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DIGITAL ACTION REPERTOIRES AND TRANSFORMING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATION[1]

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An emerging research agenda focuses on social media's influence on political activism. Specific attention has recently been paid to digital social movement organizing and action repertoire development. The literature acknowledges the changing face of activism at the movement level, but little is known about the relationship between social movement organizations (SMOs) and digital action repertoires. Understanding this relationship is critical because strong adherence to values is at the heart of establishing action repertoires with legitimacy and persistence. In this paper, we rely on a two-year longitudinal study of the Swedish affiliate of Amnesty International. We examine the transformation in engagement and interaction that followed the organization's introduction of new action repertoires. Drawing on resource mobilization theory and the collective action space model, we elaborate how new action repertoires both stabilized and challenged the values of the SMO, as well as gradually broadened the interactions of supporters and deepened their modes of engagement. We offer a value-based model on the antecedents and effects of new action repertoires from the SMO perspective. The empirical findings and the model build new theory on social media and digital activism at the organizational level, complementing the predominant movement level research in the extant literature.

Keywords: Collaboration, organization, societal change, case study, networks and communities, digital activism

> *There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.*
> — Elie Wiesel, Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1986

Introduction

Social media[2] (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) provide important means of action to mobilize support, or movement, against prevailing social and political injustices (Bennett and Segerberg 2011; Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012; Oh et al. 2013; Pu and Scanland 2012; Tufekci and Wilson 2012; Valenzuela 2013). These digital mechanisms reduce the effort and resources

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[2]Social media refers to digital technologies that allow members to create, edit, and link to content of other members (Kane et al. 2014; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). The literature in information systems discusses a wide variety of affordances with digital technology and from a wide variety of perspectives (e.g., Kane et al. 2014; Leonardi 2013, 2014; Markus and Silver 2008; Volkoff and Strong 2013). We use "affordance" to refer to technological capabilities and choices in use (Leonardi 2013). This simple definition is consistent with digital activism literature (e.g., Flanagin et al., 2006; Tufekci 2014).

needed to join a movement (Pu and Scanland 2012; Tufekci 2014; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Thousands, even millions, of supporters in non-conflict zones can be mobilized in a matter of hours or days to protest against the injustices and struggles in the conflict zones. Such digitally enabled support can be short-lived, however, and the transitory nature of the support challenges the persistence of movements. Engagement for prolonged periods—years rather than hours or days—is needed for meaningful social change.

Social movement organizations (SMOs) are central in mobilizing and maintaining long-term support for movements that aim to restructure and change societies, industries, and/or individuals (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977). SMOs represent formal organizations that operate on the basis of hierarchies, rules, authority, and clear lines of communication (Blau and Scott 1962). SMOs coordinate solitary support from individuals, as well as networks of authorities and alliance organizations with shared values. SMOs have played a critical role in long-term political conflicts that may have endured as long as 20 years.[3]

SMOs are complex membership institutions (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Zald and Ash 1966) that rely on deep-rooted values to mobilize for collective support. Following Trice and Beyer (1993), we refer to values as preferences for behaviors or outcomes. SMOs mobilize support via legitimate and persistent action repertoires (Tarrow 1995). Action repertoires refer to legitimate actions and means that are available to supporters to act on a given political opportunity (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1995; Tilly 1978). SMOs select and develop action repertoires supporters use to make claims on grievances, mobilize resources, and maintain resources to act collectively (Tilly 1978; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Action repertoires can involve both offline means, such as street rallies and strikes, and online means, such as digital petitioning.[4]

Values give repertoires their legitimacy and persistence among supporters for collective action (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Zald and McCarthy 1979). For example, an SMO that adheres to pacifist values would not develop a repertoire that includes violence. Violent tactics would potentially draw more attention but would conflict with values that the SMO and its membership uphold (Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Traditionally, SMOs control the structure and content of action repertoires to ensure legitimacy (i.e., the adherence to SMO values).

Through the use of digital action repertoires, such as hacktivism, thunderclaps (i.e., crowd-speaking), and virtual sit-ins, supporters can engage with movements for political and social causes that are not directly controlled by SMOs (Harlow 2012; Lim 2012; Mercea 2011; Pu and Scanland 2012; Stein 2009). Digital action repertoires afford autonomy but also expand interactions wherein supporters engage over multiple issues and across organizational boundaries (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012; Stein 2009). But the autonomy offered by digital action repertoires also potentially detaches the repertoire from the values of SMOs. Such repertoires can render more transitory and unbounded support for movements (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012; Harlow 2012; Stein 2009; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010), but they also can undermine the values of organizations mobilizing for that movement.

Recent literature on digital activism has under-explored the critical role of values as an antecedent of digital action repertoires and the role that SMOs play in terms of values. Although Agarwal et al.'s (2014) research on the Tea Party and Occupy movements and Bennet and Segerberg's (2011) research on connective action examine the effects of digital action repertoires on interaction and engagement, they offer little elaboration on the roles of SMOs and their values.

Flanagin et al. (2006) advanced the "collective action space model" and Bimber et al. (2012) elaborated on the model, theorizing about digital action repertoires as mechanisms of boundary crossing in the two dimensions of interaction and engagement. Although the model, which examines collective action behaviors from the viewpoint of supporters, yields rich implications for the diversity of participation styles with digital action repertoires, the consequences of the repertoires from the viewpoint of an SMO and its values are not elaborated. Hence, we examine the question of *how values influence the relationships between an SMO, its supporters, and its digital action repertoires.*

We examine the question in the context of the Swedish affiliate of Amnesty International. With more than 7 million members and supporters globally, Amnesty International is one of the world's most widely recognized and impactful SMOs. Over a two-year period, we investigated how the Swedish affiliate of Amnesty International responded to opportunities to use digital action repertoires and how digital action repertoires (sometimes combined with offline repertoires) began to change the interactions and engagement of its supporters and to transform the SMO. The current research fills an important gap in the growing IS research agenda on digital activism (Agarwal et al. 2014; Ghobadi and Clegg 2015; Leong et al. 2015; Oh et al. 2013; Wattal et al. 2010).

[3]See http://www.icip-perlapau.cat/e-review/issue-16-may-2013/lessons-learned-how-ngos-contributed-att-success.htm.

[4]Digital petitioning represents a plea for a specific purpose, digitally distributed over social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter). Supporters are summoned to digitally sign the plea.

Although such research has made important strides in exploring short-term critical events and actions, it has under-examined the challenges of legitimacy and persistence in the use of digital action repertoires at the organizational level.

We also contribute to the ongoing discourse of social media's influence on political activism and collective action (Bennett and Segerberg 2011; Bimber et al. 2012; Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012; Stein 2009; Tufekci and Wilson 2012; Valenzuela 2013; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). We do so by explaining the role of values in boundary-crossing dynamics.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Two related lines of research ground this study: resource mobilization theory and the collective action space model. Resource mobilization theory, one of the most well-known theories in social movement research, provides a backdrop for understanding movement characteristics and the role of the SMO (Clemens and Minkoff 2004; Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1995; Zald and McCarthy 1979). Similar to resource mobilization theory, the collective action space model (Bimber et al. 2012; Flanagin et al. 2006) is grounded in collective action theory, but examines interaction and engagement in the era of digital technology and takes the viewpoint of individual supporters. The collective action space model is motivated by advances in digital technology that enable expansion of participation styles of supporters and more heterogeneous communities of supporters. We build on these two theories to construct an organizational perspective of digital action repertoires and of their consequences both for supporter behaviors and for the potential transformation of the SMO.

Resource Mobilization Theory and Opportunity Structures

SMOs are driven by political values that differentiate them from other organizations, both in character and in goal. Resource mobilization scholars have identified two main SMO tasks: (1) to nurture and protect their supporters (i.e., members) and (2) to sense opportunities and develop repertoires for action and social change (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1995; Zald and McCarthy 1979).

Resource mobilization theory explicitly acknowledges the relevance and importance of SMOs in social movements. SMOs have traditionally played a key role in making sense of the environment and defining political opportunity structures (Gamson and Meyer 1996; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Tarrow 1995). Greenpeace, for example, typically uses direct actions (e.g., hanging a banner on a coal plant's giant smokestack) as a tactic to motivate support. Political opportunities are usually related to the external environment but can also be linked to internal elements. For example, SMOs could face opposition to the movements' values that might lead to counter-movement activities (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Counter-movements can fragment support for the movement. Yet threat from counter-movements might also energize movement supporters (Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996).

Resource mobilization theory defines action repertoires as the range of legitimate actions and means that are available to supporters to act on a given political opportunity (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1995; Tilly 1978). According to Tilly (1978), legitimate actions include not only the means that are available, but also the expectations of what members do with those means within a value-sanctioned set of options. Thus, action repertoires are sanctioned equally by habit and by value (Tarrow 1995; Tilly 1978). To illustrate, the "strike" today is one of the most familiar and legitimate offline action repertoires. However, in the 1870s, strikes were uncommon and rejected as a legitimate form of action (Tarrow 1995). One major challenge to exploring new action repertoires rests in assuring their legitimacy.

Affordances and Digital Action Repertoires

Rather than legitimacy, digital activism literature has focused on the influence of social media in terms of the choices digital supporters make about how to engage and interact (Bennet and Segerberg 2011). There has been much interest in the affordances of particular social media technologies (Lim 2012; Pu and Scanland 2012; Stein 2009; Tufekci 2014). "Technology affordances" (Leonardi 2013, 2014) represent both the technological capabilities and the choices about how these capabilities are used. For example, Oh et al. (2013) found that affordances of social media, such as direct messaging in Twitter, positively affected information seeking and exchanging behavior during times of social crisis.

Social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, offer a wide communicative reach within the supporters' own personal networks. This ease of communication leads supporters to become independent of an SMO in organizing interactions for collective action (Bennet and Segerberg 2011; Bimber et al. 2012; Ghobadi and Clegg 2015; Leong et al. 2015; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Social media also offer "like" and "share" options, rendering interaction impersonal and engagement noncommital. Majchrzak et al. (2013) discuss affordances like metavoicing, which allows feedback on others' digital content without engaging in direct interaction.

While digital activism literature has increased our understanding of affordances in political organizing, there has been little discussion regarding the legitimacy of digital action repertoires. How the affordances support or challenge the values of the SMO have important implications for the legitimacy of digital action repertoires.

Collective Action Space of Interaction and Engagement

The collective action space model was developed to reflect advances in digital technology and particularly social media (Bimber et al. 2012) for collective action in organizations. As applied to social movements, the model accounts for action repertoires from the viewpoint of supporters and specifically in terms of supporters' communication experiences. The model theorizes how both noninstitutional and institutional actors (i.e., supporters) use digital action repertoires as a key tactic for social change. The collective action space model argues that digital action repertoires facilitate a broad range of participatory styles in terms of both interaction and engagement. These new styles can lead to heterogeneous supporter communities (Bimber et al. 2012).

The two central dimensions of the collective action space model are *interactions* and *engagement*. The *interaction* dimension ranges from impersonal (public) to personal (private), taking into account how supporters communicate and how they relate to one another in their communications. Beyond the shared "affiliation" of supporting the same movement, impersonal interaction involves no direct interactions with other supporters of the movement (Flanagin et al. 2006). For example, in a movement focusing on threatened species, supporters can "adopt" an animal by sending money. Action repertoires that support impersonal interactions typically focus on recruitment and calling supporters to action on a large scale (Bimber et al. 2012). Personal interaction, meanwhile, involves building strong ties through repeated organized interactions between the members, typically leading to shared values, trust, and homogenous groups of supporters. Personal interaction typically entails smaller groups but also less free riding.

The *engagement* dimension is concerned with the communication experiences between the supporters and the SMO, focusing on the extent to which supporters "participate in organizational agenda setting and decision making" (Bimber et al. 2012, p. 92). On one end of the continuum is institutional engagement and on the other is entrepreneurial engagement. Flanagin et al. (2006) suggest that institutional engagement is typically found in SMOs in which supporters' engagement is highly bounded by the institution's goals and values, and they have limited opportunity to participate in other than "formally designed and sanctioned activities" (Bimber et al. 2012). In contrast, entrepreneurial engagement allows more decentralized action. Supporters have a greater degree of autonomy and influence on the direction of the SMO. They might identify new political opportunities or design and participate in action repertoires that are not controlled by the SMO.

Although the collective action space model recognizes the relevance and importance of SMOs, the model is largely silent in terms of values. When digital action repertoires fail to take values into account, the resulting interactions might actually degrade a movement's social impact (Garrett 2006; Stein 2009; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). When the values are ignored, confusion and even counter-movements can emerge, wherein the resisters find themselves as the ones resisted. In the absence of guiding values, actions become *ad hoc* and in-the-moment (Bennett and Segerberg 2011; Shirky 2008).

By comparison, actions that adhere to values can build strong ties among the supporters. Such strong ties can sustain interaction and support for the movement (McAdam et al. 1988; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Swaminathan and Wade 1999; Zald and McCarthy 1979).

However, strong supporter-to-supporter ties can become problematic when ties with an SMO are weak. The personal (private) mode of interaction can lead to shared values among supporters, but those values might be different from those of the SMO. The entrepreneurial mode of engagement (versus the institutionalized mode) can be a source of new action repertoires, but it can also lack legitimacy. In the world of citizen journalists, individual supporters make personal decisions about the extent to which knowledge is legitimate. For example, an incident in Cambodia led to the arrest of several human rights workers. Human Rights Watch, a global SMO, followed and reported on the case.[5] In the process, someone tweeted that all 21 prisoners were to be released. This unsubstantiated message was re-tweeted several times and widely distributed before the accurate information—that not one of the prisoners was awarded bail—could be provided. When the necessary controls are not in place, entrepreneurial engagement can compromise the values of the SMO, such as the safety of supporters (Mercea 2012).

To recap, resource mobilization theory identifies persistence and legitimacy as the most salient characteristics of action repertoire effectiveness (Jenkins 1983; Tarrow 1995; Zald and McCarthy 1979). If action repertoires are congruent with

[5]http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/01/cambodia-quash-convictions-25-activists-workers

SMO values, they are more likely to be viewed as legitimate, to generate long-term commitment, and to divert drop-outs and counter-movements (Chadwick 2007; Choi and Park 2013; Tarrow 1995). The digital activism literature recognizes the importance of affordances in political organizing, but is silent on the relationship between SMO values and affordances of digital action repertoires. The collective action space model theorizes about boundary crossing in interaction and engagement enabled by digital technology, but it underemphasizes values and the consequences for the legitimacy of action repertoires for collective action. We now turn to a case study to explore the research question of *how values influence the relationships between an SMO, its supporters, and digital action repertoires*.

Research Context and Methods

We engaged in an inductive, in-depth qualitative study from which we elaborate theory (Charmaz 2006). The inductive approach is appropriate for exploring deeply contextualized patterns about a phenomenon that is not well explained by existing literature (Edmondson and McManus 2007). Our exploration required deep engagement in the field, observing and interviewing supporters and key stakeholders. To obtain such fine-grained data, we engaged in a single case design (Yin 1984) in which we followed three strategic initiatives by the Swedish affiliate of Amnesty International (AI). In this section, we present the research context, as well as our data collection and analysis.

Research Context

Globally, Amnesty International is a SMO that exists with the mission to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights. The organization is among the incumbent SMOs with global authority and political impact. Our focus was the Swedish affiliate of Amnesty International (AI), which has over 100,000 members. Our study followed three strategic initiatives involving digital action repertoires. The initiatives resulted in changes in supporter interaction and engagement, as well as crossing of organizational boundaries.

The formal AI represented the institutionalized parts that identified opportunity structures and requested the action and involvement of members in the centrally prepared campaigns. We focused on two groups of professionals at the head office in Stockholm that had responsibility for strategic initiatives: (1) the digital media group, which was responsible for tactical and operational functions of social media, including digital action repertoires, and (2) a senior management task force called "pop-com," which was responsible for all communication-related activities including the new strategic initiatives dealing with digital action repertoires. Essentially, the pop-com group was a decision-making forum for determining (1) what information was published in which outlet and (2) what repertoires could be used to mobilize supporters.

The formal organization was structured hierarchically to maintain consistency and accuracy in internal and external knowledge flows. The relationship between AI and the International Secretariat in the United Kingdom (UK) was also hierarchical. Most campaigns were global, and the International Secretariat in the UK provided content for the campaigns, with some localization allowed. The professional groups decided in which global campaigns to participate, in conversation with their alliances and most active supporters, who formed so-called "local groups."

The professional groups ensured adherence to AI values. Beyond global values of solidarity and humanitarian action, two values were particularly important for designing new action repertoires: effective action and accuracy. Effective action meant that the campaign itself and how it was carried out reflected political efficacy (i.e., goal attainment). Accuracy meant that the content of any campaign messages and broader communications with members and the public were based on facts. In the Swedish news media, AI had a reputation as a knowledge expert, with the highest levels of accuracy and consistency in its reporting.

Membership and Action Repertoires

Membership included local group members, paying members, and digital supporters who might or might not have been paying members. Local group members were the most active members and were responsible for carrying out campaign work. Although local groups represented different political views, the group members shared a strong belief in AI's values and mission. They were responsible for the resolution of specific working cases (e.g., adoption cases or prisoner cases) or particular interest groups (such as the death penalty or LGBT rights). They also maintained connections to specific prisoners over several years, regardless of trends or changes in the political climate. These local groups continued to play a very significant role, although the number of local groups was declining. In 2014, AI had about 180 local teams distributed across Sweden, whereas a decade earlier they had nearly double that amount.

The local teams engaged in two main action repertoires: petitioning and letter-writing campaigns. Petitioning involved soliciting signatures for campaigns and setting up tables in large gatherings or otherwise forming a presence in major city

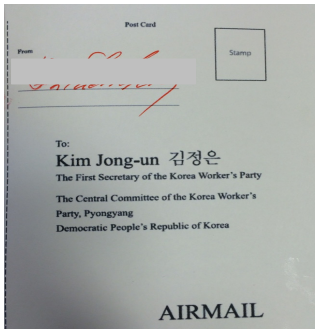

Figure 1. Example of a Local Team Letter Outer Envelope

centers. The petitions typically urged authorities (e.g., government officials or public entities) to change the political situation of a particular prisoner or group of prisoners. The letter writing campaigns involved writing to authorities on behalf of particular prisoners (see Figure 1), as well as maintaining contact with these prisoners themselves.

In contrast to the local team members, the majority of members (about 100,000 in 2014) were passive: Their engagement only included submitting their monthly fee to AI. The organization lacked action repertoires aimed at interacting and engaging with this passive member group. Interactions were routinized and typically limited to the distribution of reports such as *Amnesty Press* and *Amnesty Guard*.

Social media introduced a new group of supporters to the organization, whom we call digital supporters. Digital supporters subscribed to AI's social media. AI had long used its website, listservs, and e-mails for its regular member communications. The organization became active on Facebook (FB) in 2009. Initially, FB supporters could not publish any posts themselves; they could only comment on the posts made by AI. Nevertheless, the FB group grew significantly (see Figure 2). FB supporters totaled about 65,000 in 2014. AI began to use Twitter in 2012, but even in 2014, its use was rather limited. Although the age of digital supporters varied widely, the non-paying digital supporters often were young adults who participated in protests because of their identification with the campaign targets rather than because of their affiliation with any particular SMO. The engagement was also less predictable because many digital supporters wanted to be engaged on their own terms and with their own user-created messages. The challenge faced by the professional groups was to figure out how to tie digital supporters closer to the organization without compromising values of accuracy and effective action.

Data Collection and Sources

Several data sources and data collection techniques enhanced the richness and the validity of the findings (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009; Klein and Myers 1999). We relied on interviews and observations to understand the practices of the local teams, the digital supporters, and the pop-com and digital media groups at AI. This approach yielded multiple overlapping sources of data from several perspectives. Table 1 presents details on each of these sources. We collected data across two years (2012–2014) and conducted more than 40 interviews (see Appendix A for the interview guide). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Our contacts at AI allowed us to investigate aspects that we deemed relevant and gave us broad access to the organization, local teams, and digital supporters.

Data Analysis

In this process, we relied on established procedures for inductive research (Charmaz 2006; Miles and Huberman 1994). We wrote thickly descriptive stories (Langley 1999) and iterated between data and theory to bring clarification to emergent themes and constructs (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967).

The first round of analysis developed an initial understanding of digital action repertoires and particularly how digital supporters engaged with digital petitioning. We analyzed internal data on the content and number of petition signatures for each digital petition distributed by the professional groups during 2012–2013. We triangulated our observations with the literature (e.g., Bennet and Segerberg 2011; Tufekci and Wilson 2012; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010; Wattal et al. 2010). The analysis suggested findings similar to Bennett and Segerberg (2011) and Flanagin et al. (2006) that digital action repertoires afforded transitory engagement.

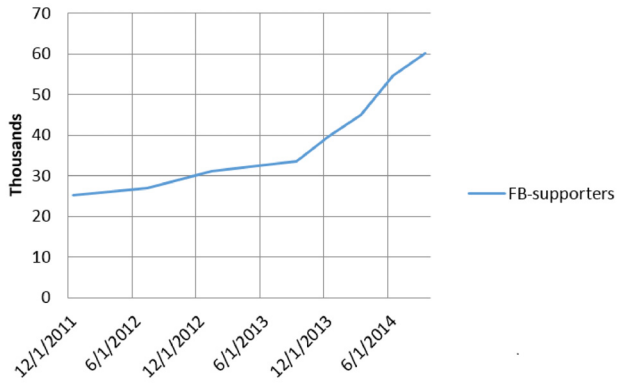

Figure 2. FB Supporters 2011–2014

Table 1. Details on Data Collection

Source of Data	Type of Data	Use in the Analysis
Interviews	*First Round* Spring 2012–Spring 2013. 15 interviews with digital media group members and senior managers across different functions (e.g., head of press relations, head of communication and fundraising, head of digital activism). Interviews lasted, on average, 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.	To gather data on the organizational structure and practices regarding action repertoires and mobilization at AI. We particularly focused on their origin and the evolution of new strategic initiatives.
	Second Round Spring 2013–Fall 2014. 22 interviews with local team members and particular strategic initiative participants. Interviews lasted, on average, 35 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.	To gather detailed information about the supporters' interpretation of action repertoires.
	Third Round Winter 2014. 4 interviews with digital media group representatives and senior management. Interviews lasted, on average, 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.	To verify the interpretations of strategic initiatives at AI and to refine our emerging theoretical insights. To provide increasing detail to the story line.
	Fourth Round Spring 2014. 2 interviews at the London UK office, 3 interviews at the International Secretariat in London, UK.	To verify the accounts that findings from the Swedish affiliate are echoed in other affiliations of Amnesty International.
Observations	We attended 4 local team meetings in Spring 2013 and Spring 2014. We attended 2 protests and rallies in 2013. We also attended the 2-day AI annual meeting in May 2014.	To gain additional understanding about the local teamwork processes, values, and mode of engagement to enhance validity.
Social Media Data	We collected all data published on AI's Facebook site during 2009–2014. We particularly focused on analysis of the "sex work policy" discussions in late January 2014 because this issue created a major point of change in the FB group.	To analyze the level of interaction and engagement in the digital community.
Other Internal Data	We received data on the number of signatures for each digital petition, the reach of the FB published petitions, and strategic documents.	To triangulate facts and observations regarding digital petitioning.

The second round focused on the values as manifested by members and digital supporters in mobilization. Early on, we had recognized a growing tension between the local team members and the professional groups regarding the mode of interaction and engagement associated with digital action repertoires. We turned to resource mobilization theory (McAdam et al. 1988; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Zald and Ash 1966) to understand the relationship between the SMO and action repertoires.

The third round of coding and analysis focused more deeply on the relationship between values and digital action repertoires. In this process we turned to the collective action space model (Bimber et al. 2012; Flanagin et al. 2006). Through this process, our key constructs emerged. We engaged in deconstructing each strategic initiative and compared the emergent themes. The strategic initiative either revealed continuity (or stability) in relation to AI's values, or it promoted change in AI's values. Dynamism in values had implications for engagement and interaction, including the interaction between professional groups and groups of digital supporters, as well as for the boundaries of the SMO.

At several points during data collection and analysis, we also reported back to the professional groups at AI.[6] These meetings helped to reinforce our understanding of how the professional groups protected values when they came under internal and external pressure. The three rounds of coding revealed the themes shown in Figure 3. We explore these themes in the following sections.

Action Repertoire Dynamics

Several initiatives took place involving digital action repertoires during the time of our study. We discuss these initiatives one by one, highlighting the design intent, the affordances, and the effects on the organization. We start each initiative with a brief summary of key findings.

Initiative to Reach Digital Supporters: Digital Petitioning

Digital petitioning, which fell in line with the traditional action repertoires at AI, symbolized what Tilly (1978) and Tarrow (1995) called an extension of a legitimate type of action. It broadened the boundaries of the organization to include digital supporters. However, digital petitioning, as it evolved, also challenged the values of effective action and accuracy, and affected the mode of interaction and engagement.

Design Intent

Digital petitioning tapped supporters who were either passive members or new to the organization. Many of the new supporters were young and technology savvy, comfortable with social media. This new group was also more heterogeneous in terms of its values and less interested in long-term relationships with any particular SMO.

Through digital petitions, members and other supporters were solicited to sign and share the protest online (i.e., push the petition forward in one's own network). The digital petitions were based on a hyperlink structure and included a short description of the petition's target beneficiary (partly dependent on the social media outlet). Although a picture of the petition's target occasionally was included (see Figure 4), pictures generally were used cautiously because they increased the risks of further victimization of the target. Through hyperlinks, supporters were redirected to the organization's web pages, which included more information about the petition target.

All the digital petitions were designed by professional groups at the organization. The design required them to adapt materials received from the International Secretariat for the local language and the specific communication outlet. Petitioning was seen as a legitimate action repertoire because it reflected AI's values of effective action and accuracy. The organization had a long history of petition campaigns through which it exerted political pressure on various causes, and the digital petitioning extended the campaigns to an online outlet. Accuracy was protected through the professional groups' control of the structure and content of petitions. In this way, professional groups could remain in the role of a custodian of values, as conveyed by a member of senior management:

> *The whole point with Amnesty is that you as an individual do something for other individuals; that was what attracted me about Amnesty in the first place, and I will defend those values until the day I die. It is a truly deep feeling.*

[6]We had bimonthly in-person or conference calls with the members of the digital media group. During these meetings, we were mostly gathering data for the repertoires. Quarterly, we presented results to the engaged managers at AI. We also shared this manuscript with the head of communication and fundraising.

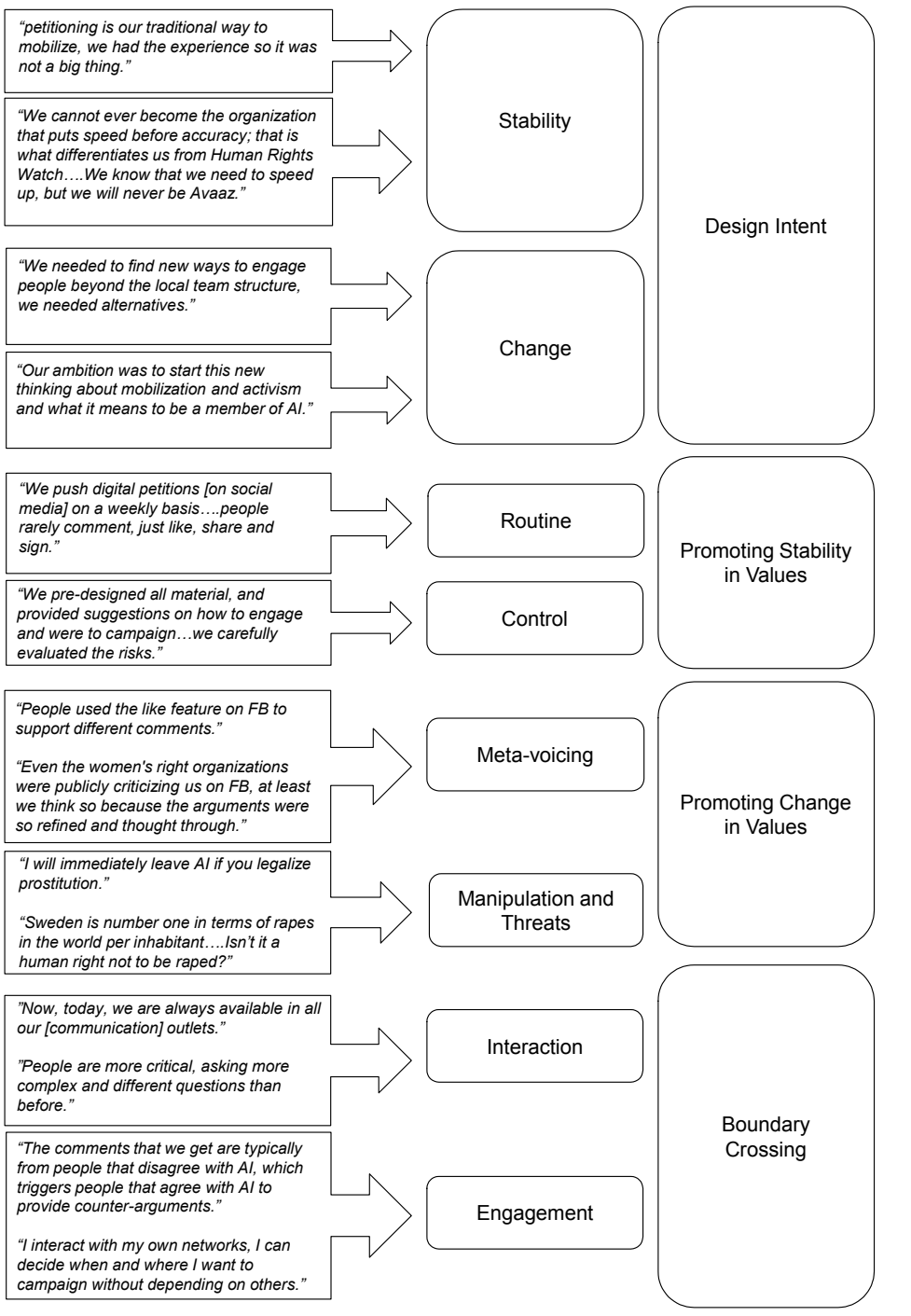

Figure 3. Representative Coding and Categories

Figure 4. Example of a Digital Petition Published on AI's FB Page

Value Stability and Change in Digital Repertoires

On the one hand, digital petitioning was designed to extend a legitimate action repertoire; on the other hand, the repertoire in action challenged the values of accuracy and effective action. First, concerns about accuracy surfaced as the digital media group struggled to adapt the content of petitions to the requirements of the different social media outlets. Rewriting the petition text for FB and Twitter presented the risk of compromising on the core message and thus reducing accuracy. A member of the senior management commented on the increasingly onerous process:

> *This [social media] is an outlet that we cannot control, we have a strong reputation as experts in human rights issues, we never comment on things that we are not 100% sure of, our reports are hundreds of pages, not 140 characters [referring to Twitter].*

The accuracy of the petitions was also challenged because FB and Twitter afforded to digital supporters the ability to add comments that were not necessarily in line with the views of AI. In response to these concerns, the digital media group carefully scrutinized supporter-created content. Rarely did mistakes go uncorrected, and all news-related content was scrutinized by the digital media group for the value of accuracy. A digital media representative commented:

> *We are sometimes almost ridiculously afraid of publishing something that is not 100% thought through. We had this LGBT team that posted something that was not 100% correct, and there were all these scenes about it.*

Digital petitioning also challenged the value of effective action. Although digital petitioning was an extension of a legitimate traditional action repertoire, the very practice of signing a digital petition was not equally legitimate. Many who signed were nonpaying members and were not seen by the professional groups or the local groups to be strongly affiliated with the values of the organization. Local team members perceived that the repertoire did not reflect sufficient solidarity with the petition target. A local team member commented:

> *I don't understand the role of digital petitions. Sometimes I think that it is more based on the feel-good for the individual than the petition target.*

The perceived lack of deep engagement violated the value of effective action. The concern over ineffective action was also exacerbated by questions about the political effect of digital petitions. At one meeting, questions were raised concerning the effect of digital signatures as opposed to physical signatures. A fax consisting of 50,000 digital signatures was compared to the influence of a stack of 800 physical letters. A member of senior management asked one of the digital media representatives:

> *To you, what is the difference between a digital signature and a physical letter? How many digital signatures do we need to gather so that it is comparable with one physical letter?*

The digital media representative answered:

> *For me, it's one to one, but that is also the reason that I work with this [media].*

The head of communications and fundraising later explained to us:

> *We expected to reach the crowd and gather more signatures. We were not prepared, however, in terms of how to measure success and the political impact of these [digital] signatures.*

Interaction and Engagement with Implications for Boundary Crossing

The affordances of social media contributed to the challenge. The professional groups and the local teams viewed social media as affording a transitory and detached nature of interaction and engagement, involving little cognitive effort or personal responsibility. Indeed, the centrally designed and executed repertoire provided little space for digital supporters to guide or alter the campaign anyway. Signing a digital petition also did not invite more extensive interactions with other digital supporters or with the professional groups. Beyond the shared affiliation of supporting the same campaign, digital supporters remained largely unbounded to the actions of others. A senior management representative commented on the detachment of digital supporters:

> *We usually interact closely with our local team members, but with this group I am unsure. I just don't see the point.*

This transitory interaction and engagement began to characterize the new group of digital supporters in the eyes of the professional groups and local groups. Interaction relied heavily on the use of "like" and "share" features in FB, or what Majchrzak et al. (2013) called metavoicing. To illustrate, during 2013 the average number of words in the comments on FB group posts was less than 10 (9.73); however, the number of "likes" at times far exceeded 300. A digital media group representative commented:

> *We know that people follow us, like us, and share our posts. But in terms of comments they are silent. We know those who comment by their names.*

Moreover, the number of supporters who signed the weekly petition fluctuated greatly. On average, 5 percent of the digital supporters signed the petitions on a weekly basis, but some weeks merely 2 percent of digital supporters signed whereas other weeks over 10 percent of digital supporters signed. The professional groups had difficulty explaining these fluctuations, as stated by a digital media representative:

> *We know that more people sign if we publish pictures of the petition target, and if the traditional news media pick up on the case…but really we don't know what triggers the [digital] supporters.*

Our interviews also suggested that even those who signed did not necessarily read the petitions. Comments revealing this approach include the following: *I never read, I just sign*; or *I trust AI so I don't have to read or make judgments*; *I sign when I see that it's from AI*; and *I believe that I make good things [happen] without knowing about it in detail*. When we presented our observations to professional groups, a member of the senior management team commented:

> *Is there "guilt by association" in Facebook? Even if people don't want to know, we still have a responsibility in providing the facts.*

The disinterest in details about the content of the petitions was thus assumed to be the result of guilt and apathy, confirming the view among some of the local team members regarding ineffective action. Together, the perceived apathy and the fluctuations in petition signing contributed to the perceived lack of legitimacy of the repertoire.

Although the interaction and engagement of digital petitioning supporters did not differ remarkably from those of many other passive members, the repertoire had organizational boundary implications. The digital supporters were not seen as adhering to values. The organization began to fraction. A member of the senior management team reflected on the division between local members and digital supporters as part of the broader organization:

> *They do not want us to call them [the local group members] activists, but rather active members; this suggests that they perceive others as "passive members." This might be correct, but it's still bothersome.*

Initiative to Integrate Online and Offline Action Repertoires

Despite the factions in the organization, the number of digital supporters continued to soar. The professional groups be-

came increasingly concerned with these subscribers' transitory engagement. To reduce factions, the professional groups also wanted to improve relations between digital supporters and local group members. The digital activism group thus launched an initiative that led to the development of two action repertoires integrating online and offline means of action. Both repertoires increased the autonomy of individual supporters. The autonomy brought about an entrepreneurial mode of engagement and concerns over adherence to the values of the organization.

Design Intent

The intent of the two new repertoires was two-fold: (1) attract new (digital) supporters and (2) force connections between online and offline groups—between new supporters and the local teams and professional groups. The local teams had been the backbone of the campaigns by mobilizing and maintaining long-term support. The local members' engagement (circulating petitions, writing letters, and doing fundraising activities) often stretched over several years. A local team member commented:

> *We typically work on three different adoption cases [in parallel], usually over several years. We build up these networks with a prisoner's family and friends.*

But, the number of local teams had been continuously decreasing. Some interviewees described the difficult position of fewer local team resources as "*a sinking ship*." A local campaign coordinator explained some of the reasons for the decline:

> *We have energetic youth teams but with high turnaround rates, [and] in the older teams, people are literally dying….It is very worrying that the active supporters are actually decreasing in numbers.*

To attract new supporters to the organization, there was a broad recognition that the repertoires needed to accommodate supporter autonomy with a more entrepreneurial mode of engagement. A member from the senior management commented on the increasing need for new repertoires:

> *Mobilizing is hard; you have to be on the phone and make all those calls to convince people to show up. It is not that people don't want to be engaged—I have people calling me every week about engaging; it's just that they want to engage in another way.*

The two new repertoires were also designed to create member-to-member interactions across different supporter groups (i.e., local team members and digital supporters). Such interaction would help new supporters to adhere to the values of the organization without the new repertoires following the institutional engagement of traditional repertoires.

Change and Stability-Promoting Affordances

Social media rendered a new value of autonomy with digital action repertories. This new value coexisted with the professional groups remaining in control over the target of the protest. The first repertoire, called the "virtual demonstration," involved a game encouraging supporters to digitally "check in" by physically showing up outside specific embassies and posting their efforts online. In this way, leveraging social media, the repertoire afforded autonomy in the supporters' choice of time, but constrained the space of demonstration. The supporters who mobilized could go whenever their schedule allowed and register their demonstration. The digital media group had selected four specific embassies for the virtual demonstrations. This control over targets ensured that the demonstrations did not violate values of the AI. The initiative leader commented:

> *I had this idea of framing it as a challenge, or a game; once you had checked in outside an embassy, you would find out how far it would be to the next.*

The interface of the application provided distances and directions to the next embassy and hence was expected to encourage the participants to "keep going." The interface also allowed the digital supporters to transmit their activities to other social media outlets, affording visibility and broadening the dissemination for the call to action.

The second repertoire, called "act on your own," combined both traditional and digital action repertoires. The campaigns selected for the "act on your own" repertoire reflected the global mission of solidarity and humanitarian action. For example, one campaign involved LGBT rights. The predefined materials included a narrative of 24-year old Noxolo Nogwaza. She was murdered on her way home from a night out with friends. Her attackers raped and repeatedly beat and stabbed her—apparently because of her sexual orientation.

The professional groups remained in control of the campaign material. The material was delivered to the supporters in small packages. The material included traditional posters, postcards, and petition lists. The instructions and the predesigned material were provided to increase adherence to values of accuracy and effective action although in some

respects they can also be seen to limit entrepreneurial modes of engagement. While the "act on your own" repertoire afforded autonomy, it also challenged values of effective action by engaging non-members in campaign work. The initiative leader shared a concern:

> *Someone [a local group member] asked me the other day how we [AI] will make sure that people don't just simply order our material and then do nothing.*

More so, the supporters were allowed to act outside the local team structure—a bold decision by the professional groups. The initiative leader explained:

> *We have designed it so that everything is sent to the activist [by] regular mail; it is like a package of tools. They will also get instructions of how to act and, naturally, information about the campaign in itself.*

While autonomy was an intent of the "act on your own" repertoire, connections were also viewed as important among the supporters of the "act on your own" repertoire, local groups, as well as the professional groups. The digital media group had set up a FB page encouraging supporters to report on their campaign work (see Figure 5). For example, the supporters were encouraged to share social media "selfies" of the type featured in Figure 5.

Visibility to the "act on your own" supporter activities were deemed important because the repertoire introduced risks from the viewpoint of the professional groups. A member of the senior management commented:

> *You [the researchers] have to keep in mind that we know nothing about these people; they may not even be AI members. And we let them campaign in our name. What we have is our brand, our name: Amnesty International; it means something to people.*

Interaction, Engagement, and Implications for Boundaries

With the two repertoires, the professional groups expressed mixed success. The virtual demonstration repertoire never came to play the mediating role between online and offline activists that the digital media group had aimed for. The "gaming" element of the repertoire that required supporters to check in was not perceived as having political impact. Not only did the repertoire ever reach a significant number of supporters, but it failed to support the value of effective action and hence was not deemed legitimate. A member of the senior management commented:

> *It was an exciting idea, but for those of us [who] work with mobilization, we honestly did not think that it would work—mostly because it wasn't clear if it had anything to do with human rights work.*

Among the professional groups, the virtual demonstration repertoire was considered a failure. The initiative leader elaborated:

> *We wanted to combine online and offline activism…. [O]ne explanation of why it failed was that it [the repertoire] was not properly marketed within the organization.*

The second repertoire, called "act on your own," was considered a success mainly because of the increasing number of participating supporters. The repertoire also expanded interaction and engagement of supporters in their own social networks. However, the repertoire did little to connect across different groups of supporters. The supporters of the repertoire did not use the FB group set up by the professional groups. The professional groups and local groups had little visibility to the campaign work of the "act on your own" supporters. When asked why supporters did not share their activities, one participating supporter offered the following comment:

> *It was personal, so in some sense it never occurred to me that I should post it [my campaign work] on AI's FB; I posted [it] in my own network.*

Perhaps because of the increased autonomy, the "act on your own" supporters were inclined to continue their engagement over time, subscribing to several of the "act on your own" campaigns. This positive outcome of the initiative was surprising, even to the initiative leader; she commented:

> *The initiative is as much about internal politics as it is about measuring success. It is a way for us to make clear that new times are coming, and that it is time to rethink in regards to the way we organize our activists.*

To recap, the "act on your own" repertoire afforded autonomy of digital supporters. The repertoire was associated with changes in interaction and engagement, as well as with organizational boundaries. The tight control of the campaign material by professional groups ensured that values were adhered to in terms of accuracy. Still the repertoire challenged the traditional structure of campaign work and hence the value of effective action.

Figure 5. A "Selfie" from AI's "Act On Your Own" Campaign

Digital Supporters' Counter-Movement Over Sex Worker Policy

The sex worker policy movement and counter-movement departed from previous action repertoires in several ways. First, it was directed as a critique toward the professional groups and so was the first time that the digital supporters engaged in guiding and altering the actions of the organization. Second, it exposed value factions with regard to effective action. Third, the value factions used social media to develop and reinforce action repertoires that did not necessarily adhere to the values of the organization. This entrepreneurial mode of engagement leveraged the heterogeneity and the knowledge of the digital supporters. The sex worker policy movement contributed to the transformation of the organization by expanding the interaction and engagement options of supporters across organizational boundaries.

Design Intent

In early 2014, someone at the International Secretariat in London, or at the UK affiliate of AI, leaked information about a policy suggestion on decriminalizing sex work to *The Daily Mail*, a national newspaper in the UK.[7] The news instantly went viral and sparked a major roar in both the UK and Swedish news media. The discussion was centered on AI's values of effective action. How would the decriminalization of sex work help prevent human rights violations of the sex workers? And in what way would a policy on decriminalization help protect sex workers from coercion, exploitation, or abuse? Supporter coalitions of pro- and anti-policy movements emerged, engaging in discussions about how to best protect sex workers. In Sweden alone, the digital media group received hundreds of e-mails and more than 500 comments regarding the policy suggestion on its FB page.

Being a membership-driven organization, global policy recommendations would be brought out for consultation and vote by the members. The professional groups communicated to media that the members would decide on the policy suggestion. A member of senior management commented:

> *We wanted to reassure that it would be the members that in the end would decide [on the policy suggestion]; we communicated this [position] to our community, also trying to explain that [a recommendation] was only a suggestion.*

AI's website also explained that in the end the members would decide. In all interactions with the digital supporters, the professional groups referred to this statement, declaring "*thanks for your inquiry, we understand your concern, please read our full statement on our web pages*." Purposefully, the professional group did not want to engage in value negotiations or mediating between supporter views.

Change and Stability Promoting Affordances

Although the overall mission of the policy was coherent (to protect the human rights of sex workers), the disagreements among different supporters emerged over the right way of doing so (i.e., effective action). The digital supporters were

[7] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2545003/Amnesty-calls-legal-prostitution-Charity-says-laws-ban-people-buying-selling-sex-breach-human-rights.html

split into two groups: those who considered sex work a human right (and hence should not be criminalized) and those who believed that all sex work was the result of exploitation (and should be criminalized). Similar to movement/counter-movement dynamics, the factions were linked to one another and interacted using threats, manipulation, and conflict (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Actors "joined" a group by reinforcing specific comments or posts. Reinforcement was typically manifested through FB's "like" feature.

The digital supporters were no longer just adopting the digital repertoires designed by AI. Rather, a number of repertoires emerged, based on what was familiar to the digital supporters. The supporters used digital action repertoires, such as allowing "likes" for critical comments, "posts" of external links from tabloids, and starting alternative FB groups for those "*who would leave AI if the policy were accepted.*" FB supporters even developed and published petitions from www.change.org about the sex worker policy. In this way, the counter-movement over the sex worker policy was associated with a variety of repertoires, including some whose values did not adhere to the values of the organization.

The digital media group followed the ebb and flow of discussion in the FB group. The group observed how the pro-policy supporters often mitigated the critical arguments offered by the anti-policy supporters. For example, when this comment was posted:

> *There is a strong connection between prostitution and trafficking. There is no need to make a distinction*

The following response was added:

> *Well, in fact trafficking is a very unusual crime. I wrote an article about this in SvT Debate [Swedish top news outlet] last year: http://debatt.svt.se/2013/12/16/det-ar-inte-offren-som-tjanar-pa-overdrivna-traffickingsiffror/.*

The professional groups could remain on the sidelines as long as the pro-policy supporters engaged in countering the arguments made by the anti-policy faction. Without engaging in the policy discussion, the digital media group used the repertoires available to influence the attention of the digital supporters by publishing unrelated news, and by pushing digital petitions on FB. For example, the Olympics in Russia were approaching at that time, and the professional groups wanted to create awareness about Russia's "anti-gay law." A digital media group representative commented:

> *We felt that we had other things to discuss, important issues and petitions that needed our FB subscribers' attention; we decided to keep going [pushing unrelated news].*

By pushing these alternative news items, the digital media group made the interactions over the sex policy less visible in the FB news flow. As a result, participating supporters had a hard time navigating through the discussions, and arguments were posted redundantly. Because no professional group engaged in a process of fact verification, questions of accuracy were raised. The movement also became highly fragmented. The different sides often responded only to the most recent comment rather than the whole thread. Thus, the comments not only were duplicated but also were distorted as, in many cases, supporters responded to a side issue in the previous comment.

Interaction and Engagement with Implications for Boundary Crossing

The interaction and engagement among supporters were influenced by the movement and counter-movement. By revealing and using different repertoires, digital supporters manifested an entrepreneurial form of engagement. This entrepreneurial engagement transcended the boundaries of AI; it also affected the SMO's values. The professional groups were influenced on several levels, particularly in terms of how they continued researching the implications of the policy. For example, digital supporters directed the professional groups' attention to sources (research sites) and organizations they could (and did) consult.

Surprisingly, rather than seeing digital supporters split off from the FB group, the professional groups saw their engagement deepen and saw participation increase from 39,000 to 45,000 supporters. Even after the conversation had moved on to other subjects, the entrepreneurial mode of engagement in the FB group continued. A digital media representative offered the following comments:

> *All of us that are working with social media have noticed a change; more people are commenting, but most significant is that we get much more difficult and critical questions – there is this critical voice that is new to us.*

Despite the lack of interaction with the professional groups, the digital supporters increasingly interacted with each other, revealing their values. A digital media group representative commented:

> *We have witnessed an increase in subscribers of almost 60% during the past year. The comments that we get are typically from people that disagree*

with AI, which triggers people that agree with AI to provide counter-arguments.

Similar to the findings described by Meyer and Staggenborg (1993), we found that when value factions were exposed, the level of engagement and interaction among digital supporters increased. Some evidence also emerged that the sex worker policy debate pushed the professional groups to advance conversation about how to simultaneously manage stability and change in values as the multiple voices on FB polarized the digital supporters. The web pages served to stabilize facts and define legitimate courses of action, while the FB pages served as a revealing site for the heterogeneous values of the digital supporters. Hence, the professional groups could stay detached from the discussions on the FB page while remaining the central actors on the web pages.

Discussion and Implications

This article investigates the question of *how values influence the relationships between an SMO, its supporters, and digital action repertoires*. The resource mobilization theory has long underscored the close relationship between action repertoires and the SMO's values (e.g., Clemens and Minkoff 2004; Tarrow 1995; Tilly 1978). However, how the values affect digital action repertoires and how these repertoires influence the transformation of an SMO remains relatively unexplored in the digital activism literature. Digital activism literature in general and the collective action space model in particular emphasize how social media afford engagement and interaction that cross boundaries (Bimber et al. 2012; Flanagin et al. 2006). Our research extends these lines of study by articulating a value-based model (Figure 6) of action repertoire dynamics from the SMO perspective (see Appendix B for additional empirical support for constructs).

The model illustrates the dynamics between values, the design intent, and subsequent interaction and engagement among supporters and the professional groups. These dynamics expanded the boundaries of the SMO.

The complex relationship between the values of the SMO and the design intent was salient in the initiatives studied. In digital petitioning, the design intent adhered to AI's values of accuracy and effective action. The repertoire followed the institutional traditions and routine practices. But even here, the new action repertoire caused questions regarding the values of the organization. The "act on your own" repertoire was intended to adhere to as well as change the values of the organization. The content of the repertoire was still centrally designed and controlled, but the repertoire challenged the traditional structure of campaign work and hence the value of effective action. In the sex worker policy suggestion, AI resorted to using repertoires that it controlled and where its message was fixed: It relied on web-based repertoires with predesigned answers to all supporter questions. The findings suggest that its repertoires were designed with an intention of stability in values as well as changes in values.

The affordances of social media mediated the relationships between the design intent of digital repertoires and the engagement and interaction of supporters. Here again, the relationships were complex and bidirectional. Affordances in the digital petitioning repertoire promoted transitory interaction and engagement. In contrast, social media in the "act on your own" repertoire afforded autonomy and entrepreneurial engagement. Individuals engaged their personal networks and took on responsibility for the campaign work. The entrepreneurial character in engagement was also present in the way that social media was used in the virtual demonstration repertoire, in which engagement and interactions were utterly dependent on an individual supporter. The sex worker policy suggestion illustrated how the affordances of social media expanded the boundaries of interaction and engagement. As boundaries expanded, social media appeared to increase critical voices and value factions. These factions developed a discourse that included threats and manipulations. The conflicting views in value factions, in turn, amplified the level of engagement among supporters, which contributed to changes in organizational boundaries.

Theoretical Implications

Our research offers four theoretical contributions. First, our research contributes to the collective action space model (Bimber et al. 2012; Flanagin et al. 2006). As theorized by Bimber et al. (2012), digital repertoires expanded interaction and engagement and led to boundary-crossing dynamics. Our research elaborates on how such boundary-crossing dynamics create challenges to the values of the SMO. Even digital petitioning, which was designed as an extension of a legitimate type of action repertoire, brought challenges to the values of effective action and accuracy. Our research also suggests that boundary-crossing dynamics introduced new values to the SMO. Both the challenges to existing values and the new values led to the design of digital repertoires that, in turn, affected interaction and engagement. Not just the professional groups at AI but the supporters themselves designed new digital repertoires. Hence, a constant interplay between SMO values, digital repertoires, and engagement and interaction was evident in the findings.

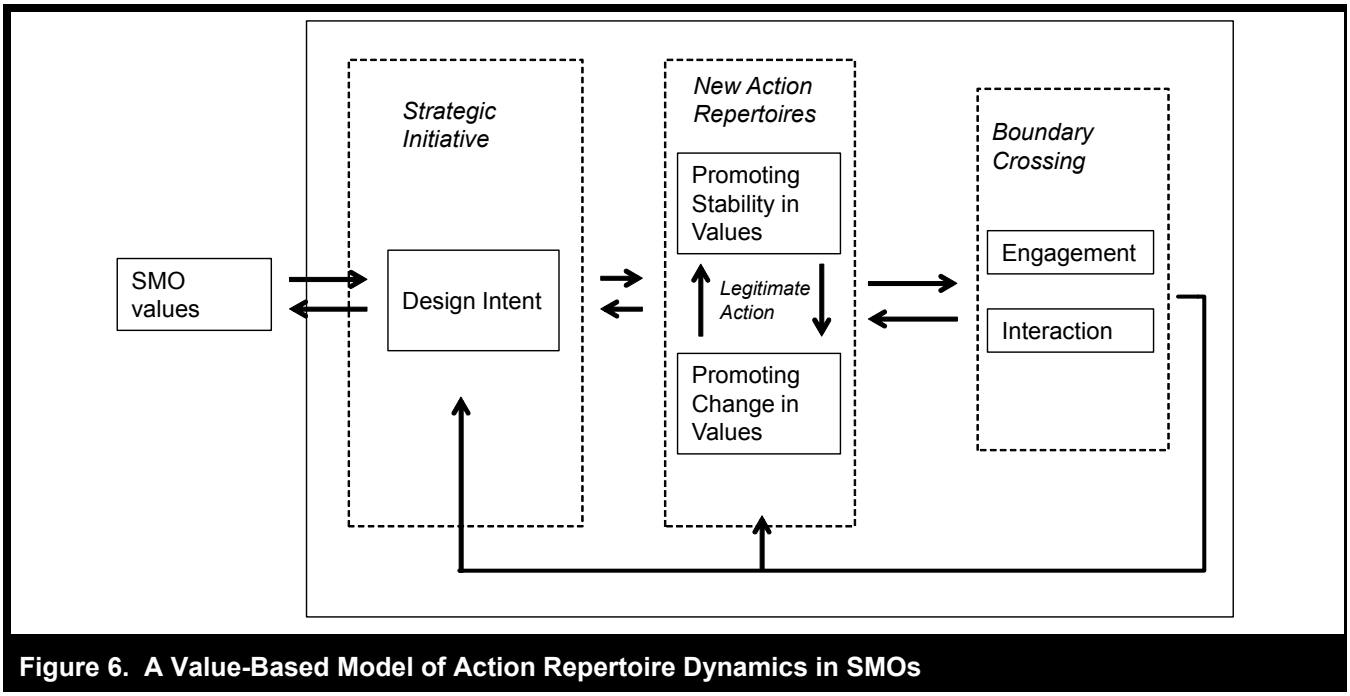

Figure 6. A Value-Based Model of Action Repertoire Dynamics in SMOs

Second, our research suggests that digital action repertoires might shift between promoting stability in values and promoting changes in them, partly depending on the affordances of the action repertoire. This view of affordances fills an important gap in the growing IS literature on digital activism and collective action; extant IS research about digital activism is dominated by exploring the affordances of social media in promoting social change and innovation (Ghobadi and Clegg 2015; Leong et al. 2014; Oh et al. 2013; Wattal et al. 2010). Yet rarely does research engage in understanding how affordances are also associated with promoting stability in values. Our results suggest that affordances need to be recognized as a means to maintain stability in values. Affordances also impacted boundary crossing. The professional groups could leverage the affordances of digital action repertoires to shift the boundary crossing between supporters and the organization *in situ*. In the sex worker policy suggestion, the professional groups changed from being a central actor to becoming increasingly detached from the FB page, while remaining in control and magnifying stability through their web pages. Recognizing these dynamics expands our view of affordances in IS research on digital activism.

Third, the resource mobilization literature has long examined the role of values in action repertoire design (Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tarrow 1995; Zald and McCarthy 1979) and the relationship between action repertoires and political opportunity structures. Our research elaborates the reciprocal relationship between SMO values and the design intent of digital action repertoires. However, in contrast to traditional action repertoires, digital action repertoires can accommodate a variety of values by leveraging technology capabilities that can support such heterogeneity. The same digital action repertoire can support stability in values and change in values, and the new values can lead to new political opportunity structures.

Fourth, this study addresses the organizational level of analysis, thus complementing the predominant movement level in the extant literature (Bennett and Segerberg 2011; Gil de Zuniga et al. 2012; Tufekci and Wilson 2012; Valenzuela 2013). The results elaborate on the dynamics of values and value factions in an SMO. While digital activism research emphasizes the autonomy and transitory engagement of digital supporters (Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010), the literature has not examined the relationships between digital repertoires and the values of the SMO. Lack of adherence to values can challenge legitimacy and lead to a short-lived action repertoire.

Practical Implications

The study has implications for practice. First, our research highlights important dynamics in digital action repertoires that influence managerial decision making regarding their use.

Understanding the relationships between values, design of action repertoires, and the consequences on collective action is critical. Even though the design intent of the SMO might push the digital action repertoires in a certain direction, the repertoires can take on diverse values and challenge their perceived legitimacy among the supporters and professional groups in SMOs. Recent research on digital activism has focused on how to combine digital and traditional repertoires (Bennet and Segerberg 2011; Harlow 2012; Mercea 2012; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010). Such design activity has to consider carefully how SMO values are affected.

Moreover, SMO managers must recognize the changing nature of the affordances of digital action repertoires. Engaging supporters from all parts of the organization can provide insights into the differing affordances of repertoires, their legitimacy, and their effects on interaction and engagement. For example, supporters can potentially write blogs or share personal experiences of their campaign work. This articulation of experience, in turn, might lead to micro-collective action networks of engaged activists with a shared communality in terms of interest and time constraints. These networks would not be stable divisions but rather fluid communities of interests that adopt and adjust to opportunities in the surrounding environment. Such communities have the potential to modularize the heterogeneous community into micro-collective action networks.

In addition, SMOs need to consider a new action repertoire in the context of the existing action repertoires. A new action repertoire can bring new supporters but also can increase the risks of fragmentation among supporters. Hence, supporters should be considered in the action repertoire design process. Our research suggests that spurring entrepreneurial engagement by supporters requires that SMOs find ways both to increase the autonomy of supporters and to share governance with the supporters. With shared governance, the SMOs can better manage the supporter risks associated with action repertoires that afford entrepreneurial modes of action.

Limitations and Future Research

The theoretical and practical implications need to be considered in light of the limitations of our study. First, our findings are based on a single case study, which might limit their theoretical generalizability. Second, Amnesty International is an SMO with a long history whose primary actions have been deeply rooted in campaign letter writing and whose organizational structure depends greatly on the long-term engagement of local teams. In our study digital action repertoires were found to challenge both of these structures. In a nascent SMO, these challenges might look very different. Given the limits of our study, a future research avenue would be to examine the interdependencies of structures, subgroups, and digital action repertoires in different SMO contexts. Future researchers are also encouraged to examine specific values in more depth and possibly develop comparative implications for collective action. To what extent does the violation of accuracy value undermine collective action? Future research might explore how digital action repertoires link to the identity of different subgroups within an SMO. To explore such relationships, scholars might engage in developing a new theoretical articulation of the affordances of digital action repertoires. Our research indicates the potential for value-centered conflicts with regard to digital action repertoires (Agarwal et al. 2014; Morgan et al 2012). Future research could seek to understand the role of digital action repertories in such conflicts. Such insights could be particularly relevant for political SMOs, in which homogenous values between actors have been considered core. Last, the AI case also points toward the need to further research the important implications of digital action repertoires on membership. As the boundaries of the SMO change, what are the implications for the concept of membership in a membership-driven organization?

Conclusion

SMOs are critical carriers of values. While heart-breaking causes leveraging digital action repertoires can mobilize tens of thousands and even millions of supporters to protest against the injustices, such support is often transitory. Without SMOs, we risk losing sight of long-term strategic and issue-based opportunity structures that go beyond the transitory affordances of social media. Our model takes a first step toward explaining SMO intervention in a distributed context that is characterized by an increased presence of digital action repertoires.

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Appendix A

Example of Interview Guide: Higher Levels of Management at AI [redacted]

Name:
Date/Time:
Recorder:

Role and Responsibilities at AI

- What is your role at AI?
- How long have you been working within AI?
- Any changes in work task?
- Any large-scale organizational changes?

Strategic Initiatives and Digital Action Repertoires

- What is the role of digital action repertoires at AI?
- How central are digital action repertoires to AI's activities?
- Is this role changing with the reorganization and decentralization of AI (one AI)?
- In what ways does AI want digital action repertoires to have an impact in non-conflict zones?
- What are the current international digital strategies? What aspects are considered key?
- How do you put boundaries to the digital strategies?

Design Initiative-Specific Questions

- What group of people do you intend to reach?
- What are your thoughts on the role of the digital collective?
- How do you decide on how much information to unpack for the receiver?
- What is the perceived outcome of the initiative?
- What will be the main challenges with the initiative?

Mobilization: Digital Petitioning

- How do you decide what petition to publish?
- What are the expectations on a digital petition? What does AI want to achieve with digital petitioning?
- What is the most effective current activist repertoire for AI?
- How do you measure success in terms of mobilization?

Other Issues Depending on Respondent

- What are the information sources? How do you rely on the public?
- How is digital activism changing traditional AI engagement?
- What are the/ (are there any) different needs? The community need vs. the AI need?
- What is the key role of the community?
- Facing a more heterogeneous community: how do you leverage the expertise?

Technology

- What are the new upcoming technologies that you plan to embrace?
- What are your current needs?
- What are the main technological challenges?
- What are the main technological potentials?

Appendix B

Selected Quotations

Model Element	Selected Quotations
SMO Values	"*It's all about solidarity....We worked (writing letters and postcards) for 8 years for a prisoner without knowing if he was alive or not....One day this dark-eyed man stood outside my door, I was making fish for dinner, I knew right away that it was him.*" [Local team member] "*The whole difference rests in if your actions are grounded by the values of the organization, or if you are acting as an individual without any true relation to AI beyond writing petitions. It doesn't matter if you use a physical pencil or a digital signature.*" [Local team member] "*We need to always be accurate; it is our responsibility to inform the public without any political bias.*" [Head of press and relations]
Design Intent	"*We need to take a few steps back and fix the boat before we engage in more new things, learn to say no....The initiatives need to be beyond short-term creativity.*" [Local campaign coordinator] "*It doesn't matter if it is digital or physical [repertoires]. It is so important that we remain in control of how it will play out—how we communicate and interact.*" [Head of Communication and Fundraising] "*The motive is not so much about reaching the masses; it is about creating awareness of AI's work in more remote locations.*" [Digital Media Manager] "*We wanted to find ways to combine the physical and the digital, to make the digital supporters visible to us.*" [Digital Media Representative]
Promoting Change in Values	"*Digital petitioning brought a discussion of who an activist is, and what defines an activist; in a sense it polarized the organization more than before.*" [Digital Media Manager] "*The share and comment features have made us more visible, but visible in a way that we cannot control. We are all about freedom of speech, we could never delete critical comments.*" [Head of Press and Relations] "*Now people are representing AI without even being members, doing campaign work on our behalf. This is something that is very new.*" [Digital Media Representative]
Promoting Stability in Values	"*Digital petitioning is well known, we redirect people to the webpage....it is not interactive. It has become a routine.*" [Digital Media Representative] "*We disengaged from the discussions, just communicating the very same message: that our members will decide on the [sex work] policy at the annual meeting in May.*" [Digital Media Representative] "*We pre-designed all material and provided suggestions on how to engage and to campaign....We carefully evaluated the risks.*" [Digital Media Manager]
Changes in Engagement and Interaction	"*We interact more with our digital community; we have this social media 'on call'—trying to be available at all times.*" [Head of Communication and Fundraising] "*We have arranged so that people can subscribe to the 'act on your own' initiative; we have invited the supporters to be part of official AI functions, trying to tie them closer.*" [Digital Media Manager] "*It is a risk [the 'act on your own' repertoire]; naturally, we need to be cautious but also realize that we cannot control everything.*" [Digital Media Representative] "*Digital media is slowly turning into our main communication outlet; the web is still perhaps the most salient, but social media support is increasing rapidly.*" [Digital Media Representative]