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30-31 August

Editors

Can BILGILI

Arif YILDIRIM

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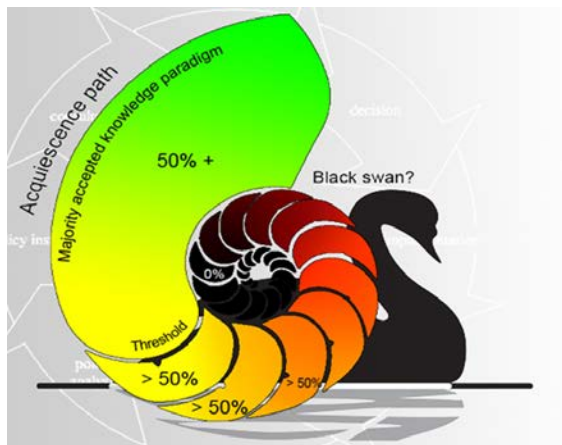
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CREATING A KNOWLEDGE ARCHITECTURE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY GENERATION

PAUL SUCIU*

ABSTRACT

This paper proposed itself to investigate the application of open source knowledge architectures to the volatile field of socio-economic policy generation, starting with an exploratory research, grounded in heuristics and iterative methodology and in the philosophy of deconstruction. It then moves on to a more pragmatic implementation through the use of the Liquid Feedback crowd-network policy enabling platform, showing both the capabilities of the software and possible pathways of improvement of its consensual decision making method and the quality of the policy generated. Finally, in the study case of the EU labor market it attempts to enhance the policy generation process adding end user friendly populated visualization methods, such as the Timeglider widget API.



The Ask

So what is the first thing we do when we have a question?

- Ask a friend
- Ask a professional or authoritative figure
- Ask a machine algorithm (Google Search, Wolfram Alpha, Siri)

* Policy Analyst, Community Organizer

We input our question verbally or textually. We use key words to link up meaning. We hope for an illuminating answer. The answer for simple problems is a word, a string or a sentence, much the same as our input. The one for complex ones is a narrative.

But what if we have a bigger question, one that is socially relevant for a community's future? One that depends on two parameters necessary for political action: to want and to be able; empowerment and accountability; knowledge and legitimacy.

INTRODUCTION

Whatever happened to the Knowledge Society? To the Knowledge Worker that Drucker (2002) was promoting as the basis of the modern corporation? An individual empowered to take decisions in a consensual environment, from any part of a production network, based on his unique specialized knowledge, with the necessary knowledge to eliminate the sort of Black Swan uncertainty that is plaguing modern society and having a "chilling effect" on action.

The drive beyond this project lies in my life experience as a migrant who has travelled in search of a better life across three continents and the empowerment I attained out of self-reliance. I ultimately aim to build communities, to bring likeminded individuals together and to further explore my political options, beyond mere compliance with the current social norms.

Since I possess very limited means of action, beyond my rather unfocused knowledge of socio-economic processes and policy, I guess I currently fall within the sphere of what is called grassroots activism - all the while actively searching for a clear expression of personal purpose.

I would have to say that I've followed every step that society prescribes in such endeavors. In my youth, years ago, I was a party member for a few months, though tired of the angst caused by the rather authoritarian environment, I let go for more artistic endeavors; studied Communication (including political, public, law, economic, PR and religious), continued on to International Policy, Business and Accounting. I have traveled the world for the last 10 years and have on occasion engaged in fierce political debate. I became a clicktivist, supported AVAAZ, Change.org, Wikileaks and many others, until I've come to realize that while aiming for betterment, they do so blindly, without offering a rational approach to social issues, riding instead on a wave of populist approval, after the transgressions had occurred. Personally, I believed it was important to recognize the effect of socio-cultural and historical factors in shaping preemptive policy as to avoid bias and help create a fair economic playing field.

A crisis of trust

Why are countries like Britain moving from freedom enabling paradigms of pluralism such as “Big Society” and “all in together” to “we decide who and when”, freedom denying ideologies? Why is the blame game played so often and why do conspiracy theories abound?

Lack of proper knowledge (either of the inquisitive kind that academics have or of the hegemonic one that power provides) and the resulting mistrust leads to a blame culture of towards either a real group (based on ethnicity, etc.) or a secret/fantastic one (Annunaki, Masons). De-legitimization of some fundamental structures of our social universe has led to an anarchic view of the universe and this apparent entropy of existence and uncertainty is in danger of filling the control gap with regressive totalitarian tendencies.

Systemic overreliance on the hierarchic model manifested in the “promotion of elites” model has led to the excessive delegation of problem solving authority to actors subjectively perceived as having the capacity to do so. As political actors work in an environment of uncertainty, where they compete with each other in a trust and promises environment, this has unavoidably created false expectations and over-entitlement. Frustration due to a sense of unfairness due to the ability to effectively operate within a rapidly changing globalized world has led to intolerance and hate.

We need to properly define the new equalitarian operational paradigm. Drucker, the conceptual father of corporations and whose lessons have often been misunderstood and used to justify a monolithic cartel-like approach to capitalism (near-monopolistic national level cartels), describes the notion of the production worker as one of the defining characteristics of the future, where individuals are empowered to take control of their own production process and ultimately their own existence, networking as they self-propel their own agendas instead of being led.

There are two main theoretical ways of organizing knowledge. Hierarchic structures are rules based and are created to be compartmental, for ease of control. In a mistrustful society the rules lord over the individual will and in time there is a natural wore out of human rights, as individuals unsatisfied of their perceived wronging will choose to engage in selfish behavior.

Principles just like fixed rules need to be taught, otherwise frustration with the basic human nature not adapting to society will set in. The importance of formal education cannot be understated as those taught in private schools seem to be able to access the best positions within complex formal institutions, with the widest reach and mass performance.

In a principle based self-organizing society the welfare of many, man and self, come first. Most individuals adhere to humanistic principles with the understanding that the occasional troublemaker will be dealt with care and a degree of systemic tolerance, within a decent and trusting society. Decent people can only come from people who feel empowered about their circumstances and are able to asses in

equitable manner their role and share within the community. **Trust** is a very important element of a free society as it allows for the generation of principles based custom solutions for decision making as opposed to the rigid rule based ones found in totalitarian societies.

Of course in real life, we encounter a hybrid situation where the two meet, with individuals in equalitarian systems in a dependent condition and individuals in a totalitarian one in gaps of practical power.

Principles inspired epistemology for governance

I was trained as an economist, but discussing complex economic frameworks is a highly problematic issue, as the level of inconsistency present within the field has led to calls from academics of deeming it a pseudo-science (Taleb, 2007 and Zhu, 2009); the name Economics is misleading, as a variety of properly supported codes and languages are gathered under this misnomer (Zhu, 2009).

Money and their flow, allow for survival within the Darwinian environment of capitalism and it's this survival that offers legitimacy to an enterprise. As an outsider I lived under the illusion that the field is forced by its numeric orientation to adopt a much more rigorous framework of systemizing reality, than your run of the mill social science. Where in the world can one find a measure of stability if not in the most fundamental/stable part of the economy? I was, of course, unaware of the many compromises that currently exist within the business environment regulations and indeed within the IFRS adoption of principles, sources of endless debate.

I do however remain positive and in agreeing with Gabbay and Hunter (1993) that "meta-language regulations (I include here "principles") have the role of reducing inconsistencies in an improperly formulated language" and having noticed an attempt to methodically implement such a language within the IFRS framework, I decided it was worth a closer inspection.

While codifying the IASB framework, the IFRS aims to create its own meta-language, which can bring some consistency to a field marked by fundamental changes in the recent years. It is a slow and arduous process, taking years between agenda consultations and post-implementation reviews². It is also an extremely flawed process, highly contested by its many contributors, even at the level of its most basic assumptions, such as the asset definition.

All the while, the IFRS has also attempted to codify accounting principles for machine code, so it in fact created a parallel, this time rather proper meta-language in the form of activities the "XBRL taxonomy for IFRSs and the IFRS for SMEs to facilitate the electronic use, exchange and comparability of financial data prepared in accordance with IFRSs". That is because machines don't understand the nuances and possible contradictions of human communication and need a clear code to parse³.

² <http://goo.gl/Yave8M> example and current developments

³ Interpret and compile

This for me was **an example that a concerted effort could be attempted towards codifying an entire epistemological field** and that **the symbolization of a limited reality was possible** and that **given enough resources one could arguably systemize the extremely volatile field of policy making.**

And the above is not a singular model of development, with similar areas of policy formulation being undertaken at all levels of the EU and beyond, from a variety of perspectives and interests. The main difference between the IFRS approach and my interest lies in the backing, while IFRS is supported by private initiative, the kind of policy I envision involves the larger public, organized in a community of thought.

It is my strong belief that eventually the community approach to socio-economic policy discussion will be the only established one, acting as a foundation on which the private sector will be able thereafter to build a unified and coherent framework of business that I can unapologetically adhere to.

So is it possible to build a knowledge architecture for generating higher quality/quantity socio-economic public policy, moving from the current least common denominator/populist approach (by eliminating various types of bias) to a better interaction/utilization of the mass user? Can we also make sure, through the utilization of open source software, that the emerging user community has the tools to re-actualize itself continuously in such a manner that it will improve upon the policy generation process? What are the current developments in the field and what can be done to improve upon them? Ideally, can we build an observational model/proof-of-concept for the theory identified?

Policy introduction

Policy is the formal or informal pervasive aspiration of a group to achieve its goals.

The problem with policy analysis is that at the moment it's too inconsistent in its approach to be considered a science or a methodology, being done in disproportionate amounts by people without a formalized backing. The problem there is that we need a good discourse in function, not just in form, which can only be achieved through an ever improving methodology.⁴

There are no such things as economic policy without social and vice versa. Every economic action we take represents socially a "check claim on society" (Warren Buffet, quoted by Lowe, 1997) and every social action has a cost, often hidden in an externality of some form. It's just that capitalist aficionados look at socio-economic policies from an economic angle and social activists from the welfare angle, creating unnecessary friction from two rigid, irreconcilable positions.

Structure is paramount for this subject, as the various policy components have to be represented within the project, easily identifiable at the analytical level, debatable at the decision making level and easy to communicate during the agenda setting/implementation process. By structure, policies generally possess a:

⁴ Which I will argue later that in itself cannot simply be left at the whim of academics, but must be community enabled, like most forms of essential social capital.

- Purpose statement (almost like an abstract)
- Applicability and scope (allows them to be organized and monitored)
- Effective date of coming into force (except for retroactive policies)
- Responsibilities of key players
- Policy statement
- Background (allows us to understand the policy)
- Glossary of definitions (dictionary)

The type of policy defines the type of analysis. Non-exhaustive taxonomies:

- Distributive
- Regulatory
- Constituent
- Miscellaneous
- Official policy
- Broad social ideas and goals
- Alignment policies

The categorization of policies by scope reveals a very diverse genera, which are in their own right grouped in various corpuses of legislation, such as: Company Policy, Communications and Information Policy, Human resource policies, Privacy policy, Public policy, Defense policy, Domestic policy, Economic policy, Education policy, Energy policy, Environmental Policy, Foreign policy, Health policy, Housing policy, Information policy, Macroeconomic policy, Monetary policy, Population policy, Public policy in law, Science policy, Security policy, Social policy, Transportation policy, Urban policy, Water policy, etc.

According to Radin (2000) "structured policy analysis has its roots in systems analysis as instituted by US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara during the Vietnam War". While his US-centric assertion is disputable, it is representative of the current approach to policy analysis that permeates Western academia, a top to down model of policy implementation. In its simplest form, this policy analysis model could be summarized in just a few steps:

1. Agenda setting (Problem identification)
2. Policy Formulation
3. Adoption
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

Althaus et al. (2007) propose an 8 stage policy analysis cycle (figure 1), based on "heuristics" and "iteration", easier to manage than the traditional model presented before, which is based on the assumption of previous expertise in policy matters. "A policy cycle is a first foray into complexity, organizing observations into familiar patterns and so providing a guide to action." Unlike the traditional, hegemonic model, theirs considers a "broader range of actors involved in the policy space that includes

civil society organizations, the media, intellectuals, think tanks or policy research institutes, etc.”

Going beyond the scope of policy generation, the rational planning model RPM (for systemic/pragmatic process organization) intends to enable the user to attain the best possible solution, by following a systematic approach in his “heuristic” endeavor. It is not only easily applicable to policy generation, but also serves to illustrate how the process could be seen from an input/output perspective, in a relational grid, extremely familiar to IT programmers (Levinson, quoted by King, 2005).

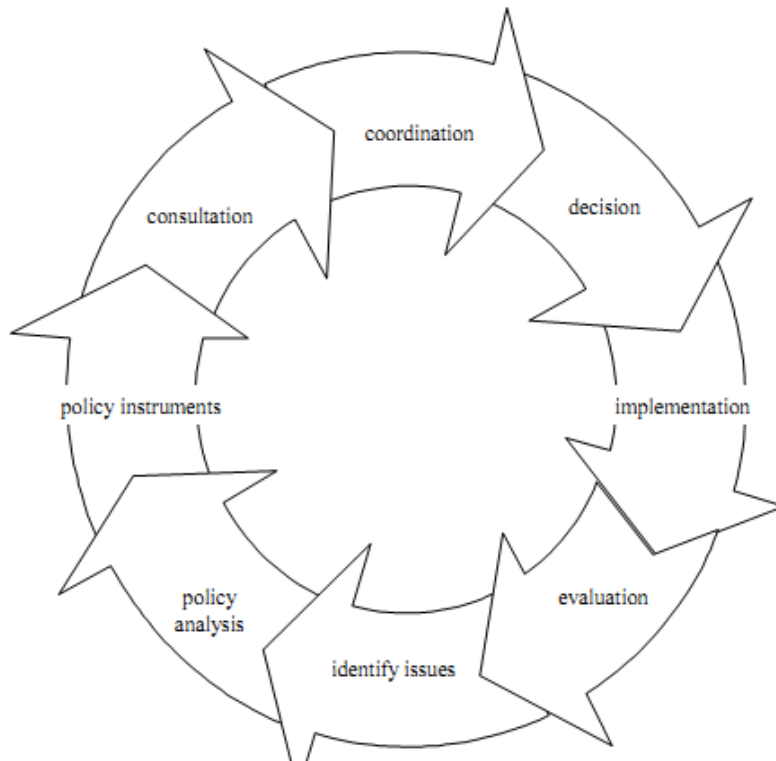


Figure 1: The Policy Cycle, which Althaus et al (2007), describe as a “heuristic” model

A traditionally hegemonic view of communication

While as I mentioned before, a cohesive structure can reinforce the perception of an argument as sound, one shouldn’t equate tidiness with an indefensible position. In a true patriarchal manner, “seamless textual unity” (Easthope, 1990) has a tendency of defining a paper and the arguments presented within as final/exhaustively covered matter. “Seamlessness and sequential structures reinforce an impression of the ground having been covered, of all the questions having been answered, of nothing important having been left out” (Chandler, 1995), since “scholarly discourse aspires to the condition of monologue in as much as it tries to have the last word on a given subject, to affirm its mastery over all previous words on that subject” (Lodge 1987, 96). This

authoritative position has unfortunately a terrible effect on the critical discourse of readers unfamiliar with the subject, by actively preventing inquisitive thinking and further matter debate by the community user⁵.

Because this continuity may artificially mask gaps in argumentation, several academics have argued for the abandoning of the classical convention of academic writing. Individuals such as Robert Merton suggest that while "true art consists in concealing all signs of art [the Classical convention], true science consists in revealing its scaffolding as well as its finished structure" (Merton 1968, 70). Chandler (1995) goes on to say that "those who would learn from semiotics should search for structural leaks, seams and scaffolding as signs of the making of any representation, and also for what has been denied, hidden or excluded so that the text may seem to tell the whole truth". In the same spirit of openness that governs open source software, I intend to reveal as much of the scaffolding supporting my paper as allowed by the guideline enforced length.

Quite often, the initiator of communication often constitutes himself into a figure of authority, entitled with the right to first speech, often setting the stage and rules of debate in the process and the academic/political institution ⁶is no exception. One possible explanation of the phenomenon might reside in the Hegemonic Stability Theory ⁷as applied to a system where the institutions and the individuals enter into a heavily unequal relationship, where the much stronger perceived partner enforces his own rules.

While in the classical view, text interpretation would come across as homogenous (because of the predominant practice), in practice it depends as much on the author's position as on the end users and since there are no "perfect readers", texts are unavoidably open to subjective interpretation. In fact as Chandler points out "there are often several alternative (even contradictory) subject-positions from which a text may make sense. Whilst these may sometimes be anticipated by the author, they are not necessarily built into the text itself". In fact, it is quite common for authors to describe texts as having a "life of their own", beyond their scope, especially when intended for a large, heterogeneous public as is the case with the final project detailed here.

There would be nothing wrong with hegemonic dominance except that we noticing a process of individual motivational depletion as a result of the loss of political legitimacy in traditional policy generation. There's anecdotal evidence that suggests that the level of the political discourse has decreased as old school politicians trained within various schools of debate are slowly being replaced with lobbying pundits and super star style created politicians (LA Times opinion⁸).

⁵ The expert's knowledge paradox, in which the expert shields his sphere of knowledge from others and prevents their learning within the community.

⁶ Traditional paper building tends to mirror hegemonic policy creation

⁷ While the theory was developed within the field of International Relations, it has found a wider application within systems theory.

⁸ <http://goo.gl/1l1equ>

Community production

John C Lilly's early, simplistic definition (1968) of the "human bio-computer" had a lot more going on for it than initially thought, as semiotic programming is part of our day to day learning process. Also, by envisioning the mind as a very sophisticated machine, Lilly has allowed us to take the next logical step and envision society as a rational network experience.

Because of sheer size, the products of this network as a whole tend to be vastly superior to ones created by institutional users⁹, as knowledge through its cheap ability to be replicated is truly a social commodity, part of the broader social capital. Policy does in fact meet this criteria and the only thing that remains is supplementing the capabilities of the human network, with an IT architecture that would simplify decision making, allow for easy visualization and give the sensation of control to the individual user and self-actualization to the community and many others that were inaccessible before the advent of social platforms.

The problem is that individuals are not only limited in their capability to process code, but are also subjected to various types of bias, ironically because of their own heuristic methods, used to mitigate uncertainty and promote the self. An exhaustive list of such biases has been provided by a mixture of cognitive science/ behavioral psychology and others and it's too wide to discuss here. Suffice to say that such bias can be mitigated by allowing individuals the tools to build communally agreed structures of thought, whether based on individual observation or on communal one.

Semantic networks are already used in specialized information retrieval tasks, such as plagiarism detection. Search engines also act in a similar manner to the human brain when looking for useful information, just a lot more streamlined and fast. They can also become more and more attuned to particular searches with usage, and given enough time will become capable of identifying complex semantic contexts.

By bringing **community support** into policy generation we are attempting to **raise the quality of the political discourse** and create a better policy product, both because of the higher numbers of interested individuals involved and because of the easier adoption of policy, as the impacted group would be empowered to generate it himself.

However, since we aim to avoid ending once more with the lowest common denominator from a crowd unable to articulate a consensual efficient/final position, we must also describe a mechanism of participatory learning and genuine executive capabilities within the community, which raises the major issue that before anything else we must envision/create one.

There should be an economy of production in relation to policy, just like with any other commodity. In the same manner the management accountant has at his disposal

⁹ Wikipedia over Encyclopedia Britannica and Encarta

a formidable ERP system, that he can feed data and receive results and updates within minutes, so should the political individual be able to make up the best plan, based on easily understandable, processable and transferable data (therefore valuable to him). Proving the regular citizen with easily maneuverable information to support his decision making process in matters that concern him, is an imperative dictated by the “rule of many” democratic principle.

Why the need for higher quality/volume information? The problem is that current policy debate/political discourse are often reduced, because of the exploitation of cognitive bias, to the lowest common denominator (populist approach) expressed to only a few points of view, mainly the binary of left and right, relegated to a four year circle and highly unsatisfactory in a consumer society where individuals get to vote on preferences almost every day (like or up vote buttons). Without a sense of control over the political process and therefore personal self-actualization, we end up with most of the voter core feeling delegitimized and unmotivated.

Current academic standards of citation do not properly serve rapidly changing community needs, but individual or institutional ones. Time to move from a limited number of individual citations accessed to a community model in the millions of connections, in an attempt to create original and genuine solutions for pragmatic problems, which the so detached theoreticians seems to constantly ignore until one of them brilliantly points out a paradigm shift (in simply stating the imperative obvious).

We can see this in the way that our society is structuring its priorities as a result of IT “The PageRank algorithm instead analyzes human-generated links assuming that web pages linked from many important pages are themselves likely to be important. The algorithm computes a recursive score for pages, based on the weighted sum of the PageRank’s of the pages linking to them. PageRank is thought to correlate well with human concepts of importance.”

At their fundament, knowledge architectures should be an exercise in community self-education, self-regulation and creation of social capital, initially through ideological articulation, then pragmatic means. It’s about teaching people how to think in a consensual environment, about developing critical abilities beyond the lowest common denominator.

Semiotics within policy analysis

Deconstruction vs. the lowest common denominator

In my research I often reference the “lowest common denominator” for consensual understanding, but how does that translate in code terminology? Semioticians distinguish between “broadcast codes” accessible to a wide audience (pop music) and “narrowcast codes”, specific to a specialized group (gospel music). The broadcast codes have the following characteristics in relation to the narrowcast ones, by being structurally simpler, repetitive, with a great degree of redundancy, making sure they don’t get lost in the process of communication. Because of the limited amount of elements they are able to transfer, they’re sometimes called “restricted codes” (Fisk,

1982). "Such codes several elements serve to emphasize and reinforce preferred meanings" (Chandler, 1995).

Again, we notice that the emphasis is on preference and not efficiency or consensual decisions, though a consensual decision that favors the restricted meaning is likely to emerge, leading to a "lowest common denominator" on very large heterogeneous populations.

In disrupting complex structures, ultimately bias tends to be polarizing, which is why, we end up with a left and a right for a political spectrum, a choice between 0 and 1, which in itself represents the simplest programming structure possible in a chaotic network. This yes/no design needs to be upgraded with non-polarizing ones, such as the Wh+ group of Who? Where? Why? What? When?

There are multiple cultural connotations on a seemingly common denotation. Even the most natural, culturally well-adjusted term is culture-specific, bringing up personal associations (ideological, emotional etc.) of the term. These associations are related to the interpreter's class, age, gender and ethnicity and so on (Wilden 1987, 224). Not only do I want the community I envision to be able to generate its own code interpretation, I want it capable of understanding/analyzing overarching and competing codes.

At its most basic level, a knowledge architecture should serve as a very sophisticated tool of policy code breaking/reconstruction, using the best resource available on the market, the human brain (much as for example in decoding CAPTCHA's). And that can only be achieved by attracting a critical mass of users and enticing them to participate as much as possible in the creation of bias free code.

Semiotics is the field in which deconstruction first appeared as a method, owing to the superior organizational potentiality of the written word, the same means by which policy is in overwhelming majority, transferred within modern society. As a result of the previous need to itemize policy I began conscientiously employing the neo-structuralist method of deconstruction to policy analysis. It is my hope that the lowest common denominator will eventually shift from left-right swings to a proper critically deconstructive/reconstructive process.

Deconstruction by its scope tends to constitute itself as a challenge to established structures, and policy symbols and codes of communication are no exception. But being a part of semiotics, it doesn't represent a method per se, but a rather a philosophy of approach on which proper and specific processes must be built for operational efficiency.

Decoding somehow implies that we are working according to digital rules, by a conscientious method, which is not the case. Therefore if we don't talk about a science of numbers, then we must be dealing with a science of principles, a philosophic system and an art form. That is why it might be more appropriate to refer to the site activity as deconstruction, instead of decoding. However, the reason I chose decoding was

because of the IT semantic proximity which enabled a better understanding of the principles utilized, by reducing complex interactions to representational/mechanical ones, and allowing me to speed up the building process and ultimately enable network wide deconstruction by design.

"Individuals differ strikingly in their responses to the notion of media transformation. They range from those who insist that they are in total control of the media which they use to those who experience a profound sense of being shaped by the media which uses them" (Chandler, 1995). He then hints to the existence of "contextual cues" that help us identify "the appropriate codes" as they appear quite "obvious, over determined by all sorts of contextual cues".

This cueing is "part of the metalingual function of signs". Chandler goes on to say that "The classic realist text is orchestrated to effect closure: contradictions are suppressed and the reader is encouraged to adopt a position from which everything seems obvious". Sometimes surpassing for importance content, the form can have a major impact on decision making as we "routinely judge a book by its cover" and through "the use of what is sometimes called scholarly apparatus (such as introductions, acknowledgements, section headings, tables, diagrams, notes, references, bibliographies, appendices and indexes)" we immediately identify a particular text as such (Chandler, 1995).

As Chandler (1995) puts it, semiotics has been used for a variety of reasons such as by structuralists such as "Lévi-Strauss for myth, kinship rules and totemism; Lacan for the unconscious; Barthes and Greimas for the grammar of narrative" in exploring a wide array of social phenomena. The he goes on to quote Julia Kristeva in that "what semiotics has discovered... is that the law governing or, if one prefers, the major constraint affecting any social practice lies in the fact that it signifies; i.e. that it is articulated like a language".

The study of semiotics might as well be the study of human policy as it is the main way we can analyze the underlying context of narratives. In respect to the IT architecture, semiotics also offers us the much needed missing link/connector level between natural language policy expression and programming standardization, in particular in the absence of a clear dictionary and syntax.

The general purpose use of semiotics has led some to erroneously label it as a science, when in fact "semiotics is still a relatively loosely defined critical practice rather than a unified, fully-fledged analytical method or theory. At worst, what passes for semiotic analysis is little more than a pretentious form of literary criticism applied beyond the bounds of literature and based merely on subjective interpretation and grand assertions" (Chandler, 1995). In fact, because of the reliance of this loose technique on the interpretative skill of its user, some unfortunate practitioners "can do little more than state the obvious in a complex and often pretentious manner" (Leiss et al. 1990, 214). Kinder voices have also spoken for semiotics praising its "promise of a systematic, comprehensive and coherent study of communications phenomena as a whole, not just instances of it" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, 1).

The ability to critically evaluate discourse from a semiotic position allows the end user to recognize discourse legitimacy in respect to the presentation of "truth", besides the ontological relationships between the constituting elements of a policy text.

Policy literacy through textual analysis

Creating my own code, naming my own concepts through early life graphic design has started me on the path to an existential self-determination which isn't readily accessible to most individuals. As we live in a world where "most people in most societies are confined to the role of spectator of other people's productions" (Messaris 1994, 121). It is important that we recognize the ludic form of personal empowerment, which enables us to act as social agents later in life.

Chandler (1995) tackles the issue of a semantic system, which pressures people into code conformity, from starting with an over emphasis on symbolic codes (text, sciences) over iconic codes (such as design) during formative education. He goes on to say that this conformity translates at the level of their entire lives and that "this institutional bias disempowers people not only by excluding many from engaging in those representational practices which are not purely linguistic, but by handicapping them as critical readers of the majority of texts to which they are routinely exposed throughout their lives.

Parsing, a term used both in linguistics and computer science, is the splitting of formal language/code into its smallest units or tokens, which can be used thereafter for syntactic analysis. In case of policy these tokens will be constituted more or less by textual entities gathered within dictionary taxonomies. Unfortunately, as policy is based on a more formalized language than common speech, it is still in many ways tributary to natural language, unlike computer code which operates in a context-free environment.

A working understanding of key concepts in semiotics - including their practical application - can be seen as essential for everyone who wants to understand the complex and dynamic communication ecologies within which we live". Acceptance of codes from a social perspective:

- In a simplistic manner, a code can be hegemonic and its acceptance full and implicit
- It can be subject to debate and improvement, as a contentious issue
- It can encounter a full rejection, as too dissociated from the current social context.

It is extremely important that we eliminate "natural" semiotic lethargy and we recognize that "we are part of a prearranged semiotic world" where, "from the cradle to the grave, we are encouraged by the shape of our environment to engage with the world of signifiers in particular ways" (Lewis 1991, 30). While we aren't prisoners of semiotic systems, we are shaped by them throughout our lives. This is a much more

fundamental change than merely seeing under policy layers, as it forces us to reevaluate ourselves as part of that policy, starting with our role as readers. This is important because many individuals feel like observers and are politically inactive and a self-actualization as an agent of change can spur them into action. Of course, we should also aim to recreate the semiotic comfort with respect to community consensus, which does mean establishing new user friendly processes of analysis, even opening the design of such processes to community design to replace the broken traditions.

As Chandler (1995) notes, "realities are not limitless and unique to the individual as extreme subjectivists would argue; rather, they are the product of social definitions and as such far from equal in status. Realities are contested, and textual representations are thus sites of struggle". Discussing policy therefore is not just fair game in social Darwinism, but also a natural function of the thinking individual.

Semiotics is an invaluable tool for looking beyond not just appearances, but fundamentally accepted values¹⁰, as "the more obvious the structural organization of a text or code may seem to be, the more difficult it may be to see beyond such surface features" (Langholz Leymore 1975, 9). Semiotics can also help us to realize that whatever assertions seem to us to be obvious, natural, universal, given, permanent and incontrovertible are generated by the ways in which sign systems operate in our discourse communities (Chandler, 1995).

We have to see the code behind the concept, less it degenerates into "a system of interpretative hermeneutics", with the reality of inner processes hidden from us. The problem with policy is that quite often it is infused with ideology, which is instead of what the ground reality should be, policy reflects what we think there should be, often idealistically. The current system of trial and error has unfortunately lowered itself to a blind man's social engineering on a very large scale.

"An ideology is the sum of taken-for-granted realities of everyday life" (Burgin 1982, 46). Because signs both refer and infer their content, they are often purveyors of ideology. "Sign systems help to naturalize and reinforce particular framings of the way things are, although the operation of ideology in signifying practices is typically masked... If signs do not merely reflect reality but are involved in its construction then those who control the sign systems control the construction of reality. However, commonsense involves incoherencies, ambiguities, inconsistencies, contradictions, omissions, gaps and silences which offer leverage points for potential social change. The role of ideology is to suppress these in the interests of dominant groups. Consequently, reality construction occurs on 'sites of struggle'" (Chandler, 1995).

How does ideology work from the point of view of semiotics? Apparently, the ideological code activates individuals predisposed to this type of interpellation. While classical liberal view tends to see man as an individual "whose social determination results from their pre-given essences like talented, efficient, lazy, profligate, etc."

¹⁰ A short ontological rant from a purely deconstructivist perspective

(Coward & Ellis, 1977), the structuralist view sees him as a time built construct from various outside codes.

“Seeing” the point “simultaneously installs us in a place of knowledge and slips us into place as subject to this meaning” (Nichols 1981, 38). “Recognition of the familiar (in the guise of the natural) repeatedly confirms our conventional ways of seeing and thus reinforces our sense of self whilst at the same time invisibly contributing to its construction... The familiarity of the codes in realist texts leads us to routinely suspend our disbelief in the form¹¹... Falling into place in a realist text is a pleasurable experience which few would wish to disrupt with reflective analysis (which would throw the security of our sense of self into question). Thus we freely submit to the ideological processes which construct our sense of ourselves as free-thinking individuals” (Chandler, 1995).

I wonder how deep we need to go, in our pursuit of better policy. Will we end up cutting in the very nature of our society? “Many semioticians see their primary task as being to denaturalize signs, texts and codes. Semiotics can thus show ideology at work and demonstrate that reality can be challenged... It can be liberating to become aware of whose view of reality is being privileged in the process” (Chandler, 1995). Yet the code that I’m proposing doesn’t operate in a political vacuum, as it rides on a social code of the acceptance and necessity of change in the aftermath of a crisis and attempts to engage existing social institutions ¹²at the subtle level of a semiotic understanding of policy, in an attempt to spur them into action.

Chandler (1995) says that “the conventions of codes represent a social dimension in semiotics. A code is a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework... Society itself depends on the existence of such signifying systems”, then continues to say that codes aren’t just simple conventions, “but procedural systems of related conventions which operate in certain domains, which transcend single texts, linking them together in an interpretative framework”. He then goes on to quote Stephen Heath (1981) in that “a code is distinguished by its coherence, its homogeneity, its systematization, in the face of the heterogeneity of the message, articulated across several codes”. Codes help “simplify phenomena in order to make it easier to communicate experiences” (Gombrich, 1982).

Signs and codes are generated by human institutions and in turn serve to maintain them, either through self-propagating myths or careful gentle symbolic insemination. According to Chandler (1995) the most important issue that concerns modern semiotics is that **we are not merely the slaves of authority generated ideology, but active assigners of meaning**, in the smallest details of our lives. And in that “we transcend that old imperative described by Sartre in his theory of Being, by not merely being the observer or the observed, but the painters of our whole universe”.

¹¹ And I would argue that the reverse is also true, as unfamiliarity draws out our suspicions

¹² From the general public to the government.

The deliberate intention (precision/intent) to communicate tends to be dominant in digital codes, while in analogue codes (unintentional) "it is almost impossible... not to communicate". Again, quoting Chandler (1995) "the graded quality of analogue codes may make them rich in meaning but it also renders them somewhat impoverished in syntactical complexity or semantic precision. By contrast the discrete units of digital codes may be somewhat impoverished in meaning but capable of much greater complexity or semantic signification". As policy tends to constitute to situate itself halfway through a digital and an analogous code, interpretable, while contentiously possessing a dictionary, one must content that the move mentioned in the preceding paragraph, towards a more symbolic form is unavoidable and highly desirable.

The classical view is that texts are homogenous across and they have only one interpretation, the one intended by the author. However, interpretation depends as much on the author's position as on the reader's and since there are no "perfect readers", texts are unavoidably open to subjective interpretation. In fact as Chandler points out "there are often several alternative (even contradictory) subject-positions from which a text may make sense. Whilst these may sometimes be anticipated by the author, they are not necessarily built into the text itself". In fact, it is quite common for authors to describe texts as having a "life of their own", behind their scope, just as policy often does.

Knowledge structuring

Heuristics and iteration

There are a myriad of issues to be tackled in a practical policy design implementation as opposed to merely defining and analyzing in a standardized format an academic issue. In a world of incertitude and constant flow the human mind has to employ basic principles of action, which are also employed within IT in designing programming languages, trial and error and repetition. These methods of learning are what we call heuristics and iteration.

Often we find ourselves operating on very limited knowledge, more akin to faith than trust, based only on the conviction that we will succeed in overcoming any obstacle, if merely by following strategic/topical cues and guiding ourselves not on the principle of "the best solution", but on "the convenient solution".

This is what Wikipedia¹³ defines as "heuristics" referring to "experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and discovery. Where an exhaustive search is impractical, heuristic methods are used to speed up the process of finding a satisfactory solution. Examples of this method include using a rule of thumb, an educated guess, an intuitive judgment, or common sense." While the Wiki quote might

¹³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heuristics>

seem mundane¹⁴it does however provide a link to the pragmatic interpretation of heuristics as a method in IT where according to Pearl (1983) “heuristics are strategies using readily accessible, though loosely applicable, information to control problem solving in human beings and machines.”

Iteration on the other hand is much easier to understand, as it means “the act of repeating a process usually with the aim of approaching a desired goal or target or result. Each repetition of the process is also called an iteration, and the results of one iteration are used as the starting point for the next iteration” (Wikipedia page).

In respect to this particular paper, not only am I following the iteration/heuristic model, but I also seek to promote it as a necessity of architecture design, to transfer it to the crowd as a method of learning and generating policy output (as conceptual processes and ultimate functionality are intimately and inexorably linked).

Narratives – sequential knowledge structuring

Narratives offer an easy to understand way for complex phenomena and are scalable as much as required by the mental capacity of the listener. Narratives such as the Biblical ones were the first ways early storytellers described the relationship that man has with society and with the greater universe. They offer traceability and argumentation to existence at a quantifiable, yet personal acquiescence speed that all can adhere to and hope to understand.

“Because once upon a time, we grew up on stories and the voices in which they were told/ we need words to hold us and the world to behold us for us to truly know our own souls.”¹⁵

- Taylor Mali

A narrative¹⁶ can function as an overlapping metacode/metalanguage structure for a more complex situation, allowing an individual to slowly ease himself within what is a logically consistent process of thought and development, based on a complex reality.

A formal approach to narratives is important, as when one desires to alter said reality, he must propose a “vision of the future”, extrapolated from an understanding of the current and past situation. They provide at social level the way we negotiate our political paradigms, with various thresholds of understanding of the public opinion for the greater continuum.

¹⁴ As opposed to academic propriety, despite being one of the better definitions out there, offered through community debate and support, a design which this paper wholeheartedly promotes.

¹⁵ <http://goo.gl/522dnr>

¹⁶ a semiotically supported process, through syntagmatic “AND” type connections

Of course, even within democratic societies this is a highly flawed process, mostly hierarchically driven by policy decision makers and gatekeepers, which result in a lot of logical errors, which compound themselves in intellectual and emotional distress, prejudice and even wide erroneous narratives, such as “conspiracy theories”.

As I mentioned, narratives require a way to be scalable as to allow individuals the traceability of knowledge with minimum effort and to improve their “acquiescence speed”. In turn this will allow for a greater “minority opinion” level of integration beyond the simple 50+1% of simple majority decision making. Whilst oral individual narratives allow for only basic timelines, written community generated ones allow for much more content complexity as we will see further.

Scalable timelines¹⁷

Chandler (1995) recommends as the best method of text analysis the “detailed comparison and contrast of paired texts dealing with a similar topic” according to syntagmatic/paradigmatic principles. But representing a policy matter requires more than mere narrative or tree structures. It requires consideration of overarching (corpus of policies) and underlying issues (token component analysis, definitions), the ability to move into detail (ED’s, abstracts and links) a time dimension etc. Timelines¹⁸ offer complex/time dependent issue visualization and comparison within intuitive structures over which interested individuals can browse and identify social fallouts and opportunities for policy improvement.

Simply put, scalable timelines allow for the ordering and comparison of vast types of data within the same seamless visual field. For example, within a common draft displayed on your PC monitor you might be able to see a few paragraphs and a couple of topic titles at the same time. On a timeline, you’ll have 100-1000 topic titles at the same time, arranged in a time dependent fashion, with various visual cues and colors for easy identification. Simply put, comparability at community level is enhanced because:

- Comprehensive topic visualization, volume, color codes, font choices, etc.
- Preservation of the temporal value of data, customarily lost when data is shown merely in an ED text, with the preservation of semantic and observable connectors which allow an insightful user out of the thousands watching to raise an issue before it happens (prevention).

¹⁷ Origin idea came to me from Encarta Encyclopedia where human society was structured historically according to selectable topics (everything that the Timeglider widget I’m showcasing can do), thou the idea came too late and Encarta was eliminated by Wikipedia, who has yet to implement such a system.

¹⁸ Historically speaking there are some fascinating examples as shown at <http://goo.gl/rsx91B>

- Logarithmic timeliness include an additional parameter, that of information novelty, which means a dilatation of time as we move from present, both in past and future, with less detail being exposed for the past and less prognosis for the future.
- Timelines can also include complex user generated data such as a commonly agreed dictionary¹⁹ or a community generated draft²⁰. Both types of production can be community selected as superior through the usage of a voting system (like/dislike) and the bubbling to the top of the most relevant user experience²¹.

Already social networks have been employing timelines with various complex aspects for social purposes, and in fact Tweets and FB posts are already aligned according to basic continuous timelines could be fed into more complex visualizations, by employing the Timeglider widget. Here is a practical implementation of the widget in assisting with the visualization of a campaign²².



Fig. 2 Presenting a social issue campaign on a scalable timeline

¹⁹ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/>

²⁰ <http://etherpad.org/> see a sample here <https://romania.piratenpad.de/roma> (Password Orion)

²¹ <http://www.reddit.com/>

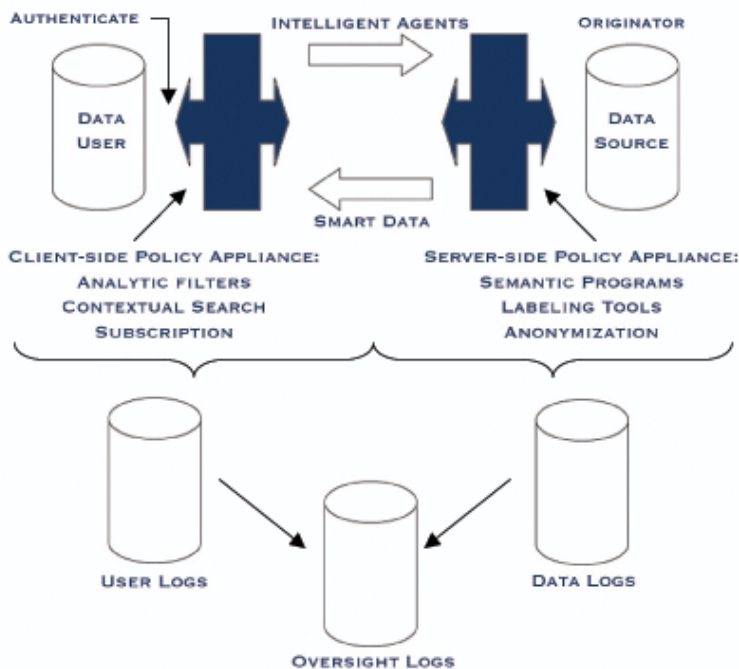
²² <http://www.knowledgearchitectures.org/Student.html>

Introduction to knowledge architectures

“Although policy development and enforcement itself is a political or cultural process, not a technological one, technical systems architecture can be used to determine what policy opportunities exist by controlling the terms under which information is exchanged, or applications behave, across systems” (Taipale, 2004). We have seen the difficulties arising from policy discussion as a subject/code. It’s clearly impossible to run such a complex code only on a human network²³, therefore in this chapter I intend to showcase the theory for a support IT architecture.

What Taipale (2004) calls Policy Management Architecture, coming from the position that someone must moderate/enforce policy, I call Knowledge Architecture, a more generic term that emphasizes the need for community education and self-determination. Nevertheless, part of the architecture he describes closely matches my own and precedes it by more than eight years.

Fig. 3 Policy management architecture, client-server reference model (Taipale, 2004)



²³ knowledge architectures on analogous human social networks redefine themselves through conflict

In the simpler server-client form, matching the Shanon and Weaver original communication model (1949), Taipale (2004) presents his architecture such as in Figure 3 before.

The difference is that his architecture is distributed across the Internet and doesn't attempt to facilitate user feedback and convenience on one branded site structure as is the case with my plan. The end user is less of a policy generator and more of a receiver, according to the hegemonic model. This simple model allows us to view the main points of contention:

- It has a distorted feedback loop, with an anonymous source as the originator of policy and in charge of semantic control on the server side, with the end data user required to subscribe
- There's an implicit gatekeeper/monitoring element in the oversight logs, which means control of the architecture is not in the hands of the end user
- It doesn't address the community user as a content creator, but as a client

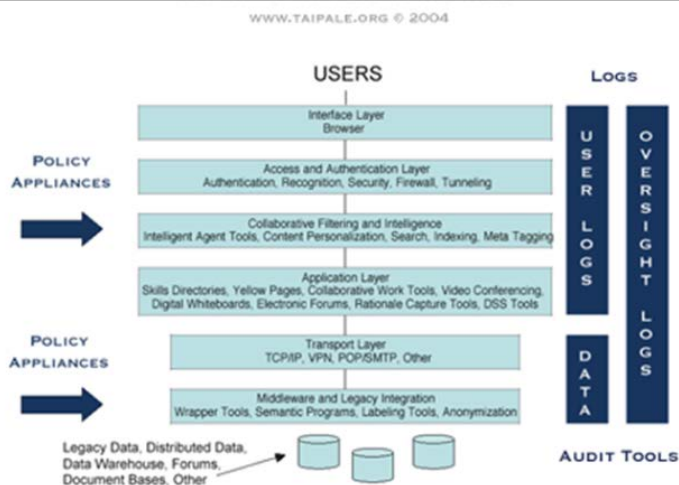
His is a top down trickle architecture, born out of a preoccupation with security, which aims to deny "freedom of association" to the end user, therefore part of his ability for self-determination. Unfortunately, in my dissertation proposal I offered my first project iteration which followed pretty much the same thought process. But let's see what Taipale's (2004) structure is all about.

Of course, one could argue that in his network-stack model (figure 4), Taipale addresses the issue of user cooperation and leaves out the anonymous originator, but counter-arguments can be made that:

- The application layer, with its forums, collaborative work tools, directories, etc. is too distributive (spread across the Internet into factions and groups) to be able to offer a consistent alternative to the hegemonic policy generator. Not only that, but it is unlikely that such a distributed layer will be readily accessible to the civic user, who will once more find himself as merely a receiver of policy, created at a plutocratic level. The only way the end user can be motivated enough to use this system, is to be legitimized through the "power of the many", the social user, which isn't addressed in here.
- The audit tools remain once more the prerogative of a limited group, anonymous in its intentions and presence.
- The legacy data repositories described are extremely difficult to access for the average civic user, as they are in non-standard formatting and difficult to visualize. The current design is only accessible to the most educated of policy readers, who from their expert position become in effect the leading policy generating plutocracy.

- No policy code description, despite the author being fully aware of the importance of syntax/semantics/pragmatics in this style of communication.

Fig. 4 Policy management architecture, network-stack reference model (Taipale, 2004)



Open source²⁴ versus closed repositories

In his model Taipale advertises the use of protected data repositories. What he forgets to mention is that security models can and do interfere with ease of access, as they tend to prioritize their own goals over efficiency. This paper wouldn't have been possible without open source. Not only did it rely heavily on open source infrastructure (such as Debian OS, Liquid Feedback PHP, Lua and C, Timeglider Javascript, HTML, XML and JSON, etc, etc), but it also relied on free knowledge repositories, starting with the ubiquitous Wikipedia (for very fast topic identification) to Github²⁵ and stackoverflow.com (for software) and many others really.

In the open source model, one does not control the outcome, just creates the tools and tries to work with the emerging community to develop them. This was the case for every single major open source project since Richard Stallman formalized the concept. It's not perfect, as I recently had the chance to observe, when a sufficient developer community failed to form around the Timeglider widget which I favor for timeline display and the makers pulled it out of the MIT license.

The web browser is an integral part of the knowledge structure, acting as semantic selector at web level, just as the policy topic search will be for the LQ platform and the

²⁴ Both open source information and software.

²⁵ RIP Aaron Schwartz <http://goo.gl/1HMh5W>

integrated search and legend functions are for Timeglider - 3 levels of search into our aggregated data (Web, website, timeline) just for visualization.

However, as soon as one starts manually indexing information, he realizes an obvious limitation of the browser search function, as it cannot search structurally non-indexable data - the "deep web" (such as dynamic pages, locked repositories or simply poorly downloadable content, like the excruciating amount of PDF's the EU institutions post online) and the "no web" (data that was never meant to be shared in public, such as the one available only through the Freedom of Information acts). It's hard, grunt work, which requires the work of many to put into proper context.

As an individual forced to become an independent researcher in an environment of disinterested institutions, I find the idea of "data lockers" in effect "cemeteries" for all but for institutional users, repugnant and one of the main driving forces behind the knowledge crisis affecting society. Done with the complicity of self-serving academic institutions and various governmental factions is becoming a social plague (University of Cambridge online, 2012). Hoarding knowledge and other types of capital ²⁶is consistent with a fear behavior, which shows that these institutions do not trust their ability to deal with the future very well, despite their cynical marketing prompts.

Because of the nature of my work, I was spared having to use protected data repositories. If I can't actively link to them from my website, they're useless, dead and hard to upgrade pieces of information, becoming more obsolete as time passes. On a site that should be accessible, like a governmental one, not upgrading info is a cue, either to indifference or to lack of funding. But in closed repositories, the design forces data to become obsolete, so why contribute to such a process?

I quote from Falkvinge, The Pirate Party maker "Almost all the world's new creators are already working in the new paradigm; creating despite the copyright monopoly, rather than because of it... those laws can and will change as the 250 million Europeans who share [a free information] culture come into power. 250 million people is not an adolescence problem; it is a power base of 250 million voters. As these people start writing laws, they can and will kill those monopolies at the stroke of a pen." "It is an overriding imperative of the American democratic system that we cannot have our public documents locked up in some kind of proprietary format, perhaps unreadable in the future, or subject to a proprietary system license that restricts access" things are moving there already (Eric Kriss, Secretary of Administration and Finance in Massachusetts, 2005).

Liquidfeedback

Not often one is involved in a conceptual process taking months and years only to find out that the ideas intimately articulated have already taken shape, but I find this an ever recurring phenomenon in today's society. Whilst on my own I had started to realize that it was possible to articulate social change by means of highly interactive/dynamic web pages that facilitate user control and group consensus a German team already had a viable project in the pipes since the second half of 2010.

²⁶ <http://goo.gl/OdKWz1>

Still, let me give you an example of how new this technology is. Should I have been aware of the Liquidfeedback platform at the beginning of my research, I would have had to deal with experimental software that needed a full English translation (easier said than done for software, where you have to scour the code for your target and remember I don't speak a word of German). Luckily for me, soon after discovering the software, I was made aware that the second version of it, fully available in English was to be released on the 29th of June 2012, with enhanced features and API support.

Claude Lévi-Strauss said that "the process of creating something is not a matter of the calculated choice and use of whatever materials are technically best-adapted to a clearly predetermined purpose, but rather it involves a dialogue with the materials and means of execution" (Lévi-Strauss 1974, 29). What about using materials that were made by a third party; especially in the case of such a complex process such as policy analysis/transfer?

Well, undoubtedly the design choices²⁷ and the implicit purpose of Liquidfeedback have had a significant impact on the way I chose the concept for what I define as knowledge architectures, as beyond providing the algorithms for democratic decision making through alternative voting the software favors "speaking from a position of authority" as it doesn't address the individual knowledge gaps through interaction and facilitating learning.

In a hegemonic dominance stability system, you have a top to bottom policy generation model and the IT architecture will reflect that, as in Taipale's case. But with the recession hitting and the breakdown of faith in stability in the hegemon, the dependent individuals/citizens will become more independent decision makers, willing to organize themselves adhoc (we notice a rise in entrepreneurship, due to social/personal necessity in periods of crisis, after the failure of the social contract) into the simplest and most convenient form, that of an amorphous network, which can begin to generate its own policy (as is the case with social network generated policy).

We must remember however, that we had a symbiotic collaboration with the now weakened hegemon, which will move to restore the status quo (restrict the network ability to generate policy, as we can see in a series of modern pieces of legislation at global level²⁸), therefore it is essential to move from the simpler social networks (trend setters) to specialized ones that permit the expression of crowd policy at such a level of quality that it begins to alter the hegemon's paradigm. One must not understand the hegemon as an enemy, rather than a structure with an established usage offering opportunities and challenges. That is why it's essential to do two things to improve individual control:

²⁷ The team behind the platform has experience in "data base solutions: like enterprise resource and planning, point of sale applications, reservation systems" (Nitsche, 2012).

²⁸ <http://goo.gl/a7MeB0>

- Enhance the quality/quantity of his decision making process. This can be satisfied by either providing the individual with higher quality/volume data input (to create his own opinion) or to expose him to higher quality/volumes data structures (community work), which he can adopt or enhance (through debate and research).
- Enhance the reach of his decision making process, again this can be done in a simple manner, by enhancing the penetrating power of his decision, either by creating a front of action, through association, through creating the right context for diffusion of his idea, if valuable and through allowing direct interference over the agenda setting policy activities.

That is where participatory platforms such as Liquid feedback come into play. Through the mechanism of a shared decision making, we can build a community of intent (Nietzsche, the will to power). We must however distinguish between crowd of intent²⁹ (the starting point) and community of knowledge (the middle point) as two different facets of what we are attempting to steer towards our goal of policy generation³⁰(production). The ultimate goal would be to build a community that can formulate not only its goals by means of this website, but also new pathways of action, such as educating its own agents of change, such as Lawyers in an initial step and many others later on, even considering new social roles³¹, after replacing the anonymous policy generating user with a community think tank policy generating user, which emphasizes participation and ultimately possesses civic legitimacy through self-representation.

Proxy voting (Fig. 10) with a Schulze method for preferential voting (LF Annex, Fig G) is the precise mechanism this representation is achieved in LF. "Transitive proxy... was first suggested in internet forums in the United States... around the year 2000. Back in 2009 the growing Berlin Pirate Party wanted to perpetuate the chances for every party member to participate in both the development of ideas and decisions. And they thought transitive proxy voting could be a promising idea." From there the team started a "democratic proposition development process and preferential voting" (Nitsche, 2012).

²⁹ Freud, mass psychology

³⁰ Intent without knowledge is blind and knowledge without intent is lame.

³¹ Fish (1980) called this "interpretative community"

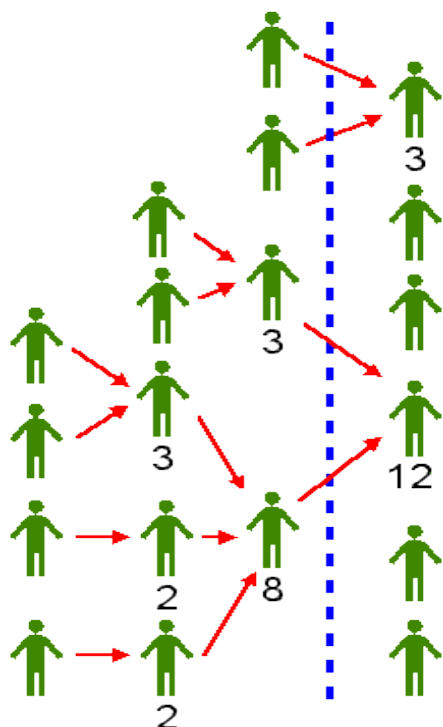


Fig. 5 Proxy voting representation - behind the punctuated line are the direct vote proxies and individuals

Knowledge process modification proposals for the LF platform

Through the facilitation of LF we have our community of intent (the will to power). Now what we must do is support this community with the necessary tools as to also turn it into a community of knowledge. Knowledge and intent are what assures us of producing a quality final item - policy.

Once again, while the LF software offers a trove of opportunity to the political individual, for the academic researcher is a rather poor proposition, as the level of communication is no better than on any other forum and the individual users might feel delegitimized by being corralled through the 10% quorum (for issue to initiative upgrade of proposals) and the 50% of quorum (validity of winning issues) requirements.

Complexity is definitely an issue here, as most users are used to either social interaction (Facebook), trend following (Twitter, Yahoo) or exposure articles (Wikipedia) in respect to topics of interest. What I don't want to do is stifle the creativity of a few by enabling too much moderation³². Imagine a site that grows in complexity not just on a linear fashion, but in a network manner that aims to harness

³² As forums become more and more complex and require similarly comprehensive forms of analysis, we notice either tighter control on the discussion topic or quality degeneration of the discourse.

specific processes of the human mind. I also wish to avoid having untrained individuals lose themselves in a bad process³³, and create a new plutocracy of those that can adapt versus the average user.

The means to achieve the desired enhanced platform functionality for the Liquidfeedback decision making software is by using the new Application Programming Interface³⁴, which LF supports with release 2.0³⁵ and by developing specific standards of presentation/community supported protocols within the platform. The additional functions for enhancing Liquidfeedback that I propose are:

- A. Enhanced visualization – timeline (preventive role)
- B. Enhanced visualization – exposure draft protocol (imperative role)
- C. Semantic search – better search function
- D. Semantic clarity – dictionary
- E. Enhanced search – elapsed topics tree structure
- F. Peer-to-peer communication – direct messaging window
- G. Proxy suggestion box - through the direct message system.
- H. Community-to-peer communication – RSS feed window
- I. Community creation – enabling circles
- J. Generally enhancing user profile with vote statistics, historic, etc.

While on a theoretical level I propose all these, I do hope the support community for the LF platform will provide programming for most of them, such as the Search function, where I believe I will see improvement in the next few weeks, due to its exceedingly poor condition and high usage. My immediate concern is to provide the functionality for the most difficult and important bits, the timeline and the dictionary, which are not a standard in social platform design, but are imperative for policy evaluation and debate.

And of course beyond these inner improvements, one must do everything he can to improve platform functionality in respect to user access/interest, by creating a brand expressed through a good website image.

“Information visualization, or in other words, visual data analysis, is the one that relies most on the cognitive skills of human analysts, and allows the discovery of unstructured actionable insights that are limited only by human imagination and creativity. The analyst does not have to learn any sophisticated methods to be able to interpret the visualizations of the data. Information visualization is also a hypothesis generation scheme, which can be, and is typically followed by more analytical or

³³ Jonassen (1997) stresses that “well-structured learning environments” are useful for learners of all abilities, while “ill-structured environments” are only useful to advanced learners.

³⁴ Through the API interface, other pieces of software can be connected (with some programming). <http://goo.gl/HWVU24>

³⁵ Support is also provided at official developer level, by registration here <http://goo.gl/OMuBrt>

formal analysis, such as statistical hypothesis testing.” (Anonymous Wikipedia editor³⁶)

Exposure draft ³⁷

The first issue that jumped to my mind when observing the LF functionality was the rather poor interpretation of specific issues offered by the end users, in a complete misunderstanding of a policy operational steps. Issues were being proposed by people with good intentions, but without the necessary ability to articulate them. As such decisions were made as the result of popular opinion, with similarly inclined individuals likely following social cues without giving thought to a proper solution.

A good model of community generated exposure draft presentation has to be the Wikipedia model, which could be integrated as part of more complex visualization designs such as topic/tag clouds or timelines. These exposure drafts should be joined by a critical assessment tool/commentary such as the commentary option offered by the MS Office tool for text, which would offer the community the chance to amend the text of a proposal with suggestions within collaborative environments such as Piratenpad (Etherpad).

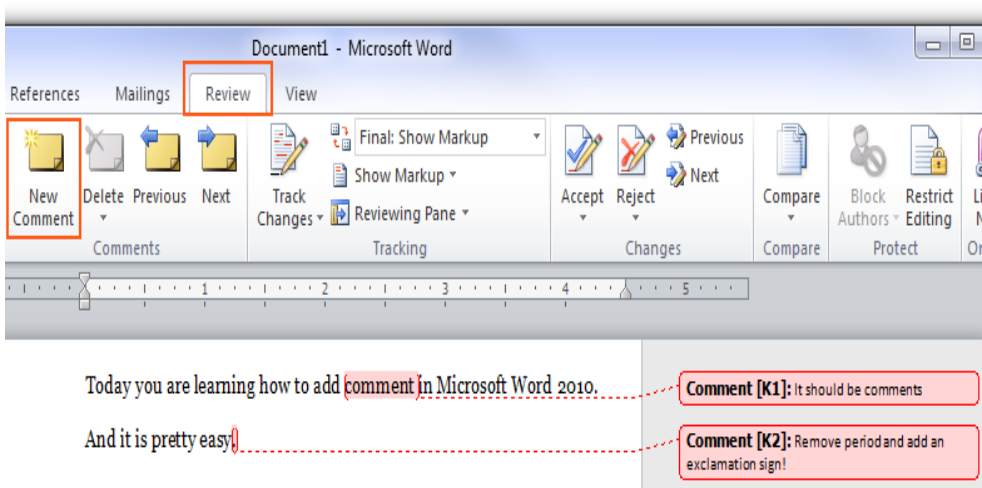


Fig. 6 An example of review and collaborative draft creation

³⁶ <http://goo.gl/3tf2qQ>

³⁷ Presentation of an item of policy for the public as per IFRS terminology, thou the original idea came to me from traditional encyclopedias and academic journals article presentation

Dictionary³⁸

The existence of a dictionary³⁹ binds people to a shared understanding and stops individuals at the semantic level of discussion when the terms do not coincide, eliminating dissent at later stages.

Ensuring consistency of approach – In natural language processing, semantic compression is a process of compacting a lexicon used to build a textual document (or a set of documents) by reducing language heterogeneity, while maintaining text semantics. As a result, the same ideas can be represented using a smaller set of words. Semantic compression is advantageous in information retrieval tasks, improving their effectiveness (in terms of both precision and recall). This is due to more precise descriptors (reduced effect of language diversity – limited language redundancy, a step towards controlled dictionary)" (Ceglarek et. all, 2010). Topic delimitation is critical as semantic incongruence can lead to a never ending amount of debate between individuals who share complementary negotiating positions.

Even with community support the amount of work in operating with the taxonomies is so large that I hope it is possible to utilize some preexisting conditions, in the form of web dictionaries. There just has to be a community accord on the exact definition and optimal dimensions of it. As of now, this particular topic requires a further investigation.

The sortable/search function at site level has to be improved as to allow for proper topic selection, be they expressed through the ED, the timeline or the dictionary. Some potential ideas might include topic tree navigation, thumbnail selections (commercial site style), better semantic tags for identifying policies (which could possibly enable an automatically tag populated timeline), individual user and circle search.

Conclusions

Due to the modular nature of open source we have seen how it is possible not only to create fully integrated tools of policy analysis/generation, but also how these tools can be used to enable community functions that can prove to be far superior to commercial ones, because of the higher stakes and capabilities said communities possess as a whole.

While providing a visual proof-of-concept for only the initial stage of policy analysis for an already existing infrastructure, I have also shown how very complex nature of such problems both possess a challenge to narrow academic skill definitions, forcing us to get down and dirty with such real world issues, data manipulation or simplified user visualization and interactivity. While not everybody needs to know the complete process of crafting a community enabled knowledge network, the difficulties I

³⁸ original idea, from the law, where everything has to be explained in detail to avoid litigation, where the formal language code creates convergence and enforces uniformity and consistency.

³⁹ which should include tools and protocol descriptions

encountered during the endeavor, showed me just how removed from pragmatic implementation could be a modern graduate of multiple academics institutions.

This arrogance of intellectuality quickly dissipates when one is face with the truth of his own illiteracy, an illiteracy reflected at the top policy production levels of some very large and important social institutions that pick their staff solely on the environment they've graduated, despite policies affirming the contrary. As plutocratic leaders are unable to master the ability to formalize natural languages and create easily understood social protocols, they should stop "the blame game" and support community generated solutions that must be found in order to address first IT illiteracy and then policy illiteracy. The community meanwhile is exploring alternate means of self-governance by exploring issues such as proxy voting, out of sheer frustration.

In respects to this paper I don't believe I should abruptly stop what I envisioned as essentially an iterative process and as such I'm willing to leave the some of the matter open to frustrate reader interest into action. Due to the vast potential of the theme, it would have been impossible for me to provide such a closure.

In a sense, this is a manual on how a single individual can and should kickstart a pragmatic process of policy analysis that could benefit a community. To enhance end user platform experience and confer him an identity we must link him to a community with a clear purpose/intent. Being that this is a policy research and analysis model, I have attempted to create an institutional entity⁴⁰, which I currently use as a means to generate outcomes for my social campaigning.

As I mentioned previously, whilst some of this knowledge rather pertinent and basic, it isn't self-legitimizing and MUST be used in the field as to prove its worth. As such I have embarked in a process of practical application, which makes use of the superior value of knowledge over other types of capital by tackling large institutional players. Here's further reading⁴¹ into the action generated as a result of trust garnered through knowledge.

You must go out into the world. If your institutions fail you, you must create your own space. Just as economics cannot be simple numbers or it would be math, political concepts such as net neutrality cannot be pursued thought the medium of IT alone, neither can be expect for progressive knowledge to be self-obvious.

If we are to truly concern ourselves with relationships of efficient social production and of a meaningful human condition outcome, we can't all be indifferent academic number crunchers as there's no more room there. A true researcher must forge his own path, impose⁴² through campaigning and through discourse rationality/legitimacy an operational paradigm and not merely be content to vent his intellect by observing the world.

⁴⁰ <http://www.knowledgearchitectures.org/>

⁴¹ <http://goo.gl/h1tSFV>

⁴² http://www.mynacc.org/Rules_for_Radicals.pdf

Pragmatically speaking, the best human condition you could have in this world is one in which you can conceptualize for yourself and **create** a self-sustaining political agenda, whilst serving a real social need. Will that get you at odds with the establishment, with the powers that be? Doh... but that's why you want to be a Pirate, right?

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COMMERCIAL THREATS TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE – AND WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

RICO BROUWER

ABSTRACT

Financial institutions (banks) exert an ever increasing threat to personal freedom:

- (Student) loans;
- Mortgages;
- State debt;
- bail-out and bail-in measures.

Work towards financial slavery of individuals.

Credit crisis measures have accelerated this by not including bank reform.

This paper argues principal steps by addressing a root cause; 'debt bondage through unregulated greed'. Banks operate independent from political government and democratic control. They are granted a 'license' from a central bank. But these license conditions, the rules under which the central banks operate, can be changed by law. Some of the proposals; an unhealthy bank is to be considered a utility bank and will be regulated through law and published audits. A hard limit on banker pay and ban of bonuses when under 'bailed-in/out'. Utility status or split-up when 'too big too fail'. Practical measures that can be implemented EU wide before or as next crisis hits.

INTRODUCTION

Quote from Wikipedia;

Debt bondage has been described by the United Nations as a form of "modern day slavery". Debt bondage (also known as debt slavery or bonded labour) is a person's pledge of their labour or services as security for the repayment for a debt or other obligation. The services required to repay the debt may be undefined, and the services' duration may be undefined. Debt bondage can be passed on from generation to generation.

The premise of this paper that is written for Think Twice 2 - 2014 is that 'Debt bondage' is what everyone present today lives under. We are all servicing our government's debts that were passed on to us by previous generations and that were

greatly expanded in the wake of the 2008 credit crisis. On top of that we are servicing an increasing amount of private debts, such as student loans and mortgages.

There is a 'debt bondage apartheid' going on, between the 'haves' and the 'have-debts' though we don't call it that and most don't recognize it as such. The noose if you will has tightened since 2008 as a direct result of the 'credit crisis measures' taken by governments and banks.

- In the first chapter it is argued that the period we live in in 2014 resembles the Titanic, in the three hours it still floated between impact and sinking;
- Chapter two describes how banks and bankers fared since 2008, and more importantly how individuals did with their mortgages and student loans;
- The third chapter makes the argument about 'what to do' in the remaining time the world economy remains floating, and what to do when the next crisis hits;
- How to accomplish this is in the last chapter, chapter four.

Global Economy Like A Titanic

The Titanic and the Federal Reserve system in de US were both created early in the 20th century.

Titanic had 2224 people on board. Some small floating ice was observed, but she went full ahead nonetheless. A big iceberg was hit. Three hours later she went vertical and sank. Two hours later a rescue ship arrived saving 705 lives.

The Global Economy today looks like Titanic did in those three hours between impact and going vertical. One could argue that the 'dotcom' bubble burst in 2000 was us hitting some small floating ice, a warning if you will. In retrospect that might have been the best time in history to make changes and adjust course and speed.

But we didn't make those changes. We went full ahead.

Alan Greenspan of the Fed introduced a close to zero percent interest rate. And all kinds of financial products were invented after 2000, made possible by the repeal of the Glass Steagal act in 1999. Glass Steagal prohibited commercial banks from participating in the investment banking business. Personally my wife and me went full speed ahead too. We went on vacations to the most beautiful sites in the world. We bought our first house in 2000, we bought our current house in 2007. Ignorance had its virtues.

In 2008 the global economy hit its iceberg. It sprung irreparable leaks and was sure to sink. But these things take time and with some patchwork that time is now extended as we're in our sixth year sinking. Ben Bernanke of the Fed added to close to zero interest rates and introduced QE programs that pumped unprecedented amounts of money into the economy, or maybe not the real economy but in the banking system and the equity markets. China, Japan and Europe did too.

Now even though you can't duct-tape Titanic, captains in charge tend to react to disaster in a similar manner. You'll hear them say; 'keep calm, everything is under control, carry on, nothing to see here'. We've seen real life examples of such behaviour in Fukushima 2011, with Costa Concordia 2012 and that ferry called Sewol that went down in South Korea in April where people were told to stay below decks for safety as the ship was already sinking. Actually that Ferry sank due to negligence and corruption, as reported in the preliminary official report issued on July 8th 2014.

The central bankers' strategy to pretend all is still well today is 'inflating the hull of the economy'. Making the ship bigger by pumping money into it would cause it to float longer. But it does nothing to the leak already dragging it down nor the engine propelling it. If anything it will make our economy move ever slower forward until that thing is so bloated all forward momentum has ceased.

For the people actually owning the ship this may look nice as their big ship is now even bigger. The money being pumped into the financial system goes to the 1%. It does not go to its passengers that are the 99%. As an example you may look at who owns companies, real estate, fine art, stocks and bonds. And you may look at individuals' debt levels, unemployment rate numbers and food stamp usage at record highs.

Some observing 'passengers' are no longer buying the bullshit and have begun moving towards 'life-boats'; you have preppers and people moving into bitcoin, gold or silver. Some others are actively calling out that things are wrong and have gone to exposing it. I count Assange, Manning, Snowden among them. You have economic whistle-blowers too like Andrew Maguire who exposed the rigging of the silver market.

So what to make of our current leadership actively discouraging the use of crypto currency, depicting it as a threat? What to make of price suppression schemes going on in the precious metals markets? What to make of governments that violate basic human rights by monitoring all communications? I would argue that actively discouraging the building or even pondering of 'life boats' is more criminal even than the captain that tells its passengers to ignore the ship going askew. The witch-hunt after our whistle-blowers might just be exposed for the war-crime it is, once we've gone vertical.

Money is being pumped into the economy at record levels, trying to up the buoyancy a little longer, and we're not supposed to notice. But the circulation of money (velocity) has already come to a halt. With all the added money-as-debt they print they shrink the real economy rather than growing it. Since we're still taking on water some argue the only thing left in the long run is to go vertical and sink. And as with Titanic, that could happen suddenly and go pretty fast. Titanic sinking killed two thirds of its passengers. They had too few life boats to begin with and they didn't properly use the ones they had.

So. What do you do when your old ship is sure to sink? You build a new one before it goes under! Historically speaking Pirates knew a good boat from a lousy one and they knew how to sail ships. But I doubt they really knew how to build them.

If our global economy goes like Titanic, who will then most likely be looked upon to help save us all? That would probably be the current leadership. Looking at how basic civil rights are actively being eroded away already, they'll probably force their 'solution' on us in a 'use it or drown' kind of way when the time comes. Or that solution might even be received favorably, depending on the level of misery among the population.

A captain's plight is to stay on the bridge of his sinking ship and go down with it, saving as many passengers as he can.

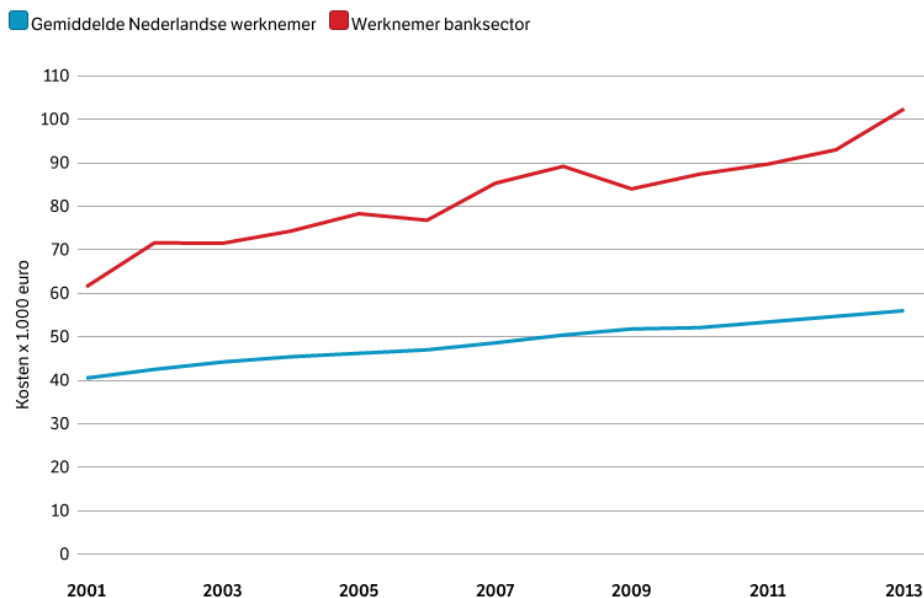
That's where the analogy between Titanic and our current elected leaders and appointed bankers fails.

2008 – 2014, While We Float

The Dutch bank ABN AMRO stated on their website about a 2014 20% wage increases; *'Despite these raises they (sub-top management) will suffer a decrease in income between 5% and 10%. ABN AMRO raises wages in anticipation of new laws restricting bonuses'*.

Statistics show that in 1987 an average bank employee in the Netherlands earned 18% more than an average Dutch employee. In 2014 that bank employees earned 87% more.

Totale beloning per arbeidsjaar, inclusief alle werkgeverlasten, x 1.000 euro



Bron: CBS

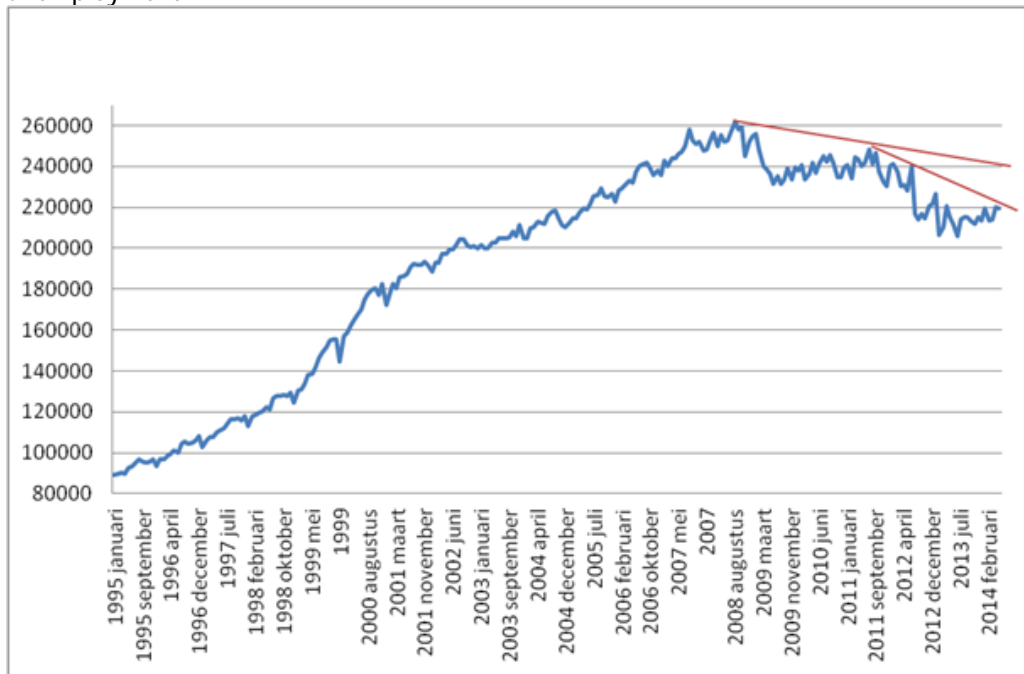
Door: NRC Q Gemaakt met: LocalFocus

This graph illustrates the total costs of an employee, over time from 2001 to now. In the Netherlands during the 2008 credit crisis a couple of banks including ABN AMRO came close to a default. Liquidation was prevented only through state intervention. Had they been any other company they likely would have been let to default.

According to the Dutch government the reason for 'saving' banks was that they were too important to our society; they were 'too big to fail'. Saving the banks meant transferring bad loans liability from the banks onto the state and thus the tax payer. The collective debt levels of citizens as a result of that have increased substantially, reducing their individual financial freedom although artificial low interest levels have postponed the impact of the added debt for now.

Even though some of the big banks are still on life support today, the banker wages have gone up more than average since 2008. More importantly, they claim to deserve the raise and they justify by calling it a 'pay-cut'. Some other examples that illustrate 'big banks behaviour';

The 2008 crisis is called a credit crisis. Instead of writing off bad debts, banks repackaged them in financial products to make them appear more attractive. Bad debts were subsequently sold through. Those crappy debt products were later exposed and that caused the cascading collapse. Not only did banks loan out more than was sustainable, they tried to hide the fact and tried to make money off it too. In 2014 sub-prime loans schemes are back, for example in the US in the car-loan business. But also take into account student debt levels in an economy that has large youth-unemployment.



This chart illustrates the average price of a house in the Netherlands from 1995 onwards. By now we can conclude that like the Netherlands a lot of countries go through a similar housing bubble. If you observe longer trends you might even argue the Dutch are only halfway through deflating their bubble. Mortgage banks in 2014 however claim that house prices are on the rise again and we're even safe to start lending and buying again. In the UK there's 'help to buy' and house prices are now even 30% higher than before the 2008 crisis broke out. In the Netherlands, there's a similar incentive to get mortgages going again, it's called 'starters loan'. Different countries invented different ways to reflate the housing bubble and impose new loans to potential buyers.

When I purchased my house in 2007 I was not aware of a housing bubble. The course of events in the global economy since leads me to three conclusions;

- I was not savvy enough to make the financial decisions I was encouraged to make;
- My bank either lied to me in 2007, or they didn't know housing was in a bubble;
- Mortgage banks are still lying to their customers today, or they have not learned anything from the last 6 years;
- Governments today try to reflate a bubble again that nearly destroyed the financial system on a global scale in 2008.

Over the last couple of years the amount of student loans in the US have increased dramatically. In 2014 a new student lending scheme was also introduced in the Netherlands. If you have a desire to educate yourself through schooling most people will need to take on debts they might never be able to pay off. But they will loan nonetheless as no debt basically means no education.

These examples illustrate that as a result of actions by bankers and governments we are today far more indebted than we were before 2008 and we had no real choice in that change. More importantly bankers and governments are still working to increasing individuals' and government debt levels today.

What is happening today is not unlike what happened to the slaves of old under 'debt-bondage'.

What To Do

- Some argue this thing we're going through is cyclical and we'll see growth return. This appears to be the official government and central bank position;
- Others suggest there are all kinds of ways our current economic and financial system will collapse in on itself. There are some that think this is unavoidable;
- There are conspiracy theories that claim 'the powers that be' intentionally created the current financial apartheid through debt bondage. And that they'll work to gain an even firmer grip after the next collapse occurs.

I believe the issues of our time are structural and not cyclical. If we carry on, on the current path we will allow a further eroding of our individual liberties in exchange for larger debt liabilities to the point where we'll no longer have a democratic society. The measures taken by governments and banks have made no improvements to the root cause. Instead they reinforced existing power structures by increasing debt levels. If anything; they moved away from a sustainable solution.

What to do to start make things better? There are a lot of different angles as to how to do that. But united as all kinds of solutions people come up with may be on a common cause, they stand divided in their good intentions and various different plans as to how to get there. By doing this they have trouble finding substantial momentum. Some examples of different approaches;

Society and individuals are being held hostage by debt through greed by the 'haves' among them the bankers. Some would argue that we therefore need to eradicate debt altogether, or ban interest on debt, or ban fractional banking or reinstate a gold standard. These may or may not be good arguments for a philosophical debate but I want to look at measures that all support and can be implemented in the current state of our society by currently elected officials. I'm not discussing what would be best in the long run, I'm discussing what would be best either way if we do it right now no matter your world view or long term philosophy.

Among the root causes is a lack of self-regulation by bankers and of insufficient regulatory measures through governing bodies. The core to any real solution starts with changing the rules to the banking game; 'if you want to play bank, you have to play nice'.

As an illustration how conveniently useful the threat of 'losing a bank license' can be, you may observe what happened to BNP Paribas. They were found to be in non-compliance to US imposed sanctions and were fined for nearly nine billion dollars. The bank decided to pay the penalty, in order to keep their license in the US. Another way to put this; they complied to the US mafia and paid up at gunpoint. Where this story becomes more interesting still is the subsequent French statement suggesting they could 'get out of the use of US dollars'. This is a clear message saying; 'this far, no further'. Some line drawing is needed and needs to be done before the next big collapse if they are to be of any use towards the future.

Suggested measures;

- Failure to observe any of below rules will result in a bank losing its bank license. Their activities would then be wound down or nationalized where applicable;
- Criminal cases that include banks may not be settled but must be brought before a court of justice;
- Pay for all employees including board members of banks that are operating on state support (through the bail-out measures or nationalization) may not exceed 130% that of the pay of that country's ministers. In Holland this is

called the 'Balkenende norm' named after the prime minister that instated this rule for all government paid officials in 2006;

- Unlike currently in the Netherlands, this 130% rule will not be voluntary but mandatory;
- All bank bonus schemes are suspended until a banks bail-out measures are repaid in full;
- If a bank is considered too-big to fail it is to be considered a utility bank and the '130% rule' applies;
- All banks possessions and liabilities including central banks and those of the ECB must be in their books on a mark to market basis. This includes real estate, gold, stocks and derivate products. These reports are to be made public;
- A clear distinction needs to be made when an asset is owned or a derivate of that asset is owned. For example a physical bar of gold and a claim on a bar of gold are two different things;
- The 3% capital reserve demands of a bank must consist of hard assets only. Such as currency, real estate or gold. Financial derivate products do not count. Until such time that this is accomplished the '130% rule' applies;
- All licensed banks will go through yearly standardized audits to verify these rules are observed and to confirm a bank is not 'too big to fail'. Audit reports are made public;
- Banks that pass the yearly audits and above rules will no longer be regulated by the '130% rule' measure or suspension of bonus schemes.

A note on the ECB and accountability; in the Netherlands, the Dutch central bank is accountable to the 'Algemene Rekenkamer', who in turn reports to the parliament. Some of that central bank accountability is being transferred to the ECB, which is accountable to no official body.

By transferring to the ECB existing accountability is eroded away. All accountability including that on the ECB needs to be placed under supervision of an elected governing body. When the ECB decides to 'support the economy' by increasing the money supply. They are loaning out money and by doing so increasing their balance sheet. The ECB itself is backed by the central banks of the countries that participate. So when the ECB prints, which they announced they would do again in august 2014, the EU taxpayers effectively are liable for that.

How to do it

How do we get these measures implemented?

These are measures that every citizens in Europe can easily understand, relate to and support. Measures that would benefit society no matter your philosophy, no matter how the future unfolds and that can be implemented by our currently elected governments if they but will it. Whether they are voluntarily willing or not, the few people leading today are still subjects to the many that is society. That's democracy and it's time we call it to work.

I propose all pirates and likeminded people to come up with their list of measures throughout the EU. It matters not if you have elected representatives in current government bodies. What matters is if you can generate momentum throughout the EU. Our current elected leaders will follow-up on your measures if the people will it. It's an easy enough statement; 'make changes, or we'll not accept any further bank support'.

There will be denial, mocking and opposition. A few I will address here;

- 'we will lose talented bankers through these measures'
 - o Those talented bankers got us in the current situation and did little to address the root cause. How would losing them make matters worse?
 - o We may even need a new generation of bankers to get anything done as we're changing the essence of banking
- 'You are in effect calling for a bank-run and by doing so creating a crisis'
 - o No, we are however giving them a last chance to better themselves. We're making a clear threat. 'Listed now or we will stop using banks the next time you try to 'save' them without imposing proper rules to the game'
- 'if we disclose the true position of banks, they may default'
 - o That would mean that the true positions of banks are not sustainable. The fact that those banks are still in operation even though they may operate like zombies, illustrates current crisis measures are insufficient and something needs to be done even if it means default
 - o In case of a default of too big to fail banks, they may need to be nationalized after the bail-in procedures have been implemented. That would increase public debt. That would prove extremely painful but still be better than to endure a further deterioration and an ever bigger pain further on down the road
- 'these measures do nothing to solve said problems of debt and debt bondage'
 - o This is true. These measures will however take away the fuel that is banker greed and by doing so will begin to extinguish the fire. Or close the leak so you will.
- 'these proposals are soft, don't go far enough, people will be reluctant to support what may be perceived as half measures'

- This is true. However good additional measures may be. They will never get implemented if we don't get forward momentum. Put a stop to current unregulated greed could be that first step.

Anyone reading this ten page paper on short term bank reform, please take a moment to reflect and decide if you think these are measures that;

- You understand;
- Would begin to improve individual financial liberties;
- Would improve ethics in banking, and as a result improve our shared economy, liberties or society compared to where we are in 2014;
- Our elected leaders and bankers would be able to implement.

In closure

How to prevent the people that are responsible for the old mess to create and impose a new even bigger one and get away with it? I would argue it does not take a whole lot of elected pirates to keep a good close eye on our elected leaders. To make them accountable for their actions and have they make the better choices. If their work is being critically observed and exposed they're less likely to commit fraud or make choices that benefit 'the owners of Titanic', the selected few.

Getting Pirates elected and getting change going is plan A, but it takes time and democracy is more than just that. Also, we may already be out of time. The next crisis could be huge and happen before democratically elected pirates can begin to make a substantial difference on these topics.

An increasing number of people across Europe making the demand for measures that eradicate fraudulent and self-enriching banking ethics would speed up things in a way no elected pirate could.

When a part of society starts making these demands, they may not be so easily ignored or denied. Ignoring a community that is quiet is easy. Ignoring a community that makes a simple but strong demand is a different thing altogether. An active act of denying the public voice might impact the next democratic elections in your country and the EU and make a landslide difference for the better. Keep in mind that the only thing our elected leaders and appointed bankers and their fiat currencies have going for themselves.. is your faith in them. It is called 'fiat money' for a reason. It is only backed by the people's confidence. Tell them that is what is at stake.

When these demands get ignored or denied still and we do hit our next big crisis, there's no way new crisis measures would disregard the demands already made by the people.

However if we keep quiet or divided until such time, we'll add to the eroding of our financial independence and our civil rights.

After reading this piece, what will you do? Convince your elected leaders to implement changes? Convince your peers to join this cause? Maybe use social media, write letters to your elected representatives, connect to main stream media. If you

have additions; make them known throughout your community. If you have political ambitions consider making the suggestions in this paper part of your program. Or will you sit and wait?

When I got invited to present this paper for Think Twice 2 on august 30th 2014, I decided to start act on this myself and make that a part of my presentation. Prior to leaving for Istanbul I wrote a letter to Dutch parliamentarians.



Quotes;

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debt_bondage

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THE EDUCATOR'S NEW CLOTHES: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE AND OPEN VISION FOR EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

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ABSTRACT

In 2013 the authors participated in a collaborative teaching and learning project Media Culture 2020, with four European partner universities. The first object of the Media Culture 2020 project was to demonstrate what 21st century converged and interactive European Media Culture could be in comparison to the broadcasting based one-way 20th century European Media Culture. The second objective of this project was to break classroom and campus walls by creating open virtual learning environments where students from different countries and fields could explore and learn together. This project was also about developing flexible curricula that can quickly respond to a rapidly changing world. The ability of lifelong learning and working in multidisciplinary teams were the keys to professionalism we hoped to enhance with this project.

After the successful Media Culture 2020 project last year they explored opportunities to implement and embed some of the best practices of the project at the University of Lincoln. They developed a collaborative interdisciplinary teaching and learning project 'co_LAB' involving students and staff from the School of Media and School of Art & Design. co_LAB is an interdisciplinary, educational project which houses intensive teaching programmes, the first of which is took place between 12-16 May, 2014. co_LAB was designed to explore and develop new approaches to collaborative teaching and learning through the use of networked digital tools, and through the transferral of knowledge, skillsets and teaching styles. co_LAB aims to overcome the traditional barriers between individual course specialisms by bringing together students and colleagues from across academic disciplines to collaborate on transmedia design projects.

Building on their experiences with social media and collaborative learning, the authors have proposed the development of an Integrated Learning Ecosystem called Scholr. Scholr is a comprehensive, integrated software environment that supports the development, delivery, assessment, and administration of educational courses, in addition to providing a modifiable

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toolset that can be used to foster collaborative forms of blended learning within the classroom and online delivery of course content. Scholr allows technology to play a more active role in supporting learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. This paper discusses the collaborative learning projects that inspired the proposal, setting the context for and outlining the key features. This paper will present and discuss these projects and moves towards a collaborative and open vision for education in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

“The New Economic Law: The more you share, the more you have”

Cai Melakoski, MC2020 - 2013

In 2013 five universities from across Europe undertook an innovative project ‘Media Culture 2020’, combining skills and forces to develop new practices that would face the challenge of the convergence of digital media, taking full advantage of social media and cloud-based technologies. The aim of the Media Culture 2020 project was to demonstrate what 21st century converged and interactive European Media Culture could be in comparison to the broadcasting based one-way 20th century model. The main objective of the project was to break down classroom and campus walls by creating open virtual learning environments where students from different countries and fields could explore and learn together.



Media Culture 2020 is an Erasmus Intensive Programme. The project demonstrates what 21th century converged and interactive European Media Culture could be. MC2020 breaks classroom and campus walls by creating open virtual learning environments where students from different countries and fields can explore and learn together.

Image 1: Media Culture 2020

Media Culture 2020 developed innovative digital learning environments that consider new forms of production, transmission and representation of knowledge. The project utilized a range of free online platforms, social media and cloud-based technologies including Facebook, Google+ Google Hangout, Google Docs and Blogger in the

collaborative development, management and delivery of the project. For the students and lecturers from the 5 partner institutions taking part in Media Culture 2020, social media platforms offered an innovative solution to learning and teaching in a collaborative manner.

These platforms facilitated the 6-weeks of pre-workshop activities prior to the workshops, were used for documenting the process during the workshop and provide channels for dissemination after. These platforms offer excellent opportunities and models of working for non-real-time collaborations, but there are still issues with real-time logistics for arranging different groups of people to present simultaneously. Facebook was the meeting 'room' prior to the events in Tampere, and Liepaja, and has proven to be a great way of everyone keeping in touch since they returned to their respective countries.

The Media Culture 2020 project was considered to be a great success by all the partners, academics and especially the students who took part. It is a true example of an intercultural, multidisciplinary, blended learning experience in higher education that achieved its goals of breaking down classroom walls and bridging geographical distance and cultural barriers. The students with different skills, coming from different countries and cultures, interacting with other enlarges the possibilities of creativity, collaboration and quality work.

The students referred to Media Culture 2020 as: "the best experience ever as students", or "it was a life experience!" The high-level of collaborative work achieved was unique. The results were amazing, even given the short time to develop concepts. The heterogeneous base of knowledge and culture of the students gave them an opportunity to learn fast and quick, to debate and improve ideas day by day, and to be more creative due to the different approaches. The only two students from the business field were amazed by the successful educational methodology. To work with people from different countries gives to the project an added value because cross-country teams with cultural differences and backgrounds has increased the project attractiveness due to the different perspectives that can appear.

Building on the success of Media Culture 2020: co_LAB

Building on the success of Media Culture 2020, the team of academics from the University of Lincoln explored opportunities to embed some of the best practices at their institution. co_LAB is an interdisciplinary, educational project which houses intensive teaching programmes, the first of which took place between 12-16 May, 2014. co_LAB was designed to explore and develop new approaches to collaborative teaching and learning through the use of networked digital tools, and through the transferal of knowledge, skillsets and teaching styles. co_LAB aimed to overcome the traditional barriers between individual course specialisms by bringing together students and colleagues from across different academic disciplines to collaborate on a transmedia design project.



Image 2: co_LAB

The project was motivated by a desire to enhance collaboration and knowledge transfer, between different courses and schools within the College of Arts. Whilst many of the courses ran by the Lincoln School of Art and Design (LSAD) and the Lincoln School of Media (LSM) share a number of similar themes and creative skillsets, they are currently located within separate buildings and share very different working practices. Students are subsequently siloed off into their individual course specialisms and rarely get the opportunity to share ideas or work collaboratively to produce new knowledge and creative outputs. The pilot project featured collaborations from a number of lecturers and 14 second year students from Media Production (LSM), Interactive Design and Contemporary Lens Media (both LSAD). There were also collaborations from Dr. John Murray from the School of Social Computing, Louise Lawlor (LSM), a virtual lecture from Chris Heydra (The Hague University of Applied Sciences) and a demonstration of the 'virtual reality' system, Oculus Rift.



Image 3: Chris Heydra, Hague University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, giving a talk via Google Hangout

co_LAB was the result of the university's 'Fund for Educational Development' programme, which was set up to support the implementation of the University's 'Student as Producer' initiative through innovative curriculum redesign projects. The project set out to investigate how collaborative and interdisciplinary methods of teaching and learning might engage students from a variety of educational contexts in the production, transmission and representation of new knowledge. co_LAB explored the following aims and objectives of Student as Producer:

University of Lincoln Student as Producer Aims & Objectives

Conventional models of higher education have seen a schism develop between the two most fundamental activities which take place in universities: teaching and research. At the University of Lincoln, these two activities are not viewed as competing priorities but as integral components of a broader process, which is the real essence of a university: the creation of knowledge and meaning.

The core concept of the Student as Producer project, led by the Educational Development and Enhancement Unit (EDEU) at the University of Lincoln, is research-engaged teaching. This means encouraging students at all levels and across all disciplines to see themselves as active producers of knowledge, rather than passive consumers. The principle of research-engaged teaching now underpins the curriculum across all subject areas at the University of Lincoln.

The project emphasizes the role of students as collaborators. Undergraduates are given opportunities to work with academics, postgraduates and support staff on real academic research. In this way students become part of the academic project of the University and make a meaningful contribution to the production of knowledge alongside experienced researchers.

Through practice and primary engagement with research, students extend and improve their practical and academic skills, which in turn increases their employment prospects and opportunities to pursue further study.

Discovery

The open-ended brief and flexible teaching structure empowered students to define the working environment. The structure of the workshop itself was open to negotiation, whilst students were encouraged to pool their collective research and practice skills. This approach was designed to engage students in the discovery and sharing of new knowledge by underscoring the importance of research within the conceptual development stage.

Technology in Teaching

co_LAB utilized a range of free Google Drive and associated software (Docs, Presentation and Hangouts) to share information. The project also made use of a blog and Twitter to publicize the project, and social media platform Facebook to foster closer

working partnerships between staff and students. We believe that by leveraging the capabilities of Web 2.0 technologies this model of digital scholarship can facilitate a more open, interactive and collaborative working environment for teaching and learning.

Space & Spatiality

The technologies and virtual learning environments used in this project allowed for real-time collaboration whereby information and knowledge could be accessed and disseminated across a number of networked devices.

Assessment

Peer-review and student driven feedback was encouraged throughout the project. The workshop was also planned to coincide with 'As Above, So Below', an international academic event on 'drone culture' and network politics. Not only did the workshop share similar themes, the work produced during the co_LAB programme was exhibited at this public event. This added a 'real-world' context to student concepts and encouraged students to engage in greater depth with the development of ideas.

Student Voice

The established teacher/student divide was avoided wherever possible, with optional seminars, interactive workshops, student-led presentations, group discussions and plenaries taking the place of the traditional, rigid lecture/seminar structure.

Research & Evaluation

Participants were engaged in active research activities throughout the conceptual development, presentation and delivery of projects. A collaborative approach to research was encouraged, with both staff and students contributing to an archive of research sources. A number of open plenaries were held to discuss and evaluate this research in relation to developing student concepts.

co_LAB as Blended Learning

The co_LAB framework represents a novel form of 'blended learning', which Curtis Bonk and Charles Graham (2006: 5) define as a hybrid learning system that combines face-to-face instruction with computer mediated activities. Christopher McMorran (2013) suggests that if used in an educational setting, collaborative technology can enhance active participation (through content creation), increase student engagement, and enrich the learning process. The development of online learning environments alongside established classroom forms must therefore be considered a useful pedagogical approach, since it can serve to facilitate a more collaborative learning experience (Garrison & Kanuka 2004: 95-105; Berger & Trexler 2010). Collaborative technologies were central to much of the work undertaken throughout this project, thus providing an opportunity to evaluate the educational merits of some of these tools.

In addition to the intensive workshop, cloud-based and social media tools were used to extend the methods of teaching and learning within an open, virtual learning environment. This mode of 'blended learning' was designed to enhance the learning experiences of a diverse set of students from different disciplinary contexts. Google+ and associated applications (Google Docs, Google Drive and Google Hangout) were implemented as the core tools for this process. Google Docs was utilized due to the range of integrated software needs it fulfills (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, etc.). This platform enabled all participants to easily create and share documents from within the web browser, which could be accessed by a range of networked devices.

The associated 'cloud' storage service, Google Drive, allowed these documents to be shared to all participants instantaneously, whilst also facilitating a separate space for admin purposes. Throughout the project student groups each had their own folders for sharing work in progress, which the lecturers could also see and comment on if required. Google Hangouts was also used to facilitate the delivery of an online lecture by Chris Heydra from The Hague University of Applied Science (which was streamed live and recorded to YouTube).

The outline of the workshop itself was not tied down to any formal structure, but instead open to negotiation and democratic voting process wherever possible via number of virtual 'polls' held on the Facebook group (which acted as an informal 'coffee room' to network and discuss ideas). Students were also invited to contribute to a shared Google Doc with any requests for additional content they felt they needed to support their concepts. One of the most popular requests was for more information about application development and design. In response to this, LSM lecturer James Field presented a case study of an application he has recently designed, and gave some invaluable advice about the importance of market research for developing creative design concepts. This blend of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods fostered an open, blended learning environment, one which extended the traditional boundaries of the classroom in time and space. The interactive and decentralized nature of these digital tools enabled staff and students to communicate and strengthen social ties, alongside participation in the production of new knowledge and media content. These services were also important for embedding the skills and knowledge delivered throughout the workshop phase.

The Current LMS/VLE Market

The Higher Education Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or Learning Management System (LMS) market in the UK is dominated by two products, Blackboard and Moodle. Both platforms are disliked by tutors and students alike due to their clunky, unintuitive nature and 'one size fits all' approach. Largely derided by the academic community who are required to implement these into their teaching and module delivery, these existing platforms are not fit for purpose for the socially networked, always connected, smartphone savvy students of today. Blackboard and Moodle facilitate the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of courses, but do not offer any enhancement to the teaching and learning experience, or improving learning

outcomes and attainment.

Blackboard is a proprietary Learning Management System and is the market leader, with a market value of \$1.52 billion in 2011, its 2010 revenue grew by 19% to \$447 million (Ghosh, 2011). Blackboard Inc. is based in Washington DC, USA, and has over 3000 employees worldwide. The annual cost is expensive, for example for Cardiff University the annual cost of Blackboard licenses is approximately £415,000 (Cooper, 2012). In terms of support costs, this includes a team to support the software, and a team who provide support for applications and databases (infrastructure) for these staff (including on-costs) and the cost of the annual software licenses totals. These costs only include centralized support for the software and do not include the costs for staff resources employed outside of Information Services.

Moodle is a 'free' Open Source Learning Management System, available under the GNU General Public License, with a current user-base of 71,701,831 and 64,232 registered sites worldwide, with 6,634 registered sites in the UK (Moodle). Based in Perth, Western Australia, Moodle is run as a trust with an annual turnover £1,156,396.11 and has 34 employees in their Perth base. Moodle is free to download and there is no license fee, however installation, hosting and management of the system can be costly, with average estimates in the region of £40,000 per year, but with further costs for training on the platform. In 2005 the UK's largest university, the Open University, a distance learning institution with over 200,000 enrolled students, invested £5 million to develop the worlds largest Moodle deployment, 'to build a comprehensive online student learning environment for the 21st century' (Open University, 2005).

Scholar: Integrated Learning Ecosystem

Inspired by their experiences in online collaborative learning, the authors proposed to develop Scholar, a comprehensive, integrated software that supports the development, delivery, assessment, and administration of educational courses, in addition to providing a modifiable toolset that can be used to foster collaborative forms of 'blended learning' within the classroom and online delivery of course content. Scholar will allow technology to play a more active role in supporting learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. By focusing its functionality around how learners engage best with content and by facilitating collaborative and social connections, Scholar will provide an interactive learning ecosystem that is centered around the individual learner.

Scholar has been submitted to the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) competition 'Learning Technologies: Design for Impact', for initial funding to take the project to proof of concept stage. This competition supports exploratory studies into the design of technology-based products and services that will improve learning outcomes. There are three important aspects to design – feasibility, desirability and usability – and all three elements are central to the scope of this competition. The TSB place particular emphasis on easy and effective usability by customers (learners, educators and purchasers) and desirability, meaning that the products and services should be widely used and will benefit learners and businesses alike.



Integrated Learning Ecosystem

Gameful Design to Promote Participatory Learning

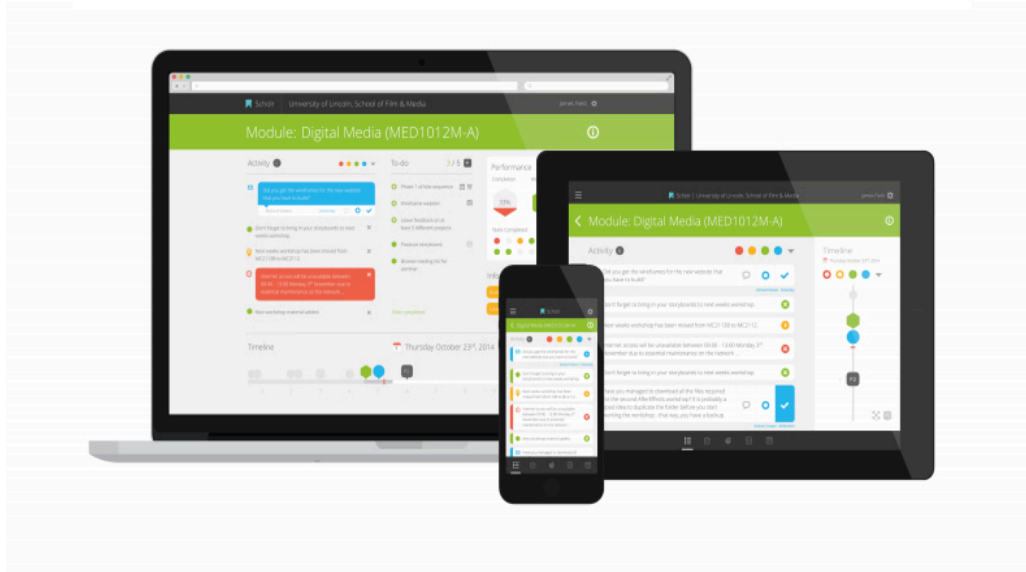


Image 4: Scholr Integrated Learning Ecosystem

In inviting proposals for exploratory studies into design of technology-based learning products and services, the TSB expect them to address issues such as, but not necessarily limited to, improving learning outcomes and attainment, and helping educators with the delivery of teaching, learning, and assessment. Projects should focus on the design of technology, particularly of software, in improving learning and attainment. Proposals must therefore demonstrate how the technology could lead to better learner outcomes and also offer a sustainable, commercial business model. Design work can also relate to new or enhancements for existing learning technology products and services, and associated business models.

Scholar offers deep personalization for individual teaching and learning needs. Scholar has a number of modifiable parameters that can be adapted to suit the demands of the individual learner, as well as providing feedback loops so institutions can learn more about students. This will include learning about our user preferences, forming a database of decisions that will further enable the system to become 'smart'. Scholar also addresses a greater issue, that of traditional teaching methods being an inefficient and ineffective method of engaging learners in the new economy. New methods that utilize the same mechanics and design principles of the digital culture that learners exist within will create a more natural learning ecosystem and increase engagement.

Frictionless sharing, incentivization, gameful design, and multichannel distribution are all tools used in the wider digital sphere, yet most online learning tools totally fail to take these into account when delivering a learning experience. Scholar leverages the capabilities of Web 2.0 (aggregation, openness, tagging, portability, syndication, user-as-contributor) to engage students and teachers in a more collaborative and rewarding educational relationship. Scholar firmly utilizes these new metaphors and modes of interaction to create a highly compelling learning experience that will result in more engaging learning outcomes and an improvement of student attainment.

On most campuses, there is little genuine enthusiasm for Learning Management Systems. They are invariably described as "clunky" and "inflexible" when compared with the environments experienced elsewhere on the web. Our first phase will focus on design; ensuring that the way the system feels and looks is consistent with the highest principles of emerging User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) design. Technology in education is now an integral part of any learning environment. The concept of blended learning is here and established through online services. The current generation of education technology provisions approach the task of supporting learners inappropriately and with little flexibility and smartness. They all, at some juncture or another, fail to observe the key requirements for what makes a technology product/service engaging, desirable and productive by being ill designed and based upon outdated metaphors for teaching and learning.

Reasons: based on testimony from students, admin, faculty and observations of how tech was used in MC2020 and co_LAB. Uniquely placed to start with the student experience and work outwards. Open source will be used where and if appropriate but there are potential dangers of dependence on open source projects: what happens if the products become unsupported, or become chargeable? Also there needs to be some "glue" between systems to generate meaningful conclusions, assessable evidence and taxonomy - to do this with a number of existing platforms would depend on the creation of Application Programming Interfaces (API's) and there is no guarantee that the data shared would be consistent. To make sure that data could be translated and collated effectively would mean the development of a semantic based service bus and related ontologies that could be developed from open source semantic IT systems. Our finished system will be offered as a platform for others and so will become open-source itself.

Social

The model for Scholr will rely heavily on promoting social interaction as a key plank of its learning support strategy. Frictionless sharing will encourage collaboration and make it easy for the knowledge and learning to be multi faceted rather than teacher to student dialogue. Designing Scholr to be simple, intuitive, smart and connected will ensure it is easy to learn as it will build on existing conventions of social media/networks, familiarity of design elements UI & UX that learners are already familiar with. We anticipate that gained knowledge can be easily shared as part of online learning portals such as Quora and others, adding to the wider accessible knowledge pool.

The innovative 'Integrated Learning Ecosystem' provided by Scholr represents a shift of emphasis in the technical provisions provided by existing Learning Management Systems and Virtual Learning Environments (Blackboard, etc.). LMS's and VLE's have predominantly sought to provide a range of tools more concerned with the management and administration of university teaching, whilst user-experience and integration with classroom teaching is usually an afterthought or addressed with additional plug-ins. Scholr embodies a shift away from such services which are 'bolted on' to the teaching and learning experience, towards a fully integrated ecosystem that promotes and supports more collaborative and participatory modes of 'blended learning'

Gameful Design to Promote Participatory Learning

Scholr implements what Jane McGonigal (2011) calls "gameful design" (McGonigal, 2011), which is the transposition of game mechanisms into other contexts, thus reintroducing inducing pleasure and enjoyment, whilst simultaneously motivating and creating user engagement. The purpose here is to encourage increased participation from students in formative feedback, collaborative group projects and 'student-directed learning' processes (Greene, 1995). Below are some examples of how Scholr utilizes gameful design:

Progression

Students are able to keep track of their progression throughout each module, enabling them to gain access to feedback and grades from throughout their university career. This not only provides an historical account of all skills and modules a student has completed, but will also indicate those areas which are yet to be covered. This visual representation of student progression (which is interactive and updated on a 'live' basis) is a gaming mechanism designed to motivate users to complete future tasks (McGonigal, 2011).

Incentives

Students are encouraged to engage in activities through both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives: Intrinsic rewards include an increased sense of 'inclusion' in the learning

experience, which is developed through the array of interactive, collaborative and social elements of the Scholr software. According to a study on motivations for learning, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2010, p. 25) posit that 'inclusion' can be a primary intrinsic incentive for engagement, whereby students develop positive learning attitudes when they feel connected with other learners.

A series of extrinsic motivational incentives are also built into the mechanics of the Scholr peer-review toolset. For example, to 'unlock' feedback from other peers, students are required to engage in the mutual delivery of feedback of other student work (these parameters are modifiable and can be set by instructors). To motivate meaningful responses, feedback is 'rated' as either helpful or unhelpful - symbolized by either 'thumb up' or 'thumb down' icons. This toolset can also be used with within assessments and to track input from students.

Badges/Trophies/Achievements - These are extrinsic incentives designed to act as short-term motivators to engage in collaborative learning processes. The representation of achievements on student profiles will result in the formation of goals and an increased willingness to complete tasks, since these rewards are both visual and reputation based. This will also encourage competition, social interaction and formative feedback amongst peers as students strive to achieve better reputation / more rewards (see above) and leading to further longevity by fulfilling instinct behaviors.

Social Connectivity - enabling peer-feedback, social rating systems and cloud-based collaborative documents will result in an increased sense of social connectivity and inclusion. Again, this is a central motivational aspect of student-directed learning.

Modifiable - students are able to modify their Scholr profile by 'subscribing' to various module sites (as opposed to being only being able to access information from only those modules a student is enrolled to). Module sites can be 'tagged' to a users profile which will give the student more control over the information they can access to support their learning. For example, a student may wish to gain access to information (say the reading list or a particular set of lecture notes) from a module that they are not taking, but that may provide useful information for dissertation research, etc. This is a far more open and interdisciplinary approach, where students can have more control over the content that they engage with.

Tools to Collaborate, Create & Share

According to a recent report on LMS's, a key concern when designing tools to enhance learning is to enable individuals to develop "coherent personal digital archives" (Groom & Lamb, 2014). Scholr puts the personal archive front and center of the learning experience, integrating the creation, aggregation and sharing of content within a personal portfolio of student work and achievements. This portfolio will act as a record of achievement and academic progression, provide web access to archived content, as well as making records and information available for potential employers.

The bespoke toolset will offer similar capabilities to online content creation and management systems like Google Drive/Docs and Basecamp, but is designed to also

enable peer-reviewed formative feedback, collaborative project tracking and modifiable assessment criteria in a specific educational context. This toolset may be utilized to support classroom teaching, project development and assessed coursework, whilst simultaneously providing a system where additional content (PDF's, MS Word docs, image files, video, etc.) can be uploaded to a progressive portfolio of student work.

Online documents, social interaction and project management are merged and contextualized for collaborative working. Portfolios and specific content can be shared between students to enable collaboration and group-project work (with permission of access to files and sharing of content defined by instructors and students). In line with the open nature of the web, content from the portfolio can also be shared with external knowledge bases and social networks.

Supporting Engaging Learning Activities

Scholr provides a range of modifiable and interactive tools which can be utilized to support and enhance traditional classroom teaching. These integrated tools can add interaction to seminar and lecture activity, engaging students in a more responsive and participatory mode of learning. The Scholr instructional toolset consists of an instructor dashboard where questions, polls and surveys can be easily inputted. Students can respond to these activities on any internet connected device by navigating to the given link (in a similar fashion to services like polleverywhere.com). The results are updated on a live basis and instructors have full control over how this might be used. For example, this could be used to gauge responses to a particular set reading, to engage students in a discussion during a lecture or seminar, or even within assessed work.

Content Everywhere and Easy Access

Examples of how Scholr will work on mobile devices and the importance of the push notification systems. Also suggest that appropriate content can be shared with device level applications such as calendar, reminders, email and photo / bespoke portfolio app. Push notifications and integrated syncing - offers live updates of class timetables, deadlines, tutorials and meetings. All information can be synced with a whole range of networked devices - no need to sign in to access these after set-up. Furthermore, users will be able to access content through the use of physical hyperlinks in the form of QR codes, NFC tags and Bluetooth sensors, placed around the physical environment.

Technical Project Summary

Scholr will be a cloud-based application allowing each instance to be scaled as and when required. Due to the nature of cloud powered application instances, scaling can happen in both directions keeping running costs relative to the amount of activity each instance is experiencing. This allows for a fairer pricing policy as an institution will only pay for what they use.

Additional benefits for shifting to a cloud-based model are that the institution will no longer have to provide and support their own servers. Currently, the larger VLE's

employ a model whereby they require dedicated hardware and trained support teams in order to operate. By outsourcing this responsibility, institutions could save considerable amounts of money.

Benefits of Cloud-Based Service

Cost

The cost to use many cloud-based tools can be negligible; although there might be an additional cost for advanced features, such as faster download speeds and increased storage capacity.

Greater Selection of Tools

Instructors and students can choose the specific tools they need for a range of assignments.

Familiarity

Many students are already familiar with tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. However, as noted, some students might not have access to or familiarity with these tools.

Shift from Content to Activity Focus

The use of online tools might shift the teaching and learning process from a content-centered to an activity-centered learning environment as students use the various online tools to create artifacts and to communicate, network, and collaborate

Increased Access to Artifacts

When students use software in the cloud, they can continue to access it when they are no longer completing a course or enrolled in an institution. Thus, the artifacts that they have produced during a course are portable — they are available to students anywhere and at any time, including after they graduate.

Architecture

Underlying architecture, delivered by cloud services, will be based on semantic techniques delivering maximum flexibility and future proofing. Overviews of semantic web stacks can be seen below expressed in the two stack diagrams.

We anticipate that the system will be built to the newest standards of learning systems. In outline terms the stack will be modeled on the architecture as outlined below, using the latest semantic technologies to increase smartness and therefore engagement creating a learning system that feels smart.

Project Management

Proposed project management methodology will be based on Agile Scrum. Scrum is a highly iterative methodology that will allow for rapid delivery of each projects phase. It also allows us to work in 20 or 30-day cycles so that rapid development can be assessed at each phase easily and clearly. Project Management will be managed by a producer supported by the scrum master, lead developer and architect. The producer will report to the project board.

Conclusion

The existing Higher Education Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or Learning Management System (LMS) platforms are not fit for purpose for the socially networked, always connected, smartphone savvy students of today. They are effective tools for the management and administration of learning, but offer no enhancement to the learning experience or the attainment of learning outcomes. We believe Scholr offers a real alternative; a comprehensive, integrated environment that supports the development, delivery, assessment, and administration of educational courses, in addition to providing a modifiable toolset that can be used to foster collaborative forms of blended learning within the classroom and online delivery of course content.

Scholr will allow technology to play a more active role in supporting learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. By focusing functionality around how learners engage best with content and facilitating collaborative and social connections, Scholr will provide an interactive learning ecosystem that is centered around individual learners. Scholr offers deep personalization for individual teaching and learning needs. Scholr also addresses a greater issue, that traditional teaching methods are an inefficient and ineffective method of engaging learners in the new economy.

The blend of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods foster an open, blended learning environment, one that extends the traditional boundaries of the classroom in time and space. The interactive and decentralized nature of digital tools enable staff and students to communicate and strengthen social ties, alongside participation in the production of new knowledge and media content. For students and lecturers, the implementation of social media and cloud platforms offers an innovative solution to both teaching and learning in a collaborative manner. By leveraging the interactive and decentralized capabilities of a range of technologies in an educational context, this model of digital scholarship facilitates an open and dynamic working environment. Blended teaching methods allow for expansive collaboration, whereby information and knowledge can be accessed and disseminated across a number of networked devices.

We discovered that implementing various modes of free cloud-based communication alongside more scholarly practices was certainly successful in terms of enhancing team networking and interactions. The Facebook group in particular was a useful tool in this respect, with the connections formed continuing far beyond the conclusion of the project. In fact, we still witness students posting and discussing

months after the project finished. These platforms offered excellent opportunities and models of working for non-real-time collaborations, although there were issues with real-time logistics for arranging different groups of people to present simultaneously in different European time zones. Nonetheless, it is clear that this model of collaborative pedagogy could be appropriated to extend the traditional boundaries of the classroom and encouraging a more participatory, collaborative and open mode vision for education in the 21st century.

Online Resources

The co_LAB project blog is available here:

<http://colab.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/>

Video of co_LAB #Project 1 here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZcZInum08&feature=youtu.be>

Media Culture 2020 project blog:

<http://mediaculture2020.blogspot.co.uk/>

A video documenting the Media Culture 2020 Tampere, Finland workshop is available to view online:

<http://vimeo.com/66458056>

A video documenting the Media Culture 2020 Liepaja, Latvia workshop is available to view online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAVrq4aOHQM>

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A MORE DIRECT AND PARTICIPATORY SUPPORT FOR CREATORS

JOSEF OHLSSON COLLENTINE

ABSTRACT

Artists and creators often need funding to continue their work. Traditionally, providing prepayment for future creation has been the responsibility for publishers, managers or institutions. If we go even further back in history we can see funding coming from the Church (or more directly from patrons) supporting individual artists.

This text will discuss some of the problems of copyright and, to a certain extent, why it is dysfunctional. Today culture is more prevalent and people consume a lot more, thus we need new methods of funding it. The article will explore microdonations as one possible solution to pay for culture and show that a more decentralized approach to funding is needed for culture in the future.

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the information age the access and consumption of culture has increased significantly. The "new" web, also known as Web 2.0, has shifted culture from a one-way consumption into a two-way dialogue with the consumer (O'Reilly, 2007). This shift also requires that we look at how culture is funded and explore alternatives.

One advantage with the two-way dialogue, introduced by new technology, is that consumers and creators are often enabled to interact more directly. With a digital presence the creator can find direct communication with their fans. From a more direct contact the creator has the possibility of removing the traditional middlemen in favor of immediate support from fans.

Crowdfunding changes the gatekeeping function traditionally performed by cultural patrons, whether public or private, therefore altering the parameters of entry to cultural public spheres (Bannerman, 2013)

One way to allow fans to fund creators directly is through microdonations. Fans give money to content they appreciate, thus they encourage the creator to produce more. With the help of “many small streams that form a large river” the creator receives enough support and funding to continue their creation.

Copyright

To be able to discuss copyright, and why it has become an obstacle in the way for open culture, a short summary of the history of copyright is needed. In 1710 the first copyright law was enacted in Britain with the name “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned” but this law is more known as “the statute of Anne”.

The law was made mainly to curb the monopolistic tendencies emerging and to encourage learning. Every copy licensed had to be added to the King's library as well as the Oxford and Cambridge libraries. With all the licensed works in the libraries it was always available for the public. Another benefit was that every work was listed, which made it easy to find the copyright-holder of the work.

The copyright was valid for 14 years and renewable once. In USA they followed the British precedent with a similar law in 1790. 28 years was still considered more than enough to protect a work and beyond that the interest of the public would disappear.

In the beginning copyright consisted of two words: the “copy right” which explained it very well. The creator of the work was the one in charge and could allow others to copy his work. Remixing was still allowed. (Darnton, 2009)

Key laws regulating U.S. copyrights and their key effects include

- Copyright Act of 1790 - established U.S. copyright with term of 14 years with 14-year renewal
- Copyright Act of 1831 - extended the term to 28 years with 14-year renewal
- Copyright Act of 1909 - extended term to 28 years with 28-year renewal
- Universal Copyright Convention - ratified by the U.S. in 1954, and again in 1971, this treaty was developed by UNESCO as an alternative to the Berne Convention
- Copyright Act of 1976 - extended term to either 75 years or life of author plus 50 years; extended federal copyright to unpublished works; preempted state copyright laws; codified much copyright doctrine that had originated in case law
- Berne Convention Implementation Act of 1988 - established copyrights of U.S. works in Berne Convention countries
- Uruguay Round Agreements Act (URAA) of 1994 - restored U.S. copyright for certain foreign works

- Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998 - extended terms to 95/120 years or life plus 70 years
- Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 - criminalized some cases of copyright infringement

The period just after copyright was invented is when it made most sense and was a useful system. The cost of copying something was expensive, both in time and material (e.g. copying a book required a printing press). Mass media worked in a one-to-many relationship intellectual property needed to be copied and re-produced for a cost of time and material in order for more persons to consume it.

Why did the “copy right” system become dysfunctional?

With the emergence of new technology several fundamental underlying factors to the copyright law has changed. Even though the factors allowing copies to be produced have changed completely, the copyright law still remains essentially the same. “During the last 150 years, more barriers than bridges have been made, restricting [...] shared culture” (Öberg, 2010). The need for copyright changed when information could be digitalized, the cost of making a copy suddenly decreased to almost zero (both in time and material cost) and re-production could be shared and used by many at once.

In the 19th and 20th Century, when copyright was formed, we lived in a “read-only” society where there were a limited amount of creators with a slow and cumbersome distribution. Most people lived a life of “read-only”. They were “passive recipients of culture produced elsewhere. Couch potatoes. Consumers. This is the world of media from the twentieth century” (Lessig, 2004).

The way that the society works has changed from the traditional broadcasting of media to be more interactive. The traditional “passive viewers” have often turned into participants and creators. With the price of hardware decreasing we are all able to be creators.

One example is the sharp decrease in cost for a good camera allowing us to take our own pictures. These photos can later be edited using Photoshop (or a similar but free program) to create even more artistic value in the piece of culture that a photo is. “The technique has been democratized. It is now anybody with access to a \$1500 computer who can take sounds and images from the culture around us and use it to say things differently. These tools of creativity have become tools of speech. It is a literacy for this generation.” (Lessig, 2007).

With an increased access to tools that simplify the creation, it allows us all to be creators fairly easy. Today culture is not only for consumption but also remixing into new pieces of culture. “The twenty-first century could be different. This is the crucial point: It could be both read and write. Or at least reading and better understanding the craft of writing” (Lessig, 2004). We should have reached a paradigm shift in the way copyright enables creativity. Letting information flow freely would benefit these

creators and more creative work would emerge, both from derivative works and own creations.

However, as one can see from the list of extensions to the copyright it is becoming increasingly controlled and remixes of works has been severely limited. This prevents much of the copyrighted work to enter into the public domain and restricts the amount of material creators are able to find inspiration from.

Additionally, consumers are displaying needs not satisfied by the market. Filesharing is a result of improvements in technology from a need to share culture more easily. When new technology emerges and it is superior to existing technology the market needs to adapt to the new needs of citizens in our digital society.

Price is one of the reasons why people are filesharing but another essential part is availability. People don't want to wait another few days (or weeks) for the end of the show they are watching. A lot of people would rather enjoy music digitally right away instead of buying a CD and converting it themselves. People have a need to be spontaneous at home and decide what movie they would like to see at that instant instead of planning it beforehand or walk to a rental shop.

The filesharing debate can be summarized to be about "the right to knowledge and the sharing of it". Today we live in something we call the "information age". Knowledge is power and the ones that have control over it are able to influence others. Increasing access to knowledge makes the society get more equal.

Innovation shakes the profitability of the market for the established players, sometimes to the better but sometimes to the worse. It is often the small and new players that are most keen on evolving their business ideas in order to make their way into the market.

The larger a firm gets the larger the bureaucracy becomes and this means that the organizational learning becomes more limited. If a company has control over the supply to a certain market they will sue and use dirty tricks to keep others out of this market. With only a few players in the market the power shifts away from the consumers and towards the suppliers.

Having an opportunity to remix culture leads to an increased creativity. The creation of copyright was meant to allow creativity but today it acts more as a restrictor of creativity. "To discuss the actual conditions of creation, one should also discuss how the act of creation is done"

Three options for a dysfunctional copyright system

1. Status Quo

We keep copyright and funding the way it is today. Slowly stagnating new cultural creations through a clear separation between creators and consumers. Protecting the commercial interests of a few copyright holders, on behalf of other people, by following the trend of increasing copyright times.

2. Reform

We reconsider the way copyright works. Looking at the way culture is produced and consumed today we devise a new system to meet new requirements. Building a completely new framework for culture or heavily revising the way the current system works.

3. Hack

We will have to live by our current system but we can bend and adjust how it works to suit us better. Adjusting the copyright to a modern age will change partly how it is perceived but not as fully as a complete reform would. It will still be the same system beneath but with a new layer of functioning on top.

Creative Commons

One way of “hacking copyright” is using creative commons to address the uncertainties for users on what they can do with the content, without risking claims of copyright infringement. This allows content to be shared more freely and enables accessibility for more people.

The core of the CC license suite consists of a license with general terms, coupled with a “menu” of clauses on essential author prerogatives. The copyright owner can mix and match provisions, allowing users to create derivatives (or not), make commercial use of the work (or not) and oblige users to share derivative works under the same conditions as the original work (or not). In this way, a total of six different licenses are possible [...] The license suite is supplemented by a CC-Zero waiver and a Public Domain Certification tool.” (Eechoud, 2010)

The Creative Commons license consists of three layers. The first layer (human readable license) describes it in plain language, illustrated with the help of symbols. The second layer (lawyer readable license) is the legal part which is slightly adjusted to different national legislations. The third layer (machine readable license) allows the author “to attach the licence to digital copies of the work as metadata” in the form of RDF/XML (Eechoud, 2010).

Thus Creative Commons utilizes the law of copyright but makes it more flexible by allowing users to access and use the work in certain ways. However, all permissions with the help of Creative Commons are granted on a royalty free basis. Thus the problem of monetary compensation for creating culture is not solved solely by using Creative Commons.

Monetization?

Most of us (the 99%) don't have the budgets to be large-scale patrons of the arts, as much as we support and appreciate such cultural contributions. I, for one, cannot afford to buy the work featured in the galleries I frequent or in the art publications I read. Art Micro Patronage offers viewers the opportunity to give what they can, at their own speed, and on their own terms" (Hotchkiss, 2011)

Most culture is created from other incentives than creating monetary recompensation. Although this is the case a certain level of recompensation is needed to allow artists to live and create more culture. Using a more open license (creative commons) does not stop culture from receiving funding from traditional methods. Licensing of works, live performances and merchandize will still be an important part in funding culture.

Crowdfunding

The concept of crowdfunding comes from gathering enough people to fund a project jointly instead of using the traditional model of private investment, where a selected investor (or a small group) finances the project (Belleflamme, Lambert and Schwiembacher, 2010). The model of crowdfunding can be seen far back in history, one example being how the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty was funded in 1884 through an open call to the American people to contribute microdonations (Pitts, 2010).

The crowdfunding can happen before the creation has been made based on the ideas that the creator would like to achieve. A presentation of the project with the idea is made and presented to the "crowd". Then the artist can apply for grants or find crowdfunding through a system such as 'kickstarter' (or a similar platform).

Backers on a platform, such as Kickstarter, decide which projects they like to finance. If the project receives the funding goals before the deadline the project is created and the funders receive rewards in the form of early access to the work or a part of it. Since 2009 Kickstarter has funded more than 70.000 projects through the help of 7 million people that jointly pledged more than \$1 billion.

Microdonations

Another option to funding the project 'before it has been made' is to pay for it afterwards. Thus it is changed from "making an idea into something real" to "rewarding creations that you like". With the help of enough monetary microdonations the creator will have incentive and monetary funds to accomplish more similar content in the future.

To accomplish this there are several services enabling people to do microdonations. This enables some creators that previously had no source of income to receive some funding and others to expand their sources of revenue. I will shortly describe three of the largest microdonation services.

Flattr is similar to a “super-like” with money attached. People decide how much they want to give to culture each month. During the month you like content with a flattr button and after the month ends your budget is divided evenly between the different “likes” that you did. Splitting the donations evenly takes away some of the cognitive friction in valuing how much each creation is worth.

Changetip is another service that functions a bit differently. When a user finds a creation they want to fund they decide on how much they want to send that person/project. It works through sending bitcoins by mentioning how much to send and to whom, with Changetip taking care of the automation.

Patreon is the last example of a microdonation service. As the name implies it is inspired by the patrons of the past. People become supporters of different projects (or people) by pledging a certain amount monthly or at the release of content. They are then rewarded with the new creations and some extra content.

Challenges for microdonations

1. Critical mass

One of the main challenges for making microdonations successful is reaching a critical mass. Without enough people the “small streams of funding” will remain only streams and never form a “big river”. Without reaching critical mass the methods of microdonations won't be common and thus miss out on many of the most popular creators.

2. Language

English is one of the most common languages on the Internet but far from the only one. There are many people creating culture in their own languages, targeted to non-English speakers. Enabling microdonation services to be translated is essential to reach the first challenge of critical mass. Without bridging the obstacle of language the support of culture will be limited.

3. Handling money

Being able to trust that your money goes where it should is essential for someone funding creators. One key to overcome this is through clear communication, preferably in the native tongue of the people using microdonations. It also puts a high demand for transparency to both the microdonation service and the creator.

It needs to be easy to get money into the service and easy for the creators to take money out. This is often complicated by different legal systems, limiting usability by national borders. Overcoming this and making a global flow of funding is one of the challenges to overcome.

4. Valuing the work

The value of a cultural creation is very subjective depending on who values it. How much is a photograph worth? How much should a song cost? The downside of letting the consumer value the content is that it sometimes causes a cognitive friction when determining the value. This choice of value need to be as frictionless as possible for increased efficiency in microdonations.

Summary

Our society has, to a certain extent, enabled all of us to be creators of culture. This requires a more open arena for culture where it can be shared and supported in an easier manner. However, copyright has gone in the opposite direction with more control and restrictions. This leaves us with the three options of status quo, reforming or hacking copyright.

The text has described creative commons as one method for hacking copyright. With the help of crowdfunding it can be seen as a complimentary solution to increase funding to culture. There are several types of crowdfunding and we looked closer at microdonations and some of the challenges it faces to gain more traction.

This text shows some of the problems and possibilities that exist in supporting culture today. One solution of increasing funding was presented but should not be taken as the only solution. We need several methods and a more decentralized approach to funding culture in the future.

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SOME CONDITIONS FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING

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ABSTRACT

The critique of electronic voting tends to stem from two primary factors: technical concerns about the security of electronic voting, and the level of technical understanding voters must be presumed to have in order to trust electronic voting methods. In this paper I will show that the issue of security regards guaranteeing two features: unlinkability and verifiability. I will address some of the conditions required to guarantee unlinkability and verifiability, show why they have never coexisted in any voting system, electronic or otherwise; and propose conditions which, if met, should guarantee simultaneous unlinkability and verifiability. In order to do that, I shall attempt to demonstrate that unlinkability and verifiability are necessary and sufficient conditions, given a practical definition of security. Finally I will try to address how a system implemented in such a way need not be technically incomprehensible to a reasonable voter.

INTRODUCTION

Voting is one of the central activities of democracy. It is the way by which democratic societies arrive at collective decisions. But voting is not a constant, well defined concept: it has many variations. Some of these variations are good, others bad. It ultimately comes down to the properties of the system at hand, and various properties have been shown to be more effective in building what Bergson (1938) referred to as a *social welfare function*, such as Arrow's conditions (Arrow 1951), Gibbard's conditions (...), and others. While these are all important for the purposes of voting systems in general, they are insufficient to address many of the concerns regarding electronic voting. In particular, [...].

Our aim here is to try to nail down further conditions for voting systems. In order to do so, we should define a voting system as a tuple S consisting of a ballot method B , a social welfare function f , and a set of alternatives C that an ordering or selection needs to be made from. For these, we shall use the notation

$$S = (B, f, C).$$

A ballot method is a protocol for acquiring a social choice from a person. For formal purposes, we can consider a balloting method B to be a function such that for a

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population A , $B(A) = V$, a set of votes. Depending on the context, one include various other aspects as parameters, such as the nature of the social welfare function, the mood of the population, or generally any external factors which might alter the population's social choices. For purposes of simplicity we shall simply reduce all of these factors, with the exception of the social welfare function f and the choice set C , to a single variable representing all external factors, e . Then

$$B_r(A, C, e) = V. \text{ (balloting method used to generate votes)}$$

A social welfare function (SWF) is the part of a voting system which establishes a social choice (i.e., the election result) given a set of social choices (expressed as ballots). It is simply a function f such that

$$f(V) = R, \quad \text{(social welfare function used to calculate results)}$$

where R is a possible choice.

Definition of security

Security is a contextual and frequently overloaded term. The factors determining the security of a system are dependent on the threats assumed to exist towards the system and the vectors available to an attacker to make good of those threats. When dealing with voting systems, we generally want to guarantee several independent aspects with regard to security. In the case of voting systems, we generally wish to guarantee that

- a) tampering with ballots is not possible (non-falsifiability),
- b) calculation of results can be conducted correctly (calculability),
- c) result calculations are stable (stability),
- d) no voter can be coerced into making a particular choice (non-coercion).

For the purposes of this paper, a voting system which is non-falsifiable, calculable, stable and non-coercive is secure, but let's define each in more detail.

Stability

A voting system is stable if the votes alone are sufficient to calculate the result, and that external factors at the time of counting do not affect the outcome of the count. If two people were to start calculating the outcome from the same set of ballots, using the same balloting method, at different times, and arrive at a different result, then the system is considered unstable.

From this, we arrive at

Definition 1: *A voting system $S = (B, f, C)$ is stable if, given a set of votes V , $f(V) = R$, independent of any other factors.*

Many voting systems, such as some implementations of single transferable vote, employ an aspect of randomness in order to resolve conditions of equality. While this

kind of random resolution can be said not to reflect social choice, it can be argued that this merely implies that the social welfare function being employed to determine the results is not adequately capturing the social choice. Regardless of whether this is true or not, the result is the same: two independent actors, given the ballots and the voting system, may arrive at different results in the case of a voting method which employs randomness. This alone makes verifiability substantially harder to achieve. If I wished to independently verify the official outcome, given the balloting method and the votes, I would have to first calculate all possible outcomes of the vote by varying the random factors to depletion. Only then could I even build a probability estimation that the random factor used was chosen fairly - but I could still not verify that it had in fact been chosen fairly.

This variation can, however, be eliminated if all parties conducting counts agree upon a pseudorandom number generator function and an initial seed, preferably selected prior to conducting the election. For the purposes of this paper, we assume that stability of social welfare functions which employ a random factor is not eliminated by the existence of the random factor, by assuming that a pseudorandom number generator function and initial seed are specified a priori. This does not mean that stability cannot be eliminated by other factors. In this case, the pseudorandom number generator and its initial seed are provided as external factors in the balloting mechanism.

Calculability

Calculability is in some ways the simplest of the conditions. A voting system is calculable if, given a set of social choices and a social welfare function, a result can be calculated. Under the conditions set forward by Arrow (1951), calculability is guaranteed if the social welfare function has an unrestricted domain. It is possible, however, that a social welfare function which does not have unrestricted domain may be used in a voting system which is nevertheless calculable, if restrictions are placed on the ballot method which are at least as limiting as the restrictions on the domain of the social welfare function. This form of restriction is generally called a limitation on the *admissible set* (Arrow 1951).

Definition 2: *A voting system $S = (B, f, C)$ is calculable if, for any set of votes V that can be generated under B , $f(V)$ exists.*

Non-falsifiability

Non-falsifiability is the property that, after each social choice is made by a person, that choice cannot be altered by a third party. This condition is met if it can be guaranteed that every social choice is an input to the social welfare function. While mathematically this does not seem like a difficult condition, in practice it is the hardest to guarantee by far.

In traditional pencil-and-paper voting, the pathway a ballot takes from the voter in the voting booth to the point at which it is counted, and the result subsequently from there to the point where it is made public knowledge, is riddled with vulnerable points. Amongst some of these vulnerabilities are the exclusion of a legitimate voter from

creating a ballot, a third party illegitimately creating and entering a ballot on the behalf of another voter, a third party adding illegitimate votes to the social choice set, the refusal to allow a legitimate voter to add a ballot to the social choice set, the destruction or replacement of a ballot box or particular ballots from it, a falsification in the tallying of the ballots, the elimination of social choices from the social choice set, the replacement of the legitimate social welfare function with an alternative function (including altering constants and other subsidiary inputs, such as a random seed), and the manipulation of the final result. More or less the same set of vulnerabilities apply to electronic methods, however, they are often less detectable in electronic voting systems. This is not as such due to an inherent insecurity of electronic systems, but rather the degree to which byzantine fault tolerance (Lamport, Shostak and Pease, 1982) has been introduced into pencil-and-paper balloting systems. As every step of paper ballot systems with manual counting can be watched over in real time and inspected in detail by any number of people, a certain amount of non-falsifiability is introduced into the system. Because of this, I refer to such systems as having *byzantine verifiability* if all other security conditions are met. Such a system should not be assumed to be non-falsifiable: if there is no explicit way to prove *a posteriori* that tampering did not occur, it must be assumed that tampering may have occurred.

A non-falsifiable method is therefore one which makes it demonstrably impossible for any party to alter any aspect of the voting system, the social choice set, or the resulting calculations in a way which is undetectable.

Definition 3: A voting system $S = (B, f, C)$ is non-falsifiably $f(V) = R$ if:

- 1) B, f, A, C, e are known before V is calculated,
- 2) V is publicly known after it is calculated,
- 3) for the voting population A , $\forall a \in A: B_r(\{a\}, C, e) \in V$, and
- 4) anybody having B, f, A, C, e can independently arrive at R .

This is a relatively complicated formulation, and should perhaps be formulated in terms of zero knowledge proofs, and using temporal logic. At any rate, this suffices for our purposes, as long as we acknowledge there to be in any election four active moments:

- 1) initialization, where the balloting method B , the social welfare function f , and the voters A are clearly defined.
- 2) pre-balloting, where the choice set C and the external factors e are defined.
- 3) balloting, where V is calculated.
- 4) post-balloting, where R is calculated.

None shall be declared out of turn, and at every point before these moments, before, between and after them, it should be possible for anybody to independently verify the state of the overall system.

Non-coercion

The notion of non-coercion focuses not on the details of the voting system and the social choice set, but rather on the question of whether a social choice entered by a person represents their real choice. Here, we try to distinguish between tactical voting on the one hand, where a person decides to misrepresent her social choice in order to

attempt to increase presumed or perceived benefit from the social welfare function, and on the other hand situations where a person is in some way made to misrepresent her social choice in a way which negatively impacts the person's presumed benefit, or the total benefit derived from the social welfare function. This would typically occur for the purpose of maximizing the perceived benefit of another person or group of people.

It is not self-evident that a social choice set which contains a ballot created through a process of coercion is necessarily Pareto-unoptimal. We regard coercion as a negative impact on the voting system as it eliminates a legitimate voter's social choice from the social choice set and replaces it with a fraudulent social choice. In this sense it is equivalent to falsification, except that it happens prior to the balloting action by a given person, and is therefore undetectable as falsification under the conditions of non-falsifiability.

In reality, a common scheme for achieving this is where a person intending to rig the elections acquires through forgery, theft or extraction from the balloting site a single ballot. This ballot is pre-filled with the selection said person wishes to make. When another person comes to the precinct to vote, they are stopped by the rigger, who takes a copy of their ID and hands them the ballot. The voter, under duress, enters the precinct, takes an empty ballot, enters the balloting box, then returns and casts the pre-filled ballot, exiting the precinct with an empty, unfilled ballot as proof of having obeyed. Disobedience often leads to violence, under this scheme.

This particular scheme could be defeated by verifying that voters do not have ballot sheets with them when entering the precinct, but that is invasive and difficult. Even if it were practical to do so, it is relatively easy to construct a host of similar schemes for both pencil-and-paper voting and electronic voting, which all suffer the same failing point: once a person has been forced in some way to cast a vote under duress, the person has no way to undo the damage.

A solution to this would be to allow voters to cast multiple votes, with each subsequent vote annulling the previous vote. This is difficult to accomplish in practice. It requires that each vote is linked to a voter in a unique way which allows for the vote's correct identification and removal in the case where it has been eliminated. This quickly becomes messy at scale: when processing millions of ballots, having to check each ballot for elimination, while simultaneously not accidentally falsifying the election by either eliminating an incorrect vote or not eliminating an invalid vote, can be uneconomical. Electronic voting makes this easier.

Yet remains the possibility that a person is coerced to vote, and is then eliminated before the person can recast the vote without duress. Such elimination is only useful to a potential vote-rigger in the case where a person's vote continues to be valid even after they are deceased. It is a grim notion to have to consider, but it may work to the benefit of a voter to require that all votes during counting belong to living voters. This too may be difficult to enforce in practice, and raises questions about temporary or permanent voter debilitation, which is outside the scope of this paper. Let us include a simple version of this for now.

To add one last point of complexity: the ability to replace votes implies the ability to identify votes to voters, which may also be the basis for schemes leading to violence.

Therefore we must maintain that - paradoxically - a vote should not be linkable to the voter who cast it. We shall deal with this paradox shortly, but for now our complete definition is:

Definition 4: A voting system $S = (B, f, C)$ is non-coercive if

- a) A voter $a \in A$ can cast votes $v_1, v_2, v_3, \dots, v_n$, such that $v_n \in V$ but $v_i \notin V$ for $i < n$.
- b) Deceased voters votes are removed from V prior to the calculation of R .
- c) V is unlinkable to A .

Unlinkability

Traditional voting schemes assume that non-coercion can be achieved by enforcing that a voter is alone in a regulated voting booth, and that from the point in time when the voter enters his ballot into the ballot box, the ballot is anonymous. This does not necessarily hold true. Depending on the design of the ballot, the design of the ballot box, and the conditions of the polling station, it is possible to violate this assumption. The ubiquity of mobile phones with cameras and the fact that although cameras are typically forbidden in polling stations, the ban is not strictly enforced, implies that a person can be coerced to privately take a picture of his ballot before submitting it; this can be used to demonstrate compliance. Often ballots are marked in some way to guarantee authenticity and uniqueness, or to indicate origin. This can be used to violate voter anonymity, or at least substantially reduce the set of possible voters who could have cast a particular ballot.

These assumptions, apart from not being sufficient to guarantee anonymity, are in a sense attempting to solve the wrong problem. The issue is not specifically *anonymity*, i.e. whether the identity of the voter can be obscured, but rather the special case of whether a ballot or a social choice can be linked back to a particular voter. This is a special case of anonymity which I call *unlinkability*.

Formally, given a voter a in a set of voters A , and a set of social choices V , if there exists a function L such that $L(V_a) = a$ but $L(V_m) \neq a \forall m \in A \setminus \{a\}$, then the voting system is linkable. If no such function exists, the system is unlinkable. Put simply: if the exclusion of a vote from the set of votes is sufficient for the identification of the voter, then the voter can be identified.

Unlinkability and verifiability

The *security* properties defined above are in fact *conditions of verifiability*: without them, it is impossible to independently verify the outcome of an election. It can be done to a substantial degree while violating some of the conditions, as is done in the common practice of byzantine verifiability, which in practice is simply the act of adding more people with supposedly different interests and allegiances into the process of conducting a vote until everybody is satisfied that the chance of any abuse has been made statistically insignificant.

However, as verifiability requires non-coercion, and non-coercion requires simultaneously that votes can be recast in a way that invalidates previous votes, and that votes cannot be linked back to the voter who cast them, we are faced with the

interesting scenario where verifiability and unlinkability have never coexisted in any voting system.

Let's take a moment to fully grasp the importance of that. In traditional pencil-paper voting systems, the vote being cast is (generally speaking and outside of exceptional circumstances) not linkable to the person who cast the vote from the moment the vote was put into the ballot box onwards. Assuming all has gone well up until this point in time, the voter now believes that his vote will be included in the determination of R . Most of the time, this will hold true. But as long as at least one vote with an identical value to that chosen by a given voter is included, the voter cannot independently verify that *her* ballot is included after it has been cast. It may be possible to reason that some votes may not have been included on inspection, but this does not help to identify where the problem occurred.

Adding more information to the ballot could help. If b bits of information are provided on each ballot, then there is a high probability that $2^{b/2}$ individuals could identify their ballots based solely on their values. This is however perhaps impractical for large populations, as the number of aggregate options on each ballot would have to equal the size of the population. This is untenable in practice, but perhaps it would be possible, in an electronic setting, to add more information to the point of unpredictability, in a way that does not influence the ballot sheet itself.

Conditions for coexistence

There has been much recent excitement about the blockchain mechanism, developed for Bitcoin (Nakamoto 2008). It is in effect nothing more than a cryptographically verifiable, distributed, append-only log: anybody can add an entry, nobody has full control over the log, and anybody can verify that the log has not been tampered with. This gives us the basis for an interesting feature.

The blockchain alone is insufficient though. Another useful mechanism is a type of mathematical proof known as a zero knowledge proof. It allows the verification of a statement without there being any information exchange. For Bitcoin, an extension has been suggested called Zerocoin (Green et al 2013), which strongly anonymizes cryptographic tokens. It is vaguely akin to money laundry: anonymous tokens are exchanged randomly in unpredictable ways, each time mediated through a zero knowledge proof to ensure that no "paper trail" is left behind.

Using these two mechanisms, we can create a voting system like so: Each eligible voter gets, by some mechanism, a unique cryptographic token – for instance a set of points on an elliptic curve generated by them and signed by an electoral authority. The electoral authority publishes the voter roster and their signature. Voters use a mechanism similar to Zerocoin to "launder" their voting tokens, rendering them unidentifiable, even to the electoral authority. Voters use their newly laundered anonymous tokens to sign their votes and append them to the block chain.

With this, it is possible to verify that every vote belongs to a legitimate person, but impossible to say who (unless the private part of that person's key is published). If a

voter casts multiple votes, there will be multiple votes signed with the same key. In that case, the most recent vote can be considered valid, and older votes discarded.

This fulfills, in theory, all of the requirements for unlinkability and verifiability. In particular, anybody can verify that:

1. Votes are signed by a token that was legitimately issued to a legitimate voter
2. The system is calculable
3. Calculations are stable
4. No falsification can occur
5. Repudiation is impossible
6. Coercion is impossible

The process of establishing such a voting system requires that first, the system specifications, including the balloting method, the social welfare function, the set of ballot options, and the set of voters, are published at the beginning of the blockchain. Second, our e value, consisting of any external factors, is also published at the beginning of the blockchain. A rule can state that e and other parameters cannot be altered after the first vote has been appended, and shall be disregarded if such an event is to occur.

A word on delegable voting

With this system, it is relatively easily to demonstrate that any balloting method and social welfare function will work. The blockchain mechanism does not impose any conditions which would prevent any known balloting method or social welfare function from working. However, in order to support *liquid democracy* style vote delegation (McCarthy 2008), or proxying, a further complication can be added in the form of derived keys. Vote delegation is a process by which any third party can be nominated to participate in the election on one's behalf, although at any time it is possible to revoke the nomination. These processes essentially transform the set of voters into a directed acyclic graph.

A voter can generate a new derived key which is linked to their private key in a verifiable way. They can share this key with the person they are delegating to, who can then cast votes on their behalf using it. If the voter wishes to revoke the proxying, they sign a revocation certificate for the derived key using the parent key. This however only works if we can construct a key derivation scheme with these properties.

Such a scheme can be easily established by making a distinction between *delegation keys* and *voting keys*, where the tokens which are swapped using the zero knowledge mechanism are *delegation keys*. These keys can be used to sign *voting keys*, the most recent of which for each delegation key is valid. The voting keys can then be established with a third party via a standard Diffie-Hellman key exchange (Diffie & Hellman, 1976).

Conclusion

This paper has not been particularly rigid in its approach, providing no proofs, as such. There is much work to be done in this direction. However, we have established a rough draft of conditions required, and suggested a mechanism which may work. Further work is needed to prove the veracity of these statements, in particular the unlinkability statement, which currently stands on relatively shaky ground.

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WHAT ROLE SHOULD PIRATE PARTIES PLAY IN DIGITAL AREA DEMOCRACY?

BIRGITTA JONSDOTTIR HIRT*

ABSTRACT

One of the reasons the system that have been built around the core idea of democracies are broken is because democracy does not work without an addon, the addon is citizens engagement, the addon is that the demo/people in democracy claim the power to participate in co-creation and ruling of their societies. The greatest challenge Pirates need to solve in order to have a meaningful role in the (r)Evolution of current system is figuring out and testing a new hardware with active voting systems such as liquid democracy that will result in total replacement of the false democracy model currently in place.

In order for these tests to work, it is necessary to do research into the strengths and weaknesses of such a system, implementation and functionality to handle complex tasks in order to make the core value and responsibilities of democracy fully functional as a platform of citizens engagement and citizens co-creation of their societies. This model could pave way for self sustainable communities that would interlock with others creating a large model sometimes referred to as countries to joint policy on issues that impacts everyone in that zone.

There are four main pillars to build this hardware on and need to be the code of the software to be the first install: Information, Privacy, Expression, Access.

The Internet opened channels of communications and engagement and is a perfect tool to connect people, ideas and projects, share knowledge and experience. It however should not be used as an excuse to not apply the knowledge offline. It is a useful as a tool but not as a reality replacement. With easy access to the Internet, just about anybody can now technically engage in policymaking and political debates. Is it possible to make those interconnections meaningful by moving them from the digital space into real social engagement in the physical realm?

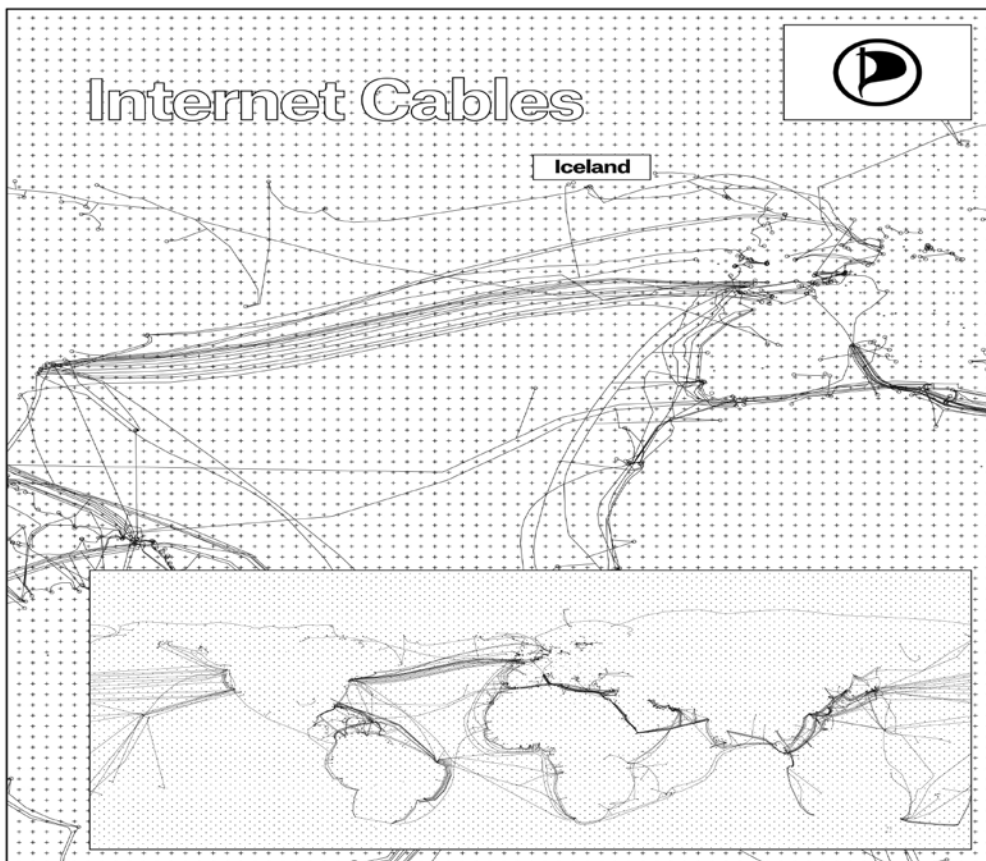
There are already existing various direct democracy initiatives being played out on local and governmental levels through out the world, there are various co-operative communities working through out the world, there are various accountability projects and 100s of ngo´s working on usable solutions that can be used to map out successes and failures, and then launch a test pilot through the various networks of Pirates around the world. Liquid feedback needs to be developed further so that it is attractive to non geeks for daily influence and finally in order for power to be in the hands of the demo in democracy constitutions or any highest binding laws need to have encoded and embedded the right to have direct influence and the four pillars of

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shared power. So the constitution can still be considered the hardware for the demo in democracy, the public in the republic. This should be priority number one for those that want to make a real difference in politics for representatives should only be a role desired to make that role redundant in the long run.

Pirates can be a leading advocacy power in regard to advice in regard to those four legal and human rights pillars in our 21st century legal framework, the end goal is not power but influence at various levels, achieving political influence should also be done via academia, ngo's and media.

Democracy 2.0



Most people agree that the social structure of democracy is a format that brings forward the greatest possibilities to influence power despite its many flaws and the failure to implement it in such a way that people truly can rule and co-share responsibility.

Most people also agree that our systems are broken today, our democratic systems are failing. If those that see the flaws, want to implement change we should look at where this system started to fail, what was it that broke it beyond repair and what sort

of systems do we want instead? How do we find out and hasn't all attempts to put in action a brand new system of a new ism always proven to be a failure because of human behavior? Can we trust the general public for great power? Who are usually the reasons for failure of implementation of a better system despite how sexy it sounds when written in a book?

Now the reason why the core of the pirate party policies is so critical is because it deals with the very foundation we need to build a healthy functional democracy that might just work. These core policies are about the four main pillars that democracy rest upon:

- Freedom of Information Act that really works with open access to extract information from in order to enlighten the masses about the choices they need to make.
- Freedom of Speech & Expression.
- Privacy.
- Access and Influence

If we don't have these in place before the fun of crowdsourcing our democracies begins the experiment will fail. During the times of unrest, (r)evolutions and uprising the demand for change is strong however the process of democracy fails time and time again. People are lied to before elections, they for some bizarre reason fear change the most and choose to reelect the same parties that have always failed to deliver their promises. Someone once said that doing the same thing twice and expecting different results is a form of insanity.

Witnessing how the tide of demands for change all over the world that started to build after the financial collapse in 2008 and how it has as fallen upon the shores of country after country with massive popular unrest was a source of hope for real change. But of course that didn't happen, simply because people were trying to change who sits at the throne of power in our failed democracies. Good people might get elected but by not changing the rules of the game, things fell quickly back into old patterns and no real change took place. Attempts for change failed because we simply didn't know what to replace the old system with or rather those that we trusted to enforce it where not agile and quick enough to use that tiny window that opens during times of crisis for real change.

Just like during times of crisis we are too numb and shocked and awed to resist bad laws, well we are also too shocked and awed to resist great laws that will give us a chance to stay empowered and to have a reason for applying our power to choices that will make us crave for change. Informed empowerment can make our lives a lot less burdened with bad choices by people who lie and cheat in order to fail us after they are in power. Let's face it most countries have a democracy system that does not give the general public the tools to get rid of those that obviously are not working for them.

So where to start and where are we going?

First we need to find out what sort of society we want to be. There is a great app for that: The Constitution. By having the peoples make a new constitution for themselves, the needed discussion about the social agreement people agree on will take place. This needs to be done without politicians meddling in the process from start to finish. One has to be aware of that those that already have power will do everything, all the dirty tricks in the book to maintain that power and so it will be no easy path, but a path that can if done correctly be deeply satisfying for communities and states in order to carve out a co-created vision of who they are and where they are heading.

A constitution is not something that is carved in rock but something that is always in need for renewal as we are constantly in a process of evolution. However there are core values that have been part of healthy societies throughout, those are values of human rights and the right to be humane in all the various shapes and with the various opinions.

In order for any society to thrive we need to rethink hierarchy. Many want to reverse the pyramid of power. But why a pyramid? Why not a circle of power? Many circles that interconnect might work much better as the next democracy matrix.

The largest challenge will be to inspire people to participate and co-share responsibility. First steps in that direction is to create the tools both on and offline for participation via direct democracy in local communities where people will actually see and feel the results of their participation much quicker than in national or transnational activities of directness.

Proxy Voting, Liquid Democracy or Active Votes

Some of the more developed Pirate Parties have created online tools to execute Liquid Feedback or Liquid Democracy that experiment has not been very successful so far because it was released before it was user friendly and needs further experimentation and participation with non-geeks. It is of great importance to do studies on the pros and cons of Proxy Voting and Liquid Democracy whom I choose to call Active Votes for the sake of trying to find new meaning to abstract and often meaningless Pirate lingo to the general public whom I believe we want to inspire to use our tools.

Active vote, means you have activated your vote either by delegating the vote to someone you trust or by using it yourself. It is of utter importance that you have a good oversight of each vote that has been activated. If the Pirate Parties around the world can lead the way in activation of vibrant and meaningful participation in policymaking on all stages in our societies we can all retire with a sense of satisfaction of transforming this world into a place where people will have real power in a collective way that does render a meaning to belonging to a community and being part of a state chosen and ruled by those that live in it.

I believe that the Pirates of the world can shape the new hardware we need to run our systems. The key to this is to be found in the core policies. We need to stay focused, forget about having policies in everything and stay on top of what we are

experts at, innovation and the application of human rights in the abstract 21st century tech world where every day holds the promise of an Apocalypse or a pretty amazing future of many different solutions to the mosaic we are as humanity. The commons like p2p foundation is implementing and defining should be an inspiration. The resource wars are upon us in a world of plenty if we only manage to protect the internet from isolating us. The stateless states are merging, the birth of a new idea based on an old inspiration of how to implement and be a democracy is upon us. There is massive strength in belonging to the global tribe of the Pirates, may we never become just another party.

CORRECTING COPYWRONGS: TOWARDS A EUROPEAN COPYRIGHT REFORM

JULIA REDA*

ABSTRACT

There has never been a bigger discrepancy between the technical feasibility to share information and knowledge across all physical borders and the legal restrictions to actually do so. On the bright side, there is also a growing consensus among the public, creators and the affected industries on the need for a fundamental change. Over the next years, we are going to experience the greatest opportunity for the reform of copyright in a far too long time span. The reward of participating in this conversation will be the promise of reconciliation. Reconciliation for those who dedicate their lives to facilitate communication and the transfer of data, those who want to express their thoughts and ideas and build upon those ideas that came before them and those who want to create the spaces and tools for others to experience the cultural wealth of this world. And this is how we are going to achieve it.

I was recently elected in Germany, but since the Pirates are a global movement I try to travel around to different countries and get an input from different pirate parties, so that we can form common policies that really reflect the interests of the European people. In the European Parliament, it is important to go beyond national interests.

The main focus of my work in the European Parliament is the push for copyright reform. My goal is a harmonized, user-friendly copyright within the European Union and I think this is something we can achieve within those 5 years of legislature. As every person with an internet connection has access to different cultures and scientific achievements, the reform of the copyright regulations has the potential to improve society in a way beneficial to everybody.

I visited Peter Sunde, the co-founder of The Pirate Bay who is currently serving a sentence for aiding in copyright infringement, in prison in Sweden, where he shares common space with people convicted of committing violent crimes. During my visit, Peter shared his observations and made a parallel between imprisonment and copyright: "*Prison is a bit like copyright, in the sense that both are equally detached from normal people's lives. Society is usually not aware of the failings in both systems*

* The newly elected member of the Pirate Party in the European Parliament (8th legislature, 2014-2019)

and that in transparency leads the way to corruption". However, unlike prison, copyright law affects everyone. For example, people posting links on Facebook can be accidentally infringing copyright, if pictures or videos are automatically embedded and come from a source that hasn't cleared the rights for them (OLG Dusseldorf, 2011. About the fluctuation of case law on weblinking, see TSOUTSANIS, 2014). The current copyright status is built more on the concept that cultural works are made of a limited resource, thus justifying a mechanism for managing and distributing this resource, while internet and new technologies give us more opportunities to produce and distribute culture. Therefore, we have reached a stage where we can start discussing about how we want to share culture and make it available to a larger number of people.

The current state of the discussion at European Union level: the time-frame of copyright.

The consultation report of the European Commission on the copyright reform, issued in July (DG MARKT, 2014), showed that a huge number of people want to participate in the copyright debate. Among all the Commission's consultations that required respondents to send in a document with replies to open questions, this one had the highest number of respondents, despite the difficulties related to the fact the questionnaire was available only in English and the online process for replies was highly limited. The reason for the high level of responses despite those obstacles is that activists from the local pirate parties collaborated with consumer organizations and other NGO activists. They translated the questions of the consultation, as well as the guidelines for answering and submitting the answers, which contributed to raise its popularity and increased the level of participation. In the end, over 9000 responses were collected, about half of them from individual internet users.

Among the respondents to the consultation, almost all of the users as well as the academic world and research centers are stressing the fact that their access to copyrighted content is arbitrarily restricted, and that the current copyright system needs major changes to fix those problems. On the opposite side, producers, publishers and general industry representatives claim that no changes are necessary, as the current status quo works fine for them and their businesses (EC DG MARKT, 2014). While legislation should be ensuring a certain level of balance between the interests of all stakeholders, the consultation report illustrates the lack of such balance. There is clearly a need for a reform of the copyright system. The main issues mentioned in the Commission's consultation are:

- Term of copyright protection: at the present time, the duration of copyright protection in the EU is lifelong + 70 years before entering into the public domain. One of the main justifications for the existing copyright framework is its claimed purpose of providing an incentive for the creation of works. It is difficult to imagine that an artist would create a work with the expectation of an actual commercial exploitation until 70 years after her death. In reality, the vast majority of musicians, for example, will generate money from copyright in the 5 to 10 years after the release of their record (HUGENHOLTZ, 2008). Only a small number of artists, like The Beatles or The Rolling Stones is going to generate benefits from copyright for their offspring. In that sense, if copyright is supposed to work as an incentive for an artist to create, significantly

shorter copyright terms than the current 70 years after the right-holder's death realistically would not demotivate artists to continue creating.

Lack of mandatory exceptions

The situation at present is that laws are made on the national level, while the EU passes directives engaging Member States to implement certain criteria. Currently, the copyright framework does not give criteria to the Member States about the minimum rights of copyright users, like universities or consumers in general, but rather provides for a narrow list of exceptions that they *may* benefit from if they meet the given criteria. This inevitably leads to discrepancies among European countries when trying to know what copyright allows or forbids. For example, if a person takes a photo of a public building and posts it on the internet, that act would be considered as a violation of the architect's copyright in some countries but not in other countries that have "freedom of panorama"¹ exceptions in their national law (POPOVA, 2014). An example of bad practices in that context can be the case where Wikipedia would not be allowed to publish pictures of public buildings in their articles, when those building are located in Member States that do not provide such exceptions (e.g. France).

Copyright on official works

Another case where a unified EU copyright framework could greatly improve users' rights is related to government official works. A curious case-study on how the copyright on official government works causes absurd situations and prevents access to knowledge is the case of the former French president Jacques Chirac's picture on his Wikipedia page in the English language (Wikipedia, 1999). As the works produced by the French government are protected by copyright in France, Wikipedia is not allowed to use any of the pictures taken by the photographers employed by the French government. The current photograph of Chirac used on the English Wikipedia page is a photo taken by an employee of the American government. Under American law, the works created by the American government are automatically in the public domain and are available for free use (WAINSCOTT, 2012).² Germany is another example where the copyright on official works is causing problems. According to the reply of the German government to a written parliamentary question, the German government makes little money from licensing its copyright protected works (Deutscher Bundestag, 2013), thus raising the question whether these revenues justify the expenses of enforcing copyright on those works. Therefore, there is little economic benefit for governments to keep their official works out of the public domain. If economic incentives cannot explain the copyright restrictions on official government works, another more sinister reason for them may be that governments are using copyright as a tool for censorship. For instance, representatives of the German government suggested a 3% threshold for the European Elections, despite the warning from lawyers that such suggestion would be rejected by the constitutional court (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2011). The Open Knowledge Foundation Germany used the freedom of information law to obtain documents from the debate between

¹ The "freedom of panorama" exception allows anyone to take pictures of a building if it is visible on the street, and to freely use the image of the building.

² See <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clintonchirac.jpg>.

the lawyers and representatives of the government, which made public the attempt of the German government to deliberately pass unconstitutional legislation. When the German Ministry of the interior delivered the requested documents, the Open Knowledge Foundation was told that they were not allowed to publish those documents on the internet, as this would violate the copyright of the lawyers working on the documents. When the Open Knowledge Foundation published the documents anyway, the German ministry of the interior started taking legal action against the NGO (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2014).

Criminalising pop culture

Posts on social media (Facebook, Tumblr, etc.) containing short sequences from copyrighted films (so-called reaction gifs) are considered as copyright infringements. It has become a well-established practice to use such animated pictures to visualize moods, similar to the use of emoticons. Clearly, a short picture taken out of a movie does not serve as a substitute for the original commercial product, namely the film from which the animated picture is taken. Since the cultural practice of using reaction gifs, while constituting a copyright infringement, cannot conceivably cause the copyright holder any losses from the sale of their work, the public policy objective of copyright to such small snippets is questionable. In such cases, the only sector benefiting from the current copyright framework is an industry formed around profiting from copyright violation court cases. This is particularly common for gifs from football game scenes. It is a common practice for the copyright holders of such games to sue people using those gifs on copyright violation grounds. In that sense, the current copyright regulation is criminalizing common online behavior and widespread social media practices.

File-sharing and peer-to-peer

Another example of legal uncertainty at the moment is the legal status of peer-to-peer file-sharing, since private sharing for non-commercial purposes is currently legal in a lot of European countries. For example, in the offline world, if someone buys content and then burns it on a CD and gives it to someone else, this is not considered as copyright infringement. However, if the same occurs online, the legal situation is much more uncertain. A good illustration of this situation is The Pirate Bay case, which provided the technical means for its users to share the content owned by them with other fellow users. Currently, the site faces uncertainty as regards its legality in Europe, as its status would depend on the different readings from national authorities across Europe. In Germany, as users are allowed to download but are not allowed to upload, the legal status of the website is under question.

What needs to change on the EU level?

Few but nonetheless core changes would be needed, like making it easier to access content across borders. Indeed, it is a very commonly encountered issue for people traveling across the Union to not be able to access the content they have paid for online in one country when they travel to another European country, due to the territoriality of copyright law. Some improvements have been made to allow better access to content for users, such as the European legislation on orphan works (DG MARKT, 2012). However, these legislations are usually patchworks rather than

constructive updates of the copyright system as a whole, which would have larger scope.

How can these changes be achieved on EU level?

The idea that I want to promote is to update the existing copyright law, to propose a completely new European copyright framework that would be directly applicable across all European member states. A single European copyright title could make many things a lot easier: if there were a unified copyright system, then the problem with territorial restrictions to access would be resolved, which would make distribution of culture and knowledge across the union much easier. However, 28 countries would have to jointly discuss the proposals submitted by the European Commission not only in Council negotiations, but also with the elected members of the European Parliament. That means that many aspects would have to be subject to compromise on the way towards common regulation.

My suggestions:

- Based on the report from the European Commission's consultation, one of the points stressed as most problematic by the respondents is the duration of copyright protection (EC DG MARKT, 2014). To resolve this issue, the main difficulty lies in the legal terms of the Berne Convention signed by European member states, which defines the duration of copyright protection as an international standard. A European copyright should set the minimum possible copyright terms possible under the current international obligations.
- Free linking and browsing: The base of how internet is built and functions, also on a technical level, is linking. As copyright should be a commercial right and not have the power to restrict users from using the internet, the freedom to use linking must remain completely exempt from copyright.
- Fair Use: The term means that when someone is using a copyrighted work under certain conditions, this use is not considered as an infringement of copyright but as a "fair use", defined by jurisprudence on a case by case basis. The advantage of a fair use exception is that judges can interpret copyright law in the light of newly emerging technologies and thereby keep it flexible to adapt to rapid technological development. The introduction of such broad exception could fix the problems of users who are being sued for using reaction gifs, for instance.
- Universal Users' Rights: Along with creators' rights, users' rights must also be taken into account, as the Internet has levelled the playing field and blurred the lines between producers and consumers of culture. The copyright framework needs to mirror this societal shift from a read-only to a read-write approach to popular culture.
- The new President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, named the European copyright reform one of his major priorities in the upcoming legislature, as he acknowledges the difficulties and harm being caused by the current copyright system in the digital environment: "The moment has come to seriously reengage with the questions of copyright [...] Copyright may not impede the digital ambitions of Europe, but must be an instrument to mobilize the European digital potential." (REDA, 2014)

So far, copyright was covered by the Directorate General (DG) for the internal market and economic affairs. Juncker has now moved the copyright portfolio to the new DG for the digital economy and society, thereby highlighting that copyright can no longer just be regarded from an economic perspective, but that the digital revolution has turned the copyright reform into an urgent issue for all parts of society (JUNCKER, 2014). The former Commissioner responsible for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, was very critical of the current European copyright framework: "Today, the EU copyright framework is fragmented, inflexible, and often irrelevant. It should be a stimulant to openness, innovation and creativity, not a tool for obstruction, limitation and control." (KROES, 2014). The content of the proposal for a copyright reform would highly depend on the scope of responsibility of the new Commissioners.

- Shifting the focus: The main focus in the coming months should consist in making sure that the people with the right competence are going to work on reforming copyright, and in guaranteeing that the changes are not only coming from the industrial and commercial perspectives, but that the people being in charge of the digital agenda contribute to shift the traditional focus to address users' rights, including those of researchers and academics.
- Lobbying Brussels: It is important to raise concerns about the obstacles imposed by the current copyright system, to alert people working in the European institutions about the issues being at stake, as not all of them are aware of the changes that the reform should address.
- Taking the streets: The demonstrations against ACTA that took place all over Europe put pressure on the Member States and were a big part of the reason why the agreement was withdrawn. We need to recapture that momentum and make sure that the European Commission knows that a copyright reform that serves the public interest could go a great way in reestablishing people's faith in the European project.

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POLITICAL HOLISM AND THE FAILURE OF ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

The Pirate Parties were founded around a narrow set of issues of importance to a relatively narrow segment of society. Much like Green Parties and other “single-issue” movements before them they have failed to attract broad political appeal. I will address the failure of issue-based politics and argue for the creation of a holistic political doctrine centered around Pirate politics. I will use Pirate politics as a basis to explore policy areas such as agriculture, industry, state finances, education, healthcare, and natural resource management. Finally I'll expand on this to suggest that the emergence of Pirate politics are indicative of a “third dichotomy” of the modern era, following the royalist-republican dichotomy and the individualist-socialist dichotomy; and that this new dichotomy can only be brought about through holistic politics.

Single Issue Politics

People have a lot of worries, a lot of concerns, a lot of hopes, and a lot of dreams. People also don't have a lot of time. Burdened with the everyday, there's often not a lot of leeway in the average person's schedule to become involved with politics. This triumph of the mundane means that the spectacular is taken in small doses. Most people are active in few, if any issues.

The articulation of any issue is subject to political reality and to individual capacity. A person may be a peace activist, an animal welfare activist, a consumer rights activist. Somebody might campaign against fracking, or for better treatment of immigrants, or the elderly. Some raise money for causes or raise awareness about diseases. Comparatively few expand their scope to include the mundane or to encompass the spectacular.

Occasionally, an issue is articulated through the creation of a political party. This is done with the best of intentions, and a series of assumptions:

First, that whereas political power lies with the legislature or government, participation in the legislature or government is the mechanism by which power can be channeled to the issue in question.

Second, that power cannot be channeled adequately or effectively without participation in the legislature or government.

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Third that the issue is sufficiently popular that representatives of the cause can win out over other candidates in a fair election.

Fourth, that, given a space within the legislature or government and thus a fragment of the power, the legislature or government will treat the cause with due reverence.

In practice, few or none of these assumptions hold true.

Despite this, single issue parties are common. Many are short-lived. Some examples - some defunct, others existing: In the US, the Free Soilers, the Grangers, the Bull Moose Party, and more. In the UK, the Animal Welfare Party, the National Health Action Party, the Legalize Cannabis Alliance. In Canada, the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party.

Others manage to expand their scope to the point where they are viable general purpose parties. Thus the Whig party in the UK, originally founded largely around the creation of the Bank of England. Thus also the Bloc Québécois. Similarly Green parties all over: constructed around environmentalism, but are now a general purpose movement.

It's worth trying to make some distinctions. I'm trying to use the term "single issue party" to refer to a political party that exists to push for a single issue. Not a single ideology or the general concerns of a particular group of people. I include Bloc Québécois historically as a single issue party as their mainstay was the independence of Québec, with all else being secondary. However, I'd generally not include nationalist parties, for instance, unless they were nationalist with a particular specific issue on their agenda. One might argue that the British Nationalist Party is a single issue party.

It's also worth saying that a single issue party can, confusingly, have more than one issue. Early Green Parties were environmentally focused, but by having such a broad single focus, they concerned themselves with many niches and issues such as natural resource extraction, animal welfare, overfishing, soil erosion and climate change.

Similarly, Pirate Parties were founded largely around copyright reform and privacy. From there they have in some places expanded to cover the rights of people online in general, but would still effectively count as single-issue parties in most countries.

It is of course all fuzzy. But if we roughly agree that a single issue approach implies focus on a rough category of issues without a holistic philosophy, we can move on.

Political Holism

There are a lot of good arguments for the establishment of single-issue pressure groups. Lobby movements can wield a lot of political power. Civil society can enact change. But when a group engages in the party-political system it's necessary to have at least some idea of what is going on beyond a single issue or category.

A person elected to a parliament is not there to work on one issue. Parliaments are never so granular. A regular parliamentarian will be expected to deliberate on and vote on issues as far apart as agriculture, import tariffs, immigration, taxation, public finances, human rights, banking regulation, social housing, education, urban planning and healthcare.

A person elected into a parliament on a platform of, say, saving the whales, has a split mandate. By constitutional decree, they are required to and able to have a say on every issue that comes through the parliament floor. However, by virtue of their campaign, they have made no promises or guarantees to the electorate about how they will behave. This means that they are essentially wildcards, following whatever interests they or their influencers have.

Split mandates beget whimsy. Whimsy does not good policy make.

Aside from the need to be on top of things in a broad sense, there's an issue of power dynamics: if you have a parliament of 100 people, and half of them one way or another are dedicated to various single issues, then the other fifty hold, on average, twice as much power as they should. In reality it's not uncommon for overspecialization in parliamentary roles to cause way more bloated power bases than that. The deference to leadership which is so common now is proof of that.

Somebody said that "specialization is for insects". Yet in the postindustrial world, it's becoming more and more common that specialization bleeds through everything - and less and less common that people can be generalists. There are simply too many things in the world for anybody to have a broad understanding of everything. The generalist is not widely suffered. Now, I'm not going to make the case for generalism, as such -- it is something I think we need more of, but it's also practically untenable.

Pirate Takes

But there is another out. If all people cannot be generalists, then the party at least can be. And must be, if it is to succeed.

This is a lesson the Greens learned the hard way, and others too. I think we can learn a lot from how the Green parties went about generalizing beyond environmentalism. Green parties adopted a broad range of policies over virtually every subject area -- notably, most Green parties don't have any defense policies. But instead of going the most obvious route of adopting policies flat out from similar movements, such as Social Democrats. It would have been easy to do so: pick up the Social Democratic approach to healthcare, or education, or industry. But they didn't. Instead, they took their underlying principles of environmentalism and constructed their entire policy scope off the back of that. Of course the result was quite similar to Social Democracy, but the method matters.

Pirate Parties can do the same. If you look at our core tenets, there are a lot of common themes.

Civil liberties, in particular: freedom of expression, but not to the exclusion of: privacy, and it's alter-ego: transparency. And we tend to talk about copyright, which could be generalized to cover: monopoly rights, which we should talk more about. ICTs are one of those things we tend to know a lot about, and: telecommunications more generally. Also, a general underpinning of our work is: democracy; specifically, increasing the capacity of common people to have direct control over their own affairs.

Frankly, copyright is boring. It is important that we reform it, but I can't find any way to be shocked at poor election results for a party that goes on and on about copyright and never talks about the real issues that most people are having to suffer. Copyright is a problem, but it is a luxury problem. Let's fix it, but let's also fix everything else.

So let's do a quick exercise. Let's construct some policies.

Agriculture

How does greater communications capacity help people to grow more and better crops? Can computation help farmers? How do land monopolies reduce the capacity of new farmers to enter the market? Are factory farms actually more effective than organic farming? Research by Agatha Perfecto et al (2006) suggests that organic farming can be up to four times more effective and efficient for certain crops. How can a scientific view of agriculture help, and how can we adopt such a view without falling into the pitfalls of high modernist agricultural schemes, which have invariably failed -- and in the best cases of failure have given us worse crops. Transparency in agriculture may give us more understanding of what works and what not.

Approaching agriculture from a social individualist perspective, whereby farmers need to have the best tools available and the greatest knowledge available in order to make the best decisions possible, yields just that. Sharing of cadastral information, supporting soil science, meteorology, and biology research, and ensuring that this information is made available in useful ways to the agricultural community, while not enforcing any systemic limitations on how farmers and others in the agricultural supply chains operate, is likely to produce the best results.

However, another factor remains, which has to do with land ownership. Over the last decades, following the green revolution and other massive advances in agriculture, fewer and fewer hands have been involved in the agricultural production chain, with larger and larger farms producing the produce. This has been a boon for labor efficiency, and has increased crop yields and therefore land efficiency for certain crops, while radically reducing efficiency for other, more complicated crops. Scott (2012) contrasts consistent and hardy crops such as barley and other grains with raspberries, which ripen at odd times, go bad quickly, and are impractical to transport. Grey (2011) noted that coffee beans are 'less cooperative' than many other plants because of the coffee berry's inconsistent ripening speeds. However, when raspberries are contrasted to coffee as functions of importance in the global economy, it is not hard to see how raspberries may become cost-inefficient in a fully industrialized agricultural market when driven solely by questions of labor efficiency, crop yield and land efficiency.

The rise in monocultures is tethered quite strongly to the reduction in farmers and the reduction in recruitment of new farmers, which are all largely driven by the cost of farming. This, in turn, is driven by the size of the minimum viable farm, which has gone up substantially in recent decades. The net result is that new farmers, especially those with aspirations of increasing variety and availability of 'less cooperative' crops, can rarely afford to buy arable land, and are essentially kept out of the field unless they are hired as tenants or gain access to land ownership through heredity. Kevin Carson has argued that "in virtually every society in the world where a few giant landlords coexist with a peasantry that pay rent on the land they work, the situation has its roots in some act of past robbery by the State," (Carson, 2012) suggesting that absentee landlordism (one of Benjamin Tucker's 'big four' monopolies) might possibly be remedied through the Georgist mechanism of land taxation, although a more long term systemic approach might be preferable: "The state's collusion with landlord is probably the oldest system of class exploitation in the world. [...] Our friends the Georgists [...] advocate shifting all taxes onto the site value of land, in order to socialize artificial scarcity rents and make it costly to hold vacant land out of use. But most monopoly rents on land, arguably, result from state intervention.

Even holding vacant land out of use is a lot cheaper for land speculators, thanks to the state." (Carson, 2011)

Therefore I argue that a first draft Pirate approach to agriculture should therefore be one in which land monopolies are eliminated, the cost of absenteeism raised, diversity promoted, and information made readily available.

Industry

From a civil libertarian perspective, how can it be acceptable for humans to have to compete against indefatigable machines on an unfree market? How come large scale industry trumps everything, even though 97% of all companies are SMEs -- small and medium sized enterprises -- and they generate up to 70-80% of the domestic revenue in most industrialized countries, and even more in less industrialized countries? Traditional politics pays lip service to SMEs because everybody knows that small is better, but in practice they focus only on the large companies, because large companies are more legible, easier to interact with, and are a more easy and predictable source of campaign contributions and coherent lobbying efforts, and on top of that, their growth shows up slightly faster in the national statistics.

Scott (1998) described "a state's attempt to make a society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion," suggesting that when confronted with the chaos of society, forcing things into easy to comprehend structures reduces friction in theory, while in practice is a root cause of authoritarianism, and of systemic failure when the assumptions of the rigid structure turn out to be wrong. Venkatesh Rao has elaborated on this, stating that:

"The big mistake in this pattern of failure is projecting your subjective lack of comprehension onto the object you are looking at, as 'irrationality.' We make this mistake because we are tempted by a desire for legibility. [...] High-modernist (think

Bauhaus and Le Corbusier) aesthetics necessarily lead to simplification, since a reality that serves many purposes presents itself as illegible to a vision informed by a singular purpose." (Rao, 2010)

When this line of reasoning is applied to the traditional political understanding of the (industrial) economy, it is easy to see how SMEs are confusing and irritable for political actors to interact with, while large companies with well defined interests and highly effective lobbyists are seen more favorably. Even more so when political campaign contributions are factored in.

Embracing the chaos does appear to be better industrial policy. Carson (2009) wrote the traditional approach off as 'crackpot realism', citing the current problems of overproduction and the government's bailing out and shoring up of large industry players as systemic failures:

"The kind of industry that emerges on the other side of the Time of Troubles will be the opposite of Sloanism. It will be an economy of small-scale manufacturing for local markets.

The closest existing model for sustainable manufacturing is Emilia-Romagna. In that region of 4.2 million people, the most prosperous in Italy, manufacturing centers on "flexible manufacturing networks" of small-scale firms, rather than enormous factories or vertically integrated corporations. Small-scale, general-purpose machinery is integrated into craft production, and frequently switches between different product lines. It follows a lean production model geared to demand, with production taking place only to fill orders, so there's no significant inventory cost. Supply chains are mostly local, as is the market. The local economy is not prone to the same boom-bust cycle which results from overproduction to keep unit costs down, without regard to demand." (Carson, 2009)

In terms of policy, this becomes a few points. First, reducing the number of state subsidies and structural supports that prop up large companies and enforcing stringent guards against favoritism in the execution of state projects. Similarly, state financing or underwriting of large private projects, such as factories, research facilities, and plants, should not be practiced under any circumstances -- both because the "creation of jobs" is not actually an acceptable state function since they invariably get it wrong, and because the mere activity creates market instability which frequently leads to hypertension and associated speculation.

It is also necessary to put an absolute end to bailouts of any kind, which also helps eliminate moral hazard. This should go hand in hand with reducing the cost of failure, in particular for entrepreneurs, so that failed ventures can lead to rapid bounceback on a clean slate, within reason. The high cost of bankruptcy, for low and middle class people, frequently leads to towns losing essential services, which deals a death blow to their economy. If bankruptcy simply meant a loss of investment and property, nulling out against claims, then a person with sufficient social capital could start over the next day, as long as they also managed to secure credit lines for required goods.

Bankruptcy then doesn't go entirely unpunished by the market, but should go entirely unpunished by the state.

This also means supporting local economies, both in terms of providing infrastructure and devolving governance to regions and municipalities to as high a degree as is reasonable and effective.

In short: localism, subsidiarity, and a retreat from state capitalism.

State finances

Greater transparency in public finances, and greater public capacity to determine public finances, can both reduce cost and increase efficiency. The current condition of public finances is only a few steps away from a medieval mindset: taxes are collected coercively and used to pay for projects determined by the elite. Public input is of little import. If this changes, greater levels of conviviality can be achieved, and less of our collective societal resources get wasted on vanity projects and short sighted utopianism.

Military spending is the classical example of this. Most people, when required to determine policy, would not entirely eliminate defense budgeting, but would certainly reduce it to a point where its only serviceable objective would be defense, rather than geopolitical posturing. As geopolitical tensions rise, so would the willingness of the public to spend on defense. However, the current tradition seen in many countries of buying expensive military toys to show off to other world leaders and put on displays of strength and poise is likely to be cut short - regardless of the protestations from the military-industrial complex that escalation may lead to success, while deescalation or change of direction is unreasonable or dangerous.

Conversely, the proportion of tax money spent on social functions would go up. Collective operation of education and health care systems would seem more reasonable. It is however likely that greater public involvement in determining the finances would lead to greater public interest in effectiveness of the spending. This could lead both to higher demands of quality of care in healthcare, and reduced incidence of vandalism in public transport systems, to name but a few effects.

Broadly speaking, this is an issue of psychology. If I have a say, I will care to speak. If however I am robbed of tithe, regardless of legitimacy, then I will have little regard for how it is spent beyond resentment that it was stolen in the first place. Even with a civic mindset in which one supports the existence of collective education, healthcare, and so on, people without any control over the governance of these things will argue entitlement while complaining about results.

Education

The origins of the current systems of education expose the objective of education: to mass manufacture human drones with standardized skills, for exploitation on the labor market. I'm going to allow myself to quote Ivan Illich at length here, as he said what needs to be said better than I ever could:

"Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby schooled to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is schooled to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavor are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question." (Illich, 1971)

What this means in practice is that education should be individualized, deinstitutionalized, and made as open as possible. It should cater to the needs of people rather than the (often incorrectly) perceived needs of the economy. It should strive to maximize human potential, and not be subject to political whims.

Once this has been accomplished, the results will be seen resonating through society in every other way. The first steps to accomplishing this include flipped classrooms, increased student choice in courses, and a less dictatorial attitude to how information is conveyed to children. This calls for a rearchitecturing of educational processes, away from the "knowledge comes from the front" approach of the traditional lecture hall, to a more open and inclusive approach wherein knowledge and facts are welcomed, but authority is not.

Generally speaking, we can apply the thematic underpinnings of Pirate philosophy to every subject matter. And we should. It will give us good results. In the experimentation that the Icelandic Pirates have been doing with this, we've gotten a lot of good ideas. It's not perfect yet, it needs more work, but this direction is useful.

The Third Dichotomy

Historically there is a tendency to shove the political debates of each time into a narrow dichotomy, shaped by the overriding argument. Before the industrial revolution, the dichotomy was about the extents of monarchic control; a debate between feudalism and parliamentarianism. The industrial revolution brought new arguments, which have been framed as an argument between individualism and socialism. Neither of these debates are over, but both have been proven by time to be false.

The hyper connected communication age, the Internet age, the digital age, or whatever you want to call it, brings us a third dichotomy. It is equally false, but we're going to have to play by it for a while at least.

Every dichotomy has its political movements. Tories versus Whigs, Communists versus Capitalists.

The Greens did well, but they were an offshoot of the socialist arm of the last great dichotomy. I believe that the Pirates could -- if we manage to expand our scope, become the first party of the third dichotomy. The argument of this age is that of centralization versus decentralization. We are the first of the decentralizationist movements. All of traditional politics is politics of centralization.

If we finish the task of running through the subject matters, and rejecting single issue politics, then we can change the world. But if we keep just circle jerking each other about copyright and net neutrality, no matter how important those issues are, we will never be more than a short, unremarkable footnote in the history books.

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THE QUIXOTIC EFFICIENCY: THE PRONENESS FOR TRANSCENDENTAL CHANGE OF SHARED ECONOMY BASED COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The following research dives into the area of a newly articulated motive of self which gains social momentum through the use of decentralized connected communities. The quixotic motive implies an universalist schemata and a transcendent attitude towards change (Salgado & Oceja, 2011). Even if the literature on altruism and gift is wide developed, neither the quixotic motive for action, nor the digital enabled gift economic systems received a fair attention (Harvey, Golightly, & Smith, 2013). It is hypothesized that shared economy based communities are conducive for the centrality of the quixotic motive. The changes of egotism, communitarianism and quixotism are investigated through a longitudinal analysis on two shared economy based communities over an one year period. Implications are discussed, as the new-new social movements (Feixa, Pereira, & Juris, 2009) enhance the preference for self-transcendent knowledge (Scharmer, 2011) and the social role of flux (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) is, thereto, weighted.

Keywords: social movements, gift economy, quixotism, self-transcendent knowledge

Although the concept of self-transcendent thinking (Scharmer, 2011) is suggested across most of the works related with the socio-psychological impact of communication technology (Tornero & Varis, 2010) the concept has not been developed within the field of social change. Most of the time, when gift economy is under observation, pundits tend to shrink their focus on solely investigating altruism, trust and giving (Harvey, Golightly, & Smith, 2013). However, little is said about how altruism, trust and giving are shaped within different contexts, with different degrees of freedom. Observations upon intracomunity gifting (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012) allowed the focus to be extended upon previously uninvestigated motives of altruist behavior. Traditionally, giving was perceived only as a mechanism for regulating interpersonal and intercommunity asymmetrical relations (Malinowski, 1922/ 2013), where power is ascribed to the giver.

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Within most of the digital enabled sharing communities, however, this asymmetrical relation is not reflected anymore, as the motives of giving and sharing are not related with increasing interpersonal or intercommunity power, but with the drive to enhance the community itself (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012). This means that the giver holds no power over the gifted, who is mostly a stranger with whom no further relations are expected to be developed. Intracomunity giving, furthermore, escapes the core feature considered to stand at the base of giving, that of being in debt (Malinowski, 1922/2013). The gifted does not owe anything to the giver and reciprocal relations are not enforced. This could raise many questions about how these sharing communities are conserved. Some answers could be shaped upon the concept of hyperagency as a cultural trend emerging across transhumanist social evolution (More, 2013).

However, intracomunity giving is reflecting a new form of altruistic behavior which is shaped within the decentralized medium of the internet. Practicing generosity without direct or indirect focus on power distribution is intimately connected with decentralism and decentralized organization implies always a form of sharing, no matter if it is knowledge, goods or skills. In order to spot the social change produced by such a diffusion of newly shaped altruistic behavior, it's required to highlight how decentralism is a corollary of recognizing the common man as valuable and powerful, which, in turn, is based on a very different assumption than that upon which the social system was built. In other words, as long as humanity shared a Hobbesian view upon human nature as prone to conflict and evils, different types of hierarchical social order were legitimized and enabled, for keeping under control what was believed to be a somewhat evil nature. As it will be further argued, the more social stratification and hierarchies are valued, the less common individuals are ascribed with value. Decentralization, therefore, is accompanying the evolution of mentalities within which the common man is no more perceived as being inessential or evil, but significant and good by nature, which, in turn, as it will be argued further, enables the unfolding of altruist behaviors that are based on quixotic motives of self (Salgado & Oceja, 2011). These motives weren't even accounted as statistically significant afore the very new development of communication technologies which gave birth to connective actions that are based on different mechanisms than collective actions, with which they are often mistaken (Bennet & Sergerber, 2012).

The first part of this article will hence highlight this journey of social schemata that are accountable for the paradigm shift regarding the human nature and the place of the common individual within society. Confusions and biased reception of decentralization will be contextualized, as the paradigm shift, by no means, implies a replacement of the traditional mindset with the new one. The new world-view coexists with the traditional one and interpretation schemes are intermingled. However, the evolution of these mentalities, which pair the positive reception of the common man with decentralization, will be contextualized within the field of social change because the new altruist behavior is most of the time a landmark of shifting outside the

established socio-political order (Taylor, Doherty, Parker, & Krishnamurthy, 2014). The second part of the article will go further into delineating the model of decentralized organization (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006) and it will provide an in depth analysis on how much it fits the banality of evil and the banality of heroism respectively (Zimbardo, 2007). As decentralized organization it's found to be compatible with heroic approach especially because it favors intracomunity giving, while some hybrid forms of organization with both decentralized and centralized features are arguably conducive to evil, the last part of the article will test if highly decentralized communities are indeed prone to quixotism. Two decentralized communities were selected and observed across one year and egotistic, communitarian and quixotic tendencies were investigated.

I. From the beast to the common noble.

The classification of social movements into three main waves - the old social movements, the new social movements and the new-new social movements-, is widely accepted across scientific literature (Feix, Pereira, & Juris, 2009). However, even if pundits are no more immersed into debating about the rationality or irrationality of social changers, they are now focused upon establishing a good or a bad nature of technology per se, much in a similar way to their predecessors.

There is a consensus in terms of understanding the social movements of the nineteenth century as being patented by a simple and rigorous social order which determined the conditions under which an individual could get involved into a contesting venture (Feix, Pereira, & Juris, 2009; Beissinger, 2004). Feix, Pereira and Juris (2009) describe a so called "Tarzan syndrome" (p.423) to pin the nature of protests irrupting during this period. The old social movements, mainly driven by class consciousness, are, therefore, considered to be supported by protagonists who became the symbol of the young man who's in search of a stable life, willing to fight for economic benefits. It is not difficult to grasp that within the socio-political context of the time, collective actions were considered to be the manifestation of perceived homogeneous entities transfigured by rage and frustration. This kind of understanding inevitably led to a pathologizing framework used to make sense of contesting behaviors (Le Bon, 1895/2009).

The second wave of social movements, which started during the sixties, gave birth to new patterns of collective behavior. It's the time when society faced a dramatic extension of the range of reasons that legitimized individuals' involvement in supporting causes that challenged predetermined social order. Unlike the first wave of protests, these ones are more strongly principle oriented and less driven by the struggle for material benefits. The new protests lack the sobriety and the uniformity of those registered before. These, in turn, are bringing joy on the streets, a dramatic expression and an eclectic vision of reality (Ayalew, 2010; Kurzman 2008).

The new protagonist is no more seeking for a stable life. On the contrary, he is struggling to be accepted by society, for civil rights and for nature related reasons.

This time, he resembles "Peter Pan" character (Feix, Pereira, & Juris, 2009, p.423), by refusing to grow up in a narrow world, which is unable to meet his diverse needs and goals. Along with the second wave of social movements, the range of contesting action is completed with what can be called "the democratization of creativity". This is to say that creativity became no longer perceived as a feature shared only by the members of some elitist group. In other words, creativity was no longer to be monopolized by writers, artists and other traditional beholders, but ascribed to everyone, as normal human feature (Greene & Kuswa, 2012).

It could be useful to notice that decentralization is starting to be articulated within the contesting repertoire during the second wave of protests, matching a tandem with this process of naturalizing creativity and diversity across society. It's also worth noticing that as the pragmatic reasons for protest are surpassed by more idealistic reasons, the heterogeneity of the contesting groups is increased and the protest slowly became a symbol of democratic social behavior. As a civic duty, the protest is claimed to be the expression of pushing forward a constrictive world which other way would delay its own development.

If the second wave of social movements brought social consciousness and more Universalist reasons for taking on the streets (Buechler, 2004), the third wave movements will continue this contesting milieu by introducing horizontal communication as a new vector. These new-new social movements entered the political arena once that Zapatista collective actions emerged, as first contesting manifestations which were heavily based on communication. As some scholars have noted, these protests, whose protagonists resemble the so-called "Yo-Yo "adultcent", are both in expression and philosophy, the most peaceful humanity ever encountered (Feix, Pereira, & Juris, 2009, p. 423).

The "Yo-Yo adultcent", as Feix, Pereira and Juris (2009, p. 423) describe him, is an adult who has integrated into his cognitive schemata the resourcefulness of child thinking. As researches within the psychology of creativity indicate, a child's way of thinking implies that information is processed by the use of imagination and intuition (Kelemen, 2004). This observation is also shared by many scholars who investigated the dynamics of contemporary societies, where technology broke a large niche into the quotidian life to make place for ludic activities (Florida, 2012). This naturalization of the ludic gradually produced a shift into the main cognitive schemes people use to make sense of the world, enabling the rise of a creative class (Florida, 2012).

The leader-framework that was traditionally used to describe the social dynamics is also changed within the new-new social movements, for one pointing to the inspirer and the catalyst as the main social protagonists (Ross, 2011; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). Back then, leaders were remembered as "heroes" by popular culture because of their uncommon actions that challenged the status quo. Thoreau, for example, is cited for his decision to refuse to pay fees for the maintenance of war. Nowadays, these once uncommon actions got normalized across different populations, as individuals who refuse to pay taxes for war expenses are now supposed to be both innumerable and difficult to identify (Tokumitsu, 2014; van Gelder, 2014; Karlin, 2014; Solnit, 2013;

Koehler, 2010). Therefore, challenging the established power is not perceived anymore as a heroic decision, but as an acceptable manner of self-expression.

I.1. The imposed order versus the spontaneous order. From anarchy as violence to anarchy as self-organization

The study of leaderless organization is almost monopolized within the field of terrorist behaviors (Garfinkel, 2003). The concept of leaderless resistance was wide spread during '80s, when it received scholarly attention and the notion denominated a certain strategy to fight a regime through clandestine cells. However, later on, it was mainly framed within the structures of social violence. This cognitive attitude towards decentralization can be easily derived from an established model of social organization which although was perfected and gained much sophistication along time, it never concealed the belief that stands at its basis, regarding the precariousness of the human nature.

In short, the model of social organization that stands for a decentralized world, with uncontrolled, horizontal human relations, as the one prescribed by the transcendentalist philosophy of Emerson and Thoreau (Myerson, 2000) is founded on the belief in the goodness of human nature. Personal conscience is regarded as the main intrinsic human feature that allows men to be good doers. It may be useful to note that both Thoreau and Emma Golden, for instance, as well as many other iconic figures of modern anarchism insist that if people would listen to the inner voice, then they would not hurt each other (Dalton, 1994).

At the opposite side stands the still predominant model of social organization that presumes the best social design is a centralized one, even though this is to be extended into arborescent structures. This assumption is largely symptomatic for understanding statehood in Lockian or Weberian terms (Tilly, 1990). At its basis, this model holds the Hobbesian vision upon human nature as being conflict driven and violent.

To assign violent features to decentralized groups is a historical theme in the literature of social movements. It is necessary at this point to be fully aware of the prescriptive and normative character of interpretations which are built on the assumption of a best social organization as a centralized and hierarchical one. This way, any other social constellation is considered to be deviant and by this, interventionism is legitimized (Eriksen, 2010; Tily, 1990). When portraying the new-new social movements and connective actions as a hotbed of violence and social fragility (Taylor, 2013; Garfinkel, 2003) a normative frame is activated, which, by itself, it's biased and lacks flexibility.

However, a different approach to understand the leaderless movements was subtly grafted on the reconceptualization of the common individual and his social role. As the notion of "simple man" became central within the worldview shared by different social groups, decentralized action started to be understood in a manner not anymore tributary to old grids of interpretation upon social organization (Falkinge, 2013; Staal,

2013; Ross, 2011; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). It can be presumed that transcendentalist principles are now revived and gain momentum, as the direct action, the connection with nature, the praise for individual freedom and autonomy which are no more related with violence (Meyerson, 2000) permeate the public conscience and the public discourses.

1.2. The Inefficiency: The weakness of unaffiliated individuals

A new shift in interpreting leaderless behaviors occurred once that the analytical apparatus was extended in order to better describe socio-political fragility. The events of September 11, in 2009 precipitated, on the one hand, an over-increased valuation of security and, by consequence, an overrated skepticism regarding various types of organizations which do not assume the primacy of control mechanisms on their core. On the other hand, the same ideated theoretical paranoia was conducive to expanding the debate on organizational effectiveness (Mata & Ziaja, 2009).

The postulate of intrinsic connection between leaderless resistance and violence was not exceeded, however. Still, the structural efficiency of an organization became a topic of theoretical reflection. From this perspective, leaderless social movements are interpreted either as hotbeds of various forms of terrorism, in the lineage of theoretical approaches from '20s (Taylor, 2013; Dishman, 2005), or as appealing but inefficient structures in triggering social change, in the lineage of theoretical approaches of the '60s (Taylor, 2013, Robinson, 2013; Reimer, 2012).

Traditionally, the effectiveness of an organization that aims to act on the political arena is conceptualized by its ability to mobilize resources so as to gain access to the political power (Zartman, 1995). To the extent that leaderless movements are identified precisely by their members' refusal to hold power, their actions have been interpreted as a form of pop-civism, being considered ineffective across the process of social change (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

The debate about effective organization opened the theoretical awareness on a straight-forward observation, which was neglected within the prescriptive approach that equaled the best social organization with the liberal one. Most of the states never had, during their history, any of the liberal state characteristics. Their vulnerability, therefore, can't be described as degradation, but through the key concept of poor-construction (Eriksen, 2010). Accordingly, the sufficient-construction is held as an attribute of efficiency. Groups such as Al Qaeda, for instance, are considered, within this frame, as successful organizations because they developed complex internal structure, moving from being decentralized to centralized. It's assumed that they "went beyond terrorism because violence is destabilizing both for its target, and for those who perpetuate it, and most of the organizations' primary purpose is self-preservation "(Garfinkel, 2003, par. 4).

Just as regarding state fragility by reference to the functional structure of the liberal type of state, while pulling down other viable non-liberal types of state (Tilly, 1990), establishing an univocal relationship between the efficiency of a social organization and its centralized configuration indicates a biased interpretation and a prescriptive framework.

One of the few studies that accounts for the error in establishing organizational efficiency by comparing an observed organization with the traditional, centralized organizational type is highlighting the distinction between the inner logic of collective actions and that of connective actions, respectively (Bennet & Segerber, 2012). Because of this difference, it is inadequately to measure the efficiency of one type of organization by using the appropriate scale for the other type, as one is not a deviant form of the other one. Thereby, organized groups are to be understood within the frame of collective actions, no matter if their members use ITC for communication or not. On the other part, connective actions erupt more often than not, amidst ITC users, but only if they are networked and they self-express by joining a movement. The authors argue that using ITC for communication by organized groups cannot change the contesting scenario. The same conclusion is supported by Morozov's (2011) case studies, who highlighted the overall inefficiency of ITC for many communities' democratization. Using a decentralized medium for centralized organization and communication doesn't change the typical span of action significantly. However, using a decentralized medium while holding a different mindset, compatible with valuating decentralization, this changes significantly the outcome actions.

The popular paradigm during The Cold War period emphasized the role of the so called "information curtains" and "communication walls", which were replicated within the internet-centric-paradigm through the metaphor of "The Great Firewall". The main assumption is that once the communication barriers are crumbled, nothing will stop the democratization process to follow its course. Morozov (2011), one of the leading analysts of the pessimistic current regarding the social role of technology, offers a great body of observational data, highlighting the overestimated role supposed to be played by the opportunity of communication and the exposure to information pools. While the author does not make the difference between groups which hold compatible mindsets with the philosophy that accompanied the birth of the internet and those who don't, a cross-reading of his work and the study conducted by Bennet and Sergerber (2012) indicate that as long as the communication serve only to meet classical needs for information dissemination and group identity configuration, the internet is no more than a more faster medium for communication, which is also hindered by the control exercised by institutions and parainstitutions.

However, if the role of communication is somehow changed, then the internet could indeed become an instrument for enabling social change. Across interconnected movements, hereby, communication serves not only for organization and collective identity dissemination, but mostly for self-expressing (Bennet & Sergerber, 2012). This specificity was often regarded in derogatory terms as it was mistaken for narcissism and egotism (Westerman, Berman, Berman, & Daly, 2012; Carpenter, 2012; Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2010).

As it will further be argued, this personalized approach on enrolling to champion a social cause implies more often than not, an universalistic consciousness and not only an egotistic one (Salgado & Ocejja, 2011; Howe & Strauss, 2000). To shed some light on the impact of self-expressing on committing to a cause, it's enough to recall the

rationalist theory of disengagement, outlined by Olson (in Bennet & Sergerber, 2012). Thus, a rational individual will often prefer not to engage in collective actions to achieve a common goal, even if he agrees the cause is a good one. While not going into details, it's enough to point out that the balance of minimizing costs and maximizing benefits is not conducive to engagement. However, this rationalist calculus does not apply across decentralized networks, where winning is not the main objective, but self-expressing and the drive to self-experience are the main reasons of participation (Bennet & Sergerber, 2012).

It must be specified, however, that the need for self-expression does not match the classic need of individuation by sharing a common identity, as it happens within organized groups. A shared cause does not create a common identity for its supporters, across networks, but a favorable context for individuals to emphasize their own individuality.

Therefore, the assumption that decentralized organization is somehow inefficient compared with the centralized one should be readdressed, since they work in different ways and for different aims.

I.3. The vertical order and the horizontal ascension

Although a large volume of studies have been devoted to the investigation of digital facilitated aggression during the first age of the internet (until about 2004, when the so-called Web 2.0 was born), the vast majority of researches do not differentiate between the digital paradigm and the mass-media paradigm. Because during its first age, the internet was mainly mirroring the mass-media, offering a space for interaction where roles were well defined and the production of content, even if diversified, was still monopolized by traditional actors, most of the researchers found the internet, just as in the case of mass media, as a medium prone to accelerating conflicts.

It can be concluded, therefore, that when the digital content is produced within a pattern where roles are predefined and relatively fixed, the dialogue between actors inflames a high level of violence, manifested by harassing and aggressive behaviors (Jameson, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004; Ellison & Akdeniz, 1998).

Much more limited is the body of research investigating decentralized digital communities, where no clear distinction is made between creators and their public, and everybody can be a creator or just a passive or an active observer, without passing any regulations to access a specific role. Despite the large volume of such decentralized communitarian communities, relatively few studies investigated their behavior. Those who did, however, found that their members present a high level of self-awareness and a proactive and altruistic attitude to strangers. Regarding the conflict management, a preference for peaceful resolution through empathic help and not by coercion has been reported. Where the loss or destruction of capital rose as a problem, direct regenerative action was enabled to counteract the damage. This behavioral pattern was observed within communities that maintain Wikipedia and Craig's List, among participants in Burning Man festival (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006), but also within digital pirates networks (Mason, 2013; Staal 2013; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

By corroborating these results with observations derived from the study conducted by Bennet and Sergerber (2012) regarding the connective actions, a protruding behavioral pattern can be traced. First, decentralized communities share the original philosophy that molded the advent of internet, which implies maximal freedom of self-expression, the legitimacy of direct action and the preference for emerging spontaneous order, on the controlled one. Then, the attitude regarding goods and capital is a flexible one, as members tend to feel entitled to appropriate, modify, personalize and redistribute contents and products. This specific stance is furthermore conducive to a specific view on innovation, which is perceived as a continuous collaborative process, and not as an individual effort, as it happens across organized groups where social distance is maintained (Shirkey, 2012). All in all, this world-view enabled a revival of gift economy on a new modern basis, where the need for reciprocity is overpassed (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012).

II. Communities of Don Quixote. Connective social movements for bettering the world

Even if decentralization is not a categorical concept, but an intensive one, and many organizations encompassed different principles of decentralization into their own functioning structure, for better distinguishing connective movements from collective ones, it is useful to sketch the ideal type of a decentralized community. First, this should serve to overpass the stereotypical assimilation of decentralized behavior within the digital landscape, as it happened across the debate regarding the direct impact of ITC on accelerating social dissent. While it is true that the paradigm shift in communication opened the mental space and gave birth to a wider panoply of appropriate tools for connective actions, this should not blur the distinction between decentralized communities and other digital enabled groups (Ross, 2011; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

More than that, the assumption regarding the intrinsic drive for violence of leaderless organizations (Taylor, 2013), as well as their presupposed inefficiency caused, on one hand, by their detachment from institutions and, on the other hand, by their idealist program (Taylor et. all., 2014; Lopez & Marcelo, 2006) need to be more critically regarded. Many scholars already noted that contemporary social movements are the most peaceful we encountered during our history, both in regards with their philosophy and the range of accepted actions (Feix, Pereira, & Juris, 2009). More than that, it can be argued that nowadays decentralization could be more conducive for what's been called "the banality of heroism", than for "the banality of evil" (Zimbardo, 2007).

A more consistent approach with the observational body of data regarding the distribution of violence across digital environment would suggest there is a limit before which, decentralizing a formerly centralized structure would accelerate the diffusion of violence, as it happened across the first age of the internet, when the digital agora was mainly mirroring the mass-media model of content production (Jameson, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

However, if decentralization is taken forward that level and the social distance is minimized enough while the distribution of roles gets extremely flexible, than the situational context could present an intrinsic violence inhibitory effect. This organizational model was refuted by pundits as being chaotic and, therefore, inefficient for social change either because of its inherent instability (Taylor, 2013) or because of the idealistic world-approach it favors, which is dismissed as being childish. Albeit a high degree of instability is specific to all connective movements, the consistence of causes and ideas across these networks is highly stable, as it will be further argued. More than that, the idealistic orientation enables a stronger engagement into social causes, than a pragmatic approach would do (Salgado & Oceja, 2011).

II.1. The model of decentralized organization

There are several fundamental distinctions that distinguish a centralized organization from a decentralized one, as Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) point out. First, within a decentralized community, there is no unity of command and control and responsibility is not delegated or distributed across the network, but assumed by each member. There is also a great difference regarding the motives for affiliation. While a centralized organization will attract its members with social and material benefits, by offering social status and pecuniary capital, a decentralized one will be joined on the basis of shared ideology and purpose. There are also important distinctions regarding the organizational capital and the degree of dependence experienced by members to meet their needs. Within a centralized organization, most of the members are fully dependent of the organization to receive payment. The organizational capital is, therefore, unevenly distributed across different actors, on various meritocracy bases. Across decentralized networks, the opposite situation is often encountered, as members are most of the time financially independent of the organization they joined. On its turn, a decentralized network usually does not possess material capital, or any other capital than the one collaboratively created by its members (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

However, the fundamental distinction between the two types of organization regards the pattern of communication, the access to knowledge and the power distribution. Because within a decentralized network, communication is horizontal and direct, there are no barriers to knowledge and no designed mechanism for assigning roles. Everyone has the same exposure to knowledge and everyone may act to enlarge it or to use it on an uncontrolled basis and under no pressure. Therefore, the power is evenly distributed across the network and direct action is totally possible and minable. On the contrary, within a centralized organization, the communication process follows a vertical track, it is not direct and roles are clearly assigned, respected and maintained as stable as possible. Across the lifespan of a decentralized community, roles are not just highly flexible and assigned by whoever want to access them, but also highly varied, as members are enabled to create new knowledge, new organizational functions and, therefore, new roles. Power and knowledge are never evenly distributed within a centralized organization (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

Another significant pair of contrasts regards the leadership type. As Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) emphasize, decentralized communities are not organized around

leaders, but inspirers and catalysts. It is not just that leaders have power of decision, control and coercion, while catalysts and inspirers don't. As long as charismatic leaders lure their followers to them (Ayalew, 2010; Lipman-Blueman, 2004), inspirers and catalysts lure from them, which means they trigger the desire of authenticity in others, empowering them to become true to their own principles. A whole body of research about transformative leadership has been developed during the last years, which shifts the focus from control to emulation and from self-power to the ability to empower others (Judge, et. al., 2006).

Because the success of an organization is starting to be perceived as an outcome of behaviors and relationships established between people who work within the same entity, the most successful agency is considered to be one that's co-created by its members. There is a significant difference between the common model of organizational functioning and this type of working out through challenges. First, the company is not considered to be a pool of values anymore, which employees are invited to share, acknowledge and appropriate. In turn, a company becomes a co-created formwork enabled by synergetic, but different visions held by its people. This marks a great shift when it comes about management, which is enabled mainly through synergetic competences, and not through ability to control (McLaughlin, 2013; Jan, 2011; Wagner, Ostick, & Komives, nd.).

The crisis scenario is also different for a centralized than for a decentralized organization. When facing danger, a centralized company tends to simplify its structure, in order to protect its board of directors. Most of the creative departments are disabled and communication gets simplified also, with no more arborescent routes to be enacted. During periods of constriction, knowledge and power are even more monopolized by the head of the company. This is not at all the case of a decentralized community, which faces danger through the opposite scenario. When crisis needs to be passed through, knowledge and power are heighten through the network, as members become more active and more creative. Communication is, therefore, intensified and the network itself gets to be replicated within a multitude of newly created networks, more diverse and complex than their mother-network (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

If trying to combat a centralized organization, it is advisable to attack its head and its capital. However, this strategy would be meaningless if applied to a decentralized community. Brafman and Beckstrom (2006) bring a wide range of examples depicting how fighting like that against a decentralized organizations only succeeded in empowering the networks, instead of neutralize them. These phenomena are connected with differences regarding the leadership. Because a decentralized organization doesn't really have a leader, to step out an inspirer can't inflict much damage, because other inspirers would take the initiative, as members were always empowered to act autonomous. More than that, the ideology can't be isolated by isolating its human recipients (Grim, 2005). Because there is no cult of personality, the ideology can't be hindered by the failure of specific persons and because knowledge and power were never monopolized, resilience is also heightened, as common

resources can't be diminished by ousting specific members. That does not mean, however, that decentralized organizations are all powerful and resilient. But to fight one, an effort into centralizing is needed, by empowering inspirers, in order to become leaders and by offering capital that's not co-created, and, therefore, could change the horizontal nature of established relations within the network (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

11.2. Ideological constancy, self-transcendent thinking and membership instability

Numerous studies indicated the superficial drive of nowadays young adults when it comes to engage into militant actions and stand up for different social causes. It has been said that they are doomed to fail because of their instability, explained through facility and slacktivism (Joyce, 2010; Sivitanides & Shah, 2011). However, only a few studies were found to investigate the endurance resorts of organizations which are shaped and maintained by millennials, the generation who embraced the current of decentralization, by estranging itself from institutions (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Because millennials, as a pool group from which most of the members of decentralized networks come from, are highly sensitive to ideologies (Nunes, 2014; Lopez & Marcelo, 2006), it's expected to find a high stability of their social interests. Though, this is not reflected into an expected persistency of their membership within an organization because being true to personal principles is not to be confused with organizational loyalty. This hypothesis is supported by the philosophy of values, which trace a networked behavior of values through a certain society, which makes it highly inefficient to neutralize individuals in order to neutralize values (Grim, 2005). The so called "final solutions" were always scattered because of this missing, although presupposed, overlap between individuals and their held values. Because decentralized communities emphasize autonomy, it should be natural for their members to cherish individual authenticity (Wood et. all., 2008) instead of organizational loyalty. This would, in turn, create a preference for experiencing multiple organizational activities, while conserving values. In other terms, individuals feel free to change membership, but compelled to hold their own principles. The difference between collective actions and connective actions (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) could be spotted into this approach where being true to yourself is regarded as more valuable than being true to an organization.

One of the derived consequences regards the emotional patterns which enables mobilization for a shared cause. Most of the studies insist on frustration and rage as main emotions responsible for contesting social action, as the used frame for understanding protests is still largely tributary to that developed during the first wave of social movements (Lee, 2011).

Within a study conducted to investigate the process of fear transformation among the span of protests (Lee, 2011), a specific moment was registered when fear was overcome and emulated through collectively experiencing flow. In other words, participants became conscious they are part of something bigger than themselves, which could not be stopped. This state of flow was depicted by theorists of the first wave of contention as the result of the contagious irrationality that people surrender to

when they gather in large groups. Because of the rationality battle, the concept remained long underdeveloped until it was addressed within the psychology of creativity. This state of flux is defined as total focused motivation, being considered one of the highest states of mind someone could reach (Csikszentmihaly, 1996). Therefore, it describes the mental state someone experiences when he's totally involved into an action, and the self-conscience and the conscience of the exterior converge. Despite being a deep learning, creative experience, conducive to innovation and by that, engulfing a large amount of cognitive effort, it's accompanied by euphoria and positive emotionality (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Although it is an iconic concept for the entire field of positive psychology, the notion of flow is relatively underused across other knowledge disciplines, despite its explanatory power. Within the investigation of ITC and their social impact, however, the notion of flow was successfully instrumented for explaining technology and internet addictions (Thatcher, Wretschko, & Fridjhon, 2007). Flow should play an important role into shaping behaviors across decentralized networks all the more so as these organizations are highly enabled by digitalism.

It's quite unusual that despite considering millennials as the most creative and spiritual generation we ever encountered (Howe & Strauss, 2000; West Midland Family Center, nd.), the scholarly body of literature doesn't pay much attention to the manner that social action is created and diffused once that creative knowledge is gaining social centrality. Because the experience of flow is mainly specific to creative thinking, the democratization of creativity should create, as in the case of internet addiction was highlighted, a behavioral social pattern where the need for flow is heightened and, therefore, situations which are not flow conducive, are rapidly discharged. This, once again, would explain the high instability registered within decentralized organizations, where on the one hand, most of their members are millennials, and on the other hand, the main configuration is conducive to creativity, by endorsing direct action and even access to knowledge and power.

Indeed, one of the few studies found to explore the emotional patterns that characterize the functioning of humanitarian organizations which are constantly troubled by membership inconsistency, showed that their members are extensively relying on self-transcendent thinking both for taking action and for overcoming day by day challenges (Effler, 2010).

The notion of self-transcendence has deep roots into the field of philosophy and spirituality, but just within the first decade of the XXI century it was acknowledged within the field of experimental socio-psychology (Garcia-Romeu, 2010). Self-transcendence was tested and accepted, therefore, as a personality feature that describes the extent someone can identify with a mental construct that overpasses the boundaries of the material self. To the maximal extent, a person could identify with the whole world. Self-transcendence could be hence defined, as Garcia-Romeu (2010) proposes, as the ability of someone to expand the limits of self within the intrapersonal, interpersonal, temporal or transpersonal level. Within the intrapersonal

level, self-transcendence is indicated through someone's ability to gain a clear knowledge of his or her personal life philosophy. Within the interpersonal level, self-transcendence is operationalized as the capacity of someone to identify with others through empathy. On the temporal level, it describes someone's thinking style that enables him or her to make sense of the past and the future through focusing on the present, as a synthetic situation by which time is given with meaning. Lastly, on the transpersonal level, self-transcendence marks the degree to which someone could feel connected with the world and the nature, passing well beyond empathy.

Within the study of values, Schwartz's (1992) operationalizes the self-transcendent orientation as an encompassing and intensive concept related with the interplay of universalism and benevolence. To the opposite side of the continuum marked by self-transcendence as one of its poles, the self-enhancement drive is placed, as the interplay between achievement and power. The other bipolar continuum traced by Schwartz (1992) refers to openness to change versus conservation. While the openness to change encompasses motivational values as self-direction and stimulation, the conservation orientation is based on valuation of tradition, conformity and security. However, there are three intensive axes to measure someone's self-transcendence: "self-forgetfulness vs. self-consciousness, transpersonal identification vs. self-isolation and spirituality acceptance vs. rational materialism" (Cloinger et. all., in Garcia-Romeu, 2010, p.31). It is not difficult to grasp that the moment of flow indicated throughout protesters' testimonials (Lee, 2011) as being crucial for overcoming fear and action advancement is highly related with self-forgetfulness and transpersonal identification. The main notion of flow implies a state of mind where the boundaries of self-perception and exterior-perception collide and by that, a new state of conscience is achieved (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

A lot of studies describe the Millennials' work style, by pointing out their instability and their drive to self-develop through work situations, getting easily bored and unresponsive when they encounter neither challenging, nor learning situational contexts (Barton, Koslow,& Beauchamp, 2014; Nielsen Company, 2014, Fromm, Lindell,& Decker, 2011; Campbell et. all., 2010). This lack of stability could be theorized hence, through investigating how much of it is related with the rejection of contexts with are not prone to experiencing flow.

A short overview of epistemologically consecrated knowledge types (Scharmer, 2011) would highlight a clear relatedness between each of the three waves of social movements and a dominant knowledge type made evident through their unfolding. The 12 types of knowledge could be systemized as follows (Scharmer, 2011, Table 1).

Epistemological / Action type	Explicit Knowledge	Tacit Knowledge	Self-Transcending Knowledge
Performing	Know-what	Knowledge in use	Reflection-in-action
Redesigning	Know-how	Theory in use	Imagination-in-action
Reframing	Know-why	Metaphysics in use	Inspiration-in-action
Regenerating	Know-who	Ethics/ Aesthetics in use	Intuition-in-action

Without going into detail, Kenneth Arrow introduced the concept of tacit knowledge into the field of economics during the '60s, to describe a by then unrecognized type of knowing, coded as the knowing-by-doing (Arrow, 1962, 1969). It is not difficult to see the common line that brings together this type of knowledge and the overall characteristics of the second wave of social movements when faced with new phenomena, pundits started to develop new theories about social changers which were for the first time attributed with rationality. If the Peter-Pan protester (Feixa, Pereira, & Juris, 2009) is an exponent of a society experiencing the knowledge-by-doing, the Yo-Yo protester (Feixa, Pereira, & Juris, 2009) is claiming his identity from the technologized world he inhabits, where playing and self-developing are the main drives he experience (Florida, 2012).

There are at least two models that address the issue of self-transcendent thinking among specific groups of tech savvy individuals. One is the so called "Kernel – The Conscious Society", elaborated by Todoroi (2012). The main idea is that technology enables people to reach a higher level of creativity integration into their day by day life, offering extremely varied instruments to facilitate creative leisure activities, as playing or composing music, drawing, designing, or even gaming for learning and self-development, to name just a few. Therefore, technology should enhance artistic thinking which, in turn, is supposed to socially diffuse a specific thinking style that's based on imagination, intuition, insight, improvisation and incubation (Todoroi, 2012). Incubation is defined as indirect and active assimilation and redistribution of information, as new interpretative frames are created.

Another model that, more or less, describes and prescribes the same naturalization of a higher state of conscience is the one proposed by Tornero and Varis (2010). The New Media Oriented Humanism sketches the lines across which the more people are exposed to unstructured, large amounts of data, accounting for a transnational reality, the more they have to exercise their critical and interpretative cognitive abilities, ending up by developing a humanist conscience that praises universalist principles and compassion for the human being (Tornero & Varis, 2010). Even though these are theoretical models, they are consistent with Florida's (2012) social research that describes the life of smart cities, where the new creative class or the so-called new bohemians are rising, as a connected, technologized, ludic and creative group who heavily impact the economical urban environment.

However, the self-transcendent knowledge (Scharmer, 2011) could be without much doubt related mainly with the openness to change value category as well as with the self-transcendent – self-enhancement value axis (Schwartz, 1992). Corroborating Florida's (2012) observations about interconnected societies with the characteristics of decentralized communities (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006), it can be hypostatized that self-transcendence and openness to change are favored within extensively decentralized and technologized organizations. This could further explain the idealistic orientation of new-new social movements enacted by Yo-Yo protesters (Feixa, Pereira, & Juris, 2009).

11.3. The quixotic motive for action

When it comes to the presupposed idealism that hinders the allegiance building and the pragmatic efficiency of new-new social movements (Calhoun, 2013), more attention should be paid to the behavioral patterns enacted by quixotic motives for action (Salgado & Oceja, 2011).

The quixotic motive explains someone's rationality for engaging in action through the belief that the world is a better place because of that action (Salgado & Oceja, 2011). This, under no circumstances, refers only to grandiose or dramatic gestures. Acting for bettering the world is mainly related with a basic pattern of thinking and evaluation which holds that in order to do something good it's enough to consider that action as the good thing to be done. This frame of mind is conducive to a highly dynamic behavior when it comes to mobilization, because it circumvents the rational calculus about maximizing outcomes and minimizing costs, by totally transcending the effects beyond the horizon of both the immediate evaluation and immediate reward. The quixotic motive, therefore, enables someone to do good simply because it is a good thing to do while holding in mind that this is somehow contributing to a better world, which would be more wretched in the absence of that action.

Despite the wide body of research regarding human values which fuel different patterns of action, the quixotic motive was not pinned as a self-motive until Salgado and Oceja (2011) experimentally coined it along with the traditionally accepted motives derived from the communitarian world-view and the egotistic world-view respectively. The communitarian motive drives people to act in support of someone or something on the basis of recognized similarity. They share specific features with those who already acted to champion a cause or with those who are in need for help and action is directed to empower people or contexts that trigger empathy. The communitarian motive is, therefore, facilitating an indirect and symbolic action directed to ourselves. The egotistic motive, however, enables people to act in order to diminish a certain discomfort they experience. More often than not, there is not a pure self-motive behind someone's actions, but a mixt incentive which recalls a more dominant motive than another.

Salgado and Oceja (2011) first tested the quixotic motive as different from the communitarian and the egotistic ones and then analyzed the different pattern of altruist actions derived from each motive by manipulating their centrality within the subjects' states of mind. Their results indicated that people who acted on the primacy of the quixotic motive, in contrast with those animated by egotistic and communitarian motives, were much more engaged into efficient help behavior, being willing to devote more time and resources for helping others.

Regarding the personality features and values that are generally conducive to action based on the quixotic motive, authors conducted a study inspired by Schwartz's (1992) theory of values. They found several items to be explicitly related to the orientation towards transcendental change, which leads to stable centrality of the quixotic motive of self. The list that starts with the most powerful correlations and ends with the weakest ones includes: "Daring (seeking adventure, risk), Social Justice (correcting injustice, care for the weak), Unity with nature (fitting into nature), Curious

(interested in everything, exploring), Exciting life (stimulating experiences), Protecting the environment (preserving nature), World at peace (free of war and conflict), Freedom (freedom of action and thought), Spiritual life (emphasis on spiritual, not material), Varied life (filled with challenge, novelty and change), World of Beauty (beauty of nature and the arts), Creativity (uniqueness, imagination), Wisdom (a mature understanding of life), Equality (equal opportunity for all), Choosing own goals (selecting own purposes), Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient) and Broadminded (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)" (Salgado & Oceja, 2011, p.148, Table 1).

Most of these items could be recognized within the profile designed by Florida (2012) to describe the new bohemians, who are tech-savvy and creativity driven, as well as within the generational portrait of millennials (Howe & Strauss, 2000) who are prone to join decentralized communities (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). If new-new social movements are to be tributary to idealist world-views, then the assumption that this reflects a weakness should be reconsidered, as helping behaviors seem to be enforced by this orientation. In other words, the efficiency of new-new social movements should not be so easily dismissed as long as their protagonists are focused on releasing social change through even collaboration and participation, as decentralized networks enable them to do so. The heightened efficiency of decentralized communities when it comes to helping behaviors was already tested across various situations ranging from rescue work to natural disaster management (Meier, 2011, 2008).

II.4. The role of ideology in shaping social tides of action

Even though the model of decentralized organization highlights the core importance of ideology for networked community functioning, relatively few studies were conducted to investigate how specific ideologies impact the span of contesting, especially when connective actions are concerned. Although The Arab Spring offered the eventful horizon for such an applied analysis, most of the researchers were submersed into the debate confronting the optimist view on technology with the pessimist one or they advocated the political process theory, by emphasizing its still adequacy for describing nowadays social movements.

However, the analysis developed by Darvish (2012) to trace the path of the Egyptian revolution erupted in 2011 is representative in this respect. The author expresses a back then unpopular conception about the risky attribution of this social venture with qualities such as democratic or liberating. By a detailed overlook to public speeches and shared slogans, Darvish (2012) connects this historical event with other significant events which shaped the Egyptian history under the claim of political rejuvenation and social freedom. The constant ideology, even though expressed through different manners, in order to meet the popular demands of different times, is, therefore, considered to be a predictor of the failure of real democratization.

Although the ideological context is assumed by many scholars to impact the mobilization process as well as the span of social contesting, the scientific literature is scant within this topic (Stekelenburg, Klandermans,& Dijk, 2009) and even more

limited when connective actions are addressed (Joose, 2007). So far, two different patterns of social contesting were identified as predicted by different ideological mobilization context. By analyzing the span of two protests erupted in two different cities in support of the same cause, by the same time, Stekelenburg, Klandermans and Dijk (2009) observed clear differences between the unfolding of these two events. Both protests were launched to stop several governmental policies, but the ideological context of mobilization was different. Authors point out that across the overall unfolding of the protest which erupted within a materialistic frame to justify mobilization, the level of violence was significant higher than across the contesting actions based on a more idealistic context of mobilization. Materialistic reasoned protests also had a shorter life span than the idealistic mounted ones, which got reactivated through multiple tides of action.

Materialistic reasons to engage into street action could range from explicit objectives to gain power or to promote a political candidate, to more subtle objectives as to obtain strategic or economic benefits for different groups or for the local community (Stekelenburg, Walgrave, Klandermans, & Verhulst, 2012). Idealistic reasons to engage into protest vary from enhancing a world-view hindered by specific policies, to pinning specific principles into the socially accepted repertoire of identities or into the field of public decision making (Stekelenburg et. all, 2012).

These results are consistent with findings derived by Salgado and Ocejia (2011) that indicate the universalist frame of mind as being more conducive to consistent action for social bettering than the communitarian or the egotistic ones. The peaceful nature of emerging protests within an idealistic context should, therefore, bring no surprise. As for their more flexible and time resilient unfolding, this could be interpreted in relation with the specific dynamics of values across societies (Grim, 2005) and the heightened instability registered within decentralized communities (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006) whose members are enacting a self-transcendent style of thinking (Scharmer, 2011).

Although not many studies that follow the social efficiency of decentralized social action according to their ideology were found, those who did it (Joose, 2007) showed that the more universalist is the message diffused by a network, the more amplified gets the movement. Joose (2007) pointed out that the most efficient decentralized social movements are those with the most inclusive messages, which go beyond the traditional communitarian empathy. Again, these results are consistent with the model of decentralized organization (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006) by indicating that successful decentralized functioning is related with open horizontal relations, where the stranger is welcomed and social distance is diminished to such a degree that difference does not create separation any more.

The assumption that new-new social movement would fail to impact society because of their idealism and their ideologies which are shaped around rejection of power (Taylor, 2013) should, therefore, be corrected, since for the success of decentralized actions, the universalist world-view is actually an adequate fuel. The same conclusion could be driven from other studies which by trying to address the debate about the technological impact on democratization, emphasize that social

networks are indeed accelerating the contesting social dynamic, but only for users who already share an interest for political issues regarding freedom and civil rights (Aday et. all., 2012). In other words, as Bennett and Segerberg (2012) indicated by distinguishing between collective and connective actions, the cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal style of individuals– in short, their world-view and their shared ideologies – are responsible for shaping different patterns of social action. These patterns are not necessarily impacted by their protagonists' use of social networks. Within the inner logic of collective actions, communication technology serves only as a tool for optimizing classic ways of social arousal. Within the inner logic of connective actions, communication technology serves, however, to express a new way of social participation based on different motives and different behaviors than those who were previously endorsed for social change (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Decentralized digital enabled communities seem to be properly designed to optimize altruistic behaviors and peaceful contentious actions. However, one should not simply dismiss the large amount of data which links decentralization and internet use with violence and harming behaviors (Lieberman & Collins, 2008; Conway, 2006; Dishman, 2005; Garfinkel, 2003). It could be already hypothesized that violence is more probably related not with highly decentralized organizations but with hybrid organizations, where leaders are still managing the community or the inspirers were turn into leaders, or the organizational capital is not highly transferable or evenly accessible. As mentioned before, this scenario would be consistent with the observation that a high level of online violence was registered within the first age of the internet, when decentralization was still very feebly reflected across the digital landscape because of the prominence of the mass-media model.

However, the presupposed adequacy of networked communities for peaceful behavior should be further investigated by contrasting the model of decentralized organization with the prerequisites for context structuring as to be conducive to either "the banality of evil", or "the banality of heroism"(Zimbardo, 2007).

II.5. The banality of violence and peacefulness. Individual Conscience impact

The concept regarding the banality of evil (Zimbardo, 2007) came to replace the socio-psychological thesis that individuals who engage into extreme violence are somehow abnormal and different from the common people. This new conception was rooted into the scientific research once that Milgram's (1963) experiments showed that perfectly normal individuals can apply deadly electroshocks to others. This finding turned pundits to focus on situational contexts which are conducive to violent behavior. Violence, however, was no more related with individual features, but with situational scenarios.

Without getting into detail, the violence inflicting scenario covers the following phases: a) a person invested with authority proposes a symbolic act of aggression that cannot affect the safety of the future victim. b) that person takes responsibility for whatever the consequences will be and asks for increasing the level of aggression by

persuasion. c) each time the one inflicting harm on his victim tries to stop it, the authoritative person interferes by taking responsibility and assuring the perpetrator of his innocent actions, as well as persuading him that inflicted sufferance is not as bad as it seems.

There are multiple constellations of predictive factors accounting for creating environments conducive to violence. The most investigated predictors regard wearing uniforms, the lack of contact between the perpetrator and his victim, fear of punishment and exclusion, along with the conscience of being under surveillance. Among others, these were the main drivers which favored the configuration of the so called "Third Wave" (Neel, 2010), a false radical movement created in Palo Alto by Ron Jones, a literature teacher who tried to make his students understand the Nazi inner logic.

However, the model of decentralized organization dampens the prerequisites of reaching an obedient attitude towards authority since it completely excludes authority and, therefore, the power of coercion. Although ideology plays an important role for coalescing decentralized communities, and by that, it creates a favorable medium for experiencing belonging and self-transcendence, the openness to strangers should completely change the scenario of violence diffusion. Testimonials of those who attend The Burning Man festival, in Nevada, are indicative in this respect. They show a clear pattern of managing violence once it erupts among community: a) once people witness violence, their first thought is to call the police b) they realize there are no accessible authorities to whom they could delegate responsibility c) they sense the danger of violence contagion and that they have to act because there is no one else to act instead of them d) sometimes they become conscience that episodes of violence could hinder the unfolding of the festival itself e) they act kindly to solve the problem that enacted violent behavior and never try to punish the protagonist, but to help him cross over whatever distressed him in the first place (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).

As one could see, violence is much inhibited by enacting individual's conscience. As for situational vectors that contribute to facilitate the activation of someone's conscience, it seems that the absence of regulatory mechanisms boosts the self-conscience, when the overall context is contributory created and relative safe. This assumption is coherent with the model of The New Media Oriented Humanism (Tornero & Varis, 2010) which, in short, implies that the more people expose themselves to unorganized and varied information the more they develop their critical thinking and their self-conscience.

The same peaceful behavior in managing crisis episodes was found among communities which support Wikipedia or Craigslist (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). Vandalism, in the case of Wikipedia, and fraud, in the case of Craigslist, are amended through direct restorative action, with no energy directed towards punishment, blaming or shaming. An interesting, although not surprising aspect regards the relative weak occurrence of violent episodes across these communities, as their members testify (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). The assumption that each aspect of someone's life needs to be highly secured because it could always become the target of others' destructive drives lies on our world-view that ascribe the human nature with negative meanings and connotations. The experiential reality of many decentralized

communities, however, shows that collaboratively created environments are very little affected by direct negative behaviors, despite being open and unregulated.

Self-conscience had always been considered by modern anarchists as the path keeper of goodness and freedom, as bad things were supposed to be mainly the result of someone's self-surrender for embracing the comfort of formal attitudes prescribed by institutions (Myerson, 2000). Still, much intellectual effort fueled the largely accepted worldview that legitimizes control and hierarchy by contesting self-conscience as a common human feature (Lasswell, 1948; Lippman, 1922 / 2010, Bernays 1928; Le Bon, 1895/2009).

The hero, therefore, is the counterpart of the torturer, as long as both are considered to be uncommon human typologies. However, by accounting the banality of evil, the mental space for taking into consideration the banality of heroism was created (Zimbardo, 2007). If common people are able to do evil deeds, they should also be able to do good deeds. In his book, "Lucifer Effect or how good people turn evil", Zimbardo (2007) draws extensively on the experience from Abu Ghraib prison and his famous Stanford experiment (<http://www.prisonexp.org/>) to argue for the absolutely psychological commonness of people who were influenced by situational contexts to commit atrocities. By the same time, Zimbardo analyses biographies of historical acknowledged heroes just to draw the same conclusion: common people become heroes because of their reactions within specific situational context, without being previously exceptional in any ways.

The heroic behavior is therefore delineated within the concept regarding the banality of heroism and it comprises two dimensions: a) a pulsating attitude that allows someone to move forth and back between commitment and detachment, because prolonged detachment is conducive to cynicism and disempowerment which favor the perpetration of abuses, while prolonged commitment could have just the same result. and b) altruist attitude towards common people and rejection of authority (Zimbardo, 2007).

In the light of this model, more attention should be paid to what was simply categorized as narcissistic, unstable, moody or inconsistent nature of millennial young adults, who can so easily engage and disengage (Westerman et. all., 2012; Shepard, 2003). Beyond the high instability within this generation and within decentralized communities could lie an important framework that predisposes them to act as "common heroes". With respect to the idiosyncratic relation established between institutions and members of decentralized communities, especially as millennials are considered to be generally detached from institutions, a lot of data was already gathered (Boyd, 2014; Taylor et. all., 2014).

Zimbardo (2007) offers a seven point guideline to map different attitudes able to stop the unfolding of violent inductive scripts.

- 1) The first inhibitor of violence consists in regarding error and mistaking as natural and human, so that instead of going for rationalization and self-proving

as being right, the script of “I was wrong - I’m sorry – Forgive me - It’s not going to happen again” can be activated (Zimbardo, 2007, p.4520). Indeed, the need for self-consistency and the negative approach on mistaking were identified across post-traumatic psychology field as the most jeopardizing aspects that fuel destructive and self-destructive behaviors (Van der Kolk , McFarlane,&Weisaeth, 2007).

As it was already mentioned, damage is faced through direct restorative action within decentralized communities, with little other mechanism for accountability than the mere emphasis on reputations which can be enhanced or destroyed (Harvey, Golightly, & Smith, 2013; Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012).

- 2) The second mapped attitude considered to adequately block the diffusion of violence concerns cherishing a state of “mindfulness” which is supposed to be conducive to “instantaneous critical thinking” (Zimbardo, 2007, p.452-453). This constant awareness is defined as active meditation that enables individuals to pay attention to both external and internal stimuli which, in turn, facilitate a better coping with different situations. Even if millennials are considered to be the most spiritual generation, whose members naturalized the practice of meditation (West Midland Family Center, n.d), this isn’t much for critically addressing this issue in regard to decentralized organizations.

However, there are two directions Zimbardo points to. The first is considering a type of thinking enabled by being mindful. The second accounts especially for critical thinking, which is mainly based on a high level of information needs. The mindful processing of information implies specific cognitive routes we generally use when we’re faced with new or uncommon information, so that we engage into a deep thinking process. Without getting into detail, it’s enough to remember that neuropsychology provided a model for processing information and memory formation that, simply put, accounts for two main dimensions: a) for deep information processing to be started at the level of neocortex, an emotional arousal is necessary and b) this arousal should be related with eustress instead of distress (Pasupathi, 2012; Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2007). This interplay between eustress and distress, although it is a complex issue, can be summarized by pointing out that the encounter of unknown produces eustress and activates explorative behaviors if the subject feels relatively safe (Pasupathi, 2012). The explorative thinking pays attention to both internal and external stimuli and is often prerequisite for the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), by enabling someone to use the already achieved informational background in such a manner as new information are deeply integrated into it, and not just merely attached to it, so that new schemes for interpretation are spontaneously created (Pasupathi, 2012). Todoroi’s (2012) model of the conscious society is accounting for this style of thinking which can be traced across Florida’s (2012) description of the creative class.

In order to achieve this attitude of welcoming the unknown, that’s inherent to explorative thinking, one should let go of his need for control in some extent (Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2007). It’s not necessary to resume now the main philosophy that cherished the birth of the internet, which implies total freedom, trust in people and high tolerance to the unknown (Tornerio & Varis, 2010). The decentralized

model of organization is designed accordingly to this philosophy. However, being able to let go of the need for control implies a thin management of information needs, from which it derives. This moves the analysis towards what Zimbardo (2007) pointed as spontaneous critical thinking.

Most of the studies focused on how internet is changing people's information needs report that during the first age of the internet, individuals manifested a hyper-need for information, but, by the same time, the quality of sought information was very low or insufficient developed (Connaway, Dickey, & Radford, 2011; Wiler, 2004; Rieh, 2003). However, the revival of long-form journalism is rooted into digital technology development, which now offers multiple tools for reading management (Tenore, 2012; Benton, 2011; Tenore, 2010). The new reading trend, favoring large, complex content production suggests that although people did choose simplistic information when they couldn't control reading, that happened not because of mass-superficiality enhanced by digital consumption as it was generally considered (Connaway, Dickey, & Radford, 2011), but because the accessibility of such information.

Many studies show that nowadays youth perceive the need to stay informed as a personal duty (Dork, Carpendale, & Williamson, 2011; Sundin, 2011), which, according to other studies, predispose them to dissatisfaction and procrastination (Thatcher, Wretscho, & Fridjhon, 2007, Schwartz, 2005; Burns, Dittmann, Nguyen, & Mitchelson, 2000). Even if it isn't a straight forward argument to infer that members of decentralized organizations would be equipped for explorative thinking (Zimbardo, 2007), by corroborating Forida's (2012) observations about tech-savvy people's behaviors and needs, with seeking information behaviors displayed by millennials and the prospective insights of Tornero and Varis (2010), it could be concluded that all in all, youth who join this kind of organizations are predisposed to develop adequate mind frames for reaching mindfulness and instantaneous critical thinking.

- 3) The sense of "personal responsibility" is another feature which prevents the acceleration of aggressive behavior (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 453). By enhancing direct action and autonomy, decentralized organizational design is, as it was previously discussed, fitted for taking personal responsibility (Boyd, 2014; Falkinge, 2013; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006).
- 4) Keeping a positive self-image by perceiving ourselves as "good-enough" and "worthy individuals", while helping others to improve their self-image is another route to stop violence diffusion which is fueled by peoples' feelings of being "nobody", and, therefore, social invisible and insignificant (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 453-454). Indeed, research shows that in a very large extent, aggressive behaviors are predicted by the degree in which a person can accept his own vulnerability, without hindering his self-esteem (Brown, 2010). Aggressive compensatory behaviors often occur because of someone's inability to perceive the self as a meaningful construct (Van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2007).

Maintaining a positive self-image is probably the first thing researchers found millennials to excel in (Taylor et. all, 2014; Archive, 2013; Prosumer Report, 2011;

Lopez & Marcelo, 2006, Howe & Strauss, 2000). Social networks created a highly conducive medium for common people to feel recognized and significant for others, and this, in turn, accelerated and normalized the courage to stand up which fueled the proliferation of connective actions (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Although no studies were found to investigate how members of decentralized networks are managing vulnerability, the mere design of this type of organization implies collaborative creation and consumption (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006), which is indicative for members' sense of others' significance in their life.

- 5) Directly derived from the second dimension of the heroic behavior model, the next filter proposed for damping violence refers to the "respectful but rebel attitude towards authorities" (Zimbardo, 2007, p.454). There is a large consistent body of data investigating millennials' attitudes towards those with higher ranks than theirs. Despite the fact that millennials feel the need for mentorship and are the first generation to accept elders' leadership if they perceive them as being wise, they are also the protagonists of lots of work related problems because of their ambivalent attitude towards authority. In short, they are highly sensitive to social justice issues and to subtle indices of respect, being more prone to leave a perceived unfair organization, than to build a coherent career path while accepting such shortcomings (Taylor et. all., 2014; Archive, 2013; Prosumer report, 2011). Because decentralized networks allow them to build their life more on their terms, they are considered now to be the first generation so much detached from institutions, while being strongly connected within friendship circles (Taylor et. all., 2014).
- 6) Another path for inhibiting violence consists in developing bipolar valuations for both being a part of a group and personal freedom, so although being grateful to a community, someone would not place belonging as a more significant personal achievement than being true to himself (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 454). This, again, is well fitted with internal dynamics of decentralized organizations, which are accessible in terms of both joining and leaving (Boyd, 2014; Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). Even though this is the main reason for instability across these communities and it was regarded as a great weakness (Taylor, 2013), it is also a great barrier for violence prevalence.
- 7) The last barrier in front of aggression regards the vigilance against symbols and synthetic forms of ideological induction which could prime individuals to be responsive to world-views that will inflict sooner or later attitudes that could damage the dignity of certain groups (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 454). Because millennials, as a generation, were raised mainly on the basis of a visual and dynamic culture, it would be more likely to register among them a high level of uncritical visual absorption (Smith, 2008; Duncun, 2004). However, if the model of The New Media Oriented Humanism (Tornero & Varis, 2010) is to be also applied in regards to visual message exposure, it could be assumed that visual symbolic literacy is going to be also achieved.

III. The present research. Study overview: The quixotic tendency of two decentralized communities across an one year period.

All in all, millennials' generation and even more so, members of decentralized communities seem more fitted for heroic behavior than for perpetuating the banality of

evil (Zimbardo, 2007). Even more so, research suggests that as long as decentralized communities are kept that way, without much hybridization, they could be highly efficient for inducing social change by creating pools of quixotic motivated people, who are, in their turn, efficient in supporting altruistic endeavors (Salgado & Ocejja, 2011). However, this hypothesis should be further tested, in order to verify if quixotic orientation is truly a tendency among decentralized organizations. To do so, two such communities were observed on a one year period and change tendency was measured for egotistic, communitarian and quixotic orientation.

The study aims to highlight the change in quixotic orientation within decentralized communities across an one year period (13 months), from August 2013, to august 2014. Because of the longitudinal nature of the study, only two communities were selected. One is the network of Impossible (www.impossible.com) users; the other one is comprised by users of Couchsurfing online platform (www.couchsurfing.org). The main objective was to measure the growth tendency of quixotic motives as they were indirectly indicated by users' behavior and initiators' ideology.

Impossible is a free sharing platform that enables users to interact by posting what they are ready to give for free or wish to receive for free. The range of sharing comprises food, objects, skills, services or knowledge. The platform is highly decentralized and does not favor a type of gifting over other. Even though each member can be publically thanked by others for his services, this does not inhibit anyone's chances to get helped.

Couchsurfing is both a free and a paid platform that was mainly designed to help travel passionate individuals to host each other for free, across the world. However, the platform allows users to create groups that are decentralized and within which members are enabled to interact with like-minded persons and to post requests on topics of their choice. So, they can find travel mates or companions for different activities, or share advice.

On both platforms, users are enabled to co-create and co-participate one into another's activities and direct action is enhanced. Communication between members is direct. However, Impossible was created as being more conducive to quixotic reasoning, because there is no fragmentation into groups which favor communitarian reasoning. Couchsurfing, instead, got birth to empower travel lovers and, thereby, communitarian reasoning was at its basis. The network got diversified by spontaneous interaction among users who started to self-organize within groups.

Method

To investigate the quixotic tendency, user generated content from both sites was scaled, in order to select appropriate proportional amount of content for analysis. Although the quantity of interaction matters, this is also an effect of marketing strategies used by initiators. In order to focus only on the motives displayed by users, the disparity between the social reach of each platform was not taken into analysis. 166 users' posts and conversations were collected from the total amount of interaction

between users of Impossible. 297 users' posts and conversations were collected from the total amount of interaction within Couchsurfers' groups.

To contrast users' behavior with the core ideology of their membership communities, all articles posted on Impossible and Couchsurfing blogs during the mentioned period were collected and analyzed.

At first, a categorical discourse analysis was performed in order to establish the level of the quixotism, communitarianism and egotism for each community, on a by month basis, from August 2013, to August, 2014. The monthly frequency of codes associated with each designed category was computed. Then, a concordance analysis was performed in order to discharge irrelevant entries. Finally, percentiles were retained, since the total amount of words collected from each community was not even. The TAPoR online tool for discourse analysis was used. Results were then exported into SPSS 17, where correlations, mixed models and regressions were performed, in order to investigate the change tendency of quixotism.

Coding and research design

In order to create codes for each category, the social values scale (Schwartz, 1992) and the derivation of the ten basic values (Schwartz, 2005) were used. By contrasting Schwartz' (1992) model with other taxonomies of values, the category of self-transcendence was related with sympathy, the ability to enjoy life through group participation and an instrumental perception of self as a vehicle for greater purposes, as well as with valuating affection, broadmindedness, forgivingness, helpfulness, honesty and responsibility (Bilsky & Koch, 2000). As for the category of self-enhancement, it was connected with someone's ability to face adversity by practical engagement, which is translated into valuation of ambition, capability, intellect and logic (Bilsky & Koch, 2000).

Contrasting the value axis of conservation versus openness to change to other epistemological models of values, the two intensive categories were found to be related with different attitudes and life principles (Bilsky & Koch, 2000). Therefore, the conservation orientation was related with the tendency to preserve and admire the great achievements of humanity, the ability to self-control in order to hold firm personal principles, and the passive awaiting for joy and peace, through cultivating obedience, orderliness and politeness (Bilsky & Koch, 2000).

The openness to change was related with cherishing independence and self-knowledge, as well as with the drive of seeking stimulating experiences, while accepting diversity and meditating on the inner life. This value category is also related with courage, imagination and independence (Bilsky & Koch, 2000). Bilsky and Koch (2000) argue, as they experimentally tie up this corroborated taxonomy of values, that hedonism is a border category, claimed both within the openness to change orientation and the self-enhancement orientation. It is associated with cheerfulness and enjoying simple and accessible pleasures. The authors point out that various values hold an ambiguous affiliation, as for example, independence can match both the self-enhancement orientation and the openness to change. There are also contexts when self-control, which is presumably associated with the conservation versus self-

transcendence axis, can change its meaning as to indicate the self-enhancement category (Bilsky & Koch, 2000)

Salgado and Oceja (2011) conceptualized the quixotic motive as dependent on both self-transcendence and openness to change. The communitarian motive was therefore operationalized as related with self-transcendence and conservation, while the egotistic motive was considered to be related mainly with self-enhancement and conservation. By keeping in mind the observations of Bilsky and Koch (2000), the following categories were defined. Universalism, benevolence and stimulation were retained as related with quixotism. The communitarian motive, in turn, was considered to be related with the following categories: benevolence, tradition, conformity and security. The egotistic motive, therefore, was related with categories of power, achievement, hedonism, self-direction, security and conformity. Schwartz's theory of values (2012) and observations derived from the study conducted by Bilsky and Koch (2000) were used in order to establish appropriate codes for each category.

After frequencies were measured on a by month basis for each category, across the separate plots of content ascribed to Impossible users, Impossible promoters (blog), Couchsurfing users and Couchsurfing promoters (blog), percentiles were computed and data was exported to SPSS 17. To avoid problems that could appear because the mixed meaning of some categories, Quixotism was computed as the mean of scores registered for universalism and stimulation, while Communitarianism was computed as the mean of scores registered for conformity and tradition. Egotism was, at last, computed as the mean of scores obtained for power and security. All the other categories (benevolence, self-direction, achievement and hedonism), which hold mixt meanings when they are to be ascribed to a value category, as they reflect relations between value categories (Scwartz, 1992) were hold as independent variables and used in further analyses.

Results and Interpretation

A minimal overlook on means computed for quixotism, communitarianism and egotism shows that across investigated samples there are no outstanding differences and all motives of self are quite fairly represented. However, as it was expected, on Impossible blog, the mean of quixotism is the biggest. The same situation is encountered for Couchsurfing blog, also. This could suggest ideological priming slightly biased towards quixotism. Still, both for Impossible users and couchsurfers, the biggest mean was computed for egotism, while communitarianism means were the smallest.

	Quixotism			Communitarianism			Egotism		
	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean
Couchsurfing members	3.53	4.43	3.96	1.97	3.55	2.63	4.03	5.17	4.45
Couchsurfing blog	2.83	7.62	5.09	1.00	4.45	2.29	2.36	5.50	4.22
Impossible members	2.96	4.63	3.86	2.26	3.93	3.09	3.57	5.19	4.36
Impossible blog	2.88	6.13	4.24	0.00	3.12	2.11	0.84	6.27	3.87
Couchsurfing total	2.83	7.62	4.5	1	4.45	2.47	2.36	5.50	4.34
Impossible total	2.88	6.13	4.06	0.00	3.93	2.58	0.84	6.27	4.11

At first, an Unconditional Mean Model was conducted, in order to investigate the interclass correlation (ICC = 0.3). As the registered value was higher than 0.25, the Individual Growth Curve (ICG) analysis was conducted. However, The Unconditional Linear Growth Model pointed no significant linear effect of time over quixotism ($F(1,146.58)=0.96, p=.33$). However, it's suggested that the mean of quixotism was 4.54 and decreased with time ($b=-0.47, SE=0.48, p=.328$) When testing for quadratic and cubic growth curve, nor time, or time² or time³ were found significant. Modeling the ICG for egotism and communitarianism also showed no significant change over time.

Because Impossible users registered lower scores at quixotism than couchsurfers, despite the fact that their ideology was much more quixotic oriented than that of couchsurfers, a mediatory variable is supposed to influence the altruistic motivation, beyond ideology. Because Couchsurfing is a community designed around the passion of traveling and the experience of flow was shown to be of great importance across the unfolding of different social actions (Lee, 2011), as well as across day by day life of millennials who are involved in altruistic endeavors (Effler, 2010), it was hypothesized that passion is mediating quixotic orientation. Until late 90's the scientific literature on passion was very scant, despite the great attention it received from philosophers (Vallerand, 2007). Passion is related with flow experiencing as long as it is harmonious, in contrast with the obsessive type, and satisfies the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Vallerand, 2007).

In order to check this hypothesis, the category of passion was introduced and a frequency analysis was performed again, by retaining percentiles. The scale of obsessive and harmonious passion (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, et. all., 2003) was used in order to design categories for harmonic dimension of passion. Results were exported into SPSS 17 and then, correlations, mixed models and regressions were performed, to grasp the model that best fits the change of Quixotism over time. The table with significant correlations can be consulted below.

Variable	Quixotism	Communitarianism	Egotism	Benevolence	Passion	Hedonism	Self-direction	Achievement
Quixotism	1							
Communitarianism	-.310* p=0.032	1						
Egotism		.468** p=.001	1					
Benevolence	.665* p=.000			1				
Passion	.519** p=.000				1			
Hedonism	.619** p=.000			.645** p=.000	.461* * p=.001	1		
Self-direction			.305* p=.036				1	
Achievement		.306* p=.035	.337* p=.019	.324* p=.025			.753* * p=.000	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Furthermore, linear regressions were conducted for quixotism, communitarianism and egotism. Two models were retained for quixotism, one for communitarianism and one for egotism. Both egotism and communitarianism were predicted by achievement.

Quixotism, however, was best described by benevolence and passion which both significantly influenced the variance in the outcome variable, as it was expected on the basis of theoretical investigation. For the first model, benevolence was selected as predictor, with $R=.665$, accounting for 44.2% ($R^2= .442$) of the total variance of the output. By adding passion, however, R^2 increases to .608 (with $R = .780$) which means that passion accounts for 16.6% of the total variance of the output.

The predictive models could be consulted bellow.

Predictive model for **Quixotism** (Stepwise)

	B	SE B	β
Step 1			
Constant	1.65	0.45	
Benevolence	0.36	0.06	.66*
Step 2			
Constant	1.14	0.4	
Benevolence	0.32	0.05	.59*
Passion	0.55	0.12	.41*

Note: R² = .44 at Step 1, with a Δ change in R² = .17 for step 2, significant at p<0.001

Predictive model for **Egotism** (Stepwise)

	B	SEB	β
Constant	2.46	0.74	
Achievement	0.20	0.08	.34*

Note: R² = .114, with p=0.001

Predictive model for **Communitarianism** (Stepwise)

	B	SEB	β
Constant	1.17	0.63	
Achievement	0.16	0.07	.31*

Note: R²= .09, with p <0.05

When Mixed Models were used to further investigate the change of quixotism while taking into account the ICC, a three level predictive model was designed. Within this model quixotism was significantly predicted by the wave of time ($F(1, 48)=8.22, p<.001$). The interaction between the wave of time and benevolence also significantly predicted the outcome variable ($F(1,48)=29.90, p<.001$), as the level of passion did, as well ($F(1,48)=22.54$).

The mixed model is, therefore, summarized in the following table:

	b	SEb	95% CI	
Time	-0.29	0.28	-0.4	-0.18
Time*Benevolence	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.05
Passion	0.61	0.13	0.35	0.87

By conducting separate multilevel models for Couchsurfing and Impossible separately, it could be found that for Couchsurfing, time did not predicted the level of Quixotism ($F(1,25)=3.77, p=.06$) and neither the interaction between time and benevolence ($F(1,25)=2.46, p=.13$), but passion did ($F(1,25)= 38.97, p<.001$). For Impossible, instead, passion did not predict the level of quixotism significantly ($F(1,23)=1.98, p=.17$). By the opposite, time ($F(1,23)=16.61, p<.001$) and the interaction between time and benevolence ($F(1,23)=24.83, p<.001$) did.

Different tendencies were found, therefore. In the case of Impossible, the negative effect of time ($b=-0.25, p<.001$) and the positive smaller effect of time and benevolence combined ($b=0.03, p<.001$) suggest a slight decrease of quixotism level over time. For Couchsurfing, however, the level of quixotism was found to be rather stable in time, as only predicted by the variance of passion ($b=1.24, p<.001$).

Further analyses differentiated between the ideological priming for quixotism and the in-group perspective on quixotism. For the Couchsurfing blog, thereby, even though only passion ($F(1,12)=5.35, p=.03$) predicted significantly the quixotism, time's effect was also found to be close to significance ($F(1,12)=4.26, p=.06$) and negatively influencing the outcome variable ($b=-.32$). For members of Couchsurfing this relation

is enforced, as time ($F(1,13)=0.18$, $p=.68$) and interaction between time and benevolence ($F(1,13)=0.1$, $p=.763$) are completely insignificant for the level of quixotism. Passion, instead, predicts the quixotism significantly ($F(1,13)=7.04$, $p=.02$). As for Impossible blog, passion did not predicted quixotism ($F(1,12)=0.69$, $p=.42$), but time ($F(1,12)=14.8$, $p=.002$) and the interaction between time and benevolence ($F(1,12)=20.68$, $p=.001$) did. When the content produced by Impossible members was surveyed, only the interaction between time and benevolence predicted the change of quixotism ($F(1,11)=4.87$, $p=.04$), but time itself wasn't found to have a linear effect ($F(1,11)=2.78$, $p=.12$). Passion ($F(1,11)=0.89$, $p=.37$) did not predict the level of quixotism either.

Final Discussion

As means indicated, quixotism level was higher than the communitarianism one, although not higher than the level of egotism. Still, differences weren't impressive. However, this was surprising as it was supposed that quixotism regards only as a tendency and not as a well established and consistent active motive of self. It could be observed that passion is highly influencing the level of quixotism which tended to slightly decrease over time when was solely moderated by benevolence, but not when passion moderated it. It's interestingly to observe that across Couchsurfing, a community which was supposed to account mainly for communitarian reasoning, because it was shaped around a shared passion like traveling, which implies openness to change and unknown, the quixotism is better represented than the communitarianism. Even more than that, although ideological priming addresses quixotism on a slightly decreasing rate over time, Couchsurfing users are mainly quixotic oriented on the base of passion with no change over time. For Impossible, however, benevolence is more central and related with changes in quixotism. As it was the case of Couchsurfing users, Impossible users also displayed a constant level of quixotism over time, despite the fact that ideological priming addressed quixotism on a slightly decreasing rate over time.

Results suggest that the opportunity to experience flow as it happens when passion is exercised weights the quixotic orientation. These findings should be further investigated by extending the sample of decentralized communities selected for observation and by direct assessing tendencies within different populations through self-reported questionnaires. Furthermore, results should be replicated across different decentralized communities which are actively pursuing a socio-political cause. Although couchsurfers were interested among others on libertarianism, anarchism and socialism, as well as on ways of life outside the system, as they created interaction groups for debating and organizing related actions, users of Impossible only indirectly and randomly addressed these issues. However, neither the users of Couchsurfing, nor those of Impossible could be hold representative for decentralized socio-political communities and the tendency towards quixotism should be specifically investigated across such social samples.

However, the assumption that decentralized communities are prone to violence (Garfinkel, 2003) or ineffective (Taylor, 2013) should both be revised and nuanced.

First of all, because motives of self are not purely activated on the interpersonal level and not even within the intrapersonal level, even though the level of idealism increases, this does not necessarily imply a lack in pragmatism, as quixotic orientation did not exclude the egotistic one. Secondly, as Salgado and Ocejja (2011) argued, such an increase would make these communities to be even more efficient in conducting altruist behaviors. That means that as long as new-new social movements evolve within creating solutions to exist the system (Taylor et. all., 2014) by increasing non-reciprocal sharing and gifting (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), they could reach a high level of resilience by further developing self-transcendent thinking (Effler, 2010).

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OCCUPY WI-FI – A CONCEPT, A TOOL, A CALL FOR ACTION

YOAV LIFSHITZ, TAL MESSING

ABSTRACT

The central democratic battlefield of the 21st century will resolve around The Internet. The egalitarian premise of the Web is now being threatened, thus politicized, as the fight for digital sovereignty begins. The Israeli Pirate Party, an unregistered but quasi-official political party, a collective of writers, programmers, artists, designers and other creatives, perceives this struggle as posing a simple but effective question: What is the Internet? Occupy WiFi, the project we develop, is a public performance piece and hacktivism tool for the post-Snowden era. While government and corporate powers aspire to annihilate our public spaces, tracking, measuring and isolating us, the WiFi sphere is becoming our last free autonomous zone. During our presentation, we will examine the many aspects of such protest, resistance and occupation: from conceptual and theoretical influences, to technological inspirations and political practices. Actual results, media attention, DIY guides, and future possibilities and developments will be discussed.

On July 14 (#J14), 2011, Daphni Leef, a young Israeli woman, organized a protest against the high prices of rent in Tel Aviv. She and a few friends set tents in the middle of the symbolic Rothschild Boulevard, as a way to demonstrate that the only option to live in the city is in tents. The rent was, and still is, very high. This act embarked the Tents Protest, the Israeli version of the social and pro-democracy protests wave that burst all around the world that year, from Egypt to the United States, as the rent in Tel Aviv was just the symptom of a the illness of the Israeli economy. The tents sprawled from the center of Tel Aviv to the entire country. Secular Jews, orthodox Jews, Arabs, were all living in tents in order to protest a wide variety of social injustice. It was the largest social protest movement in the history of Israel. At its peak, nearly half a million Israelis were marching in the streets. It was the constitutive political movement of our generation, and it constituted the Israeli Pirate Party¹.

¹ Israeli Pirate Party (israelipirates.org.il) is not a registered party, but a collective of activists and hacktivists that act under the Pirate Party flag. There is an actual registers Pirate Party in Israel (named Pirate Party Israel), but it isn't really "pirate" nor active.

Occupiers as Pirates

From a pirate point of view, this protest was a lot about pirate issues and agendas – transparency in budgets, a more participatory political system, against monopolies, justice in courts etc.

People lived in unauthorized tents-camps, autonomous zones in the center of Tel Aviv and other cities, and marched freely in the streets whenever they wanted. All regulations regarding protests and assemblies were de-facto held off. The tents-camps were a really progressive public sphere where one can "sense" the public thinking, like in Habermas' vision, or like a hivemind. The occupiers had councils to decide about agenda and course of action and it was consensus based.

The tents, their architecture, what they symbolize, and how they let people communicate, to share information about politics in the middle of the boulevard, where a lot like what is going on in the web, only in ex-web, in the midst of the hot summer of the middle east. It was a platform for an experiment in a different political and economic system, very similar to the vision of do-ocracy from the book *Bolo'bolo*².

A Battle for Two Territories

In Israel, much like in Iceland or Turkey, the pirate battle is not just for file sharing and copyright reform. Copyrights are merely the metaphor for freedom of information and better use of technology in the information age - but it's a part of a bigger battle for a democratic and social reform: a battle for transparency, for not being monitored, for a participatory political system, for better economic and monetary system, etc. Politics re-writes its code in the information age, and this is a battle in which pirates and the pirate progressive post-ideology should play a major part.

One of the Israeli Pirate Party slogans is "Free internet – free public sphere", and it is the essence of information age politics. Free internet, and its ethos of transparency and flow of information, enables evolution, and sometimes revolution. This is why dictators block the internet, and liberal states have more sophisticated laws, legal boundaries against free use of the internet, and use the technology against their own people.

As a political party formed out of the tents, we realize that our territory in both online and offline, or perhaps - the internet, the web, is the map of the ex-web, which is the territory.

Both of our territories are in danger of being taken from us. The NSA, the battle for net-neutrality, the arrests of pirate bay founders and some anons, initiatives like SOPA, and many domestic rules which threaten the freedom of the internet³. But also the ability to protest, to have your voice heard in public, is being threatened.

² P.M. (1983). *Bolo'bolo*

³ An example that is significant in the context of Occupy WiFi, in August 2014 Russia was reported to demand Internet users show ID to access public WiFi. Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/08/us-russia-internet-id>

The tents were evicted at the end of 2011 summer. Some protesters thought it to be just the first stage of a long battle, others simply got tired of living in tents. But in the summer of 2012, when we wanted to back in the streets, back in tents, we found that it was much more difficult for us to protest. This time, protesters were being targeted and digitally surveilled, both on social media and during protests⁴; protesters faced violent arrests and false indictments which cause a chilling effect; and we needed a license to place a tent in the boulevard, thus making us pirates against our will just like online piracy. Although protest is good for democracy, it was being made simply impossible to protest freely.

A similar approach was taken against the Occupy movement in USA, where occupiers were treated as terrorists⁵, and in Turkey, where the police violently evicted the protesters from Gezi Park.

The political speech, the political act of sharing information is in danger as a whole. Much like the metaphor of copyrights, CCTVs are a perfect example of the way the public sphere is being privatized or taken by the bio-politics, and thus, narrows the available and much needed free space for expression in public.

Occupy WiFi: A Concept

As post-tents post-Snowden Israeli pirates, we had the task of coming with a new, creative, technology based, way of protesting in the streets without being monitored or arrested.

Our solution is a concept we call Occupy WiFi.

Occupy WiFi is a public performance piece, wireless art installation and hacktivism tool for the post-Snowden era all at once. It takes advantage of the most basic human need: the constant hunger for open WiFi networks in public space.

The Occupy WiFi project, developed by the Israeli Pirate Party, is a call for action: turn yourselves into Web servers and propaganda distributors. This enables activists, protesters and other freedom of speech advocates to virtually demonstrate in public institutions, cafes or banks, without having to get a protest license, while grabbing the crowd's attention.⁶

⁴ For digital surveillance during protest, on one occasion the Israeli police used a vehicle called "Raccoon", which is usually used by border police, and is able to collect data for radius of 10-20 kilometers. Source: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/what-was-a-border-police-surveillance-vehicle-doing-at-a-tel-aviv-social-protest-1.448110>

⁵ Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/23/fbi-occupy-wall-street_n_2355883.html

⁶ From Occupy WiFi manifesto, available at: <http://occupywifi.org/en/>

The project is inspired by Aram Bartholl's "anonymous, offline, peer to peer file-sharing network in public space", Dead Drops⁷, and by the wireless "DIY anonymous offline file-sharing and communications system", Pirate Box⁸.

The concept is very simple: turn yourselves into web servers and propaganda distributors. How? Carry your own digital propaganda tool – a router! This way you can distribute messages to anyone who is in your radius.

You can set a site specific message. Corporations already do that every time you log into their open WiFi, so why can't we use that uncensored virtual space for our own needs? For example, while waiting at a bank, why not take advantage of the time you spend there and tell everyone what you think about banks?

Occupy WiFi: A tool

A router is a good tool for sharing and expressing in the public sphere, for its clear advantages:

Occupy WiFi is an easy way to grabbing the crowd's attention. The page that the user's device is directed to is called a Captive Portal for a reason. Occupy WiFi is anonymous. The router is a stand-alone, not connected to the internet, and it can't be monitored. No one knows who carries it or who installed it. It's like walking with a t-shirt that has a message and wearing a mask at once. Occupy WiFi can be used for a permanent, constant demonstration, without the protester having to physically be at the venue all the time. You can install the router at a nearby place and have it be a fixed virtual bulletin board. Occupy WiFi lets you protest at ease, while drinking your coffee at the coffee shop or on a bus, using portable routers with batteries.

Occupy WiFi is legal, for the time being. And most important – using Occupy WiFi practice, you can demonstrate where you are not allowed. This is the so-called hacking part of this concept: Wi-Fi hacks the territory, even one with restricted access. Radio waves are carried in the air, so that a router installed nearby a closed for protest site can deliver a message to people in that territory.

Our inaugural, most conceptual and symbolic mission of the project was to set a WiFi network in Ministry of Interior office in Tel-Aviv as a protest against the Israeli Biometric Database project.

The Biometric Database Law, is an Israeli law which the Knesset passed in December 2009, determining that fingerprints and facial contours would be collected

⁷ Dead Drops are "USB flash drives [that] are embedded into walls, buildings and curbs accessible to anybody in public space". You can read about this art/network concept at <https://deaddrops.com/>

⁸ Pirate Box is a wireless, raspberry pi based, "portable offline Internet in a box". We consider it the successor of Dead Drops, since it has the same logic, only you don't have to physically connect your computer to a wall, and have multi-users use it at once. You can read more at <http://piratebox.cc/>

from all Israeli residents, that the collected data would be integrated onto the Israeli digital identity cards and digital passports, and that a biometric government database of all Israeli citizens and residents would be created which would be used for biometric identification that would allow the management of access control, identification of individuals and assist in locating individuals suspected of criminal activity by the law enforcement officials.⁹

In simple words, Israel will finally have a smart-ID (electronic ID), like many countries already use, only unlike any other democracy, Israel is using the implementation of the smart-ID to create a database containing the biometric details of all its citizens¹⁰.

The opposition to the biometric project is very strong, and succeeded in making it only a voluntary pilot at this stage. Academics, scientists (including Nobel Prize winners), security experts, made their opinion heard against the database, arguing that not only it is immoral and anti-democratic act, it also endangers the security of every Israeli citizen in case of a leak.¹¹ Even Israel's security agencies forbid their people to join the dangerous experiment.

Currently the project is running as a pilot, and though there is not a clear criteria for a successful pilot (since the government wishes to make it mandatory no matter what), it's clear that the fewer people voluntary give their biometric details for the database project, the government will have a difficult task to call it a success.

So we used Occupy WiFi practice to warn people waiting in line at a Ministry of Interior office in Tel Aviv (where the biometric ID is issued) of the danger in the biometric database, and maybe adding them to statistics of people who refused to give their fingerprints and face scan to the government.

Only using Occupy WiFi we could demonstrate inside the offices, not only outside of the building. Other reasons for selecting this venue in particular are: The entrance to the Ministry of Interior's office is conditioned in a security check. Citizens aren't allowed to protest against the database Project in the office's territory; A long line spirals in the place. The waiting time is several hours; The Interior office itself is displaying propaganda consisting of short films glorifying the biometric experiment to the captive audience waiting in line.

This way, propaganda in a wireless network is the only way to oppose the old media propaganda of the Interior's Office and inform the people waiting in line regarding its dangers and risks.

⁹ Source: Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biometric_Database_Law)

¹⁰ In order to have an electronic ID, a country doesn't have to create a biometric database or to keep biometric details in any form. A fingerprint is embedded only to the electronic ID itself.

¹¹ Michael Eitan, former Minister of Science & Technology, called a potential leak a "Digital Chernobyl (source: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/digital-chernobyl-1.280802>)

In order to encourage people to connect, and evoke awareness to WiFi network we deployed in the space, we handed out notes telling people that in order to shorten the line for the Biometric ID, they must connect to our network, named BIOMETRIC_ID_HERE. When they connected, a splash page containing crucial anti-biometrics information was shown to connected users¹². This is how we thought to affect people who wish to join the voluntary pilot, mostly since they aren't aware of the dangers of the Biometric Project.

While for the first mission in the interior office we used a portable router, in another mission, against a museum in Tel Aviv owned by the city which violates its workers' rights¹³, we installed a router at an empty building nearby, also owned by the city. This practice is Digital Squatting. The plan is to use this practice for the protest against the biometric experiment as well, and place routers at stores located near the office.

In both missions described here, we used the name of the WiFi we set on site for our purposes. Like a virtual graffiti, it can be used to spray¹⁴ a message (for example: "vote pirate"), or in some artistic way. There is no law that regulates it. One can be at a bank and call his WiFi the same name the bank calls its own. It's as legal as using your competitor's name in GoogleAds.

Occupy WiFi: A Call for Action

We opened with a broader look of the danger for freedom of information, both in cyberspace but also in the streets, the map and the territory. Our digital protest project, Occupy Wi-Fi is not only a tool for protesters to bypass some of the restrictions against them in the streets, but also a concept and a symbol for our battle for democracy and freedom of information – both in the streets and in cyberspace, and maybe even more important: a call for action.

The web as we know it might not be free, but what is the web? Is there one Internet? The internet consists of lots of "webs" and different layers. Last June, Gordon M. Goldstone published an article in The Atlantic about the end of the internet¹⁵.

"Some experts anticipate a future with a Brazilian Internet, a European Internet, an Iranian Internet, an Egyptian Internet—all with different content regulations and trade rules, and perhaps with contrasting standards

¹² In order to install the splash page (a.k.a. captive portal) we use OpenWRT (<https://openwrt.org/>) firmware, a GNU/Linux distribution for embedded devices, suitable for a specific router.

¹³ For this mission we set up a "fifth wall" at the museum, a so-called pirate art exhibition, available for everyone that visits the museum. The works we installed on the router for this exhibition were about workers' rights, and we informed the visitors that this museum is not just a site used for art-washing by Tel-Aviv municipality, but also a site for a political battle for rights against the municipal authority.

¹⁴ The inspiration for this practice is Addie Wagenknecht's WiFi Tagger (can be found here: <http://fffff.at/wifitagger/>). "Tagging" is a basic way of writing the graffiti artist's name.

¹⁵ Goldstone, Gordon M., "The End of The Internet?". The Atlantic, 25.6.14 (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/07/the-end-of-the-internet/372301/>)

and operational protocols. Eli Noam, a professor of economics and finance at Columbia Business School, believes that such a progressive fracturing of the global Internet is inevitable. "We must get used to the idea that the standardized internet is the past but not the future," he wrote last fall. "And that the future is a federated internet, not a uniform one." Noam thinks that can be managed, in part through the development of new intermediary technologies that would essentially allow the different Internets to talk to each other, and allow users to navigate the different legal and regulatory environments."

One can also talk about Google Internet or Facebook Internet. This is the awareness this practice of making your own web wishes to raise: there is no one internet.

Is the Internet, like the Jewish Elohim, not one-that-is-many? A singular form which includes an infinite multiplicity? Why only one Internet? Why not many internet(s)? You're an internet!¹⁶

The solution for the privatized and monitored internet may be local internets. The internet nation may be a federal state like Eli Noam said. And if that is the case, we need to occupy our own networks, build a global net of autonomous mesh networks, an alternative infrastructure that will be net neutral, new independent platform. This is the call of Occupy WiFi.

¹⁶ From Occupy WiFi manifesto



Portable router (TP-Link TLMR-3040) with Occupy WiFi sticker



Noted we handed to people waiting in line at the Interior office, telling them about a network called BIOMETRIC_ID_HERE for faster enrollment to the database. The logo is of the Population and Immigration Authority which is in charge of issuing biometric IDs and passports.



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BIOMETRIC_ID_HERE

< > התחבר ביטול

מערכת רישום מזורז למאגר הביומטרי

רשות האוכלוסין וההגירה

השתגעת!?

טביעת האצבע שלך עומדת להיכנס למאגר הביומטרי ללא אפשרות להתחרט. אינך חייב/ת!

המאגר נמצא בשלבי ניסוי ומותנה ברצונך להשתתף. סרב/י לתת את טביעת האצבע שלך וסרב/י להצטרף למאגר הביומטרי!

לא השתכנעת? הנה מספר סיבות מדוע המאגר הביומטרי הוא סכנה לפרטיות שלכם ולבטחון המדינה:

- מומחים רבים מהאקדמיה וממערכת הבטחון מסכימים כי ריכוז המידע הביומטרי של אזרחי ישראל במאגר אחד מהווה סכנה לפרטיות שלכם ולבטחון במדינה המידה והמאגר ייפרץ

Captive Portal (splash page) for the mission at Ministry of Interior. The first screen says that in order to fasten the procedure of joining the experiment one has to insert his fingerprint. Touching it leads the second screen, which tells those who "put their finger in the database", that this is dangerous and explains the reasons why.

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אזהרה דחופה / תהל פרוש

זוהי אזהרה דחופה. בכל המקרים הבאים אנא הפסיקו לעבוד מיד וצאו לרחוב.

הפסיקו לעבוד אם במקום העבודה שלכם פערי שכר מוגזמים בין העובד הזוטר למנהל הבכיר ביותר, אם הבחנתם שיש מנהלים מתעללים או מנהלים בכלל, אם אתם או מי שלידיכם נדרשים לעבוד יותר משבע שעות ביום, אם שמתם לב שעובדים חולים מגיעים לעבוד, אם אתם נדרשים לדווח על מיקומכם, אם עליכם לנהוג במכונית לעבודה יום יום, אם אתם צריכים לקבור אפכם בחול, לשקר, למכור מוצרים שאין בהם צורך, נדרשים להופיע בלבוש הולם, אם על שבע השעות אינכם מקבלים משכורת המספיקה לקורת גג, אוכל, לימודים, להולדת ילד, לספרים, מוזיקה, הצגות, תיאטרון וקולנוע, קניית צבעים ונייר לציור, שיעורי ריקוד ונסיעות אוטובוס לים.

מאבק עובדי מתחם ביאליק




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airport.us
Occupy Beit Hair

< > התחבר ביטול

עיצבו הכל. צאו לשבת באוויר הפתוח ליד ביתו של שר הביטחון, שר האוצר, ראש הממשלה, כל שרי הממשלה, צאו לשבת ליד בתיהם של עשירי ישראל המעסיקים אתכם, ואם יזדמן לכם לראות אותם, אולי אף תוכלו לשבת בחיקם. צאו לשבת במגדלי אקירוב, על גג בניין האופרה, בסביון, כפר שמריהו, הרצליה פיתוח, ארסוף וקיסריה. הציפו את רחובות תל אביב צפון ומרכז והיזכרו: מה לא. מה כן.

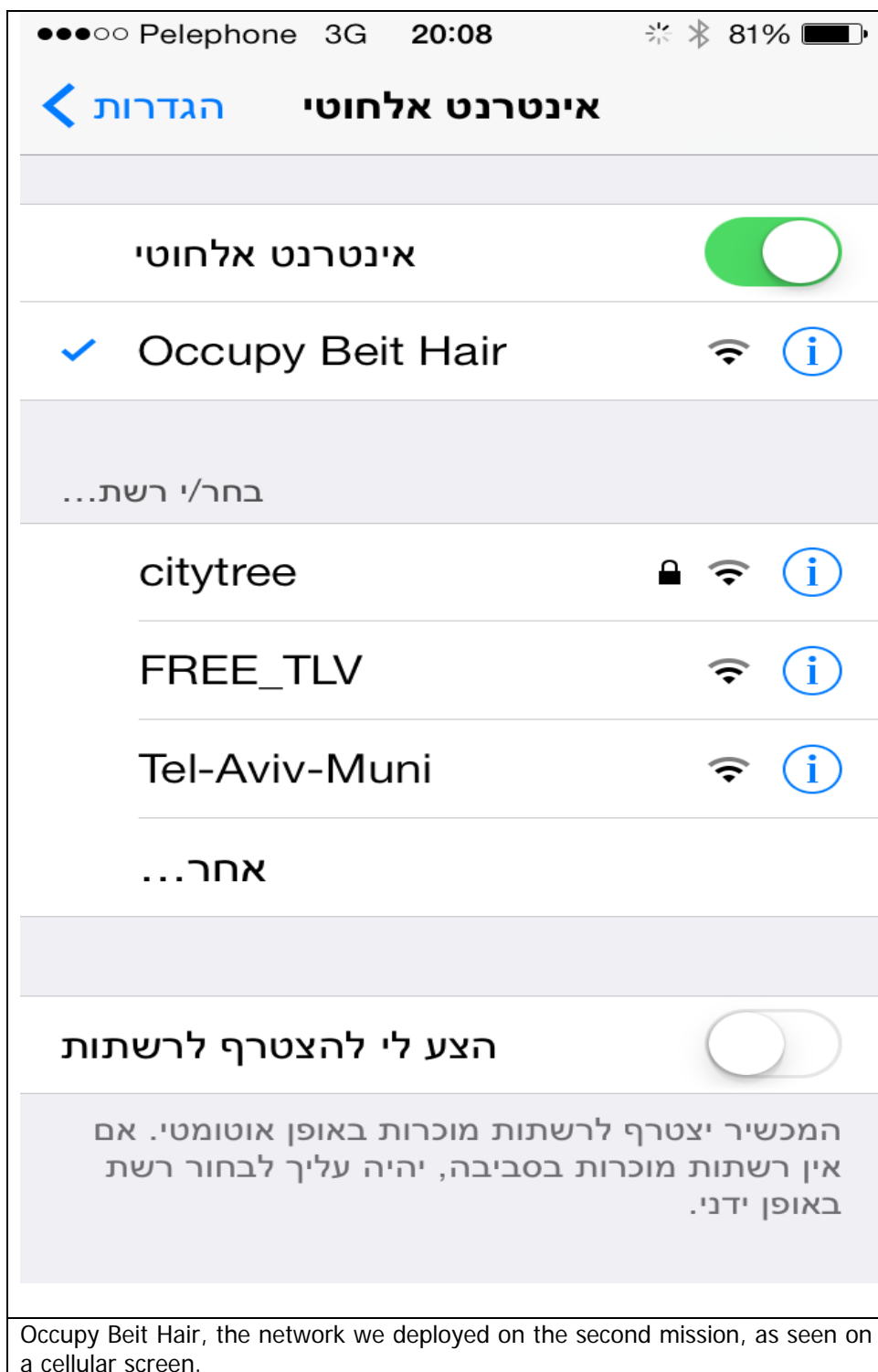


לתמיכה חפשו בפייסבוק "מאבק עובדי מתחם ביאליק". [רקע נוסף על המאבק ואפשרויות פעולה](#)

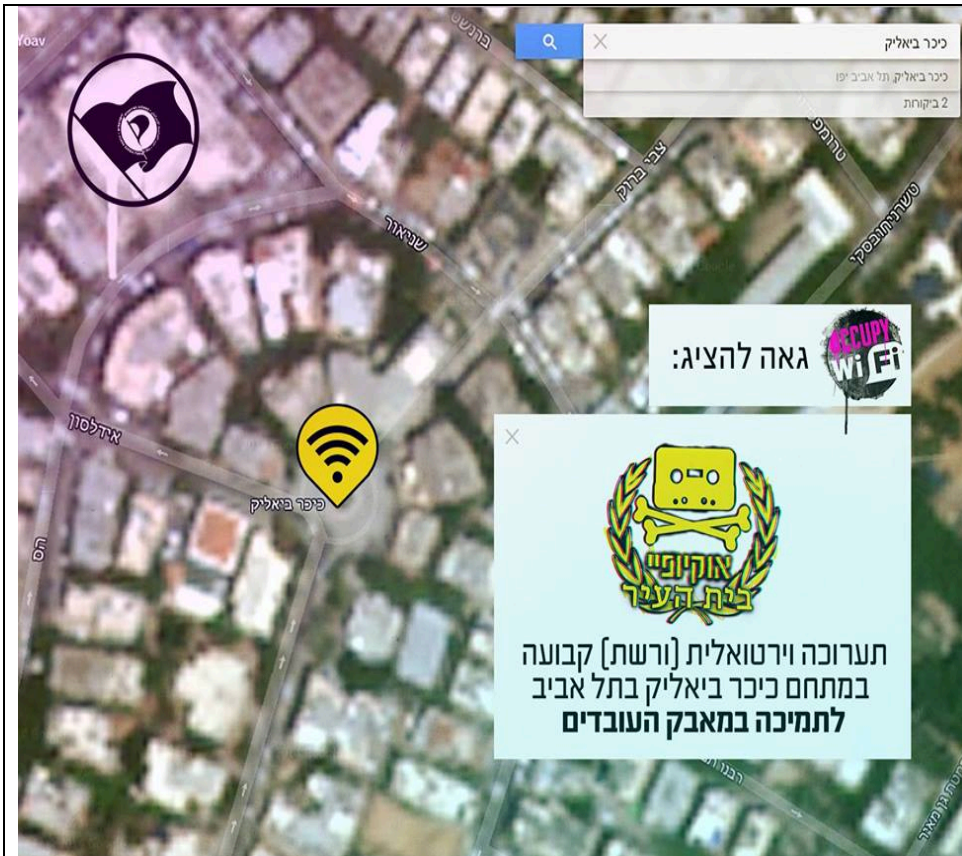


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Captive Portal (splash page) for the mission at the museum (Bait Hair). The virtual exhibition contains a poem (Urgent Warning by Tahel Frosh) which calls people to stop working if they are being exploited at the workplace, a meme which makes Bialik (Israel's national poet, the site where the museum is located is called Bialik Square) – a pirate, a picture from a demonstration outside the museum, and a link to more details about the workers' fight for right.



Occupy Beit Hair, the network we deployed on the second mission, as seen on a cellular screen.



A map of Bilal Square and its surroundings, showing the location of the WiFi, and inviting visitors to come and see the virtual exhibition we installed there.



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