

The Unmaking of Collective Action: Changing Organizing Logics in Civil Society Organizations Through Social Media Activism Culture

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Through social technologies, long-standing civil society organizations are confronted with increasingly autonomous social media users. This article offers an overview of these challenging times at ethnographic case study Amnesty International, which was, during data collection, restructuring and diffusing its digital work throughout the organization toward a network logic. It tells a story of organizational social change in the social media age. It presents a view of how social media logics are constructed and embedded, arguing that they lead to the transformation of organizing logics in activist organizations as (a) they conflict with traditional organizational principles (network–hierarchy tension), and (b) the new organizing logic of connective action in social media activism creates pressure on organizations to change. Drawing on an ethnography conducted at Amnesty International, the article consequently suggests that social media logics lead to the unmaking of collective action.

Keywords: connective action, network logic, social media logic, network–hierarchy tension, technological determinism, Amnesty International

Social media technologies have had a significant influence on civil society organizations (CSOs; nonstate and nonprofit organizations often in pursuit of social or political causes), but their impact has also been contentious (Briones, Janoske, & Madden, 2016). Social media, a collection of diverse technologies and platforms with dynamic, interactive, and therefore social features—most famously Facebook and Twitter—have been said to offer a range of affordances including new, direct, and low-cost avenues for campaigning, mobilization, recruitment, more evolved data practices, increased visibility and connectivity, and opportunities for organization–user relationship-building (e.g., Kane, 2017; Kavada, 2010; McCosker, 2017; Y. Zheng & Yu, 2016). However, their emergence has also brought about challenges for CSOs around privacy and security; issues of control, censorship, and regulation; concerns around data currency, information overload, accuracy, and credibility; and difficulties in adapting to the new circumstances (see Brophy & Halpin, 1999; Lievrouw, 2011; McCosker, 2017).

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The various concerns are mirrored in the difficulties and uncertainty CSOs have had in adapting to the digital age over the years (McCosker, 2017; United Nations, 2013). Many CSOs have been said to use social media predominantly to share or broadcast organizational information rather than for relationship-building, participation, or engagement (Briones et al., 2016). Particularly in the early years of social media, CSOs have been slow in relationship-building with constituencies and two-way (i.e., social) communications (e.g., Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011; Waters & Jamal, 2011), a particular issue for activism-based organizations (as opposed to charities or research-based organizations) as their work immanently depends on the active engagement of their constituencies. Thus, social technologies create both opportunities and challenges for CSO working practices, and are potentially critical for their development and very survival in rapidly changing and dynamic fora.

This article explores these changing organizational dynamics through a consideration of the role and effects of social media activism culture on activism-based CSO Amnesty International (hereafter Amnesty). It examines in what ways social media activism culture has affected the internal working cultures and structures of activist CSOs with a formal logic. Although the outward-facing social media work of CSOs has received ample scholarly and public attention, this article turns the focus to the internal effects of these changes. It explores changing organizational cultures and structures that result from the spread of a social media logic in activist culture (i.e., social media activism culture). To that purpose, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork at Amnesty's International Secretariat, predominantly in the Digital Communications Programme (DCP). Amnesty was chosen as a theoretical case for long-standing, traditional, "formal logic" (for organization type, cf. the Internal Challenges and Method sections), large, international CSOs, essentially not new social movements or natively digital organizations, as well as for offering scope because of its magnitude, historical impact, and increasing adoption of social media services (see Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016). This allowed for an observation of the effects of social media activism culture in an activist organization that existed prior to social and commercialized digital media, as well as an organization that has been grappling with the integration of social media services since their wider distribution in the 1990s.

This article tells a story of structural and cultural social change at Amnesty in the social media age: First, it establishes how social media logic, with features of flexibility, immediacy, decentralization, and flatter hierarchies, is different from Amnesty's activist work, which is more rigid, bureaucratic, centralized, and hierarchical, a conflict known as the tension between networks and hierarchies. Second, it asserts that social media activism culture therefore creates pressure on the organization to change culturally from a "formal logic" toward a "network logic" (see Nunes, 2014, pp. 10–14). Third, it suggests that these endogenous bottom-up changes are caused by the new organizing logics of connective and collective action in social media activism (based on Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

In doing so, this article argues that social technologies have not only led to a change in social dynamics in digital space, but also, by extension, have shaped traditional organizations in their overall working design and logic. As such, it makes a significant contribution to the debate about the social construction of social technologies as potential determinants in organizational evolution. It raises questions about issues of agency in the digital age, suggesting that social technologies do not merely extend action repertoires, but fundamentally affect the structures and landscapes of collective social movement actors. It does so through an illustration of the role of social media activism in the cultural and structural development

of a CSO, when scholarship has often prioritized the potential of these social technologies, overlooking the struggles that are taking place inside organizations seeking to adapt to their constant evolution.

Social Media Activism Culture and Changing Organizing Logics

External Challenges of Social Media Activism

The last three decades have shown myriad sociocultural changes in various CSOs' practices. These changes follow from both external and internal challenges including cultural, demographic, economic, market-related, or, as is the focus here, technological and political forces (see theory of organizational change; e.g., Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008, p. 14). External technopolitical challenges arise from outside the organization in the form of new "competition," as the Web has opened the playing field to many other activist actors (Brophy & Halpin, 1999). Long-standing organizations have since faced individual users without organizational affiliation or centralized movements and digitally born organizations that have had some success in dealing with the challenges of the new age, circulating their activities on their own interactive platforms or via mainstream technologies such as Facebook and Twitter, including Indymedia.org (a widely cited early example), (#)Occupy, petition-based platforms such as Avaaz, and new viral movements often popularized through hashtags such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter. For various CSOs, this has meant that digital landscapes require them to adapt their working practices to make themselves more competitive in social media protest ecologies, a pressure that can be seen in the restructuring processes many established large-scale organizations have undergone in recent years.

The shift toward individuals is representative of changing sociopolitical relationships in which networks and communities aggregate and form, often described as a change of hierarchies. Compared with traditional movement structures, the Internet is said to be demarcated by a hierarchically flatter culture, offering broader and more equal (although not complete) access to information collection and content production. Thus, social technologies are organized more as fluid networks and liquid forms of organizing (Gerbaudo, 2012) that do not embed strong hierarchies, a complex and multifaceted relationship that has resulted in a long-term scholarly debate loosely described as the network-hierarchy controversy or tension (various disciplines; e.g., in Castells, 2010; Diani, 2012; Diani & McAdam, 2003; Galloway & Thacker, 2007; Gerbaudo, 2012; Melucci, 1996; van Stekelenburg, Roggeband, & Klandermans, 2013).

In part, this notion of hierarchical absence has been contested, suggesting that the Web is not as decentralized and hierarchically flat as has been claimed: For example, Madianou (2019) argues that preexisting power relationships between humanitarians and their constituencies are reconstituted in digital space; Galloway and Thacker (2007) argue that electronic infrastructures still allow for and indeed embed hierarchical organization (literature on opinion leadership, influencing, gatekeeping, and algorithmic power; e.g., Beer, 2017; Bucher, 2012, 2018; Gillespie, 2014). Even so, it has become widely accepted that social technologies have created new forms of organization and aggregation, essentially a change in dynamics and logics (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Gerbaudo, 2012). Van Dijck and Poell (2013) call these new dynamics a "social media logic" (p. 2): a range of alterations in mechanisms, rules, and strategic and economic principles and tactics that have arrived with social media culture. Although these overlap in part with mass media logics, according to van Dijck and Poell, there are nuanced differences based on four

principles in that they are programmable, popular, connective, and datafied. Beyond new communicative structures, this means that the structures and cultures produced through social media logics depend much more on individuals' productive processes: their contents, networks, engagement, and data. As such, activist CSOs are confronted with new logics within their key practices.

One of the most important paradigmatic changes following these developments has been the diversification of organizing logics laid out in Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) "The Logic of Connective Action." They describe these new logics as a "different set of dynamics" in social media activism, in which digital technologies are recognized as key "organizing agents" (p. 752). They outline three types of logics: (1) connective action in the form of self-organizing networks, (2) connective action through organizationally enabled networks, and (3) collective action via organizationally brokered networks. The first is based on little to no organizational action coordination (instead by individuals, often in the form of personal expression and framing); the second includes loose organizational coordination through the organizational provision of spaces/outlets for personal expression; and the third is based on strong coordination by organizations through organizationally managed technologies, spaces, networks, and frames.

This means that organizing logics have diversified to include connective action frames in addition to the traditional organizing logic of collective action (an extension of traditional social movement debates; e.g., Diani, 2012; Diani & McAdam, 2003; Melucci, 1996; van Stekelenburg et al., 2013). In this connective action framework, individuals rely more on horizontally organized networks than centralized hierarchical organization. These actions, although still a form of collective action in accumulation, do not rely on action frames that are predominantly organizationally driven; they are, in Postmes and Brunsting's (2002) categorization, individualistic rather than collectivistic, and often persuasively oriented rather than confrontationally. Thus, social media activism culture is based on new organizing logics that stand (at least in part) at odds with the hierarchically oriented logic of (traditional) organizational collective actors, and therefore, as the following section demonstrates, with their very cultures.

Internal Challenges of Social Media Activism

Compared with external challenges, internal challenges of social technologies revolve around CSO internal issues such as structures and cultural practices that may require adaptation. They include logistical issues around the use of social media data (e.g., reliability and verification of digital materials, difficulties in data collection and distribution in an age of information overload, problems around the protection of activists due to digital privacy and security concerns, and also potential changes in values; see Kavada, 2010; Lievrouw, 2011; Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016). For CSOs, this can constitute a considerable issue as they very often lack the necessary financial resources, human resources, or the technical knowledge and commitment to implement these changes (see Briones et al., 2011; McCosker, 2017; Seo, Kim, & Yang, 2009).

This becomes particularly important for long-established and by now traditional organizations that have adopted a "formal logic" (see Nunes, 2014, pp. 10–14), such as Amnesty. In the 20th century, CSOs (e.g., governmental and commercial organizations; see Shirky, 2008) have been subject to various transformations including commercialization, professionalization, bureaucratization, and institutionalization

(see Barnett, 2005; Dichter, 1999; Hensby, Sibthorpe, & Driver, 2011; Nunes, 2014). These cultural working practices (i.e., formal logic), developed over the course of several decades, are reminiscent of state and corporate institutions rather than grassroots movements, and are therefore not particularly compatible with the networked, participatory, and individualistic cultures of the digital age—variably described as a tension between networks and hierarchies (Karatzogianni & Robinson, 2009; Lindgren, 2013), formal organization and network logic (Nunes, 2014), individualistic and collectivistic engagement (Postmes & Brunsting, 2002), and sovereignty and networks (Galloway & Thacker, 2007). Amnesty as a theoretical case represents these kinds of 20th-century formal logic CSOs that have been subject to this tension.

Extant scholarship suggests that this tension may be putting pressure on organizations to evolve. For example, in their study of Amnesty's Swedish section, Selander and Jarvenpaa (2016) found that digital action repertoires had an effect on the organization's actions, constituency engagement, and even values, a result of negotiating changing environments. DellaPosta, Nee, and Opper (2016) describe the effect of these pressures as follows: "The greater the utility gain and larger the network externalities, the more likely it is that political actors will accommodate endogenous institutional change" (p. 6). They describe these pressures as recognition of "what works"—the net utility (p. 6). Such utilities may extend to encompass preferences of CSOs' constituencies, which have been shown to move away from professionalized formal organizations (based on distrust) and instead toward network organization (e.g., Nunes, 2014). As a result, institutions may be pressured to accommodate change, should their external environment or in DellaPosta and colleagues' words "network externalities" (p. 7) require it. Existing works suggest that there may indeed be preferences toward a network logic, although little is known about whether and how exactly that is case.

These challenges then become relevant in two significant ways. First, they demonstrate that, despite the many affordances of social technologies, CSOs are challenged in their adoption externally and internally. Although external factors have been subject to much attention, research on the internal effects of these changes is comparatively scarce, an issue I address by focusing on the sociocultural dimension of technological change. This dimension concerns the influence of new technologies in the workplace, where digital media integration is a slow and lengthy process (see McCosker, 2017; Pope et al., 2013). This article presents an overview of such internal sociocultural change by providing an inside view of an organization negotiating changes afforded by the new technologies, essentially a story of organizational social change, exploring the ways social media activism affects the internal working cultures and structures of activist CSOs with a formal logic.

Organizational transformation is not new in itself (see theory of organizational cultural change; e.g., Alvesson, 2013; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008); indeed, "revival" is a key stage in organizational life cycles (W. Zheng, Qu, & Yang, 2009, p. 158). However, I suggest here that some of these sociocultural changes are provoked by the political and cultural changes produced by the new organizing logics of social media activism (or at least their social construction), that is, the changing organizing logics of connective action (as per Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) that push traditional organizations from a formal to a network logic. In doing so, this article contributes to the body of literature that explores the effects of digital/social media activism on CSOs (e.g., Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016) as well as the wider literature on organizational cultural change (e.g., Alvesson, 2013; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008; Nunes, 2014; W. Zheng et al., 2009). It suggests that social media affordances affect organizations beyond

their external work with their constituencies in their internal development. As such, this article provides an account of the social construction of social media technologies in arguing that their emergence has led to new dynamics that shape traditional organizations in their overall working design and logic.

Method

The findings of this article are based on an ethnographic case study of Amnesty International. Amnesty was chosen as a representative of organizations that have developed toward an organizational model resembling international governmental organizations such as the United Nations (see Dichter, 1999; Martens, 2006). This model distinguishes itself from other types of organizations in that it focuses on negotiations with state and state-dependent actors (Dichter, 1999; Martens, 2006), and therefore acquires similar administrative structures and cultures involving high degrees of bureaucracy (or complex administrative procedures to secure the validity and proper administration of information), confidentiality, and vertical hierarchies as measures of control for organizational processes; centralization (the movement of decision-making processes into central organs of the organization); and formality and professionalization in imitation of more formally recognized governmental bodies (e.g., Bach & Stark, 2002; Simmons, 1998)—that is, strong formal logics. At the turn of the century, Amnesty—like several other CSOs of that generation (e.g., World Wildlife Fund, Human Rights Watch)—had developed a strong profile as a traditional organization of that type (Martens, 2006): established, large, influential, and based on 20th-century paradigms and a formal logic.

As a case, Amnesty therefore is an example of a CSO that has developed those traditional paradigms. Case study research commonly implies what Ragin (1992) describes as “the idea that objects of investigation are similar enough and separate enough to permit treating them as comparable instances of the same general phenomenon” (p. 1). That means that case studies are used to demonstrate that a particular case is either typical of something, exemplary of it, or derisive in a particular way (Ragin, 1992), in this case, 20th-century activist CSOs following a formal logic. As an ethnographic case study, the Amnesty fieldwork further allowed for an understanding of the effects not only based on second-hand accounts, but also within the day-to-day working culture of the specific historical, social, political, and environmental (local) context of a specific organization.

The wider ethnographic approach applied in the study included elements of digital ethnography as per Murthy's (2013) distinction between ethnography that is conducted (entirely) online and ethnography that is digitally mediated. Murthy calls the former cyberethnography and the latter digital ethnography. Digital ethnography is based on using Internet research methods as part of analyzing a phenomenon that may be partially or entirely digital. Thus, cyberethnography refers to ethnographies of particular digital spaces—virtual worlds, and therefore traditionally online communities—and digital ethnography is often combined with conventional ethnography (Murthy, 2008), as applied here. Such an approach allowed for the observation of what Madianou (2015) calls polymedia, a more dynamic and relational understanding of media environments beyond individualized social media platforms, which include organizational e-mail, Intranet, and private social media spaces (p. 1). This was deemed essential for capturing Amnesty's wider organizational media environment and the contextualized microdynamics around its social media activism practices.

The participant observation was conducted via an internship under full disclosure of research intent and after signing a confidentiality agreement at the DCP at Amnesty's headquarters, the International Secretariat (IS) in London. The chosen spaces and contexts for participant observation included the day-to-day work at the DCP, informal conversations with other departments, attendance at several external Amnesty events (DCP & non-DCP) and meetings that sometimes included section representation, project work across the IS, and access to internal documents and digital social networks. The offline participant observation took place over a period of 11 months and started in 2013. The ethnography further included long-term online observation of Amnesty's private Facebook group of social media staff and interviews with 20 members of staff across the organization. The interviews started approximately eight to nine months after the start of the participant observation and were conducted in two waves. This research design was chosen toward gaining a sense of the organization's overall digital work practices including its restructuring and historical development (wider organizational ethnography); observing how digital activism is undertaken, negotiated, and responded to (Facebook and DCP participant observation); and how expert staff experienced these changes (interviews). The entire data collection period spanned a total of 19 months and took place from 2013 to 2015 with follow-up conversations reaching into 2016.

Interviewees were selected through both purposive and snowball sampling, the former for selecting participants with wider knowledge of Amnesty's history of digital work and digital activism specifically. The latter was applied for introductions to difficult-to-reach persons of interest for the project's focus such as senior staff or staff at international offices. As such, these were expert interviews, deliberately skewed toward staff who experienced and indeed negotiated structural and cultural adaptations to social media logics. The final sample included members of the DCP, senior communications staff, members of the Activism Unit, and staff members from international offices whose digital activism activities had gained recognition. Interviews took place after initial informal conversations in a place of the interviewee's choice (e.g., Amnesty meeting rooms, London cafes), were audio-recorded, and lasted 1.5–2 hours on average. The format of the interviews was semistructured, with core questions focusing on the development of Amnesty's working practices in response to social media activism.

The order of the methods was part of a reiterative process to help induction. Initially, the field was entered with fairly broad questions around Amnesty's digital history and the integration of social media. Informal conversations with staff were used for rapport-building and to trace the social change and historical development of new digital technologies at the organization. This initial scope was deliberately kept fairly open to develop an understanding of the complex processes of digitalization at Amnesty. The data collection was narrowed down following the announcement of the DCP restructuring as well as tensions and differing perspectives arising from the suggested model of "digitalizing from within," essentially a newly introduced network logic approach. Data were then analyzed thematically, with a focus on historic and current organizational social changes, both cultural and structural, in Amnesty's adoption and use of social technologies, as well as their overall influences on the organization. The induction and deduction of coding themes resulted simultaneously from the ethnographic observation, informal conversations, and interviews toward a comprehensive ethnographic account bringing together lived experiences, organizational history, and subjective accounts.

Amnesty's Changing Logics in the Age of Social Media Activism: An Ethnography

A Brief History of Amnesty's Digital Work

In 1 Easton Street in London's Farringdon stand the two interconnected buildings that were, until 2015, still Amnesty's main hub and international headquarters: the International Secretariat. The massive size of the buildings that housed the core body of the organization suggests that any department might be slightly tiresome to reach on foot, but none as much as the DCP: from the entrance to the middle of the building, up three floors, over the bridge into the next building, to the very end of the building, down three floors, into the very last room of the IS—a positioning exemplary of the notion that digital media were a later development of the organizations' work. The integrative work spaces together with the department's own facilities and no direct access to other offices or teams on the same floor presented the DCP as a self-contained unit. At the same time, the DCP resembled the modern notion of a digital social network in that its work supported various departments and functions through its expertise. Although global workflows and digitally innovative practices were not exclusive to the DCP at the IS, its subject knowledge and work-based focus on everything that is digital made it a major point of contact for all things digital.

Within just under a year of the fieldwork, the DCP moved to the other building in 1 Easton Street. After a long period of planning for the 2012 restructuring "Moving Closer to the Ground," the plans had started to become more visible at the IS. The plans for the new hubs in different parts of the world had already been well under way and many roles and departments were changing, merging, or dissolving. The day-to-day mood was marked by change, uncertainty, and constant goodbyes. Although initially the DCP was not supposed to be part of the restructuring, halfway through 2013 an announcement was made that it was subject to change. The plans were still in early stages and three options were put forward for discussion, but, in the months to come, much would change at the DCP.

When the announcement for the DCP to restructure arrived, the department had not existed for a great many years, and would cease to exist within the next 18 months. Originally a small team called the Web team, the DCP was part of the publications department in the early 2000s. The team had consisted of a few short-contract online editors for English and Arabic content. Shortly after, in the mid-2000s, the small team was developed into a program of its own, variably called the E-communications Department, Interactive and E-communications team, and Internet and E-communications Programme—the precursor of the DCP. Later, with some changes in roles and functions, the program was renamed the Digital Communications Programme. Early roles included online editors producing content for online channels, a couple of what one DCP member called "acting project managers" who had not obtained the respective titles yet, and a few Web developers. Later roles included project managers and social media staff. The program was a vision in transition and subject to frequent change.

The changes continued with the establishment of the DCP as a full program. In approximately two years, the program had four directors. This change was one of many, which affected functions, responsibilities, and staff, as well as technological choices. Social media accounts were set up and managed when tools became popular, but official social media roles for content creation for Facebook and Twitter were installed in the DCP as late as 2010. Further changes arrived with a restructuring in 2010. Prior to

2010, the focus of the digital department had been the editorial (i.e., content editing for digital channels). Web development had been split between a few in-house Web developers and a third party. With the 2010 restructuring, digital staff dealing with content moved into the media program, and more Web developers were brought in to manage the website in-house.

The changes constituted not only an investment in digital functions, but also a change of focus. According to DCP member Duke, pre-2010 the digital department had focused on communications content via digital channels (i.e., an editorial focus), whereas after the restructuring, the responsibilities of the DCP had moved more toward digital production (i.e., a technical focus). The editorial focus meant that the digital department was predominantly in charge of producing content that was distributed via social media channels (i.e., a communications role), whereas the new technical focus shifted the department's work toward the production of digital infrastructures in support of editorial functions located outside the DCP. For many participants, that move represented a change in attitude around the purpose of digital technologies. Whereas digital media had previously been seen as communication tools that merely required different skill sets, postrestructuring, digital technologies were used for more varied functions including Web design, user experience, and content management, an adaptation to global technological developments.

In the years that followed, the DCP's responsibilities were extended to include further areas. In its mature years (during fieldwork), the DCP included 12 staff members in Web development, user experience, and content production for social media, project management, and a managerial and administrative tier. It still included the production of its own Web channels such as websites (its technical focus) as well as social media content management (some of its editorial function). In addition, projects were conducted to support other entities of the organization in digital planning, and the new unit Technology and Human Rights accumulated a range of new innovation projects, primarily supporting individuals at risk through technology uses. Thus, the DCP had become a patchwork department of all things digital; it had also become the central organ of Amnesty's digital work in its adaptation to the digital age.

The departmental changes over the years received mixed reactions. Participants generally acknowledged the need for the organization to change and find better ways of integrating digital responsibilities, a response to network externalities that identified a need for it. A dominant theme was that social media technologies were difficult to integrate into an organization as a whole, in part because of the lack of control over information and content framing in platforms such as Facebook and Twitter for an organization that was bound to information accuracy and confidentiality, also a tendency of 20th-century formalized organizations. Consequently, Amnesty's digital work had been subject to many changes, not all of which were perceived as progress. In DCP member Kenny's words, in its struggle to manage digital work, Amnesty had been transitioning "back and forth" for the preceding 10 years. Changes were contingent, temporary, and at times unplanned reactions to network externalities. The development of Amnesty's digital work did not represent an orderly extension of existing working practices or expansion into a new field, but a period of uncertainty in which digital work and particularly social media integration were constantly fraught by uncertainty and reconfiguration.

It had also been a phase of development and accumulation of digital work at Amnesty: a digital centralization phase, a period demarcated by the establishment of a centralized digital department and

equally mostly centralized digital working practices. Between 2013 and 2015, the organization underwent a further series of disruptions to disperse their digital work throughout the organization into a more networked model, and Amnesty responded to changing perceptions of digital practices as separate from traditional functions toward a more integrated network approach and network logic reminiscent of social media activism culture and its logic.

The 2013–2015 Restructuring

The restructuring of the DCP was contentious and initiated a range of discussions on what the digital age meant for the organization and the changes it required. Overall, DCP members and other departments agreed that change was necessary as the structure and function of Amnesty's digital work were considered outdated. That opinion was generally based on one of two arguments. First, the department did not fit the original criterion of the job in that the DCP included digital roles and responsibilities that went beyond communications, such as digital projects technology support for individuals at risk. Second, the DCP combined many different areas whose common element was merely the use of and focus on digital technologies. Some of these areas, participants claimed, would be better situated closer to their nondigital counterparts through a networked dispersion. For instance, technical roles such as programming and Web design would be much better situated in IT than with social media correspondence, and social media management would be better positioned within strategy-specific departments. This second view relates to issues with the centralized model of digitalization, which Tony, an Amnesty member, described as follows:

The format of DCP was already slightly out of date. For two reasons: (1) It was trying to be one central department or one central program trying to cover very diverse needs across the organization; . . . it was constantly chasing its tail particularly around requirements for the new offices . . . where essential teams sitting in Central London [were] not equipped to build websites, to run media strategies for those places. (2) The question of where you do tech development. All this comes in cycles and currently the way tech is doing, you will find fewer and fewer organizations that actually build large central in-house technical development teams in their structure.

According to Tony, the centralized structure of the IS did not allow for networked working practices, as technological developments were, contrastingly, more decentralized. This perceived tension between networks and hierarchies or formal and network logic was shared by other colleagues who called the organization's structure and resulting culture siloed and rigid, incongruent with and lagging behind current activism culture.

Although Amnesty members generally agreed that a network logic was needed, the desired change differed among participants. In response to the announced restructuring, the DCP discussed several models for integrating digital work (e.g., in Mogus, Silberman, & Roy, 2011; NetChange, 2014). They included (1) the informal model (organizations adopting new technologies organically without much management or strategy), (2) the centralized model (organizations accumulating their work in a dedicated centralized department like the DCP), (3) the independent model (the integration of several independent digital centers), and (4) the hybrid model (digital teams as both networked throughout the organization and

supported by a central team). The final proposal was a variation on the hybrid model. It suggested the disaggregation of the DCP, the devolution of its roles to related business units, the addition of centers of digital expertise in nondigital functions, and the consolidation of the smaller Technology and Human Rights initiative into a stand-alone unit. This model was informally called “digitalizing from within”/“embedding digital” and was essentially a networked model of managing digital work. It followed a network logic and was seen as more congruent with digital organizing logics. It was, like the cultural logics of social media practices, more networked, decentralized, and dispersed.

A few months after the negotiations, this model was realized. The DCP was dissolved, and some select members were transferred into other departments of the organization, continuing their roles as part of making digital roles more integrated and networked. The project officer of the Technology and Human Rights subunit continued in the same role in another department, the former deputy director of the DCP became the Director of Global Content and Digital Strategy, and the roles of the social media content staff turned into Digital Engagement Officer and Social Media Strategist. Web development was outsourced. This process of “embedding digital” established one of many changes and arguably one of the most substantial structural and cultural transformations Amnesty went through in an age of globally networked societies. It was part of a growing realization that social technologies are based on networks in themselves as well as with traditional spaces—a network logic.

What had started as a contentious idea was increasingly supported by many, and between initial informal conversations and two waves of interviews, many more staff members supported the move. Amnesty was transitioning from the digital phase into the network phase, a period of time when digital work was not instated as a separate set of working practices anymore (the digital centralization phase), but when digital was integrated in the organization in the form of a network (the network phase). The two phases mark both a structural change (in digital work) and a cultural change in logic in that perceptions and practices of digital work became integrated rather than separated. Those extensive changes also followed decades of temporary disruptions at the organization, as they involved periods of delays, uncertainties, uprooting, regrouping, and reorientation. It was also an endogenous, bottom-up, reactive change, enforced through internal members in response to external pressures, as part of a growing realization of the net utility of network externalities. It was also, as the interviews show, a result of long-term tensions between the formal logics of traditional organizational working cultures and the social media logic of contemporary activism culture.

Changing Organizing Logics: Networks, Hierarchies, and Clashing Logics

The tension in logic was expressed across the participant interviews. On several occasions, participants used descriptions of empowerment or democratization in their users’ publishing mechanics to explain the disruptions at Amnesty, an external pressure that moved the organization toward making internal changes. This view was particularly prominent among digital progressives (predominantly DCP) who related organizational disruptions over the past decades to features of interconnectivity, direct user participation, and the resulting empowerment (all characteristics of digitally enabled activism), as noted by Tess and Gwen:

My favorite word is “democratized” and that is what digital publishing does, it democratizes everyone and empowers people. When you’re using a social network or you have got a blog or you e-mail someone you are empowered. This is the disruption. (Tess)

You’re talking about organizations disrupting themselves. . . . We’ve seen it happen in so many occasions in the last 10, 15 years, entire sectors uprooted. . . . It’s not just AI, it’s a lot of organizations, disruption happens from the outside. You see casualties as a result of that internally in certain organizations in certain sectors. . . . It takes a significant leap of faith to say “we disrupt this model as of now.” (Gwen)

Such descriptions suggested two things. First, Amnesty’s internal changes followed from outside pressures. Thus, the changes at Amnesty were not simply based on organizational preferences, but the result of a changing environment (network externalities) and the resulting pressure on the organization. Second, these changes were attributed to user empowerment and democratizing principles. As part of the sociopolitical concerns CSOs are facing in the digital age, empowerment constitutes a network externality, essentially newly or more freely evolving and arguably more complex power dynamics through widening participation—a cultural attribute of social media logics—invoked first by changes in publishing conventions and the subsequently evolved action frames. Although these changes took place endogenously at the organizational level, they were reactive as they were negotiated in response to network externalities. Thus, although the decision to dismantle the digital department was made from inside the organization and in a top-down hierarchy, the external challenges that created the pressures provoking those decisions came from outside the organization and in a bottom-up movement of more horizontally organized movements.

At Amnesty, these change-resistant structures were part of the organization’s wider traditional working culture. All participants expressed that the organization needed to change, and almost all participants described Amnesty’s rigid and hierarchical organizational culture as a barrier to success in social media activism culture. Activist practice under network logics was generally understood to be innovative, hierarchically flatter, participatory, collaborative, immediate, engaging, transparent, and networked, whereas Amnesty was typically characterized as traditional, bureaucratic, hierarchical, fragmented, contained, slow, and rigid. Participants variably described the organization’s formal logic as conservative, traditional, and culturally outdated. The organization was consequently, and in line with extant scholarship, seen as experimental in its adoption of a network or digital organizing logic, and resistant to change that was seen as inevitable.

Participants saw the organization’s bureaucratic and hierarchical procedures at the core of these clashes in logic. Although bureaucracy was mostly seen as a necessary evil to ensure accuracy and confidentiality for individuals at risk, it was also seen as excessive in that it made the organization too complex and fragmented, limiting and slowing its activity through its “red tape” (e.g., Penny) and managerial tiers, as noted by Tess:

The current structure has too many layers of management again. It’s too siloed and too many repetitive tasks. . . . You need a bureaucracy unfortunately to have an effective amplification. It’s just that the bureaucracy isn’t for a paper-based world any more, it’s for a digital based world; so it has to be more responsive and empowering. (Tess)

In that context, approval processes were seen as a particular hindrance in digital work because of the time lapse they created. Whereas social media protest was typically praised for allowing immediate response, Amnesty was seen as a late participant based on its approval system. These approval or validation processes, bureaucratic chains to validate information, were seen as slowing and limiting response to protest developments. Although many participants acknowledged that there were valid reasons for these processes, the immediate reactions possible in the online environment created a dilemma and, as a result, tension, resulting in a description of these formal logics as (among others) an "obsession for precision" (e.g., Stella) and the organization's Achilles heel (Klara):

Precision is a very important value in all aspects of knowledge, but at the same time it can be a serious obstacle. . . . I mean one of the favorite internal sports here is "where the comma goes." . . . Remember today the guy we saw? He was doing what is called the Approval System. If you and me or someone else produces something, someone else will review it, or more than one—depending on how serious this is. For instance, if your investigation was subject to be published on behalf of Amnesty, probably you will have three or four levels of approval above yourself. So all managers are up to their hair dealing with all approvals, because everything requires checking, double-checking, and checking across. (Stella)

We come out with work, good work, very quickly to a high standard and then you look at our global campaigns, they get bogged down in glacial movements for planning and replanning and missing bits of research that suddenly take two or three months longer to get out, the research never arrives. (Edwin)

Bureaucracy and approval [are] the Achilles heel for the organization. Egyptian crisis for example: Press officer was in Egypt covering a demonstration, peaceful demo, going well, . . . banners. By the time that went through the channels of approvals and it came back, we couldn't publish it any more 'cause the situation had moved on, . . . it was old news. (Klara)

The traditional, bureaucratic, and hierarchical orientation of Amnesty was general consensus across interviews and informal conversations. However, most participants also saw changes at Amnesty. Although Amnesty was generally described as a fairly traditional organization, some participants saw the "embedding digital" movement as a modernizing process that would embed new logics through the mirroring of external environments. It was seen as a move from a more hierarchical model to a more open and networked one. Although not all participants agreed that the restructuring would necessarily embed a network logic (because of an assumption that the organization could not circumvent many of its institutionalized processes), participants agreed in the changes needed for the organization. They favored structures that were more open, networked, collaborative, transparent, and resulting in immediate response and engagement to externalities such as user-generated contents (an internal network logic as a response to social media logic). In comparison, hierarchies and rigid working practices were seen as inflexible and uncooperative, barriers in competing with new logics in social media activism culture (networks vs. hierarchies, formal organization vs. network logic), and therefore, in consensus, entirely inevitable for Amnesty and organizations that developed along the same path of formal logic.

Conclusion

This article provides an ethnographic account of Amnesty's digitalization efforts, which exemplify the organization's cultural transition from a formal toward a social media logic. It paints a picture of cultural differences between increasingly hierarchical, bureaucratized, and institutionalized 20th-century organizations and, contrastingly, a flexible, decentralized, and hierarchically flatter social media activism culture. The article demonstrates that these changes in internal organizing logics arose from pressures created by what DellaPosta and colleagues (2016) calls network externalities (i.e., changes in external organizing logics). As such, it is argued that social technologies have led not only to changes in social dynamics online, but, by extension, shaped the organization in its overall working design and logic. In line with Nunes's (2014) view that organizing logics are not necessarily binary or mutually exclusive, Amnesty is seen as developing from a formal logic toward a network logic (aligning with emergent social media logics), but as yet hybrid in its developmental efforts (mirroring the complexity of the issue in debates in the network-hierarchy literature).

Above all, the case study showed that these developments were reactive, bottom-up (driven by new activist practices engaging through connective action frames), although endogenous, and a reaction to network externalities around user decentralization and democratizing principles in social media activism culture. It was these external struggles for organizational visibility and sustainability that pressured Amnesty into adjusting its internal working design, logic, and culture, including (as with Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016) a change in the organization's cultural values. Perhaps controversially, this ethnographic account presents a social constructionist narrative of social technologies that suggests elements of technological determinism. Changes evoked by social technologies were judged reactive, adaptive, transient, and involuntary to the extent that a change in cultural and structural logic was deemed inevitable. Although this in itself does not necessarily mean that social technologies determine organizational structures and cultures (after all, organizational transformation and revival stages are not uncommon), it shows that they were, at the very least, socially constructed as such. Thus, this study suggests that the pervasiveness of social technologies, not merely on a physical, but also a cultural level, means that digital organizing logics carry significant weight in how societal groups and institutions change not only on a public, but also the internal level.

The study also shows a range of significant changes in the organization's role as a collective organizational actor and CSO with a formal logic in an age of connective action. Amnesty's internal changes display a move away from its 20th-century formal logic through deinstitutionalization, debureaucratization, and deformatization, toward network logics. Perhaps this is most clearly visible in the organization's opening up of internal structures to remove barriers that form containment (internal structures), and reconsiderations of approval processes that try to establish authoritative and nonnegotiable versions of events (internal processes). Above all, these developments display a reorientation and internal reappropriation toward responding to what Bennett and Segerberg (2012) describe as connective action frames, a hierarchically flatter, more decentralized, personalized, and user-driven form of activism culture. It establishes a move away from more rigid collective action frameworks toward crowd-enabling measures. In light of that, the case study suggests that traditional collective action frames may be on the decline as frames are reappropriated through a refocusing on crowd- and organization-enabled connective action frames, visible across the organization's evolution in structure, culture, and values.

In terms of the organization's development as a 20th-century organization, these developments present an interesting conundrum. In going back to less formalized structures prior to 20th-century institutionalization processes, traditional civil society organizations following a formal logic may not simply be losing some visibility, but are being unmade in their history, structure, culture, and values as traditional collective actors. Although infrastructural elements, influencing, gatekeeping, and algorithmic practices certainly still influence social media activism culture toward weighty actors, it is questionable whether CSOs are in a position to benefit from these. Assuming that organizations would indeed be able to assert this kind of control, the case study (and similar restructuring processes at other CSOs) suggests that, regardless, existing dynamics produced through social media logics have already initiated these processes of unmaking.

Although a considerable amount of literature has focused on the relevance of long-standing organizational actors in the social media age, this ethnography casts the gaze to how these actors have developed in response to it. Thus, this article raises significant questions about the "survival" or "revival" of not only organizational actors, but also the structure and culture of organizational collective action. In doing so, it suggests that social media logics affect, above all, the precise role that these actors play rather than their significance. It outlines the unmaking of activist organizations' structures and cultures as they are reappropriated toward crowd- and organization-enabled connective action frames, suggesting that social media may not merely be diversifying activist engagement, but rather changing it wholly into these newer forms of engagements.

In terms of future studies, it remains to be seen whether restructured organizations adopting network logics truly embrace and thrive in social media activism cultures, particularly among models of more self-organized connective action. In particular, it would be interesting to see whether those changes actually create more open, flexible, rapid, and hierarchically flatter organizational cultures or change these organizations (as per Bennett and Segerberg's [2012] organizationally brokered connective action) toward crowd-enabling actors.

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