


Spring 5-1-2012

Analyzing the Tea Party Movement, the Coffee Party Movement, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement's Use of the Internet: Case Study on How the Internet Influences Grassroots Social Movement

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Analyzing the Tea Party Movement, the Coffee Party Movement, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement's Use of the Internet: Case Study on How the Internet Influences Grassroots Social Movement

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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May 2012

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ABSTRACT

The Tea Party movement and the Occupy Wall Street movement have made great use of the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This phenomenon intrigued my interest in how grassroots social movements have employed all types of media to mobilize, as well as how they furthered their agenda in the past. In order to better understand how the Internet impacted the three movements, my thesis draws on resource mobilization (RM) and new social movement (NSM) theories for theoretical understanding and textual analysis. The movements I reviewed for analysis are the Tea Party Movement (TPM), the Coffee Party Movement (CPM), and the Occupy Wall Street Movement (OWSM). In addition to analyzing each movement through mobilization theories, I draw upon similar case studies, such as Bi Yun Huang's (2009) work on the Falun Gong movement. Other studies include Hara and Estrada's (2005), where they draw elements from theories, and studied indicators of the Internet's influence on social activist's activities through observing newspapers and journal articles.

Analysis of three movements' websites show the SMOs utilized the Internet to communicate with internal and external resources, which reduces the costs of the operation, compared to using direct-mail, phone calls, and television ads. My analysis indicated that the Internet and its means for communication served as an integral part in forming a collective identity among the movement activists, which is a key factor in coming to a collective action, as indicated by the NSM theory. Even for Tea Party movement and the Occupy Wall Street movement, which has been able to solicit ongoing support and allegiance in spite of its broad aims and decentralized organization, due to its ability to maintain solidarity and its overall variability, they have been able to solicit ongoing support and allegiance. More generally, my analysis showed that grassroots social movements are latching on to networked technologies that provide a framework where holders of specific views reinforce their opinions and form solidarity with one another.

The case study on the Internet's influence on the three movements, as studies by Yun Huang (2009), McCarthy and Neumayer (1977), et al have shown, reveal that as a grassroots social movement, the movements have been impacted in four main ways. Users online engage the most in Internet services modified to suit their movement needs. They are able to access and acquire various types of resources, such as money and knowledge. They are able to make use of the opportunities Internet provides for participants to mobilize offline. They supplement the ways in which participants form a collective identity.

This thesis used a combination of research on grassroots movement and the combination of RM and NSM theories as a framework to analyze the use of the Internet with online grassroots social movements. Use of the two RM theories displays the ways in which Internet expands the movement's agenda, as well as its constraints in going beyond being a viral, networked movement. Because the theories were formed not movements on the Internet, it is difficult to fully exemplify ways in which Internet expands the movement's agenda.

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Acknowledgements

I am thankful for Dr. Steve Sawyer, for being my thesis advisor, and for all the work he put into making this thesis work. I thank him for allocating a space for me in his busy day-to-day schedule. I also thank him for giving me feedbacks on my thesis. I am thankful for Dr. Steve Wright and Henry Jankiewicz in the Honors program for helping me with my post-graduation plans. I am thankful for Dr. Tae-Sun Kim for being a great mentor and a friend. I thank my friends, old and new. I am grateful for the friends I met on my trip to Tanzania this spring, friends from being a resident adviser, and friends from the iSchool, BCM, Wellslink, and the Honors Program. Many thanks go to my parents, in Japan and in America, and my grandparents.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

How are grassroots social movements taking advantage of the Internet? The question is broad and my interest in the space attracts me to many aspects of the phenomena. For my capstone project I build from this broad interest and focus on the ways in which grassroots social movements such as the “Tea Party,” “Coffee Party,” and “Occupy Wall Street” takes advantage of internet technologies to support and enhance their efforts.

One of the binding elements of recent grassroots movements is their uses of the tools and technologies available via the Internet. These tools and technologies are often called “information and communication technology (ICT)”, or new media. More specifically, I am interested in those new media/ICT/internet technologies that are often called “social media” or “web 2.0”. Social media, for this work, includes a range of ICT/new media such as online discussion boards, blogs and other internet technologies that support distributed/online discourse among its members. My selection of the Tea Party, the Coffee Party, and the Occupy Wall Street fits into the category of dissident social movements in a new way than movements past, in that a web-based communication is a staple of the movement. Their web 2.0 identity fits the characters of Resource Mobilization theory, where there always are grounds for protest in modern, politically pluralistic with rhetoric depicting the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street as “common” people pitted against “elitist enemies” of the country. Research of contemporary social movements in capitalist societies at present also use the New Social Movement Theory in addition to the Resource Mobilization Theory.

Although they are critical to understanding the three grassroots movements that consistently use the Internet, neither is a comfortable fit for three movements and how they came about. For example, while interim leadership was introduced on a preliminary basis during the movement's formative stages as predicted by Resource Mobilization theory, the threat to traditional identity and culture within the American diaspora was purported as the catalyst of the movement's drive and ambition, suggesting discursive struggles and conflict purported by the NSM theory. According to Schons (2011), the theoretical divide between identity and coordinated activity was expressed early on in the development of the Tea Party movement through its organic features and advances through political strata, and has continued to be stressed and explored as prominent figures in American politics and society have offered their voice and consent to the Tea Party's efforts.

Through this thesis, I link Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) and New Social Movement theory (NSM) with technological innovation, using the Tea Party, the Coffee Party, and the Occupy Wall Street's new media ecology as a case study. I also consider the Political Process model (PPM) for looking at strengths and weaknesses in accounting for growths and developments of three movements.

While the PPM represent competing perspectives within the RMT discipline, New Social Movement theory looks at identity, culture, and symbolic meaning in explaining collective action. By using available resources online, published resources, and rhetoric of each site, I track accounts and empirics of the three movement's emergence and activities through the lens of each of these alternative

theories in order to understand what elements were present or absent as the movements assembled to pursue its determined ends. While the TPM's and OWSM's mixed agenda and autonomous groups complicate the collection and the evaluation of these materials, in combining research strategies and materials I uncover how these movements has been able to engage in collective action.

In order to measure the extent of influence the web and the social media has on grassroots social movement, the study draws on resource mobilization theory (RMT). The core idea of RMT is that the success of movements greatly depends on the effective use of resources, including money, facilities, labor legitimacy, land and technical expertise (Hara and Estrada, 2005). I provide a case study of three TPM websites, two CPM websites, and two OWSM websites. I theoretically reflect on the data that analyzes how the movement's engagement with new media fits into broader conversations about technology and democracy. My analysis questions the presumption that new media communication technology fosters a more democratic society by providing more opportunities to connect with potential members of the movements, as well as to continue the discourse against injustices members feel are against.

1.2 Rational for the Case Study Approach

The development of social media has created opportunities for Web-fueled social movements, or cyber-activism, to change the landscape of collective action (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). Scholars like Eltantawy (2011) argue that for "resource poor" actors, Internet based communication technologies "provide an important additional resource for social movements, and offer means for mass

communication that may have previously been restricted by financial, temporal, or spatial constraints. It is a field that needs more clarity and cohesive direction in where it is headed. Langman (2005) argues that computer-savvy activists use the Internet to initiate and organize a broad spectrum of dissention activities, including consumer boycotts and public protests and demonstrations.

Scholars from various disciplines such as sociology, communication and political science have studied the uses of social media in a range of political and social movements. Neumayer and Raffl (2008) study the characteristics of cyber activism and the role of Social software for networked political protest. Yun Huang (2009) conducts qualitative case study and a quantitative questionnaire to understand the relationship between social movements and Internet technology. Following their example, I pursue a theoretical framework that could integrate and contrast findings and conclusions from different studies, as well as advance a shared pursuit toward understanding the role of these technologies for collective action.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The rhetoric of reclamation, common among SM websites, and general proponents, is comparable to many social movements in history, both liberal and conservative. I focus on the pattern in use of technology among the three different movements to determine the unique attributes between technology and reactionary populist movements.

There are features in the site, in its rhetoric and features, characteristics of Resource Mobilization Theory. The sites I study and compare are *Tea Party*

*Patriots*¹, *Tea Party Express*², *Freedomworks*³, *Wake up and Stand Up*⁴, *Citizens Intervention*⁵, *Occupy Wall Street*⁶, *Occupy Together*,⁷ and *Adbusters*⁸.

1.4 Research Questions

The thesis I explore through this include potential usefulness of RMT in understanding contemporary, grassroots social movements. In pursuit of this goal, the analysis specifically responds to the following questions:

1. What resources and conditions sustained protests /social movements?
2. In what ways is the Internet employed as a resource to support the social movements?
3. How do individuals and organizations connect to each other to exchange/pool resources and information?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant for two reasons: 1. because it advances RM theories through examining the recent ongoing US grassroots social movement's Internet uses. 2. The comparative study may contribute to a better understanding of a grassroots social movement's Internet use and its impact on the social movement. Additionally, understanding relationships between grassroots social groups and their uses of Internet technology may help to reveal tactics used by group participants.

¹ <http://www.teapartypatriots.org/>

² <http://www.teapartyexpress.org/>

³ <http://www.freedomworks.org/>

⁴ <http://coffeepartyusa.com/>

⁵ <http://citizensintervention.com/>

⁶ <http://occupywallst.org/>

⁷ <http://www.occupytogether.org/>

⁸ <http://www.adbusters.org/>

1.6 How the Thesis Is Organized

Chapter 1 provides a rationale for the case study as well as the theoretical framework. The chapter also looks at how the three social movements came about, and what each works to accomplish.

Chapter 2 addresses the meaning and defining characteristics of social movements. Studying previous social movements will provide me with an original framework to assess how the three social movements I study utilize resources. The chapter will then proceed by defining Resource Mobilization Theory, as well as the historical background of the Resource Mobilization theory by tracing a pattern of a relationship with technology characterized as oppositional, alternative, or serving the mass people in order to better understand the Tea Party, Coffee Party's and Occupy Wall Street's relationship with RTM and technology.

Chapter 3 addresses the three social movement's relationship with the Resource Mobilization theory and technology. The Tea Party's use of online communication technology shows a focus on role of power and power struggles in their rhetoric. While the Tea Party's digital genesis marks a new way of looking at political communication, the movement nevertheless functions within a larger historical context of other dissonant groups using technologies to communicate and support their goals. The analysis looks at the histories, mission statements, videos, training sessions, blog posts, and other forms of digital political rhetoric to explore how the party members utilize the technology. Then, key patterns will be applied to the theory, as discussed in Chapter 2.

1.7 Background Information

1.7.1 Background: About the Tea Party Movement

According to Branson (2011), the Tea Part Movement possibly got its start on February 19, 2009, when CNBC business news commentator Rick Santelli, one month after the inauguration of President Obama, began rebuking Obama's aid to homeowners facing foreclosure. Obama had just signed a \$787 billion economic stimulus package. The same week, Kelly Calendar, a teacher and a blogger known as Liberty Belle in Seattle, stages a protest in Seattle to protest government spending attended by 100 people. Three days later a now famous rant by Rick Santelli, who is a CNBC business news commentator, rebukes Obama's aid to homeowners facing foreclosure. He charged that the Obama administration was promoting bad behavior by subsidizing what he called "the losers' mortgages." Within hours of what became known as "The Rant Heard 'Round the World,'" a website called OfficialChicagoTeaParty.com launched. Many Tea Party websites and Facebook pages were launched within hours after the rant was broadcast on news. By the end of the following week, dozens of small protests occurred around the country as a result of the rant by Santelli that went viral on the Internet. The mini movements around the country eventually coalesced into a unified Tea Party Movement, angry about the climbing national debt and the failure of both parties in finding a remedy for our financial crisis (McGrath, 2010). They have had initiatives such as the 9/12 project. The movement has been called Astroturf, rather than grassroots movement by Paul Krugman in April 12, 2010, noting that it has been established by well-known conservative groups.

Some of the Tea Party protests and other mobilizations have been promoted and sponsored by FreedomWorks, an organization funded by the former House majority leader, Dick Armey (Maddow 2009). The movement has focused on healthcare reform and finance reform when the White House proceeded to do so, and that resulted in small protests in town hall meetings all over the nation. The Tea Party has worked on electing like-minded candidates in 2010, which led to Scott Brown's electoral victory in Massachusetts. New York Times poll has shown that the demographics of the Tea Party is whiter, older, richer, and angrier than the general population. (*Slate*, 2011) Ann Marie Buerkle, who was a Tea Party favorite in the Syracuse area, won the 2010 midterm election as a result of a wave of Tea Party discontent (Terrerri, 2012). Ann Marie Buerkle's congressional win in 2010 reflects a significant impact of the TPM. After she was identified as one of Sarah Palin's "Mama Grizzlies," Buerkle fundraising campaign funds increased by more than 200 percent in the next quarter and led to her win (Bullock, 2011).

While the movement lacks a coherent ideological backbone and a national leader. The Tea Party's unifying and prevailing ideas are: (1) fiscal responsibility, (2) constitutionally limited government, and (3) free markets. Tea Party members diverge from the views of each other, and the social movement is not necessarily homogeneous or united. The movement is disparate in its "political motivations, ideas, and attitudes about the role of activism" (Branson, 2011).

Tea Party movement is a conservative grassroots movement. Schons uses Blee & Creasap's (2010) definition of conservative social movement based on

their historical analysis of conservative and right-wing movements in the United States. Their definition states that a conservative social movement is “movement that support patriotism, free enterprise capitalism, and/or traditional moral order and for which violence is not a frequent tactic or goal.” TPM has a loose agenda and goals by which they claim to made tangible gains, some of which can be documented. Their purposefully chaotic and disruptive tactics in local hall meetings gained them local and national attention, which fostered recruitment. Targeted politicians have been forced to accommodate and at times concede to the demands of this polarized, conservative movement. However, their specific demands and their legitimacy remain to be established.

According to James (2010), Tea Party members are ‘essentially someone who would’ve earlier identified as a Republican but now calls himself an independent despite being a conservative and voting pretty much exclusively for Republicans’. Tea Party members do not have a specific policy agenda. Rauch (cited by James, 2010) mentions that the Tea Party members are not as considered about political change as they are about cultural change. The cultural shift they aim to bring is to make Americans more skeptical of government and more self-reliant. Just like Occupy Wall Street, they demand fairness and accountability. Whatever policies they support in the future, it will entail less involvement on the part of government in businesses.

Previous accomplishments may indicate future attainable objectives. According to *The Burning Platform* in 2009, they protested TARP bailout bill and

ARRA stimulus bill. Additionally, in 2009 they protested the 18% tax on soft drinks (“OWS vs. Tea Party,” 2011).

1.7.2 Background: About the Coffee Party Movement

The Coffee Party Movement rose in opposition to the Tea Part Movement. A documentary filmmaker, Annabel Park, started the Facebook group Join the Coffee Party Movement as an experimental place for civil online deliberations for individuals who sought to engage with other, like-minded individuals (Mascaro & Goggins, 2011). According to Annabel Park, the movement started as a Facebook page because she wanted a place to rant. As a result, the page went viral, and now they have tens of different chapters around the nation and turned into a real organization with over 500,000 people in the network. Thus, Coffee Party USA is a grassroots online network which advocates cooperation among elected representatives and promotes civil public discourse (Park, 2010). One of the ways in which they promote a civil public discourse is by raising concerns of the Tea Party’s extreme rhetoric, and their hostility toward the federal government. They are different from other established organizations in that they do not have a top down structure, and they are focused more on the process than the outcome. By March of 2010, participants have met in over 350 local events. In September 2010 the movement held a national convention (Kim & Miranda, 2010). They are able to have big rallies in public space in front of the capital. They are supported by people like Thom Hartman (progressive radio talk show host), Buddy Romer, Joe Sestack (former Congressman and 3 star admirals), Francis Lupe, Lawrence

Lessig, Wall Street occupiers and Lisa Graves (C-Span Video Library, 2011).

They are supported by organization like Public Citizen and the Common Cause.

Coffee Party supports specific policies, based on their principle to create an alternative form of civic engagement with a focus on civil dialogue. Their mission statement is as follows (“Mission Statement,” 2010).

The mission of the Coffee Party is to fight the Cycle of Corruption, and restore self-governance to the People. To do so, we must achieve

1. Campaign finance reform
2. Wall Street reform
3. Tax code reform

Coffee Party members are concerned with creating equality and sustainability, which cannot be accomplished when politics create a gridlock in forming legislations and passing them in Congress. They are interested in getting people engaged not as party members but as individuals concerned with solving problems and making decisions together. They do not believe that organizations should be based on ideologies. Rather, they should be based on the belief that they can together come to a solution in a civic, democratic way. Thus, because campaign finance laws have too much impact on the process of public policy decision making, they are against campaign finance laws that allows corporations to make substantial donations to politicians. Annabel Park states that civic space should be a space where people can approach positions without partisanship that creates complex and distorted views on policies. Campaign finance laws incentivize politicians to obstruct the process to keep the donors happy, and they don't reward people based on the outcomes.

They have a stance on Tax Code Reform. The Coffee Party believes that the government is broken partly due to flaws inherent in tax reform. According to Annabel Park, categorically people do not want to raise taxes, and the government has not been closing loopholes, which create publicly subsidized corporate warfare. They support a Financial Transaction Tax, and wishes to close “carried interest loophole” in Capital Gains Tax. Financial Transaction Tax is a legislation to help bridge the gap in income inequality. They desire a Wall Street reform where people like Warren Buffet pay more in terms of percentage than the secretary of Warren Buffet. They desire to end tax breaks on oil and gas companies. They want to end ‘Too Big to Fail’ where people cover Wall Street’s losses that they are incentivized to take. They also support revisiting Simpson-Bowles to start a tax dialogue. She also states that there should be a division between commercial and investment banking. By accomplishing all of these objectives, they believe that they can bring about a cultural change where people can vote based on policies that matter, rather than on partisan ideologies and distorted information they get through the media (C-Span Video Library, 2011).

1.7.3 Background: About the Occupy Wall Street Movement

The movement, according to a commentary in the *New Yorker*, started when “an anti-corporate, nonprofit, incongruously slick Canadian magazine” blasted an email (Hertzberg, 2011). On September 17, 2011, several hundred activists marched to Wall Street, near the New York Stock Exchange, which was the beginning of an uprising now known as Occupy Wall Street. The New York Times ran a story on the “faulty aim” of the movement, condemning its “lack of

cohesion and its apparent wish to pantomime progressivism rather than practice it knowledgably” (Bellafante, 2011). The protesters marched through the streets in search of sanity in our political and economic system. The people-powered movement has spread to over 100 cities in the United States and actions in over 1,500 cities globally. According to OccupyWallSt.org, the movement is fighting back the “corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process, and the role of Wall Street in creating an economic collapse that has caused the greatest recession in generations.” The movement is inspired by popular uprising in Egypt and Tunisia, and aims to expose how the richest 1% of people is writing the rules of an unfair global economy that is foreclosing on people’s future.

In the U.S., the OWS movement “emerged as the yin to the Tea Party’s yang, but itself is a form of chaos in the process of coalescing into a new order” (Love, 2011). The OWS movement does not have a unified leadership. The OWS protesters do not have a unified goal. The protesters in the U.S. say they are voicing their concerns about the fact that living conditions for average American are rapidly deteriorating. One of their demands is to have leaders who accept responsibility and accountability for their actions (Addley, 2011).

The movement facilitates political action from disparate, heterogeneous partisans wanting to increase transparency and participation in decision-making. In their activities, they rely on both human-scaled and participatory technologies. Jurgenson states that the site Adbusters initially established the Occupy Wall Street Protests. As the internet hacktivist group Anonymous joined, in, much of

the protest at first occurred online. It sidestepped traditional media. Once organized, occupy protesters took photos, tweeted, and videotaped police brutality (2011). Through these processes, the Occupy Wall Street embodies a vision for a pluralistic, direct democratic society and demonstrates it through practice.

Occupy Wall Street has moral principles to base their movements on, but specific goals of the movement remains to be identified. They are frustrated with high-end bankers, and the unifying idea seems to be “the 99 percent.” Their general goal is to bring about accountability and fairness. Unlike the Tea Party movement, they call for a greater regulation of businesses paired with government redistribution of resources (Soltis, 2011). They generally support campaign finance reform, believes that the rich should be taxed, tax loopholes for corporation should be closed, and work to enact the Buffet Rule on Fair Taxation (“OWS vs. Tea Party,” 2011). Buffet Rule on Fair Taxation demands that the richest Americans pay higher taxes to help cut US deficit by more than \$3 trillion. The plan also targets tax loopholes and subsidies used by many larger corporations (Kuhnhenh, 2011). The tax increase also includes oil and gas companies and US based-corporations that earn profits overseas.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

Internet use by social movements like the Tea Party, Coffee Party and Occupy Wall Street movements provides a new forum to assess how digital resources can be used to organize, form a collective identity, and inform activists. The role of this chapter is to provide an overview of relevant theoretical and

empirical work that focuses on online and offline social movements and will be relevant to the study of the TPM, OWS, and CPM's use of the Internet.

2.2 Understanding Grassroots Social Movements

Point of using any theory is to provide insight into the underlying mechanisms of phenomena. In the realm of collective social action, social movements' theories focus our attention to the mechanisms that encourage and guide particular forms of social behavior. It is the mechanisms, explained below, that lose to frame the analysis. Theories of social movements provide a basis for the analysis of actions taken by diverse social movement participants and facilitate consideration of components of the social movement's structure. The assessment provides groundwork for broader study of current trends towards a virtual society.

2.3 Definition of a Grassroots Social Movement

Social movements, according to Wood and Jackson(1982), are “unconventional groups that have varying degrees of formal organization and that attempt to produce or prevent radical or reformist types of change”. John Wilson (1973) defines social movements as “a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large-scale change in the social order by non-institutional means”. In politics, common objectives may be achieved through challenging authorities, power-holders and cultural beliefs through non-institutional means (Jasper & Goodwin, 2009). McCarthy and Zald (1977) see social movements as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a

society”. They also argue that social movements rely on resources from supporters who are not necessarily committed to the values underlying the movement. Huang (2009) cites Tarrow (1988), who defines social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities.” He also cites Castells (1977), who characterizes social movements as being “purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the value and institutions of society.” According to Castells, social movements usually consist of three components: its identity, its adversary, and its social goal. Another definition includes Diani (2000), who defines social movements as “networks of informal relationships between a multiplicity of individuals and organization, who share a distinctive collective identity, and mobilize resources on conflictual issues.”

He states that the definition “identifies several dimensions of social movements that computer-mediated communication (CMC) may be expected to shape.” Such dimensions of social movements that Diani (2000) states CMC shapes include the behavior of specific movement actors, individuals or organizations; the relations which link individual activists and organizations to each other; the feeling of mutual identification and solidarity which bond movement actors together and secure the persistence of movements even when specific campaigns are not taking place. He cites Tilly (1978) and Rheingold (1993), who says that potential advantages stemming from CMC include the “higher speed and the reduced costs of communication among sometimes very distance actors; the persistent accuracy of the original message and the

overcoming of the traditional problem of distortion, so common when communication spreads by way of mouth or through summaries by intermediaries; the potential to promote interaction between branches of organizations and/or movement activists; the opportunity to transform sets of geographically dispersed aggrieved individuals into a densely connected aggrieved population, thus solving one key problem of mobilization.

In thinking about political social movements, Tilly's definition of social movement campaign applies to the three movements being studied. Social movement campaign "is recognized as a sustained and organized effort to make collective claims on target authorities" (2006). Tilly identifies social movement repertoire as one of the elements in every social movement, which he defines as "form of political action that a group decides to adopt to express their social or political message" (Lo, 2000). Form of actions include marches, rallies, demonstrations, occupations, picket lines, blockages, public meetings, delegations, petition drives, letter-writing, lobbying and the establishment of coalitions. The two other elements Tilly (2004) identifies as elements of social movements are social movement campaign and the "worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment" displays. Social movement repertoires are "movement forms that are used for political mobilization" which goes beyond forms of collective action to "learned cultural creations that result from the history of struggle" (Sidney, 1996). The three social movement's repertoire of contention is impacted by cultural norms, as some of the forms of contention include demonstrations, speaking up at a town hall meeting, peaceful protests, and sit-ins. ICT influences

the three movement's repertoire of contention in that the dialogue to engage in different actions take place mostly online.

Some social movements do not seek to bring about institutional change to the existing establishment. According to Lo (2010), a reform movement seeks to alter institutions, rather than to remove existing institutions. They desire to create certain degree of change to society, but not to start from scratch where existing sociopolitical institutions stand. CPM and OWSM fits into this genre.

TPM is a social movement in that although they are a political group, they do not associate with any of the established political parties, including the Republican Party. As McCarthy and Zald (1977) states, the Tea Party desires to change the reward distribution of a society in that they seek smaller government role in citizen's daily life. Tarrow's (1988) definition of social movements as "collective challenges" to opponents and authorities suits the Tea Party because the Tea Party does not agree with the status quo of the federal and the state government. They believe that the structure of the local, state, and federal government in their distribution of power is not decentralized enough. They believe that their ideas for a solution to America's economic woes - government spending cuts, tax cuts, and deregulation - were being blocked by forces like the radical left, unions, environmentalists, and Barack Obama (Prokop, 2011). Tea Part objectives, as it often conflicts and varies among the members, may be addressed by computer-mediated communications in that they share a collective identity by forming informal relationships who identifies with the same cause.

The Occupy Wall Street's collective identity includes forming against the corporates 1 % who earn 40% of US 's income. Identities of Occupiers vary from veterans, students, those who lost healthcare, those without a home, teachers who can't afford their student loans, and people working three jobs to live paycheck to paycheck. The goal of the movement is to bring about change, and hold the 1% of the nation accountable for their actions. Although the means to accomplish such broad goals are not defined, they are consciously attempting to build a radically new social order, which fits the definition of social movement by Zirakzadeh (1997).

The similarity between the two movements is that, as Prokop (November 11, 2011) notes, they both oppose bailouts and profess to be crusading against corrupt establishment. They both feel victimized by the federal government and Wall Street because there have not been any consequences for making bad decisions. There has not been enough accountability (Sloane, 2011).

2.4 Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)

Resource Mobilization Theory is based on the notion that resources – such as “time, money, organizational skills, and certain social or political opportunities – are critical to the success of social movements” (Eltantawy & Wiest, 2011). Thus, the theory assumes that the key factor in creating successful and sustainable movements is by accomplishing specific tasks to achieve movement objectives are through acquiring resources and mobilizing people. Because resources can be in various forms, such as money, property, access to media, people and more, RMT sees economic and political resources as necessary in making a movement

successful. The theory focuses on how the movement manages, employs and distributes the resources (Lo, 2010).

There are two different types of movement within the RMO that are going to show them the tangible gains with a society. First is the political process model and the second is the Organization Entrepreneurial model.

The RMT arose during the 1970s as a reaction to collective behavior models, and explains the growth and development of social movements by emphasizing the fundamental importance of pre-existing organizations and the availability of resources such as money, professional expertise and recruitment of networks in civil society. Relationships among the media, wealth and other resources and social movement plays a critical factor in their accomplishing tasks. The RMT treats social movements as normal, rational, institutionally rooted activities that are structured and patterned. The theory takes into account resources outside the social movement under study. It emphasizes rational actor's abilities to use resources among social movements effectively and the availability of applicable resources to achieve their set of goals (Lo, 2010). McCarthy & Zald (1977) states that before action can be taken, resources must be mobilized mostly through constituents. Constituents believe in the social movement organization goals and ideology, but neither stands to benefit directly from the accomplishment of SMOs goals.

A multifactorial model of social movement builds on Tilly's (1978) political theory by emphasizing political alliances and processes shaping success and failure. In the present resource mobilization theorists state that grievances, or

frustrations by activists are relatively constant, deriving from structural conflicts of interest built into social institutions, and that “movement form because of long-term changes in group resources, organization, and opportunities for collective action (Jenkins, 1983). Grievance is a necessary condition, but the critical factor is the availability of resources, “especially cadres and organizing facilities.” Successful movements overcome problem in many ways. One major method is the development of programs that offer the collective incentives of group solidarity and commitment to moral purpose (J. Wilson 1973; Gamson & Fireman 1979; Moe 1980; Jenkins 1982a). Group solidarity and purposive incentives are collective in that they entail the fusion of personal and collective interests. When the movement supporter’s calculated self-interest may be served with the solidarity of the group and the moral commitment to the broad collectives, those people in the movement tends to act.

Jenkins (1993) states that within a basic framework, the organizational structures of movements will still evolve. The movement structure, as seen with the National Organization for Women, expands, and becomes more internally diverse and decentralized in order to accommodate the diverse ideologies and interests of its growing membership (1983). Hertz (1981) observes that the growth of the welfare rights movement in the late 1960s produced a multi-organizational field of informally coordinated organizations, providing the movement with the advantages of a decentralized structure. Most social movements fall between the bureaucratic and decentralized models, which potentially affords the mobilization advantages of decentralization as well as the tactical ones of centralization.

Within resource mobilization theory, success may be measured by two dimensions: the provision of tangible benefits that meet goals established by the movement organizations, and the formal acceptance of the movement organization by its main antagonist as a valid representative of a legitimate set of interests (Jenkins 1983).

The main concern of the mobilization model is the link between collective interests and the pooling of resources. Rather than being socially constructed and created by the mobilization process, underlying collective interests in the resource mobilization theory are assumed to be existent prior to mobilization and relatively unproblematic. Olson's theory (1968) states that the collective interests often emerge during the mobilization process.

As people are more commonly "voting their conscious" because their needs are met and they have discretionary resources, social change comes about through organizations who mobilize their resources to effectively "normatively manipulate" the social culture, gain constituency, and obtain more resources to achieve their goal (McCarthy & Zald, 1977)

2.4.1 Organizational Perspective

According to Gamson (1975), RM theorists argue that an organization is required for a group to launch a social protest or movement. RM theory has considered that strong, bureaucratically structured social movement organization is crucial for successful mobilizations.

RM theorists consider that after a group or a movement has organized to some extent, there are certain factors which will influence its success. Cohen

(1985) argues that organizational success is enhanced by the ability to mobilize resources, recognition from those in power, and a flexible organization, among other things. An affiliation with groups in power influences the group's ability to carry out its initiatives (Aveni, 1978; McCarthy and Zald, 1977).

Ahuja and Carley (1998) define a virtual organization as: “a geographically distributed organization whose members are bound by a long-term common interest or goal, and who communicate and coordinate their work through information technology.”

An organization may consist of virtual teams. Virtual organization may be a “geographically distributed organization whose members are bound by a long-term common interest or goal, and who communicate and coordinate their work through information technology” (Virtual Organizations section, para 1). A virtual team works when members work independently to accomplish tasks guided by a common purpose. Falun Gong movement shows that ICTs makes it possible for organizations and groups to virtually organize various aspects of their activities (Mascaro).

2.4.2 Political Process Model

PPM stresses dynamism, strategic interaction, and response to the political environment. This process argues that social movements stem from an environment of contentious politics. Such an environment “is episodic rather than continuous, occurs in public, involves interaction between makers of claims and others, and is recognized by those others as bearing on their interests, and brings in government as mediator, target, or claimant.

According to Schons, PPM especially highlights the elements of interaction: “We treat social interaction, social ties, communication, and conversation not merely as expressions of structure, rationality, consciousness, or culture, but as active sites of creation and change. We have come to think of interpersonal networks, interpersonal communication, and various forms of continuous negotiation – including the negotiation of identities – as figuring centrally in the dynamics of contention” (Ibid). Granovetter (1973) has also shown how combinations of both strong and weak ties within society are useful in supplementing social movements by providing trust and emotional support as well as offering diverse arrays of ideas and interests.

2.4.3 New Social Movement Theory

New Social Movement Theory adds on another dimension to the resource mobilization theory by addressing the inadequacies in analyzing collective action. RMT needs a specific objective to utilize resources around. New Social Movement Theory identifies non-economically related factors like ideology and culture as a reason for coming to a collective action. Examples of new social movements include the women’s movement, gay rights movement, and peace movements.

The theory does not add another dimension to the Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movement’s ideology because their primary concerns revolve around economy. In terms of collective identity and culture, it applies to the Tea Party in that some of their ideologies seem irrational, and so becomes difficult to assume that the individuals within the movement are acting rationally. As a collective

group, they form a sub-political culture in the mainstream. Because resource mobilization theory and political opportunity theory assumes that the actors within a movement act rationally, new social movement theory closes the gap between the two theories when the members of Tea Party Movement, Occupy Wall Street, and Coffee Party does not act rationally.

2.4.4 Critiques of Resource Mobilization Theory

Some argue that the RM model overemphasizes the importance of funding, bureaucracy and formal organization and cannot explain why informal social/grassroots movements with loose coalition networks and few resources can succeed in their activities (Evan and Boyte, 1992; Jenkins, 1983; Piven and Cloward, 1995 cited in Tarrow 1998). Even McCarthy and Zald, two leading scholars of resource mobilization theory, agree that although RMT has benefited from social mobilization theory, it is only a “partial theory” (1997). The RM theory does not accept the role of collective identity in the movement (Buechler, 2000). When considering the Tea Party movement, which uses technical resources online, the theory may not cover all aspects of the social movement and how they emerge.

2.5 Summary

Resource Mobilization Theory	
Collectives Attempt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain benefits for individuals • Produce social reforms • Gain entry into the established structures of society

Mobilization Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on role of power and power struggles • Requires an organizational base • Continuity of leadership
Types of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Political influence • Access to media and workers
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing transformation of movements through interaction of competing SMO's in broader political environment
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational decision-makers who have weighed costs and benefits of collective action and have decided that goals of protest are worth time and effort

Van Der Veen (2006)

CHAPTER III. CASE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

The case design of this thesis facilitates the bridging of theoretical and empirical knowledge. The TPM, CPM, and OWSM's history, description of their websites and an observation that seemed relevant to the case study are written in that order. RMT states that SMOs need "material, cognitive, technical, and organizational resources in order to expand the movement" (Van Susteren, 2010). In order to understand how resources (as indicated in RM theory), has affected grassroots social movements, I rely heavily on websites and publications

regarding each movements. Websites indicate how information has played a role in shaping and determining the success of each movement. Websites also will indicate how they have helped to connect participants.

According to Bandy and Smith (2005), organizational theory suggests that local SMOs require autonomy and a democratic decision-making structure so that they can address both local and global politics and members' needs. In order to understand how Internet may help balance the needs listed in organizational theory, I looked at websites and the level of autonomy granted at the local level. Organizational theory also suggests that SMOs that develop cross-movement alliances will be the most successful, as alliances are expected to provide both SMOs with more resources and political power, decrease their workload, and increase the probability of reaching shared goals (Van Susteren, 2010). This approach also looks at the interplay between local and national SMOs within the same social movement.

Political Process model states that a social movement's chances of developing are heavily influenced by three sets of conditions—expanding political opportunities, indigenous organizational strength, and certain shared cognitions among the movement's proponents (Norton Web). Because the Political Process model looks at how the social movements interact with external groups such as authorities and allies, I will be looking for any connections with external groups on the websites for the case study.

NSM theorists suggest that the development of a collective identity is crucial to the success of a social movement. In order to determine whether a

collective identity plays a role in sustaining a social movement, I carefully examine the language of the mission statements, as well as conversations of participants on the websites that uses a collective “we” in their rhetoric.

3.2 Tea Party Movement

Here we are interested in how the TPM progressed into a solid entity from the isolated participants on which it is based. Because RMT is concerned with “clearly defined, fixed goals with centralized organizational control over resources and clearly demonstrated outcomes that can be evaluated in terms of tangible gains” and the TPM is a decentralized movement with unclear objectives, the RMT model in evaluating the TPM needs to be supplemented. Jenkins’ (1983) underscores this point in his argument that the basic model of RMT comprises “rational actions oriented towards clearly defined, fixed goals with centralized organizational control over resources and clearly demarcated outcomes that can be evaluated in terms of tangible gains”. TPM has decentralized form and its overarching objectives are often elusive and highly uncertain. Therefore, according to RMT’s perspective, the assumed lapse in centralized organization as well as the TPM’s diffuse and at times incoherent platform and goals interfere with these basic components of a social movement’s pursuit of institutional change, stressing the need for an alternative evaluation of the RMT strategy.

Consistent with the RMT, Tea Party group has plenty of financial, communication, and political resources and used it effectively to organize protests. In observing the TPM, Branson notes that the political opportunity theory must recognize the mobilizing effect of threat, “especially for reactive and

right-wing movements” (2011). He says that Republicans already have enough resources, so the fact that some are turning to protests to accomplish tasks in response to a loss of resources or allies. Political opportunity structures (Kitschelt) “are comprised of specific configuration of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others.” In other words, the Tea Party made use of its historical and institutional arrangements that created a frustration in how finances are managed in the States, as well as frustration with Congress that resonates with a group of people all over the nation. In the political opportunity structures model, we try and explain how interpersonal relations and networks affixed to this framework may account for the movement’s expedited growth and subsequent influence in elections and public policy. Under this model, actors mobilize locally and expand their network and lateral engagements through activities and involvement of third parties thereby increasing their political efficacy and charges of political and social change.

3.2.1 Tea Party Patriots

In looking at the resources that RMT suggests as the source for growth and development of SMOs, I looked for availability of resources such as money, professional expertise, recruitment networks in civil society (Yun Huang, 2009). Tea Party Patriots allow users to share the ideology of TPM through Pinterest. The description for the TPM picture for Pinterest states “The Tea Party movement spontaneously formed in 2009 from the reaction of the American people to

fiscally irresponsible actions of the federal government, misguided “stimulus” spending, bailouts and takeovers of private industry. Within the first few weeks of the movement, Tea Party Patriots formed to support the millions of Americans seeking to improve our great nation through renewed support for fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free market economic policies.” In the main page, the users, who are not administrators of the site are allowed to post news related to their common interests, which serves as a cognitive resource for all members. Participants are able to volunteer locally by finding a group to join through the site, or can join a national group called the First Brigade. They can make financial contributions to the site through Pay Pal or with a paycheck.

Tea Party Patriots list the following as their primary mission on their homepage.

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Constitutionally Limited Government
- Free Markets

The forums show language use that focus on ‘we’, and encourage others to post videos regarding their mission statement. As for organizational perspective, local meetings are documented on videos, and are available for viewing by people who are separated by geography. Major national events, such as a protest in Washington D.C., are documented and viewable by every participants through the site. The site does not have any official affiliations with any political parties. However, in the Events section and in the News forum, mentions of legislation

are shown. The Mission Statement is shown as ‘Our Mission,’ and demonstrates rhetoric that focuses on the wording ‘our’ and ‘we’.

3.2.2 Tea Party Nation

Cognitive resources include the News segment and a study group for participants. The website has a link for groups to be formed based on the subject that participants want to discuss. There is a study group on the Constitution, study group on fire arms and the second amendment, and groups based on the states that they are located in. Technical resources include a Groups segment, where members can find a local group to join based on the States they live in.

As for the organizational perspective, there seemed to be cross-movement alliances between the TPM and Christian group called the Judston Philip.

The statement for Tea Party Nation:

A HOME FOR CONSERVATIVES!!!

Tea Party Nation is a user-driven group of like-minded people who desire our God-given individual freedoms written out by the Founding Fathers. We believe in Limited Government, Free Speech, the 2nd Amendment, our Military, Secure Borders and our Country.

3.2.3 Freedomworks

As with Tea Party Patriots and Tea Party Nation, Freedomworks educate and train volunteers through the site. They take donations for the organization. Participants have a choice to stay informed via email updates. Virtual teams are created based on topics that interest participants. Board members that guide the organization is listed on the site, so the site has a specific leader in its organizational structure. The organization is chaired by former U.S. House Majority Leader Dick Armey and the President is Matt Kibbe.

Participants' ability to form a democratic decision making structure should be doubted, for it does not have a forum where people can rationally have conversations about selective topics. Freedomworks has a link that allows participants to 'sign and pledge' support for radical, conservative initiatives. There is a page that allows participants to sign an online pledge to 'fire Obama,' which does not make sense as US citizens cannot 'fire' presidents. Another example to make one doubt of the rationality of the movement includes means to endorse Republican members of the Congress in 2012. Narrative used to describe each candidate is simplified and lacks information on what exactly is the candidate's position outside of being 'fiscally conservative,' 'freedom,' and 'limited government.'

Participants can give each candidate a star rating out of five stars, which seems too simple a way of evaluating candidates running for Congress. There are no indicators to address what aspects of the candidates were considered in giving them a star rating. In a website that simply states the TPM supports candidates 'who will defend freedom,' one has to doubt the rationality of the movement's ability to rationally make conscious decisions.

3.2 Coffee Party Movement

From the lens of political opportunity structures, the movement gained participants by finding an opportunity with people frustrated with the current function of politicians and the overall political structures. From RMT perspective, one can see how leadership is sustained in the movement to effectively utilize the resources movement has. Informally, the leadership of the movement is taken on

by Annabel Park, who started the Facebook page and is often the spoke person seen in mainstream media such as CNN and C-Span. The movement's point is for citizens to become local organizers all over the nation, and to take on leadership roles within the set region. Thus, the movement has consistent and sustainable pattern of people taking the initiative to lead.

The Coffee Party Movement maintains coordination with other similar social movement's organizations. They often mention Occupy Wall Street in their blogs, and have noted of the alliance in Annabel Park's interview on C-Span. Furthermore, they collaborate maintain coordination with MoveOn.org and other like-minded, liberal organizations.

3.3.1 Coffee Party USA

The Coffee Party USA page is administered by Annabel Park and Eric Byler. They and a few administrators post news and what they deem interesting on the home page. For an instance, on November 26 2011 they posted an essay by Robert Reich on the economic turning point of America today. Coffee Party USA's blog contains news about the economy, anti-establishment of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and about the Cycle of Corruption.

CPM on their website has a Mission Statement, where they state that the Coffee Party's mission is to fight the Corruption of Cycle, and restore self-governance to the People. In order to do so, they say that they must achieve campaign finance reform, Wall Street reform, and tax code reform.

About US segment provides website visitors to join the Coffee Party USA's volunteer team by filling out a brief survey, which also serves as means

for the movement to contact new volunteers. On the survey, visitors must state their interest in the following: money in politics, tax code reform, consumer and financial protection, Wall Street reform, election reform (redistricting, campaign finance, etc.), climate change (clean energy, green jobs), immigration, and other issues of interest. The visitors also can select the skills they can contribute to their cause. The site shows that the movement looks for people with writing skills, film and video, social media and content distribution, web design, public speaking, graphic design, legal analysis, network building, administrative support, grassroots leadership, and net roots leadership. Unlike the TPM, the CPM site has dense papers that provide information on all of the issues that they are fighting for in depth. To illustrate, in the 'About' segment, they identify legislative fixes to campaign finance laws, Wall Street regulations, and the tax code. They provide YouTube videos on how to introduce the movement to friends. Such videos include a speech by Professor Lawrence Lessig, and speech by movement leaders such as Annabel Park and Eric Byler.

Like the TPM, the CPM provides recommendation for books the participants to read. It also serves as a social media website, where users can create a profile, join groups or create a group, and personalize their profile to communicate with people on the site. They can form their own virtual community based on their own interests. The movement gains legitimacy as they post videos of the members being interviewed on official organizations, such as the CNN, The Thom Hartmann Show, and the Filter Free Radio with Jacob Dean. The members show legitimacy of the movement to others in their environment when they

purchase and present CPM gears. Such goods include bumper stickers, campaign buttons, mugs, jewelry and watches, mouse pads, tees and sweatshirts, and tote bags that participants can buy on the website.

Individuals in the movement has provided intervention statements, where they are able to state the need for sustainable healthcare in the US, equal pay, and other issues that they are interested in. In each of the intervention statements, other participants are able to comment on it through Facebook. They can also share the statements via Facebook by liking it, re-tweeting it on Twitter, publically posting it as a number one site on Google, and sharing it through other social networking sites such as Tumblr and LinkedIn.

3.3.2 Citizens Intervention

Citizens Intervention, in their mission statement, emphasizes the ability of the people to shift the control of the media from large media conglomerate to the people.

The segment called The Talking Points in the ‘About’ states the stance and the objectives of the Coffee Party. It also provides a link which provides instructions on creating a “Citizens Intervention” Open Mic event, which is a program designed to express “how the corruption and dysfunction affect our lives, and what we want to do about it.”

The Mission statement page shows pictures of people in the movement with a sign that says, “I am a person” indicating that the political system itself allows “powerful interests and party ideologues to have more influence with our elected Representatives than average people.” The images add legitimacy to the

movement, as well as clarity in affirming their message that special interests should not be given preference in our political system. With the mission page the movement is able to mobilize activists to host Intervention events, where people with common ideology can form collective identities.

The movement lists specific objectives in their “Coffee Party Position Paper: Reforming a System that is Broken.” They list public policies they support through means to bring about campaign finance reform, Wall Street reform, and Tax Code reform. They support a number of legislative bills that can have a positive impact on reforming the three systems. The power struggle CPM have in supporting these legislative measures are against the public media that distorts the process of coming to a well thought through decisions on legislations. This provides a measurable means to consider whether the movement was successful or not. Unlike the other two movements, the CPM has specific legislative bills they are supporting to achieve their three objectives.

In the News segment of the website, supporters are identified by their user ID when they upload posts. Contents of the post mostly focus on Wall Street reform. Users on the site are able to ‘like’ the post on Facebook, re-tweet with Twitter, mark as ‘+1’ on Google, or bookmark and share with other social networking sites such as Reddit, StumbleUpon, LinkedIn, and Tumblr. Means to share posts are prevalent in all pages of the segment News, such as Press Releases, Press Clips, and Blog. This shows how the movement is effectively mobilizing the media resource that is available to them without a charge, and when it gains momentum can have an appearance of mass based movements.

Organizations and citizens are able to become a 'sponsor' of the movement by financially contributing to the movement. Current organizational sponsors include the Science Club, Champaign Telephone Company, Dean's Beans, and citizen sponsors who gave either in the amount of \$500 or \$100. Organizational sponsors have an incentive to promote their business because they are given a link to guide website users to their own website in the 'Sponsor Listing' page. Additionally, citizens are given social incentives to donate money as their names get listed in the 'Sponsor Listing' page as well. The move to show all of the sponsors adds legitimacy to the movement. Other means to raise money by the site include selling commemorative tees, sweatshirts, signs tote bags, and other mementos on their Shop segment.

In a segment on hosting a "Citizens Intervention Open Mic" event, movement participants are provided with the toolkit to promote and execute the event. For an instance, they can view a video from previous events that was successful. They are able to e-mail the website organizers for additional support. They are given a 'Local Organizer toolkit', which include a sample press release, suggested tips on choosing a venue, suggested ways of promoting the event, sample instructions for writing a radio PSA, sample agenda, a pre-made sign-in sheet for the event, follow up information for the director of Coffee Party Local Support, tips on being prepared for the event, and a list of suggested viewing to be aware of issues that they are going to talk about. Additionally, local event organizers are provided with professionally pre-made flyers as well as a backdrop banner for the event materials.

The site provides specific directions on contacting members of the Congress. They can download a stationary with Coffee Party logo and a banner to use for the letter. The site gives directions on writing intervention statement to Senators and Representative in Congress by providing participants with talking points. The site also provides a link to have volunteers join Citizens Lobby. Citizens Lobby is a network of local organizers targeting district offices of Senators and Representatives. For fostering collective identity, the site provides pictures and videos from major rallies as well as open-mic nights. Additionally, participants are able to voice their opinions by posting videos.

3.4 Occupy Wall Street Movement

In looking at how information technology relates to social movements, one must keep in mind Diani's (2000) definition of social movements, which says that collective identity, networks, and live values are crucial to contemporary movements. According to Diani's (2000) definition of social movements, computer-mediated communication has the potential to influence some primary dimensions of social movements such as the actors (individuals and organizations), the movement's collective identity, networks, and resources (Huang, 2009). One sees that the Internet serves as means to make simple yet significant signs go viral, and transcend the movement beyond Wall Street into cities across the U.S. and even international regions (Arvizu, 2011). A common use of the sites by movement actors is to make their voices heard. The net provides a space for online discussants to freely express their concerns and issues. Occupy Wall Street's main website is filled with images of activists with the "We

Are the 99 Percent” signs. OWSM has a collective identity in that participants fall under the 99% of Americans who is under an unfair economic system that contributes to their personal problem. In the “We are the 99%” message, the term ‘we’ “fall under the majority of Americans who are not wealthy.” The movement is not limited to people fighting for economic justice, for their collective identity remains open and vague. The openness to interpretation in a movement’s story allows “diverse groups to see their interests as alike enough to act collectively” (Polletta, 2011). If desired, users can remain anonymous with an unidentifiable username to freely express their concerns and issues without fear of public rebuke.

Occupy Wall Street movement is gaining institutional support. For an instance, Klein notes that Moveon.org, an organization composed of various organization with the intent to ‘bring real Americans back into the political process,’ (‘What is move on?’) sent out e-mails about ‘an amazing wave of protest against Wall Street and the big banks erupting across the country’ (2011).

3.4.1 Occupy Wall Street.org

The members are able to access and acquire various types of resources, including knowledge, money, and materials. Through the use of the websites that provide links to Twitter, Facebook, and other social media tools, individuals are able to describe their economic situation, describe an unfair economic system that contributes to the problem, and mention an action to take, such as to attend a protest. On OccupyWallst.org, one will find the opportunity to discuss the movement, political issues, donate money to the coordinator of the site, gather

information, form or join an event. Users find that there are multiple opportunities to discuss with other users. For an instance, in the LiveStream segment, one will find a stream of video that captures what is going on at the moment in a location where people are protesting all over the nation. Users also find a live stream chat room and a comment section. The chat room stream is different from the comment section in that it is more like an informal conversation, with short phrases. The comment section leaves one the time to respond back. It promotes role of power struggles, for in the comment section one will find liberal, conservative, and moderate movement members with various conversation topics they want to explore. The movement shows struggle against companies like Sotherby.

The site assumes a liberal pluralistic political structure in their Form section. The post regarding discussions online includes the following statement:

“It seems like the amount of trolls on this forum have doubled, if not tripled. I wonder why they increase, and why the desperate trolls attempt[ing] to try and get people to respond to their threads. This is a forum for civil discussion and sharing of ideas. If you don’t agree with threads put up, that is fine – just keep it civil. Trolls don’t know how to be civil. So it is easy to spot them right away. Anyway, ignore the trolls and they will have to go away.”

In the policies regarding moderating posts, it lists that the site does not support any presidential candidates for 2012 because the election spamming by parties like Ron Paul was getting out of hand.

The site provides post for training events, such as the Direct Action Training in New York City. The site provides resources to form general assemblies. One gets an idea of where the assemblies are taking place by taking a look at User Map and Live Stream. User Map gives people an idea of where the

other users are located. Live Stream shows where general assemblies are taking place, as well as a live video to show the event as it is occurring.

Users legitimate the interaction of movement by emphasizing ongoing transformation. The video feed provided allows users who are geographically isolated to be a part of the movement. It also serves as a means to grow the movement by encouraging users to start a general assembly, like the one they see online.

The members have a chance to challenge those who are in power, and their actions are recorded and viewed on the website. The homepage shows a YouTube video of Occupy Wall Street in New York protesters crashing the Sotheby auction on November 9th. It also shows the time and the location that other members should meet to protest by the auction house. Another example includes an educational session where the members were given a chance to join a phone cast with the Federal Reserve on November 9th and listen to a moderated discussion with Dr. David Korten and Occupy Wall Street occupiers.

As for external allies, the movement is legally supported by the National Lawyers Guild. The site links to the worldwide occupy movement, which shows interplay between the national and global SMOs.

3.4.2 Adbuster.org

Adbuster.org provides links, briefings, news and feeds to users who want come across the site. There are ways to legitimize and illegitimate the actions of the movement on the site. For an instance, in the comment section of the news segment of the site, when too many users post radical, unproductive comments,

the site and the organization loses validity, especially when they are calling for a more responsible political dialogue.

The Get Involved segment provides links to the main page of Occupy Wall Street movement; general assembly updates; YouTube for movement's videos; Facebook event page; Tumblr for clippings and links; and Livestream for live video. The main page provides blog posts from the daily accounts of the movement.

One of the ways in which the movement focuses on power struggles is through articles called 'briefings.' Briefings call members of the movement "rebels, redeemers and believers" who believes in a "soft regime change in America and a resurgence of the political left worldwide (*Adbusters*, 2011). *Adbusters* has a Twitter feed window called 'Action Stream' where it shows Tweets with hash tag #OccupyWallStreet. The messages in the feed range from quotes that indicates protesters are getting arrested by the police, links to video feeds from different assemblies; and links to encourage others to take actions by sending an email or a letter to individuals in the Congress. The site has a link to downloading different posters, stickers, and handouts with images that clearly indicates the 99% of the population fighting against the 1% in the corporate America. One of the posters says "To keep our government of the people, by the people, for the people, it's time to take action!" The poster includes hash tag #OccupyWallStreet as well as a date where fellow Occupy Wall Street members will protest. It calls people to bring a tent, and directs them to the official Occupy Wall Street website, www.occupywallst.org. The site provides a blog-like daily

updates, where people can post pictures from the assemblies they've attended. Most of the visual images and videos consist of government figures, such as the police commenting on unprovoked assaults by police on students. Other times members upload posters announcing an ongoing event.

Briefings by members on the site legitimize the website, and provide means to which the movement has continuous leadership. In a leaderless movement, the site provides means to which everyone has equal access to the contents as well as the ability to post contents.

One of the primary ways that Adbusters work to mobilize resources is by providing links that allows members to get involved with the movement. When the members go to the site, the first thing members see when they enter the site is a segment called Get Involved that organizes members to events around the nation. The links allow members to become active participants from passive members. The site provides personal narratives and stories about issues, which fulfills political functions such as public expression, civic association and popular protest.

3.4.3 Occupy Together (occupytogether.org)

The first content the users see when they access the site is a news report, provided by someone named Ella of the movement. She proceeds to give an update on the recent occupation report around the globe. According to the site, Ella is a member of a team called *Rebuild the Dream*, and compiles *This Occupation Report*. Although one receives daily update on the movement, site is not as active as the other sites for Occupy Wall Street. The updates serve many

functions provided by the Resource Mobilization Theory. First, it serves as a resource in that it gives a short, condensed report on the occupations around the globe. The updates emphasize ongoing transformation of movements by indicating in different regions of the nation, Occupy movements are taking place.

Occupy Together uses Meet Up in their ‘Actions and Directory’ section, which is a social media tool for “finding, starting and organizing occupy groups in your area” (2011). It provides a map of with a post-it like tabs to indicate that events are occurring in that place. Below the map the site provides occupation name, the state of the assembly, city, and the website for each of the occupation. By indicating the exact occupation and their locations, the site adds legitimacy to the movement. Once users click on the tab, the site indicates how many people identify with the occupy movement there and also provides a link to send the users to that local website. MeetUp showcases variety of change efforts occurring in the world. This feature indicates that the movement has connections to the broader political sphere in that in each of the local website, the members indicate interests in different political and social issues they want the local government to consider.

The site provides a link to How to Occupy, which is a site dedicated solely to training mobilizers. According to the site, HowToCamp/HowToOccupy “is designed in order to promote the methods, techniques and knowledge on taking the square” (2011). In other words, the site mobilizes members and is a resource in itself. The purpose of the site is to provide step-by-step methods to challenge those in power, or as the site puts it, “practice civil-disobedience” and “build a

new world.” Members of the site include people who identify with a global revolution, civil disobedience, and non-partisanship in promoting a better way to come to a public decision.

In their Posters and Materials link, the site shows posters and banners that were donated by graphic designers. By November 2011, the site had enough donations (80 posters) that they no longer were accepting open submissions. Messages in the poster range from call to action on specific date, the 99% message against the corporate greed, a message that says the numbers are too big to ignore. The posters and materials are all free to use to people on the site, whether they are registered member or not. The files are available in a PDF format.

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

4.1 TPM and Organizational Structure

For decision making, the administrators of each site delegates which issues to focus on, as well as to which news to post. There are no other movements for the movement to be allied with. As for the interplay between local and national SMOs, the local ones are reliant on the national movement for agenda, training materials, as well as the tools to recruit new members via the web.

TPM and Organizational Structure	
Democratic decision making	Administrators of the site delegates what issues to focus on.
Cross-movement alliances	No other movement to be crossed with
Interplay between local and national SMOs	Nationally the issues are distributed to local ones through the site. Local events are structured in accordance with the national agenda.

4.1.2 TPM and Political Opportunity Structure

To be specific, one has to look at the political process that shapes the participants' ability to take on political opportunities by their interaction with external reference groups. Such groups can be allies, state authorities, and federal authorities. Movement organization among Tea Party groups is not fully grassroots, and are controlled by larger established political committees, as can be seen on Freedomworks' website, where it shows the committee that makes up the

organization. One can see the TPM's taking on concerns of Republican candidates for Congress in 2012 on the Freedomworks' website. Because of their online pledge to endorse various Republican candidates, they are taking on the political factors external to what the social movements want to achieve. The website, particularly Freedomworks, serves as a gateway between established political action committees and decentralized, local grassroots movements.

TPM and Political Opportunity	
Structure	
Interactions with external groups	Established political action committees articulate goals (Freedomworks)
Political dynamics	Established Republican political committees articulate the mission of the movement

4.1.3 TPM and NSM Structure

NSM theory examines collective action based on identities such as gender, ethnicity, and sexuality that makes up a culture, rather than on economic classes. TPM, through its engagements online, may be called to form a social culture that is based on similar beliefs in limited government, financial conservativeness, and freedom. Their preoccupation is linked directly to the emergence of a niche of a society which is dominated by the "production of symbolic goods which model or transform the representation of human nature and the external world" (Touraine, 1987). TPM shows participants with many different viewpoints and goals

working together in a relatively stable fashion, such as by signing online petitions, forming general meeting using MeetUp.com, and leading discussions online.

TPM participants have formed a collective identity, which is a central aspect of movement formation, according to the NSM theory. NSM activists focus on issues that affect their personal lives, pursuing social change through politicizing culture. As Melucci (1994) states, “Conflicts move from the economic-industrial system to the cultural sphere. They focus on personal identity, the time and space of life, and the motivation and codes of daily behavior.”

TPM and NSM Structure

Forums, blogs, and comments

Repertoire of contention

Mission statements, official statements

Emphasize leaderless conservative movement. Conscious avoidance of institutionalized politics, reference to patriotism, free enterprise capitalism and traditional moral order derives common conservative ideology

4.2 CPM

4.2.1 CPM and Organizational Structure

The CPM’s organizational structure is that of a grassroots social movement on an electronic network, and is impacted by the fact that, through the Internet, the group has its own media outlets such as webcasts, web forums, and blogs. This enables the group to freely provide information and publish whatever

they see fit. CPM's web-presence is propagated through other social media websites such as Facebook, Google's social media features, and Twitter. Through the signing of petitions online, like the one demanding coverage of two wars, environmental catastrophe and economic crisis rather than Lindsay Lohan's troubles, allows members of the movement to take actions, as well as to gather a sense of their collective identity. External social medias outside of their websites enable the group to promulgate a wide range of content and strategies for achieving movement goals. The Internet thus helps structure the characteristics of a movement itself.

The Internet is a facilitative tool for network building that participants use for socializing, recruiting and shaping potential participants' ideology, and encouraging individuals to get involved in collective action. CPM as an organization is able to mobilize resources and have received recognition from those in power. They are also flexible in structure and link groups to those in power to launch a successful movement. Organization is marked by its frustration with incivility and obstructionism in political discourse, and the media narrative that the Tea Party represented America. Their online organization structure is decentralized. The tactics the movement uses include creating opportunities for members to gather and form small groups.

CPM and Organizational Perspective	
Virtual organization	Exist for a specific goal Electronic network necessary for promulgation of goals, physical meetings and rallies

4.2.2 CPM and Political Opportunity Structure

Concept of political opportunity structure, as indicated by Tilly and Tarrow (2004) follows as “the consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provides incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectation for success or failure. Writers for the CPM all contributed blogs and videos that reached millions of people in February 2011 when the Global Democracy Movement, inspired by democracy advocates in Tahrir Square inspired the world (Coffee Party USA, 2011). They joined the 99 Percent’s social media pushback against the 1 Percent, and were a part of a global phenomenon that fought against economic inequality and intolerable corruption.

CPM and Political Opportunity S	
Interactions with external group	Contributing writers promoted videos and papers for Global Democracy Movement inspired by advocates in Tahrir Square

4.2.3 CPM and NSM Structure

The most commonly mentioned components in the definition of NSM are a movement's collective identity, adversaries, collective challenges, resources, organization, and goal. Under these general characteristics, the CPM easily qualifies as a social movement. Regarding the CPM's identity, the participants see themselves as a cultivation practice group. In reaction to the TPM, this group wants to struggle to secure its ability to practice rhetoric in a fair manner. Furthermore, CPM members identify as adversaries all those acting against them, and those who either directly or indirectly participate in the TPM and the media's radicalized point of views.

CPM's collective challenges include: raising the public and government's awareness of the issue of financial reform, Wall Street reform, and the tax code reform. As a collective movement they maintain independence from all political parties and labels.

Informal and diffused structure, uses of unconventional tactics (e.g., lobbying, sit-ins, and rallies), advocacy of identity, and individual autonomy are commonly used to portray NSMs. Using these characteristics, the CPM seems to conform to the concepts of NSM.

CPM and NSM Theory	
Collective identity	Raising the public and government's awareness of the issue of financial reform, Wall Street reform, etc.

4.3 OWSM

4.3.1 OWSM and Organizational Structure

Through online features such as MeetUp that allows participants to quickly form local general assemblies, OWSM is able to form a dynamic organization from the local level up. The movement also has a dynamic virtual organizational structure in the way that participants are able to identify with common goals and participate in a dialogue through blogs and forums. Although there seems to be administrators on the web that coordinates how the website is set up and can control the content of the discussion if desired, there does not seem to be a bureaucratic form to the group structure, which is effective in mobilizing grassroots support according to Jenkins (1983). Overall, the OWSM's organizational structure is decentralized, non-hierarchical and focuses on self-help and self-organization, which fits the description of NSM theory (Offe, 1985). The informal and temporary networks facilitate the organization of collective action, as stated by Mueller (1992).

OWSM and Organizational Perspective	
Among participants	Decentralized, able to participate through blogs and forums
Hierarchical	In collaboration with NYC GA and NYC DA, but decentralized

4.3.2 OWSM and Political Opportunity Structure

The political opportunity structures, or the broad social, economic and political dynamics that shape the opportunities and constraints for mobilization (McAdam, 1982), places weight on the way social movement interact with external reference groups and the argument that social movements may influence changing political opportunities. In understanding the OWSM, role of external actors such as state and elites can be understood as emphasizing the need for change with the state. The participants all collectively consciously share the oppression that they experience before they take action. Using cyber activism, OWSM participants drive mobilization and press for demands in with the Congress by forming a general assembly-style press conference and propagating the message using blogs and websites, the OWSM are able to rally against the Super Committee in the Congress.

It is too soon to tell whether the movement resulted in a changed political system. If the participants are able to undermine the political or class elites, it will be because participants were looking to change the political system and not revolutionize them.

4.3.3 OWSM and NSM Structure

Aspects of NSM structure include the intimate aspects of human life, an informal and diffused structure, uses of unconventional tactics, advocacy of identity, and individual autonomy Using these characteristics, the OWSM fits the structure of NSM. Participants may join the movement informally and without any organized induction. OWSM follows an advocacy of identity because

participants form a collective identity that says protesters are the “99 percent” who does not belong to the top 1% of Americans who are wealthy.

Additionally, as for the social base of OWSM, they do not focus on the traditional way of recruiting participants in that they do not recruit from established political order. Although most of the participants are independent or Democrat, participants are drawn from a socially diffuse group of individuals who unite on a particular issue.

The collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation. Mobilization factors tend to focus on cultural issues that are associated with belonging to a differentiated social group where members can feel powerful (Melucci). OWSM members belong to a differentiated social group unaffiliated with any political groups. The group’s identity does not stress on class, but they seek for equal distribution of wealth among all income classes. The mission statement of the OWSM shows that they value direct participation, plurality, and difference. They are an informal, ad hoc, discontinuous organization that involves a rotation of leadership, which fits the characters of the new social movement.

The OWSM uses a variety of tactics such as mass rallies, site occupations, and sit ins, and in order to do so they gather information and spread information through their websites. The tactics of NSM protests are not completely new and still employ those that have been used in traditional social struggles such as court cases and getting out the vote. The membership of the OWSM, just as in the NSMs, is fluid.

OWSM and NSM Theory	
Culture and ideology	99 Percent versus the 1 Percent developed via blogs, forums, spread through social media
Issues	Complex beyond single issue
Reaction to modernizing process	Reaction that can only happen in industrialist capitalist nation, where Internet is accessible to almost everyone

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

This study examined how the TPM, CPM, and OWSM participants employed or utilized the Internet in order to achieve their goals. As a result of the Internet, particularly the social media aspect of what each websites provided, forms a stage where individuals form networked collective actions. This forms a more democratic society because anyone can join anytime and fit into the narrative provided on the Internet. Web interfaces of each websites are mediated by the web administrators, but anyone has can post, blog, and contribute resources at any given time, as well as decide to meet offline.

Lastly, the study examined a number of social, economic, political, and individual factors in order to take a closer look at the interplay between the Internet technology and users. This research draws on research mobilization theory and new social movement theory as a framework to explain how and why

the internet helps and hinders a social movement. In doing so this study explored ways in which the Internet facilitated and impeded online and offline movement mobilization in a dispersed social and physical environment.

In Data shows that the movement participant's Internet uses reflect their ability to organize and mobilize people and resources. This in turn assists them in overcoming barriers, gathering information, and form virtual collective identity. Their collective identity is formed over the Internet, by reducing the cost of mobilization and offering resources that can easily be accessed and enjoyed by individual activists. Participants embrace the opportunities that come with Internet such as MeetUp.com, low cost, reaching a broad audience, access to a tremendous amount of data, and the availability of multiple media platforms. Resource Mobilization theory shows that a formal SMO plays a key role in enabling a social group to launch campaigns. A SMO performs crucial functions for a movement such as defining goals and strategies for movements, attracting members, and strengthening collective identity. In contrast to the perspective of RM scholars, NSM theorists give far less attention to formal organizational structures, focusing instead on decentralized and non-hierarchical structures that organize around self-help and self-organization principles. The TPM, CPM, and OWSM's hierarchical structures are loose and decentralized. It also has no formal leadership, membership, and constitution.

Each movement can also be described as a virtual organization, based upon the interplay between its organizational form and its participants' Internet use, which are two mutually shaping factors. Tilly (1978) states that a

technological development has influenced the organizational structure of social movements and the tactics they adopted. By looking at the ways each website contributes to the forming of events and ideas, the findings support the idea that Internet use and organizational structure are mutually shaping.

Each movement's organizational capability benefited by taking advantage of the internet's low cost, rapid information transmission and the potential to reach a broad audience without physical barriers. Through this Internet enabled networking, the organization's widespread, fluid potential supporting base can be quickly reached. The movement's reliance on the Internet further shapes the movement, allowing it to be a more decentralized form, as the majority of information being exchanged and many communication behaviors is digital. This supplements the participant's need for physical meetings. Leadership is sustained without a centralized administration or control, thus allowing participants the ability to participate equally in complete movement actions.

The organization structure of CPM, TPM, and OWSM is that of a grassroots social movement, and is impacted by the fact that, through the Internet, the group has its own media outlets such as webcasts, blogs, Facebook posts, and YouTube posts. This enables the group to freely provide information and publish whatever they see fit. TPM's web-presence is well known nationally, and its presence online promulgate a wide range of content and strategies for achieving movement goals.

According to RM theory, (Gamson 1990), access to resources such as money, communication technology, facilities, supporters, and technical expertise

will facilitate the rise of social movements. With the Internet, activists in CPM, TPM, and OWSM have valuable human and financial resources that ease some of the burdens that typical grassroots social movements face. Just as with the Falun Gong movement, the three movements that utilized Internet applications gained five resources: money (e.g., spending less money, saving on expenses for facilities, hours of labor, and the free download materials); education (e.g., teaching/learning about issues, accessing self-teaching resources); knowledge (e.g., participants posted about relevant issues for the social movement, looked for and obtained ideas from the information and experience of others, and easily accessed issue information and speaker and group contact information); time (e.g., by being able to work in many different locations, saving travel time for meetings and saving person – hours by using automatic computer function in software); and materials (e.g., downloading and printing out flyers, brochures, and relevant documents for endorsing candidates or advocating an issue). The five primary resources, which include human and financial resources as well as knowledge and access to information, enable participants to build networks, mobilize participants and launch struggles to achieve their objectives.

In addressing the Internet's ability to form a collective identity within a social movement, one can see that by watching live video streams about OWSM protests and rallies around the world. Additionally, participants in the TPM posted YouTube videos of their activities, and contributed to the forging of a collective identity in the movement. The Internet, overall, provided participants with an

effective participatory environment for sharing, connecting, expressing emotion, asking for advice, and launching issues for debate and discussion.

The case study confirms previous studies, such as by Yun Huang and Hara and Estrada, in that the effectiveness of the use of the Internet is related to the cultural and institutional factors in the user's environment. Collective identity forms from the participants' original beliefs in one of the three movements and for some are strengthened through Internet. A sense of collective identity can crucially impact participants' attitudes and provide an incentive to use the Internet for the purposes of the social movement.

This study confirms that the integrated theoretical framework is useful in explaining and understanding how a grassroots social movement can utilize new resources in the present to come to physical protests and actions. The CPM, TPM, and OWSM activism can be analyzed with the contemporary social movement paradigms of RM theory, political opportunity structure and NSM. This investigation of Internet and the different websites for the purposes of mobilization verifies the relations of movement networks and the available political opportunity structures provide incentives for activism. The TPM took advantage of new opportunities created by Internet technology that might impact social relations and political process by changing public opinion or influencing policy makers. The Internet as communication means, and with its use, participants were able to identify and exploit various types of resources, such as money, knowledge, education, time, and materials. This confirms Langman (2005) and his studies, which states that from NSM the "central role of electronic

media and global networks is enabling virtual public spheres.” The Internet can be informal virtual public sphere that can be used by new social movement activists to engage in actions in the struggle to achieve what they deem are a more democratic life. It can be a virtual public sphere where they can articulate and voice their concerns, as “digital communication technologies can undermine the ability to control communication in a traditionally hierarchical manner” (McChesney, 1996).

In understanding the organizational structure of the three movements, one has to understand the virtual organizational structures of each movement. In all three, they have non-hierarchical and decentralized organizational structures. Due to the lack of centralized control, participants freely used the websites and were more directly involved in the decision making process, eliminating multi-layered supervision or management without limiting the information flow. For an example, anyone in the movement can setup physical general assembly for the OWSM via MeetUp. The same applies to the TPM, where anyone who is a participant in the movement can setup meetings across the nation.

The websites influenced the formation of participants’ collective identity. In the case of TPM, they form a sense of collective identity by indicating themselves to be ordinary Americans who identify with the views of conservative Republicans. They are mostly for stripping the federal government of many of its roles, and that if government needs to be involved, to have the state governments take part. In the case of OWSM, the group members share individual stories of the 99% against the 1%. In the case of CPM, they identify as being against the Tea

Party movement, but also calling for fiscal responsibility and frustrated with Congress. Data analyzed point to the fact that the Internet provided an informal public sphere for participants to converse post information, discuss movement activities and debate. Such online communication sustained and strengthened the group's collective identity, a sense of collective consciousness, and oppositional culture.

By reading the site's content, participants were updated about the movement's information, including official announcements, even though they were widely geographically dispersed. The websites served as a platform in the movements in which participants can be virtually linked up in a digital space.

The movements are largely affected by environmental opportunities, but their fate is heavily shaped by their own actions. Organizationally, the TPM has decentralized character, which limits the recognition of hierarchical or bureaucratic divisions online. Organizational perspective of the RMT and its professional association's emphasized organizational competencies required to amass and distribute the resources demanded of the TPM and OWSM's diffuse character and relative lack of expertise in the field of political activism.

ICTs do not exist in technological isolation. It is more appropriate to treat ICTs as parts of socio-technical systems with many components including: an interrelated and interdependent mix of people and their social and work practices; hardware and software; norms and practices use; the support resources that assist users; and the people and techniques that keep the ICTs operating (Kling, 1999).

Each website allowed social movement activists to create repertoires of online activism so that their rhetoric of action can be extended into cyberspace. The websites allowed participants to coordinate action, transmit information, and communicate with one another. The organization's perceptions of opportunities of the Internet vary from facilitating events to communicating ideas.

In each movement's effort to coordinate activists, one can see that the movements are interrelated and dependent on ICTs with their social and work practices.

As indicated by research by (insert Falun Gong), participants' Internet use largely strengthen a group's collective identity. The social movement participant's collectivity and use of Internet technology mutually shape each other. The formation of collective identity can be seen as one of the elements of the social context, through which people generate the feeling of being a group, which impacts their actions and ideology. This can especially be seen with the TPM, which has generated a special niche of a collective identity in the American culture.

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CAPSTONE SUMMARY

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Analyzing the Tea Party Movement, the Coffee Party Movement, and the Occupy Wall Street Movement's Use of the Internet: Case Study on How the Internet Influences Grassroots Social Movement

The Tea Party movement, the Coffee Party movement, and the Occupy Wall Street movement's emergence suggest that grassroots political organizing remains a factor in American politics. Also, it is hard to envision them emerging without the use of Internet and Communication Technologies (ICT), particularly the Internet. This phenomenon intrigued my interest in how grassroots social movements have employed all types of media to mobilize, as well as how they furthered their agenda in the past. To pursue this, my thesis draws on resource mobilization (RM) and new social movement (NSM) theories for assessment and analysis. The movements I used for analysis based on RM and NSM theories are the Tea Party Movement (TPM), Coffee Party Movement (CPM), and the Occupy Wall Street Movement (OWSM). My contribution is to contextualize the impact of digital tools in collective action by connecting the social movements' studies with the Internet-based phenomena, which required drawing connections among three movements. In addition to analyzing each movement through mobilization theories, I draw upon similar case studies, such as Bi Yun Huang's (2009) work on the Falun Gong movement.

Grassroots social movement is sustained interaction among individuals, groups, collectives, networks, and organizations that share a collective identity in order to bring about, prevent, or undo social, political, and cultural change outside

the established political institutions” (Maiba). It is a “critical resource for progressive movement-building” and provides political education and sites for constituent engagement as they create networks across issues and/or communities (Chetkovich, 2006). Grassroots social movement promote home-grown leadership among groups that have been disadvantaged and contribute to understanding of problems as well as a public space where people can have a dialogue about those issues. To study the three movements that are geographically dispersed, I conceptualize dimensions of the Internet’s influence on the movements using social movement theories.

RM theory attempts to explain social movements by viewing individuals as rational actors that are engaged in instrumental actions that use formal organizations to secure and foster mobilization, according to McCarthy and Zald (as cited in Crawford). McCarthy and Zald (1977) stressed that a primary focus of the RM theory is how an SMO emerges, develops, and goes about surviving in its structural constraints. The success and failure of social movement is determined by external factors affecting resource flow to and from the organization. Because the RM theory states that SMO’s capacity for mobilizing flow of resource is confined by various structural and socio-economic constraints in a society, this study focused on identifying the constraints that the Internet helped relieve or impacted on the three movements. RM theory lacks social psychological factors and is too utilitarian, and so I also use NSM theory.

NSM theory explains individual participation in a movement by using the concept of framing. According to Hunt, Bedford and Snow (1994), framing is

how activists make sense of their social worlds (as cited in Milberry). It leads to the idea that shared understanding and identities, culture and symbolic meaning generate trust and cooperation among activists necessary for collective action.

Using RM theory's focus on SMO's effective and innovative strategies and tactics to overcome barriers to access resources, I analyzed three movement's structurally differentiated access to social resources. Social resources can be defined as staff members, time, money, volunteers, and financial donations. My analysis indicated that the Internet and its means for communication served as an integral part in forming a collective identity among movement activists, which is a key factor in coming to a collective action. Anyone can join anytime, bringing their identity, political background, and a narrative to share. Decentralized, flexible structure of the Internet allows individuals to participate in the creation of a narrative for the movement. Loose and non-hierarchical modes of organizing online allow for various perspectives to coexist, and the organization's unity does not necessarily depend upon a common ideology.

The websites that were used for this case study show the role of the Internet in political discourse is changing from broadcast oriented models of information dissemination toward more social, citizen engaged focused models. A case study on the Internet's influence on the three movements, as Yun Huang's study has shown, revealed that as a grassroots social movement, the movements have been impacted in four main ways. Users online engage the most in Internet services modified to suit their movement needs. They are able to access and acquire various types of resources, such as money and knowledge. They are able

to make use of the opportunities Internet provides for participants to mobilize offline. They supplement the way in which participants form a collective identity.

From an observation of the websites for OWSM, TPM, and CPM, I analyzed that the web, although not the primary means for the SMOs to reach out to the public, has become an important communication vehicle for the group. The Internet acts as an open social maintenance system, and allows people who are geographically dispersed to share common ideas. The Internet can be seen as a medium that can reach people outside of the SMO's traditional geographical boundary. SMO's presence on the Internet allows people to become aware of issues they promote. CPM, OWSM, and the TPM all send a newsletter via e-mail, which is cost effective and fast, for they only need money to keep the websites up, rather than paying for television advertising, stamps for direct mail, and also labor involved with direct mail. This shows that SMOs utilizing the Internet spend few resources to communicate with internal and external audiences.

My thesis conducted textual analysis on grassroots movement and the combination of RM and NSM theories as a framework to analyze the use of the Internet with online grassroots social movements. The Internet has complicated theoretical understanding of grassroots mobilization in social movements. Therefore, the use of two RM theories does not perfectly exemplify ways in which Internet expands the movement's agenda, as well as its constraints in going beyond being a viral, networked movement. However, my analysis shows that the CPM and TPM maintained a collective identity online. OWSM's lack of identity, or solid goal, touch on excellent points that relate to the importance of

mobilization forming a collective identity to participate online. In all three movements, elements of interpersonal relationships and identity were at play, and can be seen to incentivize social action, as indicated in the NSM theory. People are able to continue a discourse on struggles they identify with, and affirm that it's a collective struggle amongst members of the movement.