SOCIAL MEDIA DRIVING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT  
THE RISE OF THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE

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Abstract

In July of 2019, Puerto Rican citizens took to the streets to protest Puerto Rican Governor Ricardo Rosselló and his cabinets mishandling and corruption of the relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Maria, and to further compound the frustrations of the Puerto Rican people, text messages between Rosselló and his cabinet were leaked that were shown to be “insulting women, deriding gays and making fun of Maria victims.”. After 15 days of protests, strikes, and a barrage from around the world on social media, the disgraced governor and his cabinet resigned on August 2, 2019.

Keywords: Social media, Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, resignation, corruption, text messages

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# A recent history lesson

One of the most successful social movements in recent history happened during the he Arab Spring of 2010 in areas of Northern Africa and the Middle East where people utilized the power of Social Media to take matters into their own hands to oust oppressive regimes .In July of 2019 thousands of Puerto Rican’s took to the streets with weeklong protests and strikes in an attempt to force the Puerto Rican governor Ricardo Rosselló to resign amid charges of corruption, poor living standards, and leaked text messages that insulted women, derided gays, and made fun of Hurricane Maria victims. What started out as a small few thousand protesters quickly ballooned into hundreds of thousands of Puerto Rican citizens Taking to the streets in protest.

# Unleash the power of Social media.

Social media and other digital technologies were a driving force for the Puerto Rican people. The message was able to get out quickly. The influence of entertainers such as Ricky Martin and many other community leaders set the stage to confront the governor in an attempt to remove him from power. The governor tried to remain in power by offering token concessions.

# Caught Red-handed.

As the protests continued though the first few days the message grew louder and stronger throughout Puerto Rico and the world. Journalist would read the governor's text messages that were insulting to LGBTQ, women and Hurricane Maria victims live on public television. This was a major factor to the breaking point of the Puerto Rican people. The country was still devastated and slow to recover from Hurricane Maria almost two years prior, and the braggadocios corruption within the government stymied the relief efforts while placing the blame on the Trump administration to invoke Puerto Rican nationalism.

##### As more and more of the nearly 900 text messages were published and read to the public it was clear to Puerto Rican people that this governor and his entire cabinet must go. This was absolutely the only acceptable outcome the citizens and world would accept to end the racism, homophobic rhetoric, and corruption so that the country could heal and rebuild

# The Social Media wildfire.

As this event spread worldwide through news broadcast, social media, and other digital technologies, the fall of the corrupt Puerto Rican Governor’s regime took place quickly. A call for Nationwide Protests and strikes took off on Social Media and Television. As many as 500,000 Puerto Rican citizens took to the streets and demanded that Ricardo Rosselló resign immediately. The Puerto Rican citizens made their message loud and clear. On August 2nd, 2019 Puerto Rico Governor Ricard Rosselló and his entire cabinet resigned in shame.

# Viva! Victory.

With the world watching the Puerto Rican citizens around the globe celebrated an end to the corruption. As they celebrated, they were also cautious noting there was much work that needed to be done to restore their country. “And we still have people suffering in the island without communication or electricity, so this is something we need to celebrate, we have to celebrate we finally won one battle,” said Luis Diaz, a Puerto Rican expatriate living in central Florida.

# Rebuilding the Island

Nearly 3 months have passed since the Fall of Rosselló’s regime, and new Puerto Rican Governor Wanda Vázquez is left the daunting task of rebuilding not only the infrastructure and economy of Puerto Rico, but also the trust of the Islands citizens. Many in the Political world as well as in the news media have called for the private sector to reinvest in Puerto Rico and become the “catalyst for growth” for a “New” Puerto Rico. The country is urging more Foreign investment to help spur revive and revitalize the Puerto Rican economy.

# Roadmap for future Social Movement success

As the world celebrated with, and for the Puerto Rican people, one cannot help but to be in awe as to the far reaching and rapid success that Social Media helped to facilitate this Social movement. It will undoubtably be a road map for future movements. Without the aid of Social media this event very well could have ended up like many failed attempts and the continued corruption of the Rosselló government might still be in place.

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