



Confronting the difficulties of learning from the
open source for contemporary social
movements

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Social movements and their use of the internet

- Instead of using traditional means like election campaigns or public relations and marketing
- Social movements use the internet putting forward new rules of the game: the rules of new technology
- Political communication becomes cheaper, faster, groups that were excluded in the past have a voice
- BUT goals remain the same: power, participation democracy, justice, social transformation
- Quality of life
- Redistributive issues
- Opposition to the present forms of life
- Issues that challenge modern state domination
- 'A challenge to authority can be directed at technology design in addition to or instead of being directed at technology policies. Campaigns for or protests against regulatory and research policies, also changes in consumption patterns and lifestyles (technology use patterns)' (Hess 2005)

Social Movement Theory

- Two forms of explanations:
 - Based on structural conditions
 - Based on the differences in the values and psychology of individuals
- Europe: Systemic approach links NSMs to post-industrial capitalism. Others emphasize the identity-oriented paradigm
- United States: Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)
- Central issues in NSM theory
- How new are new social movements?
- Are NSMs a product of a shift to a post industrial economy?
- The middle class argument
- Pursuit of collective interests
- Reconstruction of a cultural, social, political identity
- Changing the rules of the game
- Defense of status and privileges
- Social control of the main cultural patterns
- Creation of new order (revolution)
- National conflicts

RMT

- Resource Mobilization Theory
- Collective action involves the rational pursuit of interests of groups
- Grievances are permanent products of power, cannot account for the formation of movements
- Looks at changes in resources, organizations and opportunities
- Criticisms of RMT
- We know the how but not the why of collective action
- It sets out an impoverished interpretation of human motivation
- Reduces it to instrumental rationality
- The classical RMT model
- Mobilizing structures (participation, recruitment, tactics, goals)
- Strategic framing (issues, strategy, identity)
- Political opportunity structure
- Sociopolitical Cyberconflicts
- forms:
- Hacktivists attack virtually chosen political targets
- Persons organize through the internet to protest, or carry through email a political message
- Create FOSS software?

Mobilization Structures

- Mobilization
- NSMs are open, decentralized, networked, ideal for internetted communication
- Spectacular alliances between NGOs, culture jammers, small groups of activists, opinion leaders, ordinary citizens
- Network/rhizomatic politics: people are included not according to status, but because they have the resources needed
- Key issues of mobilization structures
- Ideology (many ideologies with FOSS, free and open, peer and p2p apolitical agnosticism and neutrality etc)
- Goals (e.g. Weinberg SM might distrust orgs developing or selling services seen as private sector vehicles, long term adherence to SM goals difficult to maintain)
- Tactics (e.g. main means of protest was creating an alternative technology/product (rare instances of protest politics in FOSS such as picketing Microsoft over refunding unused Microsoft OS)
- Participation ---private sector participation: major information technology firms incorporating open source
- Recruitment
- Entry
- Movement phase
- Influence
- Key issues and key organizations

Participation and Recruitment

- Participation and Recruitment
- The fewer and weaker the social ties to alternative networks, the greater the structural availability for movement participation, the greater the probability of accepting recruitment invitation (Snow, Zurcher and Olson, 1980)
- Identity formation (TOURAINE)
- e.g. 'The technical distinctions between licences are a primary site for the ongoing object conflicts in the open source movement as it negotiates its way through the incorporation and transformation process'. (Hess 2005)
- 'It is felt that if FOSS was directed towards a political end, it would sully the "purity" of the technical decision-making process. Political affiliation also might deter people from participating on development, thus creating an artificial abriier to entry into this sphere whose ideal and idealized form is transparent meritocracy'. (Coleman and Hill)

Framing Process (identity, issue, strategy)

- Frames are specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues that we use to evaluate and suggest alternative modes of action
- Symbols, frames and ideologies are created and changed through the framing process
- The framing process involves:
 - The cultural kits available to would-be insurgents
 - The strategic framing efforts of movement groups
 - The frame contests between movement and other collective actors
 - The structure and role of media
 - The cultural impact of the movement in modifying the cultural kit
- e.g. Coleman 'Forms of political neutrality are immanent to free speech
Critiques treat the contextualized neutrality primarily as ideological scaffolding that justifies a politics of individual liberties over those of structural equality.
- It is felt that if FOSS was directed towards a political end, it would sully the "purity" of the technical decision-making process. Political affiliation also might deter people from participating on development, thus creating an artificial barrier to entry into this sphere whose ideal and idealized form is transparent meritocracy.
- A political tag is a hugely polluted association to conjure'

Strategy or Identity?

- Opposite sides to the same coin
- Ability of the actor to:
- Adapt to change successfully (elites)
- Secure protection from change (operatives)
- Or victimization by change (marginalized masses)
- Tactics
- Mobilizing supporters
- Neutralizing supporters
- Transforming mass and elite publics into sympathizers
- Influenced by: organizational competition and cooperation (internally) and public opinion and the state (externally)
- Political opportunity structure: The media-the internet
- Media sensitivity and event density
- Media are important means of reaching the general public, to mobilise
- link movements with other political and social actors
- Can provide psychological support for social movements



- The internet and mobilization
- Information dissemination and retrieval
- Recruitment
- Pickard - Poletta notes that the participatory model becomes strained once membership expands beyond the small group level. E.g. 'Given the sheer enormity of the global IMC and its fast-paced growth, some of these strategic qualities may be diminished (increased solidarity, innovation and personal development)'
- Soliciting opinions, opinion polling and discussions
- Networking, communication and coordination within and with other organizations
- Two broad groups:
 - those concerned with global issues, the level of negotiation is open for debate
 - Those concerned with their own liberation from the state, less inclined to negotiate

Hacktivism

- The development and use of technology to foster human rights and the open exchange of information
- Radical geeks brought together by antiglobalisation protests and the Indymedia network have developed their own network of skills sharing free software and solidarity (example of open source movement – although issues with Political Neutrality remain)
- The internet has revolutionized protest
but the leaderless and dispersed nature of online activism fails to reach the vast majority of the world, where many activists have little or no access to the internet

Dotcauses

- 'Many dotcauses are prominent in the Movement such as the Globalize Resistance, Reclaim the Streets, and in many of the coalitions organizing protests at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), and the G8 meetings. From a social movement perspective, dotcauses can be seen as "mobilization structures". That's is collective vehicles through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996) [Clarck and Themudo]
- Fuchs
- 'Cyberprotest is a global structural coupling and mutual production of self-organization processes of the Internet and self-organization processes of the protest system of society.
- Self-organization is a process where a system reproduces itself with the help of its own logic and components, i.e. the system produces itself based on an internal logic.
- The duality of structure, Giddens, has considered structures as medium and outcome of human practices 'According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise'



FLOODNET AGAINST APEC (NOVEMBER 19-20-21/CHILE)

TAKE A SHOT AS A HACKTIVIST WORKING ALONG WITH THE SATURATION OF THE APEC WEBSITES AND ITS OFFICIAL TV CHANNEL AND PROTEST ASIDE THE THOUSAND-PEOPLE CROWD THAT WILL TAKE THE STREETS TO SAY NO TO APEC. OF COURSE IF YOU'RE CHILEAN YOU GO OUTSIDE TO MANIFEST AND PROTEST AND JUST LET YOUR PC RUNNING SO YOU CAN ALSO DO IT THROUGH INTERNET. IF YOU LIVE IN ANY OTHER PART OF THE WORLD YOU CAN PROTEST AGAINST APEC BY GETTING INTO THE FLOODNET.

HACKTIVISM FOR EVERYBODY!!!

19 - 20 - 21 NOVIEMBRE 2004

HORA CHILE: 12:00 HRS.

HORA GMT: 15:00 HRS.

::ACTUAL GMT TIME/GET YOUR GMT TIME::

::THIS IS THE PAGE FROM WICH YOU CAN START THE FLOODING::

[HTTP://WWW.NOAPEC.5U.COM](http://WWW.NOAPEC.5U.COM)

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGAINST APEC MOVEMENTS AND MANIFESTATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY YOU SHOULD VISIT:

INDYMEDIA SANTIAGO

INDYMEDIA VALPARAISO

ASOCIACIÓN DE MEDIOS DE INFORMACIÓN INDEPENDIENTES

HOMODOLLARS

LA HAINE

Indymedia Pickard 2006

- all IMCs use technological platforms that allow for easy data sharing.
- For organizational processes, the platform consists of multiple local or network-wide email lists (running on Mailman, the GNU mail list manager) to which members can post using their own email clients of choice.
- IRC vchannels are used for more ephemeral exchanges. The transient nature of communication on IRC, however, makes it unsuited for transparent decision-making. Furthermore, relationships between the two communication channels are not always smooth.
- power asymmetries within the network (north/south, reformist/radical) and lingering traditional hierarchies dominated by white North American men.
- indymedia's radical democratic practice entails an active negotiation of all power relationships by democratizing the media (exemplified by an interactive web-based interface), levelling power hierarchies (exemplified by consensus-based decision-making), and countering proprietary logic (exemplified by open-source software)

Indymedia Pickard 2006

- The ninth principle of unity states, “All IMCs shall be committed to the use of free source code, whenever possible, in order to develop the digital infrastructure, and to increase the independence of the network by not relying on proprietary software”.
- These improved models make it easier to replicate, update, and modify the IMC website; they usually run on the open source Linux, allowing activists to distribute information easily through shared calendars, group listings, and multimedia news discussions
- ‘But several less tech-savvy activists whom I interviewed say wikis have mixed results. Some feel that introducing such a new tech-heavy tool—despite being user friendly—has alienated many people who were just becoming comfortable with web-based organizing.’

Why invest in social movements? Why social movements use FOSS

- Hung 2007 ‘...Why will big business invest money to develop FLOSS, for example, or to encourage any free content project in general? More generally, why will big business make donations to any social movement groups , again considering the free culture communities as special case of the social movement groups? Likely not because they think the investment in FLOSS or any other social movement is profitable, but because it improves the public perception of their business and /or meets their bottom line’.
- Coleman ‘A number of prominent NGO-based FOSS success stories (both inside and outside the U.S.) have played a large role in widening FOSS enthusiasm in the sector. This enthusiasm belied- and sometimes ran around against -the considerable difficulties many organizations faced (and continue to face) in transitioning to FOSS.
- green peace runs good portion of their servers on GNU linux; SchoolNet Namibia; India Goa Schools Computers Project, Sakura Project, Ganesha Project, Nodo Tau in Argentina, Rigoberta Menchu Tum Guatemala
- Most NGOs use only three kinds of software, internet servers mail exchange, intranet and desktop Linux distributions, for examples, are so well-stocked with applications...that knowing what to use and trust has become a laborious and frustrating research exercise in navigating help programs and testing software.
- To minimize this source of confusion, several initiatives are emphasizing streamlined distributions that provide only “essential” tools to meet the needs of NGOs (Debian Non-Profit and TTC’s NGO in a Box are two notable examples)’

Difficulties of using FOSS

- McLelland ‘..the value of open source software rises with one’s technological experience. If you do not know how to program, what good is having access to the source code? Adoption of open source software and methods has progressed the furthest in subsectors where organizations are larger and have full-time IT Staff.’
- majority of nonprofit organizations are small, with less than one full time IT staffer...are not necessarily in a position to take advantage of open source software’s flexibility.
- they aren’t necessarily underwriting their development or enhancing the code themselves with phantom technical resources they cannot afford’.

SM and FOSS

- golden hammer 'common aim against corporatocracy on Slashdot and on the street'
- Dominique Cardon
- So it's the same kind of co-operation, where different organizations and social movements decide what they want to propose.
- But we don't have the second part of the Linux collaboration which is the collective and public appreciation and evaluation of what has been done and what has been said at the forum. We don't have the evaluation which asks: what is being done? What is being proposed? What is the agenda of all those people who want to contribute to the forum?
- We could improve the WSF by having a collective reflection and memory of what is being said, a collective evaluation of what has been said in order to create a common language and common acquisition after the forum, if we are to try to take the Linux form for the organization of World Social Forums.

- Singer
- Bruce Perens 2003 at the LinuxWorld Conference
- “This is a ‘Linux’ show, focusing upon a product. But the real subject of this trade show – Free Software and open Source – is a social movement. Like other social movements, it advances its own ideas – in our case ideas about software equality, competition, copyrights and patents as property. It’s extremely unusual in that few other social movements make real products. The only thing that comes close to it in the social space is art. We have so far manufactured over \$2 billion U.S. dollars worth of software for everyone’s free use. And the fact that we make real products has made us real enemies”

Conclusion

- De Landa:
- What matters about the open source movement is not so much the intentional actions of its main protagonists, actions which are informed by specific philosophies, but its unintended collective consequences