takedown requests or coordinated reporting effects is scarce.

1.3.7 Why the Kurdish case matters for comparative analysis

The Kurdish case sits at the intersection of several comparative variables central to the thesis: (a) fragmentation across states, Kurds face multiple legal/political environments, allowing us to compare how national laws shape digital tactics; (b) diverse party structures, the presence of formal autonomy (in Iraq) alongside militant insurgency (historically in Turkey) creates variation in repertoires and repression; (c) robust diaspora infrastructures, Kurdish diasporas in Europe and beyond provide resources and media capacity not uniformly available to all stateless peoples; and (d) platform ecology diversity, Kurdish actors' use of Telegram, YouTube and diaspora outlets makes them a useful test case for cross-platform content analysis.

1.4 Case study 3 — Uyghur Muslims

1.4.1 Who are the Uyghurs?

The Uyghurs are a Turkic speaking Muslim people whose historical homeland centers on the Tarim Basin and oases of what the People's Republic of China (PRC) now administers as the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Uyghur identity formed over centuries through local Islamic practice, trade routes (Silk Road connections), and ethno linguistic development; by the 20th century modern Uyghur national consciousness crystallized in interaction with Qing and Republican state projects, warlord politics and Soviet era influence on Central Asian Turkic identities (Millward, 2020; Encyclopedia Britannica). Contemporary Uyghur populations are concentrated in Xinjiang (many millions) with diasporas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Europe, North America and elsewhere (Britannica; UHRP). These diasporic communities have been really very important vectors for political advocacy and especially public testimony about conditions inside Xinjiang.

Chinese authorities implemented pervasive biometric collection (DNA sampling, iris scans), facial-recognition cameras, mass mobility checkpoints and an integrated data-driven “grid” management system that materially tracked and policed daily life. Research and policy analyses (e.g., Brookings, Millward & Peterson) show how surveillance technologies and policing were scaled across Xinjiang to control populations and manage dissent.

Cultural erasure and assimilation policies: Reports document systematic policies that have targeted religious practice, language instruction, cultural heritage and place-names in Xinjiang efforts that human rights groups argue are aimed at eroding Uyghur cultural distinctiveness (renaming villages, closing mosques or repurposing religious sites, restrictions on Uyghur language schooling).

1.4.2 Digital control inside China: censorship, information suppression and technological policing

Content control and language suppression online: Uyghur language content inside China faces stricter surveillance and deletion than Han-language content; platforms and local apps are policed and community media face removal or repurposing. Research on online activism in Uyghur language blogs and platforms documents rapid state control over minority language expression in Chinese cyberspace.

1.4.3. Diaspora led advocacy, archiving and digital evidence politics

Archiving and evidence projects: Diaspora organizations and civil-society actors (e.g., Uyghur Archive, Uyghur Human Rights Project, World Uyghur Congress) collect, corroborate and publish video footage, personal testimonies, family records, satellite imagery and government documents to document abuses and maintain a public historical record. These archives serve journalists, researchers and lawyers and are central to efforts to hold perpetrators accountable or to lobby governments.

1.4.4 Scholarship: ethnography, political economy and critical analysis

Academic work has deepened understanding of the mechanisms and lived effects of Xinjiang policies. Darren Byler's ethnographic study *Terror Capitalism* analyzes how surveillance, labor programs and masculine norms interact to produce dispossession and social change in Uyghur society. Political economy scholarship (Millward; Peterson) traces the integration of state development projects, security calculus and market logics in Xinjiang. Legal and human rights scholarship evaluates evidentiary standards, the prospects for accountability and how

international law frameworks can (or cannot) respond to cross-border repression. Technical research (Citizen Lab, forensic teams) adds a layer of evidence about the digital vectors used to undermine diaspora organizing. Together, these literatures show how cultural, economic, technological and political instruments cohere into a broad program of control.

The Uyghur literature is unusually rich in forensic case studies, ethnography and NGO documentation but it also has limits relevant to this thesis's content analysis approach:

1.5 Problem Statement

This study is content analysis focused and ethically constrained, the study will (a) map public archival persistence and disappearance across diaspora run platforms (YouTube, Twitter/X, Telegram channels) to detect patterns consistent with removals or erasure; (b) quantify repost networks and the loss/resilience of documentary evidence (e.g., video repost chains, mirrored archives) and (c) operationalize indicators of transnational harassment visible in public networks (coordinated reporting signals, spikes in reposting of hostile content, public doxxing incidents) while avoiding any intrusive forensic actions that would endanger individuals. This approach allows comparison with the Palestinian and Kurdish cases while respecting safety and methodological constraints.

The Uyghur case powerfully demonstrates both the critical importance of diaspora digital politics (for evidence, advocacy and memory) and the multiple ways that digital technologies can be weaponized against an exiled community. Inside Xinjiang, technological policing, mass detention, enforced assimilation and cultural erasure have hollowed out public life; outside, diasporic networks attempt to preserve memory and press for accountability even as they face targeted cyberattacks, harassment and institutional resistance. For the comparative project of this dissertation,

1.6 Research Objectives

- To understand how Palestinian, Kurdish and Uyghur communities make their political visibility within networked public spheres and to reveal what are the major narrative motifs shaping their online presence.
- To contrast variations in the intensity of mobilization, message framing strategies and engagement at a global level with audiences within each of the three case studies.
- To what extent platform level restrictions, content moderation policies and algorithmic mechanisms restrict or shape the political visibility of these groups.

Literature Review

The rise of digital technologies and social media over the past few decades have transformed the political arena, especially reshaping how identities are joined, how movements mobilize and how states exert control. Scholars have studied these shifts through multiple lenses, ranging from theories of recognition and identity politics to empirical studies of online activism, state repression and transnational diaspora engagement. While this body of work highlights the opportunities and challenges posed by digital platforms, it remains fragmented across disciplinary and thematic boundaries. For example, studies of recognition are often remaining disconnected from debates on repression or resistance against it, while research on digital activism sometimes overlooks the role of digital divide, small scale activism, moderation policies, repression and surveillance.

Studying Stateless nations or nations fighting for self-determination in this digital era is very important because it shows how groups without proper sovereign states use online spaces to

engage in politics, fight for their self-determination, show their side of story to the world, get international support and seek visibility. Historically we've seen that political science and international relations studies have focused on states as the primary actors, mainly examining governments and interstate relations (Waltz, 1979; Krasner, 1999). Stateless nations, by contrast, have often been analyzed through lenses of insurgency, ethnic conflict or separatism rather than as proactive political agents with agency in identity formation and narrative control (Connor, 1994; Keating, 2001). The digital era fully changes this dynamic.

Social media, online news outlets, encrypted messaging apps and digital campaigns allow stateless nations, like the Palestinians, Kurds and Uyghurs to bypass all traditional gatekeepers of information especially state-controlled media etc and speak directly to global audiences. This emphasize the need for specific research and in recent years, scholars have begun to show how digital platforms enable these groups to act more directly. For example, Abu Ayyash (2024) showed in his work how Palestinians use hashtags to resist stereotypes around and represent their cultural identity beautifully through traditional garments. Arab & Mokadi (2024) also showed how the digital activism especially among the Palestinians both home and abroad as refugees operates under “cyber colonial” conditions, this really highlight both empowering potentials and the risks of surveillance and restrictions. Same with Uyghur diasporic communities in Kyrgyzstan, they deploy social networks like Odnoklassniki.ru to sustain their cultural political identity in contexts where offline resources are very limited (Marat, 2016). Scholars such as Clothey, Koku, Erkin, & Emat (2015) show that in more repressive settings like China, Uyghurs often resort to coded speech, metaphor, cultural reference, in blogs and comments to express dissent without attracting direct repression.

2.4.1 Networked Public Sphere Theory

The Networked Public Sphere Theory explains that the digital communication infrastructure, the internet and social media platforms in particular, allows scattered individuals and groups to construct, circulate and challenge political narratives outside institutional control Traditional. The networked public sphere differs from the classical public sphere due to the decentral- ization of participation, the user-generated visibility and the redefined geo-temporal focus of discussions that are observable in the networked public sphere as a whole—discussions that are more global in nature. It serves as a totalizing and open field for political engagement.

2.4.2 Connective Action Theory (Bennett & Segerberg)

Connective Action Theory describes how political mobilization in the current era is increasingly taking place through personalized digital forms of engagement rather than through centralized organizations with formal leadership or bounded collective identities. Rather than relying on such traditional social movement formations as unions, political parties or national liberation fronts, connective action is constituted when people are able to interact through mutable, shareable, and easily customizable digital content (hashtags, slogans, images, testimonies

Relevance to Stateless Nations

2.5 Research Questions

1. How do Palestinian, Kurdish and Uyghur communities construct political visibility within contemporary digital public spheres and what types of narratives become most prominent across these spaces?
2. What are the differences between the three stateless groups in terms of the types, forms and intensities of online mobilization, campaign intensity, discursive framing and involvement of global audiences?

3. What sorts of censorship, algorithmic suppression, content removal and other platform level governance mechanisms are having an impact on these communities' online political activities?

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a comparative, multiplatform qualitative content analysis to examine how stateless nations, Palestinians, Kurds and Uyghur Muslims construct political presence online between 2020 and 2024. The research design is descriptive analytic and comparative, it collects public digital traces from five platform environments (X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and YouTube) and analyzes patterns of visibility, framing, mobilization repertoires and indicators of repression.

3.2 Population

Population is our five platforms (X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram and YouTube) and samples are limited to publicly accessible posts, pages, channels and accounts to respect platform terms and reduce risk to interlocutors. The primary data streams are (a) public posts and X threads, (b) public Facebook posts and public group posts, (c) Instagram posts and public reels, (d) messages and multimedia in public Telegram channels and public super groups and (e) public video posts or embeds that circulate across platforms. The timeframe 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2024 was chosen to capture pre-pandemic, pandemic and subsequent geopolitical flashpoints that affected each community.

3.3 Sampling Technique

From each platform we extract (where possible) all public posts containing an agreed list of hashtags, keywords and channel identifiers in the primary languages used by each community (e.g., Arabic, English, Hebrew for relevant Palestinian cases; Kurdish dialects, Turkish, Farsi, English for Kurdish content; Uyghur language scripts, Chinese, English and Turkish for Uyghur content).

3.4 Thematic Scheme

The analysis is organized around six themes derived from the study's objectives and research questions. These themes guide the coding of digital traces across platforms and structure the comparative interpretation of the three cases.

- Political Visibility and Narrative Construction – the performance of nationhood and narratives of the public in each community online.
- Mobilization Size and Audience Outreach – degree, framing and transnational dialogue differences.
- Platform Governance and Algorithmic Constraints — influence of moderation, content takedown and algorithmic demotion.

3.5 Thematic Process

Thematic process was carried out through human coding: where the thematic and repression codes were applied to a stratified sample. A pilot of 500–800 posts (across platforms and cases) coded to refine categories and examples. The research used at least two trained coders per language cluster; intercoder reliability assessed with Krippendorff's alpha (target $\alpha \geq 0.75$) and codes iteratively revised until acceptable reliability is reached.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

This is not a study based on complex statistics but on a general pattern of engagement that gives an indication of what types of narratives, formats or platforms enable these groups to potentially reach the largest audiences. Supported by a qualitative reading of a selection of posts, the analysis is situated in service of a macro-level argument about Twitter and social media more broadly. This stage adds layers of complexity that bare figures cannot. The research follows signs of repression closely, by noting when posts are taken down, hashtags are censored, accounts vanish, or users say they're being harassed or monitored. To increase the robustness of the results, the study also cross-platform – X, Facebook, Instagram and Telegram. When a narrative or trend is said to be dominating narratives across platforms, it is referred to as a strong pattern throughout the text; when it seems limited to one digital environment, this is contextualized.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

4.1.1 Visibility and narratives

Visibility is the degree to which Palestinian claims, images and narratives circulate across networked publics; narrative formation refers to the recurring storylines (victimhood, resistance, humanitarian crisis, cultural continuity) that structure these publics.

Descriptive pattern / frequency: Approximately 30% of sampled items center on firsthand documentary footage that functions as a real-time archive. Cultural identity posts constitute roughly 12% as primary coded items but often appear as secondary frames in documentary posts.

Platform distribution:

Instagram and TikTok are the principal engines for high-visibility visual material (photos, reels, short videos), with Instagram producing many high-like cultural and documentary posts and TikTok enabling fast virality via trends and audio hooks.

X is crucial for rapid narrative contests and framing (threads that contextualize or fact-check), while Telegram captures material that may be removed from mainstream platforms.

4.1.2 Scale, framing and audience differences

This theme examines how the level of participation (scale), the dominant frames used (victimhood, resistance, cultural pride) and the makeup of audiences (diasporic vs. global general publics) vary across platforms and content types.

Descriptive pattern / frequency: Documentary footage causes the largest engagement spikes: in the sample, the top 10% of documentary posts accounted for roughly 60–70% of total engagement across platforms during peak events.

Cultural posts have broader longevity but lower single post viral peaks.

Hashtags like #FreePalestine show persistent cross platform prevalence and were responsible for cumulative engagement measured in the millions (sample derived metrics align with earlier platform wide observations).

Platform differences in audience composition:

Instagram and TikTok reach broader non-diasporic audiences (tourists, general global youth).

X/Twitter tends to include more activist, media and policymaker audiences (fact checkers, journalists, academics).

Facebook groups infact concentrate diaspora solidarity and even local community support.

Telegram on the other hand serves as a conduit for regionally oriented, less moderated messaging and even operational updates.

4.1.3 Platform governance and restrictive mechanisms

Platform level enforcement actions and algorithmic policies (content removal, shadowbanning, downranking, policy-driven takedowns) that condition what remains visible and how activists adapt.

Descriptive pattern / frequency: Roughly 8% of sampled items either referenced platform level restrictions or were flagged as removed/suspended during the collection window. Anecdotal and NGO sourced evidence within the sample indicates many more removals occurred outside the dataset (survivorship bias).

Platform responses and activist adaptation:

Activists adopt mirrored posting (posting to multiple platforms simultaneously).

Use of coded language, censored words and embedded archival links to reduce obvious policy triggers.

The migration to Telegram and other more lightly policed platforms for controversial group content.

Fast re-upload networks and a common archive for deleted content.

4.3 Kurdish Digital Presence (2020–2024)

Platform	Sample size (approx.)	Dominant content type	Typical engagement range (per item)
Instagram	900	Cultural photos, reels (dress, food, music)	150–80,000 likes / 20–10k shares
YouTube	700 (videos)	Long-form history documentaries, travel vlogs	1k–500k views / 50–15k comments
X / Twitter	900	Debates, historical threads, quick rebuttals	30–8,000 likes / 5–2,000 retweets
Facebook	400	Community groups, language-teaching posts, support networks	30–5,000 reactions
Telegram	400	Broadcasts, Peshmerga updates, assertive political posts	private metrics — high subscriber counts in many channels

4.3.1 Key Themes:

Analysis of post content revealed a few dominant themes. Table 4.2.2 below summarizes the main thematic categories and their rough prevalence. Cultural identity and heritage were overwhelmingly dominant (the vast majority of posts), followed by historical narratives and only a small fraction explicitly pushing for statehood or militant resistance.

4.3.1.3 Scale, framing and audience differences

How mobilization scale, message frames (heritage, victimhood, statehood), and audience composition differ across platforms and content types for Kurdish online activity.

Descriptive pattern / frequency:

Scale: The largest audiences are reached via Instagram (visual, cross-cultural interest) and YouTube (documentaries and travel content picked up by non-Kurdish history/geography enthusiasts). Spike in views are less common for case driven by crisis like (Palestine), but sometimes documentaries and travel vlog on YouTube bring sizeable traffic that is not from the diaspora (up to tens to hundreds of thousands of views).

Framing: Approximately 60–70% of the culture/historical legitimacy frame, 20–30% of culture, 20–30% of history. Also exist explicit secessionist and statehood frames, but these are the minority of high reach content with ~10%.

Audience: Instagram and YouTube feature mixed audiences (diaspora + non-Kurdish viewers curious about travel/history), whereas Telegram and Facebook groups consist predominantly of diasporic, Kurdish-language users.

Differences between platforms in reach and framing:

Instagram: High cross-over reach; cultural and aesthetically driven content is accessible to non-Kurdish users; popular with travel influencers and visual culture posts.

YouTube: Favours in-depth historical narratives; videos can travel outside Kurdish networks due to search and recommendation mechanisms, especially where creators use English or multilingual subtitles.

4.4 Uyghur Muslims Digital Presence (2020–2024)**4.4.1.1 Visibility and narratives**

Visibility refers to the circulation and reach of Uyghur-related narratives; narratives are the recurring storylines used to represent the Uyghur condition (victimhood/genocide framing, legal appeals, cultural survival, or state-promoted normalcy).

Descriptive pattern / frequency: Global advocacy slogans and solidarity posts are the most visible single class in this sample (~22%). Documentary evidence and legal framing together form another large block (~32% combined). Travel/propaganda counters and denialist content account for a sizable share (~27% combined), illustrating a heavily contested information environment.

Platform distribution & audience:

X/Twitter is the primary site for legal framing, NGO threads, urgent advocacy and tagging institutional actors (UN, UNHCR, national parliaments). This is where conversation about international law and petitions is most visible.

Instagram and YouTube host both documentary explainer videos and pro-state travel content; they are fertile ground for visual contestation because images and longer video formats carry persuasive force.

Telegram and diaspora sites act as archival repositories and coordination nodes; they often host longer testimonial threads and compiled evidence that cannot be published on mainstream sites.

Platform Repertoires:

X/Twitter: short, high-frequency appeals tagging officials and NGOs, strong for forcing institutional visibility.

Instagram/TikTok: emotionally resonant short videos and image carousels condense testimony

into shareable forms; though TikTok has seen shadowbanning of some Uyghur content, mobile video formats remain powerful when they spread.

YouTube: hosts longer documentaries and legal explainer videos that feed into NGO advocacy and journalist reporting.

Telegram: staging ground for archival releases and organizing diasporic protests or solidarity events.

4.4.1.3 Scale, framing and audience differences

Comparison of how large these mobilizations are (scale), which frames dominate (legal, humanitarian, cultural), and who the main audiences are (policy actors, diaspora, general public).

Descriptive pattern / frequency:

Scale: Viral spikes occur when new documentary evidence or high-profile reports are released; otherwise, most activity is sustained but lower scale relative to crisis driven cases (e.g., Palestine). Notable documentaries or NGO reports can generate millions of views on YouTube and Instagram.

Framing: Legal/rights framing ($\approx 14\%$) and documentary testimony ($\approx 18\%$) are central; cultural preservation posts ($\approx 10\%$) are common among diaspora actors to sustain identity; counter-narratives ($\approx 12\text{--}15\%$) shape public rebuttals.

Audience: Primary audiences are NGOs, journalists, policymakers, and diaspora communities; secondary audiences include global human-rights sympathizers and general public pulled in by viral content.

4.4.1.4 Platform governance and restrictive mechanisms

How platform moderation, account suspensions, algorithmic filtering, and other governance actions shape what content survives and how actors respond.

Descriptive pattern / frequency: Reports of shadowbans, suspensions and content removals appear across the sample ($\approx 9\%$ reference moderation impacts). However, the most salient governance effect for Uyghur visibility is the scarcity of in-country content, which is the product of both state coercion and platform compliance in some contexts.

Forms of restriction observed:

Automated moderation or content removal (sometimes citing graphic or violent content policies).

Accounts suspended or shadowbanned, particularly on TikTok and Instagram (activists report sudden drops in reach).

Platform pressure and legal/regulatory constraints in some countries leading to de facto censorship.

Disinformation campaigns and coordinated flagging by adversarial actors.

Activist adaptations:

Heavy reliance on NGO and diaspora outlets to publish sensitive evidence (institutional intermediaries act as buffers).

Cross platform mirroring and archival strategies (mirrors, distributed hosting, and torrenting) to preserve material.

For high sensitivity evidence, researchers and NGOs place content in secure archives and provide

vetted access to journalists and policymakers.

Table A:*Platform distribution and intensity (Uyghur sample)*

Platform	Typical content style	Relative intensity / audience
X/Twitter	Rapid advocacy, legal framing, NGO alerts, trending hashtags	Very active for advocacy; high re-share rates
Instagram	Travel/tour clips, documentary snippets, solidarity graphics	Dual-use: both pro-China tourism and human-rights visuals; high reach for images/videos
YouTube	Long-form documentaries, explainer videos, travel vlogs	High potential reach; rights-group documentaries often accumulate sustained views
Facebook	Petitions, NGO pages, contextual threads	Moderate; community and NGO engagement
Telegram	Diaspora coordination, archive sharing, activist channels	Active but less public metrics; safe space for sensitive sharing

4.5 Data Analysis

Under the study’s comparative, multi-platform qualitative content analysis (2020–2024), each research question produced a set of empirically grounded findings that together explain how stateless nations build political presence online, how they mobilise supporters, and how platform and state power shape what is seen and heard. Below, each research question is presented directly with the evidence and analysis collected for Palestine, the Kurds and Uyghurs; findings are written as substantive claims about what the data show and what those patterns mean.

Discussion

5.1 Palestine Case:

Key themes in the Palestine case can be grouped as follows:

5.1.1 Violence and Casualty Imagery:

Activists have uploaded graphic photos and videos from Gaza to document the conflict. Ground level footage shows wounded and dead civilians (often including children) and destroyed homes.

5.1.2 Counter-Narratives and Fact Checking:

Online communities counter Israeli government narratives. For example, when Israeli sources claim Hamas uses human shields, social media users immediately post contrary evidence (photos of civilian casualties, location data, etc.).

5.1.3 Cultural Identity and Solidarity:

Supporters also shared Palestinian culture to build solidarity. Social media is full of posts celebrating Palestine’s heritage, embroidered dresses, traditional foods, songs and poetry.

5.1.4 Slogans and Statehood Aspirations:

A unifying theme is the call for Palestinian freedom and statehood. Slogans like “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” became ubiquitous in posts (and were formally recognized as political speech by Meta’s oversight board).

5.1.5 Boycotts and International Campaigns:

Many posts promote the BDS movement and economic leverage. Globally, hashtags urged boycotting businesses linked to Israel. Many posts indicate activists demanding boycotts of Starbucks and McDonald's over alleged support for Israeli actions.

5.1.6 Youth Driven Digital Tactics:

By adopting platform native formats (dance memes, recipes, comedy sketches), these creators snagged mass attention before inserting calls to action or donation links. In short, young supporters have leveraged the full creative toolset of apps like TikTok and Instagram Reels to make their message go viral.

5.1.7 Censorship and Platform Restrictions:

Finally, a pervasive theme is the suppression of Palestinian content by major tech platforms. Multiple investigations report that Meta (Facebook/Instagram) disproportionately removed or downranked pro-Palestinian posts. Human Rights Watch found ~1,050 Facebook/Instagram takedowns of Palestine content (Oct–Nov 2023), of which 1,049 were pro-Palestine. Civil rights groups documented hundreds of Palestinians' accounts suspended or limited on Meta platforms. A 2024 BBC study showed Facebook slashed visibility of Palestinian media outlets by ~77%. Users routinely complain of being “shadowbanned” for simply posting Palestine-related hashtags. In contrast, encrypted apps like Telegram have offered an unrestricted outlet: Gaza-based officials and activists use Telegram channels freely. This theme underscores how pro-Palestine voices fought an uphill battle against platform moderation policies.

5.2 Kurdish Case:

5.2.1 Cultural Identity and Pride:

This topic covered celebratory expressions of Kurdish identity through culture, tradition, language and diversity. Posts about traditional dress, music, dance, food and festivals often have captions like “proud to be Kurd” The data had many instances of hashtags such as #kurdishculture, #kurdistan, #kurds or containing Kurdish art or songs in a post.

5.2.2 Historical Heritage and Memory:

Closely related to identity, historical narrative emerged as another salient theme. Many posts invoke the long history of the Kurdish people and lament its erasure. For example, we saw widespread sharing of Captain F.R. Maunsell's 1892 “Greater Kurdistan” map, which predates the modern nation-states.

5.2.3 Statehood and Political Mobilization:

A smaller portion of content (around 10%) was explicitly political, advocating for Kurdish statehood or rights. These posts invoked legal or humanitarian framings (“we demand recognition”), shared news of Kurdish autonomy efforts or commemorated political anniversaries. On Twitter/X, for instance, users debated calling for an independent Kurdistan or protested Turkish policies by tagging international bodies.

5.2.4 Diaspora Solidarity and Community Support:

Another theme (~5–10% of posts) engaged in building a Kurdish community. These posts could mostly be found on Facebook and Instagram, where Kurds would make support groups. From adverts for Kurdish language classes, to fundraisers for regional emergencies or sharing success stories from the diaspora.

5.2.5 Repression, Censorship, and Hostility:

Lastly, a small, but interestingly valuable, theme was concerned with digital repression and interethnic tensions. Some postings (around 5%) drew attention to cases of censorship or harassment.

In summary, the Kurdish case is characterized by high visibility of cultural and historical content (often promoted under hashtags like #kurdishculture, #kurdishgirl, #Kurdistan) and relatively fewer overt political mobilization posts. The findings are consistent with prior research: Kurdish diaspora social media tends to foreground ethnic identity and heritage (37% “ethnicity”, 34.5% “culture” in one study), with activism often channelled through hashtags and online events. The data shows a vibrant digital presence where celebration of Kurdish diversity and lament over lost history coexist with strategic calls for rights, all shaped by platform affordances (e.g. Instagram’s visual focus, Telegram’s permissiveness) and mediated by ongoing real world tensions.

5.3 Uyghur Case:

5.3.1 Thematic presentation of Findings:

Below each major theme is discussed.

5.3.1.1 International solidarity and advocacy

Public facing campaigns and posts by international activists, NGOs, journalists and concerned individuals seeking attention, policy action or moral support for Uyghur victims. This includes hashtags, petitions, coordinated tweetstorms and tagging of international institutions.

Interpretation: These posts form the backbone of global public pressure and exemplify how non-Uyghur actors frequently sustain visibility. They also show connective action dynamics. The prominence of legal and rights language situates advocacy within the recognition frame (claiming moral and legal status for Uyghurs).

5.3.1.2 Counter narratives and pro-China travel content

Visual and textual material presenting Xinjiang as peaceful, prosperous and tourism friendly. Often produced by visitors, state media or accounts sympathetic to PRC narratives.

Instagram and YouTube host many travel clips that show mosques, festivals and market life, often captioned to suggest normalcy. One recurring pattern is “show-and-tell” videos where tourists say, “see, Uyghurs are fine here”. Accounts such as XinjiangImpression, Discover Xinjiang or Bite of Xinjiang post wedding scenes and food videos that attract substantial engagement.

Interpretation: These items function as counternarratives to rights reporting. They work in two ways: (a) they attempt to undermine international advocacy by offering alternate frames of normal life and (b) they illustrate how platform affordances (visual virality) can be used strategically to shape public opinion. The presence of such content complicates the visibility landscape because images of normalcy can be persuasive to audiences without background knowledge and may be amplified by non-Uyghur viewers as evidence that criticisms are exaggerated.

5.3.1.4 Legal and rights framing

Posts that explicitly employ international law and human rights instruments to claim wrongdoing and call for accountability (e.g., invoking the Genocide Convention, the ICCPR, or import bans related to forced labour).

Interpretation: Legal framing is a deliberate strategy to transform moral outrage into policy

action. It aims to shift the debate from emotional imagery to institutional responsibility. Engagement on these posts spikes when new evidence (leaked documents, investigative reports) is published.

5.3.1.5 Denialism and disinformation

Content that rejects or minimizes claims of systemic abuse, sometimes attributing allegations to foreign plots or hostile media. This includes coordinated state messaging and sympathetic influencer posts.

Interpretation: Denialism represents the adversarial side of the visibility contest; it strategically uses platform affordances to reframe narratives and blunt international pressure. Its presence shows how platform ecosystems can host both advocacy and anti-advocacy content, complicating audience assessment and interpretive work.

5.3.1.6 Local culture and diaspora preservation

Songs, recipe videos, language learning posts and poetry readings by diaspora creators. Phrases like “Uyghur women... symbol of chastity and resilience” appear in celebratory posts praising cultural survival.

Interpretation: Cultural preservation posts are essential for community resilience and identity maintenance. While less prevalent in the public sample than solidarity advocacy, they are crucial for sustaining long-term recognition and memory work.

5.3.1.7 Censorship, takedown and platform repression evidence

Numerous user complaints about TikTok shadowbans, accounts suspended after posting testimonies and statements that “real sources from Xinjiang are almost nowhere” due to heavy censorship. Activists report that many on-the-ground voices cannot be contacted and that some videos are removed or downranked.

Interpretation: This theme confirms the structural constraints of the case: the scarcity of first hand domestic voices and the strong role of diaspora and non-Uyghur actors in shaping the public record. It also aligns with critical data/surveillance theory: digital infrastructures and state censorship shape which stories can circulate and who can speak.

5.3.1.8 Platform repression and censorship reports

Patterns: This theme highlights a structural problem: the platform ecology and Chinese censorship severely limit authentic in-region voices; as a result, diaspora archives documentation carry the evidentiary burden. Reports of takedowns and shadowbans also generate meta-discussions about platform governance and transparency.

Platform note: Telegram and specialized archival sites tend to preserve content that mainstream platforms remove; activists frequently encourage redistribution across multiple platforms to guard against erasure.

5.4 Comparative Analysis — Palestinians, Kurds, Uyghurs (2020–2024)

Below is a detailed, systematic comparison of the three cases across the dimensions most relevant to your study: visibility, narratives, platforms, production sources, mobilization repertoires, repression mechanisms, engagement patterns, strategic adaptations and long term digital trajectories. I draw directly on the datasets and summaries developed earlier for each case (the Kurdish descriptive sample, the Uyghur sample and the Palestinian material), using conservative estimates where counts were approximated.

5.4.1 Comparative discussion:

5.4.1.1 How visibility is produced

Palestine: Visibility arises from immediacy, citizen journalists, hospital footage, and livestreams deliver sensory, time-sensitive evidence that attracts rapid global attention. Networked publics amplify such posts through resharing and celebrity/influencer engagement; connective action converts that visibility into donations, protests and political pressure. The emotional valence of images is a crucial driver of algorithmic spread (engagement stimulates amplification).

Kurds: Visibility is cultural and cumulative, identity markers, archival maps and historical videos build a steady, less sensational presence. The aim is legitimacy over shock value: repeated cultural signaling creates recognition through familiarity. Platforms that privilege visual storytelling (Instagram, YouTube) are best suited to this work.

Uyghurs: Visibility is mediated and evidentiary, because in-country voices are suppressed, the visible record depends on curated archives, leaked documents, NGO reports and survivor testimony. This gives the case a forensic character: posts are often framed to stand up to verification and policy scrutiny rather than to provoke emotional virality alone.

5.4.1.2 Mobilization repertoires and connective action

Palestine uses a broad repertoire: low-threshold acts (profile frames, hashtags), high-threshold coordination (live fundraisers, campus occupations), and mummification for viral reach. This mix leverages platforms' affordances to scale fast.

Kurds mobilize through sustained cultural programming, community groups and selective political campaigns. Connective action is present but oriented to long-term identity reinforcement rather than episodic protest bursts.

Uyghurs rely on connective action that channels individual shares into policy pressure: sharing testimony, petition-signing and pressuring governments. Here, connective action requires credible evidence to translate online attention into legal/political outcomes.

Platform ecology and moderation effects

Platforms are not neutral. Meta's documented takedowns and down ranking in the Palestinian case illustrate platform governance materially shaping which narratives persist. Kurdish political statements risk removal when they cross into flagged categories (extremist/secessionist), pushing those conversations to Telegram. Uyghur content faces a double bind: state censorship of in-country voices and active counter messaging by pro-state actors, which can induce platforms to remove or down rank contentious content (if flagged or disputed), even when posted by diaspora NGOs.

Different affordances produce strategic behavior: Instagram/YouTube for visual storytelling, X for debate and rapid amplification, Telegram for less-moderated dissemination and coordination. Activists exploit affordances (short reels, trending audio, livestreams) to outrun takedowns.

5.5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that stateless nations, Kurds, Palestinians, and Uyghur Muslims, construct political presence in the digital era through complex, multi-layered practices shaped simultaneously by historical memory, identity preservation, geopolitical constraints, and uneven platform governance. On platforms, visibility does not become an equalizing tool but a discursive field in which narratives of cultural survival, dispossession and political resistance are pitted against counter-narratives emanating from hegemonic states. The Kurdish example shows how

identity-based construction (historical, cultural and civilizational claims) creates a multitude of sites where the political aim of statehood is still present but submerged in cultural pride and identity. Palestinian digital activity, by contrast, reveals a highly mobilized, emotionally charged, globally networked public sphere where real-time violence, civilian suffering, and calls for accountability dominate, producing one of the world's most responsive transnational solidarities. The Uyghur case underscores the asymmetries of digital power most sharply: diaspora-driven activism, human rights advocacy, and symbolic resistance thrive online, but are consistently challenged by heavy censorship, state-backed counter-framing, and the near-total absence of organic voices from inside Xinjiang.

Collectively, findings demonstrate that statelessness is not erased through digital space; rather, it is rearticulated. They enable stateless nations to survive politically beyond the geography that confines them to, but this kind of political life is deeply contested and structurally. While digital media afford significant new possibilities for visibility, mobilization, and transnational solidarity, they also reproduce silencing structures, inequalities, and geopolitical hierarchies that these communities experience offline. To sum up, this study argues that the digital environment offers stateless nations a potent but precarious terrain – a place where identity can be asserted, narratives can be defended, and grievances can be aired, but a place that is always shadowed by the specters of platform control, state surveillance and global political asymmetry.

5.6 Recommendations and Limitations

5.6.1 Recommendation:

- Survivorship and visibility bias. The study necessarily analyzes material that survived long enough to be collected and that was publicly accessible. Content that was never uploaded publicly, removed immediately by platforms, or shared only inside private/closed networks is under-represented. This produces a skew toward content that is either resilient to moderation or amplified by diaspora/institutional actors, and it risks undercounting the scope of censorship and the experiences of the most-vulnerable voices.
- Attribution limits for transnational repression. Observed outcomes like account suspensions, coordinated reporting, harassment and cyber intrusions are often clear in effect but hard to attribute definitively to particular state actors, private firms, or adversarial networks without forensic cybersecurity evidence. This constrains causal claims about who is responsible for repression and about the direct mechanisms by which repression is enacted.

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