

Self-coordinated Defense Mechanisms against Cyberhate: An Analysis of Postings Related to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake on Facebook

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Abstract

This paper seeks to conceptualize the evolution of ad-hoc and improvised self-coordination to institutionalized self-governance of non-binding virtual groups. It uses data collected from Facebook group postings in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake to discuss how netizens engage in loosely coordinated actions to contain hatred messages, and eventually evolve into a process of institutionalization of online communities to better coordinate their anti-cyberhate effort. The literature on coordination and governance has focused on virtual teams, and members of these teams typically belong to an organization, or are bound by a well-defined contractual arrangement. In our study, netizens are random subscribers of social networking groups who join forces to promulgate or fight against cyberhate. As adversarial external forces intensify, self-coordination needs to become more effective and the necessity of self-governance gradually leads to institutionalization.

1. Introduction

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 struck Haiti, leaving more than 316,000 dead, 300,000 injured and 1.3 million displaced [<http://earthquake.usgs.gov>]. The massive destruction prompted many people around the world, including Haitians living outside Haiti – particularly in the US, Canada and France – to come together to help victims. Massive information exchange on the Haiti quake took place in cyberspace within hours after the event. While postings of sympathy and support flooded electronic forums, there were also numerous hate messages regarding Haiti and against the idea of providing humanitarian assistance and/or disaster relief to the country.

As the exchanges between hatred and compassionate messages intensified, one could witness the emergence of netizens, i.e. group of surfers voluntarily taking unplanned initiatives to form “in-groups (us)” versus “out-groups (them)” either to proliferate hate or to fight against hatred behaviors. In the absence of, or the inability to

provide, immediate legal enforcement against cyberhate, certain of these netizens have become *de facto* defenders or protectors of the victims of online hatred behaviors. They identify themselves with the online groups that align with their beliefs and attitudes, set up self-mediated actions to counter the cyberhate movement through policing and reporting, and eventually, and by necessity, come together to institutionalize their response effort. The purpose of this research is to theorize the self-coordinated mechanism of anti-cyberhate (ACH) efforts.

Much of the literature on coordination and governance has focused on virtual teams, and members of these teams typically belong to an organization (e.g., employees of a geographically dispersed organization), or they are bound by a well-defined contractual arrangement, likely one with highly structured and well-articulated standard operating procedures. In this paper, we seek to understand how cyberhate emerges, and how netizens react against cyberhate. The research objective is to look for evidence of adhoc self-regulation, self-coordination and self-governance.

We collected data from Facebook postings related to the Haiti earthquake in order to analyze the phenomenon of self-coordination and self-governance. We began downloading Facebook postings a few hours after the quake and stopped the data collection process after six months when the number of messages drastically dropped, suggesting the withering of the debate interest on the Haiti quake. We reviewed and filtered thousands of postings, and focused on those that seemed to suggest the complex nature of collaboration, coordination, organization and self-governance and institutionalization effort during this crisis.

2. Emergence of Cyberhate

Posting hate messages is not isolated to the Haiti earthquake alone. The Simon Wiesenthal Center's 2010 report [<http://www.wiesenthal.com>] found more than 11,500 different hate sites (20 per cent increase over 2009). Cyberhate can be defined as any online messages, audio-video materials, or other

electronically transmitted information to promote violence against, separation from, defamation of, deception about, or hostility toward other people based upon race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or government [1].

Cyberspace has been used as a means to promote extreme ideology, propagate hatred behavior, set up command and control mechanisms to direct organized hatred activities toward targeted opponents [2, 3, 4]. Hate groups take advantage of the Internet to promulgate their viewpoints, and recruit new associates [5]. There are a number of reasons for the Internet's popularity among extremists. These include its low-cost, high quality presentation, wide information distribution, ability to tailor messages to specific audiences who then can self-select the type of information they seek, the ability to create an effective single image of an ideological community, and the ease of global distribution across jurisdictional boundaries [6]. Cyberhate expands and crosses geographical boundaries, and hate groups are proliferating with the advent of Web 2.0 [7].

3. Hate proliferation in cyberspace

Several Internet platforms have been used by groups to nurture hate. The common platforms are listed below categorized chronologically by the technological advances of the Internet.

3.1. Bulletin Board Service (BBS). The hate groups' involvement with the digital world began in 1983 when "Liberty Bell Net" was established by Dietz who posted racist, anti-Semitic, and Holocaust denial texts [7]. With the ability to allow members to write comments and download files, this BBS was used to spread hate propaganda, provide listings of racist and anti-government organizations and the names of those -individuals designated as enemies or traitors to the cause, and to recruit members [7].

3.2. Newsgroups (USENET). BBSs were slowly taken over by electronic discussion boards such as Usenet by the early 1990s, when hate groups started to use Usenet to exchange hate messages on several different topics [8].

3.3. Websites (WWW) and weblogs. Stormfront.org was the first extremist website that went online in April 1995. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center website [<http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/groups/stormfront>] its membership base reached more than 130,000 who can access its e-library, buy merchandise, listen to a radio program, and engage in forum discussions [9, 5]. Hate groups use Websites to promote their

supremacist ideologies, recruit and train members, collaborate with other hate groups, and raise funds. The basic roles of these Websites are to communicate, recruit, and raise funds (e.g., National Alliance, Christian Identity), to encourage overt violence (e.g., Phineas Priesthood), to focus on children and women (e.g., Creativity Movement).

3.4. Social media and networking sites. Extremist groups use these social-networking sites to create and nurture online communities.

- **Social networking sites:** By their very open nature, social networking sites such as *Facebook*, *Myspace*, *Hi5*, *Twitter*, allow messages to be spread virally to a wider audience. These sites lack the traditional concept of control and regulations. Thousands of hate videos have been posted on *YouTube* with messages of racism, anti-semiticism, homophobia and terrorism. Therefore, self-identified nationalist communities find social networking sites and social media very useful especially because they are decentralized and have no formal organizational structure [10]. On Facebook alone, one finds (can join online) groups like "Holohoax", "I hate Palestine!", "Nuke Haiti", or "Kosovo is Serbia". Many pro and anti-Hezbollah tweets can be seen on *Twitter*.
- **Mailing lists (Yahoo and MSN groups).** Hate groups are also found on various listserves and mailing lists. Several racial extremists groups are found in Yahoo Groups and MSN Groups [<http://www.hatedirectory.com>]. International Network Against Cyber Hate reports that email is extensively used to recruit and disseminate information, and therefore can be a major way to encourage hate, becoming a main well-spring of hate crimes [<http://www.inach.net/content/inach-hateonthenet.pdf>].
- **Internet radio and podcasts.** Hate groups are using the Internet radio and podcasts to spread their rhetoric [<http://www.hatedirectory.com>]. The directory lists more than 40 Hate Internet radio and 13 podcasts [<http://www.hatedirectory.com>].
- **Hate Games.** Hate games are easily downloadable, with no age restrictions. Online users can buy hate games including those that promote ethnic cleansing and total "elimination" of Jews. Neo-nazi games seem to be used for propaganda and are easily accessible by juveniles.
- **Multiplayer real-time virtual game/world (MUDs, MMOs, Second Life).** Hate groups have

also created their own space in *secondlife* and created their specific games (MUDs, MMOs). One such game is The Jewbot [<http://www.jdsl.com/SLAH.html>]. This robot is equipped with a stereotypical “Jewish” (large) nose, curly locks, a Star of David on its forehead, an Israeli passport and an Israeli flag.

4. Method

The purpose of this research is to observe cyberhate and anticyberhate movements online. Ethnography seems to be the most appropriate research methodology to achieve our purpose [11, 12]. Ethnography on Internet is a qualitative research method which studies online cultures and communities created through computer-mediated communications or online social interactions. According to Kozinets [12], Netnography collects data from computer-mediated communications in order to gain ethnographic insights of a cultural or community-based phenomenon. By its very nature, this research is longitudinal and relies on large-scale online public communications. Netnography provides us with unique methodological benefits. As researchers, we remained invisible while downloading and archiving postings from Facebook forums in near real-time mode. This covert, non-participative and unobtrusive approach helped avoid “going native” [11], and minimized observers’ biases, as we were not influencing the natural settings.

Immediately after the earthquake, we searched for information related to Haiti on the Internet. Initial data collection from a number of social networking sites suggested that Facebook was the primary forum in English that uncovered the many aspects of cyberhate. There was evidence that cyberhate expressed by netizens was linked to cultural differences, nationalism, relation and races. It was thus necessary to collect data globally. Facebook is a global site with members from 190 countries [<https://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>]. Another reason for choosing Facebook, as a global site, is the ability to collect data from Haitians, as we suspected that they would be the first informants to mount a campaign against cyberhate related to their homeland.

We started to collect data a few hours after the earthquake. Data collected were all public communications [13] in English. Two of the largest forums within Facebook were selected: “Earthquake Haiti” (HG1), and “Earthquake Haiti appeal please join every click will feed a child, invite!” (HG2).

These forums consist of more than 700,000 members. These forums allowed us to observe the social interaction without having to subscribe as a group member. As such, we did not disturb the natural setting of our field sites.

We stopped the data collection process after six months when the number of messages drastically dropped, suggesting the withering of the debate interest on the Haiti quake. As such, we have plausibly gathered a complete set of longitudinal data; thus reducing the risk of false assumptions about the netizens’ behavior patterns. Even though the collected data were easily accessible, we maintained total confidentiality and profile details of the members of our field sites were not disclosed. We used posted messages as examples but we do not reveal the users’ online name. Instead, we used generic names (e.g., name XXX XXXX) in our research.

We reviewed and filtered thousands of postings, and focused on those that seemed to suggest the complex nature of collaboration, coordination, organization and self-governance and institutionalization effort during this crisis. We adopted the Kozinets’ methodology [12] and the Glaser and Strauss’ grounded theory [14]. We used an iterative analytic process to understand emergence of self-coordinated and self-governed mechanisms against cyberhate among Facebook group members. This bottom-up process helped us extract from the data generalized concepts, and theorize the mechanisms of anti-cyberhate from self-coordination to institutionalization. We stopped our analysis once we reached “theoretical saturation” [Strauss & Corbin, 1990], meaning additional data no longer added new insights to our research.

5. Self-coordination, self-governance and necessity for institutionalization

Fritz and Mathewson [15] discuss controlling inaccurate and/or ambiguous information and the mass movement of people in disasters. In their view, “past techniques of control usually have been based upon improvised post-disaster judgments, rather than, upon orderly implementation of pre-disaster plans” [15, p. 90]. This view becomes more salient with the rise of Web 2.0 and the concomitant emergence of new convergence behaviors during disasters in the digital age [16].

We provide in this section some theoretical explanations of self-coordination mechanisms against cyberhate coupled with selected excerpts from our database. Key conceptual findings are summarized in

Table 1 located in the conclusion of the paper.

5.1 Ad-Hoc, improvised, self-coordinated policy setting

When a crisis occurs in a community, it is likely that some members of this community will take action immediately and without organization. Researchers in relational coordination theory [17] conceptualize coordination as a process that occurs through a network of tasks and communications. Gittell [18] expands this theory in arguing that in a relational coordination, participants share some common goals that allow them to join forces, share knowledge that helps relate and coordinate tasks, and fosters mutual respect to overcome barriers. Participants do not need to know or to like each other. It is the role that each assumes that links them and enables them to work together toward their mutual goal.

Negotiated policy and code of conduct. Some Facebook groups' norms and standards are explicitly posted on walls and on the introduction profile of the page, while others are implicitly understood and embedded in members' expressions. Within groups whose use code of conduct is posted on the walls and introduction profile page, group members are supposed to follow the group norms to which they agreed at the time they joined the group discussion.

The posting below reminds offenders about the purpose of the group and warns that postings are regulated by the group.

Member Name Xxxxx X Xxxx: Please keep in mind the purpose of this group Before posting: This page has been created as an informational page to allow everyone to share general comments, relevant information, to help find family members in Haiti, and guide everyone in donating only to legitimate relief organizations.

Devising a system of discipline to compel Facebook groups to conform to standards (explicit or implicit) is limited to warnings postings by Admins (Facebook "appoints" creators as in charge of online groups called Admins). However, even if such initial actions by Admins are limited, more severe steps can be taken within Facebook groups. From a self-regulation perspective, we contend that control can be achieved by reporting and deleting the hatred postings and by removing members who promote hate in the Facebook group or even by exposing names of individuals who promote hatred in other Facebook groups. For example a counter strategy adopted by the victims of racial hatred was formation of an anti-hate Facebook group "Racism is schism on

a serious tip!". The home page of this group denounces racial hatred, as well as publishes a name list of people who post racial hatred (see Figure 1).

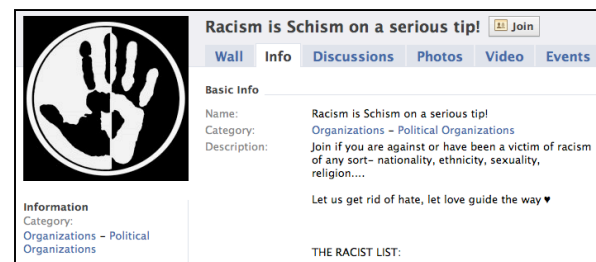


Figure 1: A screen shot of an anti-hate group on Facebook

Norms, regulations, folkways, and mores. Rules and regulations are formally created by organizations that control the posting platforms (in this case, Facebook.com). Regulation allows for controlling human or societal behavior using rules or restrictions [19].

Group norms are not laws, but members are expected to comply. Norms are like folkways and mores which consist of shared understandings about the behavior of each member in a group, where group members may approve, disapprove, tolerate or sanction, within particular contexts [20]. They promote self-regulation by social regulation. This approach aptly suits the Facebook group where Admins and other members approve, disapprove, tolerate or sanction behaviors in the online forum.

The postings below illustrate the necessity to converge some common views in order for a group to exist and survive. Two members immediately disapprove a member who posted anti-Haiti messages. Their approach to exercising authority is to induce folkways and mores in a group [21].

Member Name Xxxxxx Xxxxx: Haiti! well well! A earthquake hit "Whatever". Why the fuck you want donations! Doesnt gonna make your country better. Is still fucked country anyway..Hope America nuke your country

Member Name Xxxxx Xxxx Xxxxxx: don't be a knobhead about this terrible earthquake!! you prick!!!!

Member Name Xxxxxxx Xx: (to first poster above) ur a utter fuckface. allow u and goo suck a knob

5.2 Volunteer-based and self-governed intelligence

Lindblom [22] describes governance as a science of muddling through in which disjointed democratic forces somehow incrementally end up with a strategy of decision. He further argues that relevant issues and affected interest lead to a partisan mutual adjustment [23, 24].

Watching activities on Web 2.0 allows government agencies and others (e.g., private watchdogs) to conduct intelligence, which refers to watching over the activities of subject populace to better serve and protect [16]. Facebook and its members put their surveillance antenna on high scanning gear in the Facebook walls and discussion forums for malicious online threats, malicious websites and online scammers for fraudulent online activities. If someone posts fraudulent messages, group members and Admins warn others and also ask the offenders to comply with the norms of the group. In the case of Haiti Facebook groups, the Admins, members and Facebook.com collectively work to minimize cyberhate on the Facebook pages.

Anti-cyberhate activists monitor every new posting, and immediately issue alerts regarding hate postings. Anti-cyberhate (ACH) Facebook groups work to combat racism by monitoring and reporting hate postings and the individuals responsible for them. They reveal names of people who post racial hatred on the walls and forums of the Facebook groups that were created specifically to help - not harm - victims of Haiti earthquake. The broad approach recommended is to use tools and structures, as well as the self-regulation approach in a balanced two-pronged control mechanism. The recommendations are based on the instruments of control, e.g. individual/groups with authority, organization, folkways/mores and public opinion [21].

Similarly, Facebook members post messages to approve, disapprove or even ask for sanction against cyberhate postings. In Facebook groups, a warning by Admins to members to confirm to the group norms is the initial discipline. We noticed that members and Admins flagged, warned and reported the hatred postings as soon as the hatred messages are posted.

Facebook: Beware of scams and hoaxes and ensure that your donations for Haiti get to the right places. Contrary to a current meme, Facebook is no donating \$1 for statuses, however we are sharing reputable resources via the "Other pages" tab on the Global

Disaster Relief on Facebook Page.

Member Name Xxxx Xxxxxx: American Airlines will take to any doctor or nurse to Haiti without charge, call +1 212-697-9767 +1 212-697-9767 +1 212-697-9767 +1 212-697-9767, please help spread the message! Copied and pasted from their sites to help the desperately unlucky in that country as punishment.

Member Name Xxxx Xxxxxxxx: This is a hoax!

5.3 Self-governed enforcement

In 1896, Ross [25] argued “the system of control, like the educational system, is charged, not with revising the structure or functions of society, but with the shaping of individuals” [25, p. 521].

One possibility would be to put into place a democratic control system whose objective is to mitigate cyberhate. Such a system would consist of a device or set of devices that manage the behavior of other devices [26] to accomplish a specific number of roles: observer, evaluator, effector, and communication network [27]. Also, such a system could assist in the regulation by ISPs, self-regulation by users and ISPs, political lobbying, and educating children [1]. Hacking hate sites has also been reported as an effective counter attack [<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/Flash.aspx/150523>].

Controlling the publishing of cyberhate postings can be explained using the thermostat concept [27]. Individuals, Admins, surveillance groups, or automated mechanisms like control scripts embedded in the online forums, act as independent and automated components of a thermostat. Admins and control scripts – unlike individual users and surveillance groups – may act as effectors. The thermostat activates the script to automatically purge hate words. The digital thermostat is an example of inanimate control [28], whereas panoptic control [29, 30] would be creating anti-cyberhate (ACH) groups on Facebook pages to monitor hate postings and their creators.

Exercise of ACH authority. Facebook is designed in such a way that Admins can control postings on the walls and forums. In addition, general Facebook users may also raise alerts against offensive postings.

The ACH enforcement mechanism is based on three approaches: control, counter, and reduction of cyberhate. The Control approach includes command and control, exercise of authority,

regulations/folkways/mores, self-regulations, discipline, and enforcement. Individuals who create the group have authority over the pages. One of the creators or Admins of the Facebook group posted the example below. Definitely, this shows that Admins can exercise authority to control hate postings on the Facebook walls and forums.

Admin Name XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX: PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY OFFENSIVE, RACIST, OR HURTFUL POSTS IN ANY WAY WILL BE REMOVED. IF YOU DECIDE TO POST THESE SORT OF THINGS YOU WILL BE REMOVED, CONSIDER YOURSELF WARNED.

These are situations where an Admin exercises authority to close the walls. This is with the intention of controlling hate comments, but with the realization that constant monitoring is not possible.

Enforcement through a self-regulated control system. Members of an Admin group and individual Facebook users work in tandem to address the cyberhate issue on the Facebook groups studied. The objective is to enforce mitigation policy. Processes of the self-regulated control are also found in our data, and are reported below.

A Facebook observer detects cyberhate activities (hatred postings) and feels the need to contain them. Observers may include individual group members and Admin members.

- a. An Evaluator assesses the cyberhate activities based on the social norms and identifies the postings as hate. The Evaluator reports the postings. Evaluators may include individual group members and Admin members.
- b. An Effector addresses the flagged inappropriate postings and chooses to remove them. Effectors include Admin members and Facebook teams.
- c. Admins and other members use communication network etiquettes such as walls, discussions forums and mailboxes to inform and educate members who are involved in nefarious activities. They also use the same technologies to warn the cyberhaters. This initial approach taken by the Admins tends to influence or persuade online discussants to comply to a proper etiquette rather than impose outright penalty.

For example, a ACH group member observes different places on their Facebook groups' pages that promote cyberhate. Once they see these hate postings, they immediately flag, warn and report

them. Such a control mechanism is panoptic control [29, 30].

Members of Admin group works in tandem as a self-coordinated process of collective reinforcement [31], in order to mitigate the cyberhate postings on their walls.

*Admin Name XXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX: Tonight, this board will be closed down from 12 am pst, until another admins comes on to wake it up, in order to keep peace and harmony which it was meant for*Admin*

Reducing prejudice. Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman & Rust [32] suggest that forming a common ingroup identity may be used to reduce inter-group bias among group members. Relying on the concept of social categorization of ingroup ("us") and outgroup ("them"), Gaertner et al. [32] develop a common ingroup identity model. The Admins create situations for relational coordination to occur by inviting members to contact each other. Their interaction may lead groups to recategorize their identity by creating a common ingroup identity between groups rather than maintaining or splitting further into separate groups. Once the groups share a common identity, it is possible that the groups may begin to favor the "other" who have become "us" in the new identity. Studies conducted by Gaertner et al. [32, 33] and [34], have found that technology can be used to reduce prejudice among different groups. Prejudice can be reduced by decategorization or recategorization [33]. Decategorization and recategorization represent alternative strategies for reducing intergroup bias by helping to create a new identity between two groups [35]. Cyberhate can only be eradicated, as prejudice and bias-motivated acts can be reduced [36].

Data shows that some group members post messages to offenders as an emotional plea to understand that Haitians should not be seen from the racial angle, but should be treated as human disaster victims. Interactions between members who are generally unknown to each other are seen on the Facebook group walls and discussion forums. Interactions are seen leading in different directions. Some are focused on the topic of the forum, whereas others are random conversations. The posting below shows how Facebook users interact with each other in creating a healthy discussion.

Member Name XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX: People like that are seeking attention, dont waste your time replying to their ignorant comments or messages. Your giving them what they want. Dont focus on the negativity. Focus on the

good people that are putting their time, money, effort and energy to help Haiti. Please, dont let their ignorance get your attention, ...

Member Name Xxxxxx Xxxx Xxxx: dont worry bout it its reported :)

Member Name Xxx-xxxxx Xxx XXXXXXXXXXXX: good shees greaking anoying when there are people who auctually care.

Member Name Sxxxxx Xxxx Xxxxx: shes just a person looking for her attention, ignore her theres more important things to focus on :)

Member Name XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX: Exactly.

5.4 Institutionalizing self-coordination and self-governance

Powell [37] uses the terms “new institutionalism” to describe supra-individual phenomena. As rules, norms, codes of conducts, and enforcement practices have become routine over space and time [38], the ad-hoc anti-hate movement slowly seeks to establish legitimacy. Unlike the traditional approach to institutionalization that eventually leads to bureaucracy [39], the necessity here is merely to survive. Selznick [40] sees organizational structure as a mechanism to meet the characteristics and commitments of participants, and to react to external environmental forces [40, 41].

Countering cyberhate includes the creation of anti-hate groups and surveillance methodology. Reduction of cyberhate may be achieved through intergroup contact situations, which helps restructure the social categories into a new common group identity among the Facebook users. For example coming together of different individuals (unknown to each other) and forming a new Facebook group gives then a new common identity as anti-cyberhaters.

Subscribed members are seen exchanging messages to lobby for stopping what they view as racism. As evidenced by the postings found in our database, interactions bring Facebook members together for their cause.

*Member Name Xxxxx ‘Xxxxxx’ Xxxxxx: this group is festered with racial abuse! we must put an end to this! show Haiti your love and support and join this group
<http://www.facebook.com/board.php?uid=252988675717&f=2&start=960#!/group.php?gid=291525368526>*

Data also reported that Admins exercise their

authority whenever a member posts a cyberhate messages on the Facebook forums (for example refer to page 5).

If information is power [42], then the creators (Admins) of such online groups possess enormous influence on controlling emotions in cyberspace. Then, the organization of spontaneous and initially leaderless movements gains legitimacy through the institutionalization process. Established governments can typically address policy issues related to cyberhate by (i) exploring available legal avenues such as lodging complaints for criminal investigation, and invoking civil code to deal with human rights violations [43]; and (ii) educating the public [23, 44]. Dowd [23] argues that education is the only disciplinary method in a voluntary membership group.

Civil and human rights organization such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and The Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) are educating the public against the rise of cyberhate. The United Nations has added cyberhate issues on its agenda to explore the impact of hate on the Internet and ways to counter it [<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/note6207.doc.htm>]. United Nations members and countries of the European Union are working together to address these issues. In November 2001, only 18 years after hate messages were first noted on the Internet, 38 countries signed the Council of Europe’s Convention on Cybercrime.

6. Concluding remarks

In his seminal article, Ross [28, p. 519] wrote “control harmonizes clashing activities by checking some and stimulating others.” Control could be either authoritative or democratic [23]. In other words, control is like a double edge sword. “On the one hand, control is exogenous, imposed through tools, techniques, structures On the other hand, control is endogenous, communicative, and can be shared through language similarities, commonality and self-regulation” [45, p.4]. Such an effort requires a great deal of relational self-governance and self-coordination of the group members or the communities at large.

Social networks such as Facebook are not only used to make friends, but can also be used to help coordinate humanitarian assistance and rescue operations during time of disasters. Social networks can have a more substantive and grander impact on society when used altruistically for the greater good. In this paper, we observe the postings on Facebook in

the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake to discern hatred behaviors and the responses to hate by online communities. We report the evolution of the various types of electronic forums used to disseminate cyberhate, and indicate the emergence of self-organized, self-coordinated effort by netizens and non-governmental groups to respond to cyberhate.

A salient phenomenon with cyberhate is a tug of war between people who exploit a situation (e.g., natural disasters, political crises) for personal emotional “gain”, and others who take counter measures to impact the greater social good, i.e. rebuilding the affected area. Individuals such as “Admins” or creators of discussion groups involved in Haiti Earthquake Facebook groups have shown their vigilance about offensive hate postings. In addition, the general public as group members also play role by warning about such acts. Anti-cyberhate (ACH) actions need no longer wait for responses from civil or legal authorities. Rather, they emerge as an *ad-hoc* form of self-regulation, self-coordination and self-governance.

Perhaps, a major contribution of this paper is its explanation how anti-cyberhate (ACH) practices take form in a social network – emerging from loose self-coordination to coordinated self-governance. This study also helps raise an important research issue of how, and under what conditions, *netizens* decide to get involved without formally elected leaders or defined rules of engagement in a seemingly democratic forum.

Another issue that deserves future research is precisely how “Admins” who bestow rights in managing information on their sites, establish etiquettes and regulate the forums. This would be, it is presumed, with the goal of getting their message out most effectively. As in any control effort, it is important to measure the effectiveness of the anti-cyberhate (ACH) effort. Many ACH postings appear to be sensible with constructive propositions, while many others seem to be merely complaints. Both types of postings lead to an inordinate amount of members’ time in online debates, and in Admin time managing them. This can lead to lack of efficiency and effective promulgation of the group’s message.

As Coase theorem suggests [46], in the grand scheme of coalition and even when there seems to have no apparent transaction costs charges by benevolent participants, inefficiency could dampen the entire effort. There is a high risk of cyberhate proliferation if self-regulation and self-coordination are not fully supported on social platforms. In this ongoing tug-of-war, and despite the massive energy powered by Web 2.0, online groups seem to be “still

muddling, not yet through”, quoting Lindblom’s noted terms [47].

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Table 1. Evolution of Loose Self-coordination to Institutionalized Self-Governance

SELF COORDINATION	TYPE OF COORDINATION	EXAMPLES OF SELF-COORDINATED AND SELF-GOVERNED ACTIVITIES
AD-HOC, IMPROVISED, SELF-COORDINATED POLICY SETTING	Negotiated policy and code of conduct by Admins	Agreement of ethical practices Consensus on Policy walls
	Members agree on what would be appropriate norms	Implicit acceptance of group norms
VOLUNTEERED-BASED AND SELF-REPORTED INTELLIGENCE	Collaborative scheduling	Scheduling of the Admins' responsibility to monitor walls Random reporting by general group members
	Collective reinforcement	Warning and detection Rally of support of opinions
VOLUNTEER-BASED AND SELF-GOVERNED ENFORCEMENT	Coordination by languages, geography and severity of violations	Social networking team responsible for violations of terms and conditions
	Ad-hoc enforcement of agreed policy, norms and response operating procedures	Admins to exercise their authority: Warning Deleting postings Blocking members Unsubscribing members Reporting to social networking site
INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND SELF-GOVERNANCE	Consensus seeking	Collective creation of an organized entity:
	Volunteering signing up as new members	Victimized members to propose new anti-cyberhate group(s)
	Open membership and recruiting	