

8-6-2011

A Social Movements Perspective on “Issue” Surfacing in Brand Communities

Sung Won Kim

University of Oklahoma, swkmis@gmail.com

Shaila M. Miranda

University of Oklahoma, shailamiranda@ou.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2011_submissions

Recommended Citation

Kim, Sung Won and Miranda, Shaila M., "A Social Movements Perspective on “Issue” Surfacing in Brand Communities" (2011).
AMCIS 2011 Proceedings - All Submissions. 416.

http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2011_submissions/416

This material is brought to you by AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in AMCIS 2011 Proceedings - All Submissions by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

Americas Conference on Information Systems AMCIS 2011 Detroit

A Social Movements Perspective on “Issue” Surfacing in Brand Communities

Sung Won Kim
University of Oklahoma
sungwkim@ou.edu

Shaila M. Miranda
University of Oklahoma
shailamiranda@ou.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper develops a model of how an “issue” surfaces in weakly-structured interactions characteristic of social media. Understanding how individuals’ thoughts acquire the status of an “issue” worthy of collective concern is an essential prelude to understanding how individuals may be able to mobilize resources from powerful others via social media. We develop a model of such issue surfacing by drawing upon the social movements literature to interpret interactions by members of Starbucks’ brand community. Participants negotiate and refine “issues” that are worthy of collective action.

Keywords

Social Movements, Brand Communities, Issue Surfacing

INTRODUCTION

Communication via social media serves a range of relational and instrumental purposes. The purpose of this manuscript is to shed light on instrumental communication via social media within commercial contexts. Extant research on impacts of information and communication technologies on instrumental behavior in collectives has investigated groups of known actors within a hierarchical structure (Fjermestad and Hiltz, 2000). On social media though, problem identification and solving is typically undertaken by loosely-connected actors outside the purview of traditional organizational hierarchies or other structuring principles. Further, research has mainly considered problem solving rather than problem identification (Quaadgras and Golden-Biddle, 2010). Problem-identification or “issue” surfacing necessarily precedes problem-solving and collectives are constituted by and constitute the “issue”.

Individuals experiencing a grievance, what C. Wright Mills (1959) terms “private troubles”, engage with like-minded others on social media to translate their “private troubles” into what Mills terms “public issues” and subsequently to mobilize resources toward resolving those “issues”. The setting for individuals’ “private troubles” is their immediate environment – personal circumstances and relationships in their daily life. Individuals’ “personal troubles” stem from perceived incongruencies between their environment and their personal values. “Issues”, on the other hand, “transcend ... the individual” (Mills, 1959: 8). They threaten collectively-held values. “Issues” are not automatically recognized though, even in the presence of widespread personal troubles, surfacing instead through negotiation within collectives (Mills, 1959).

The question driving this research is: How do private perceptions of a wrong rise to the level of an “issue” on social media? The answer to this question is the first step in understanding how, within this medium characterized by absence of an organizational or institutional context, solidarity and praxis are enacted. We use the term social media interchangeably with social network sites, defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd

and Ellison, 2008)¹. To understand how “private troubles” acquire the status of “public issues” on social media, we look to the social movement literature.

Social movements have been defined as “collective enterprises to establish a new order of life” (Giddens, 1984: 204). Typically applied to the study of contentious politics, we appropriate the social movement lens to investigate instrumental communicative action of the relatively mild consumer activism on brand communities. The ensuing manuscript represents the start of a grounded theory effort to understand such action on social media. Data collected from the Starbucks’s brand communities are being viewed through a social movement lens.

In the following sections, we review literature on problem identification, highlighting limitations of this literature in informing understanding of instrumental communication on social media. We then describe key ideas of the social movement perspective pertinent to identifying qualities of communications that lead to surfacing “issues” (problem identification) on social media. We offer a preliminary view of data we are collecting and synthesizing and derive an initial model of “issue” surfacing. We conclude with future directions for this project and identifying ways in which insights here may inform future research.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PROBLEM/ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

To the extent that prior literature has focused on problem identification, it has tended to employ the vocabulary of problem “recognition,” communicating the a priori existence of an objective problem. For example, Weick’s work on sensemaking focused on actors’ ability to notice child abuse (Weick, 1995) or dangers posed by one’s work environment (Weick, 1993). Problem finders in this research arena have had the benefit of organizational histories, plans, and referent others against whom one’s own situation could be benchmarked (Pounds, 1969). In a study of problem formulation by managers, Lyles and Mitroff (1980) observed four approaches, varying from a single believed-to-be “optimal” formulation, a single expertise-based problem formulation, integrative problem formulation, and dialectical formulation. They observed that only a minority of organizations (26%) pursued the latter two, more synthetic approaches. Thus, problem identification efforts in conventional organizations appear biased toward input from a few select individuals within the organization.

While Kiesler and Sproull (1982) explicitly applied a constructivist lens to problem finding, their analysis was still premised on change in a reference environment and “correct” interpretation of associated cues. However, identification of “problems” outside the organizational arena need not be preceded by environmental changes. For example, no landmark events or environmental changes gave rise to the civil rights or gay marriage movements. Changes in aspects of the landscape may have been more conducive to noticing such “problems”, but the “problems” themselves had existed for quite a while. Thus, the nature of instrumental communicative action on social media, which occurs outside the context of shared histories and structures common to organizations, calls for a new lens for studying problem identification.

A SOCIAL MOVEMENTS LENS ON PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Social movements have been defined as “collective enterprises to establish a new order of life” (Giddens, 1984: 204). They “do not characteristically operate within fixed locales, and positioning within them does not have the clarity of definition associated with ‘roles’” (Giddens, 1984: 204). Social movements are a special case of collective action – purposive, specifically oriented toward evoking or blocking some form of change. Such action is undertaken by an alliance of people typically lacking the a priori structuring that characterizes political parties or interest groups.

A key insight from the social movement literature is attributes of proponents’ messages that garner the peer attention necessary to mobilize a movement. Tilly (2004) proposed that proponents’ effectiveness in articulating three types of claims drives the attention that their messages attract. The three claims are program claims, which “involve stated support for or opposition to actual or proposed actions” (Tilly, 2006: 292), identity claims, i.e., membership in a category of people, and standing claims, which entail establishing relationships between the claimant and others that enjoy legitimacy or power. For some authors, a central focus of social movements is change through affirmation by others, an “authentic” form of sociability based on mutual respect and understanding (Polletta, 2000). For others, movements are about resource mobilization (e.g., Edwards and McCarthy 2004). Regardless, a key

¹ The author danah boyd spells her name in lower case.

element of a movement is peers' authentication of individuals' concerns, which then flags it as a public "issue." This is an essential antecedent to a movement's ability to mobilize resources from powerful others (Tilly, 1998).

RESEARCH METHODS

Using an inductive approach, explores "issue" surfacing by participants in Starbucks' online brand community, MyStarbucksIdea.force.com. Customers and other community participants routinely advance new ideas, suggestions, and "issues" for consideration by other participants in order to attract Starbucks' attention.

MyStarbucksIdea provides a facility for threaded discussion, with initial ideas/postings available for comment by other community members. Additionally, MyStarbucksIdea allows community members to vote for an idea using a thumbs-up/thumbs-down button, which then adds/deducts 10 points to the overall score that accrues to the idea. Within MyStarbucksIdea, initial ideas/postings are organized within a single webpage under different categories, with total points accrued depicted and comments appended immediately below. Further, individuals are able to find limited information about others through the profile page. The profile page contains the number of ideas and comments written, number of positive votes, location, and when the member joined the group. A quick summary of activity is given by Starbucks which allocates points based on the number of contributions.

The sample used here included 40 threads flagged as "Ideas in Action" at MyStarbucksIdea. An additional 40 threads that had not yet been vetted by Starbucks, but matched the initial 40 on submission date and idea category were included. Illustrative examples are available upon request.

The unit of analysis is a message. Messages display a user ID and timestamp, allowing readers to identify the author of disparate messages within the social medium and when message were posted. Notably, responses to a message are themselves messages that were subsequently coded to understand the evolution and traction of an issue. Within the StarbucksIdea website, the message is an idea or a comment to an idea.

SURFACING AN "ISSUE"

The Initial Message

The social movement literature proposes that elevation of a message to an "issue" is a function of program, identity, and standing claims articulated by the proponent (Tilly, 2004). We now investigate the extent to which these claims were represented in instrumental communications studied and the nature and consequences of the specific claims.

Program claims. Examination of the content of messages initiating the MyStarbucksIdea "Ideas in Action" revealed that these messages, without exception, articulated a program claim, i.e., a specific course of action that the proponent favors or disfavors. Further investigation of a matched sample of ideas that were not validated by Starbucks' employees revealed that articulation of a program claim was indeed universal.

Our second observation about program claims is that they vary in complexity, even within a brand community. The request for decaf iced coffee in Figure 1, for example, was relatively simple. In contrast, *Suz01* in Figure 2 wants to be able to purchase coffee for a remote co-worker. (This service was later termed an "e-drink" by another member of the burgeoning social movement.) Honoring this request – not to be confused with a simple gift-card as will be apparent from subsequent communications – required several problems be solved – e.g., payment, delivery, security. Respondents identified these problems and offered solutions to them. Of particular note is the caution voiced by *oxox999* that an email coupon might be duplicated, engendering a loss for Starbucks and the thought the contributor put into crafting a remedy for such a situation.

FIGURE 1: “Decaf Iced Coffee” for “Pregnant Women”

Vote **decaf iced coffee** 

Share   

 Posted on 2/1/2010 9:35 AM
by **hyorkstillwate**

 You need a decaf iced coffee available for all of those pregnant women out there who are hot and aren't suppose to drink caff. PLEASE!!!!

2,060
points

 Comments [9]

FIGURE 2: A Complex Program Claim for “Remote Workers”

Vote

I'll buy you a drink" - remotely

Share

Posted on 3/20/2008 11:45 PM
by **Suz01**

I work at home as a remote employee. There have been many times that I have wanted to treat a co-worker to a Starbucks for helping me out on a project, or just to brighten their day. Wouldn't it be neat if you could purchase a drink for someone via the Starbucks web site? The recipient gets an email stating, for example, "Suzanne bought you a drink!" The recipient prints the email (with a barcode) and takes it to their nearest Starbucks to redeem.

42,760
points

Comments [273]

mic1011
3/20/2008 11:52 PM

Good idea, but this is basically a gift card. Those do exist.

Suz01
3/22/2008 4:33 PM

It's not a gift card, since you can't email a gift card to a friend. It is more convenient than a gift card, in that you don't have to go into the store to purchase it, and then mail it to someone (and pay postage for the transaction). It's a much quicker, easier way to treat a friend who lives long distance.

bgweorg
4/6/2008 9:35 AM

I like this idea! How about a widget for web sites and blogs that links to your starbucks card? Like a PayPal donate button can add \$ to your account without showing your account #, the sbux widget could add \$5 to your sbux card balance.

oscubed
5/7/2008 6:41 PM

Even better - make it a facebook gadget. "Buy me a coffee" or "Buy your friend a coffee"....

That would be way cool :) I'd even write it if you hired me to :)

oxox999
5/10/2008 4:13 PM

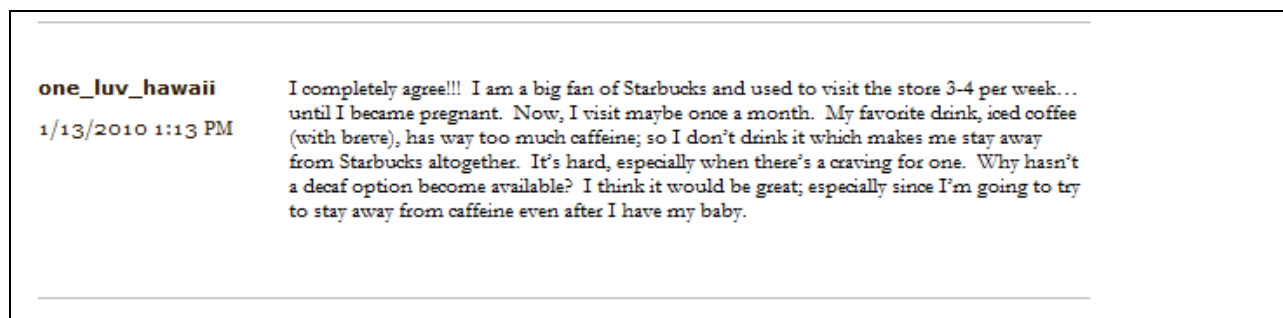
What an awesome idea.
I wonder though if xeroxed, it could be redeemed more than once?! They would have to put a code in that cancels the offer after it was redeemed. They would have to have a message come up that this coupon had already been redeemed and when it happened. OMG the CS problems that could be generated from this....

Note: Double lines between comments indicate intervening comments from the thread are suppressed in this exhibit.

Identity claims. Identity is “an actor’s experience of a category,” where a category is “a set of actors distinguished by a single criterion” (Tilly, 1998: 456). This entails labeling the collective of whom the claimant is an instantiation. Examples of such categories are graduate students, women in science, or African Americans. An identity statement communicates to the target audience that they are not dealing with a single individual but a collective representing a large number of individuals. It emphasizes attributes of that collective that imply their ability to exercise collective sanctions. In Figure 1, requesting decaf iced coffee, *hyorkstillwate* identifies with the category of pregnant women. In Figure 2, *Suz01* represents the category of remote employees.

“Identity claims consist of assertions that ‘we’ – the claimants – constitute a unified force to be reckoned with” (Tilly, 2006: 292). If accepted, identity claims connect with other category members. Note that respondent *one_luv_hawaii* in Figure 4 reiterates *hyorkstillwate*’s initial identity claim from Figure 1 (“...I became pregnant”). Note also that the respondent validates *hyorkstillwate*’s expression of personal trouble associated with caffeine consumption while pregnant. As such validation of the identity category–personal trouble association increased, the message rose from the status of personal trouble to public “issue” (readers allocated the message 2,060 points).

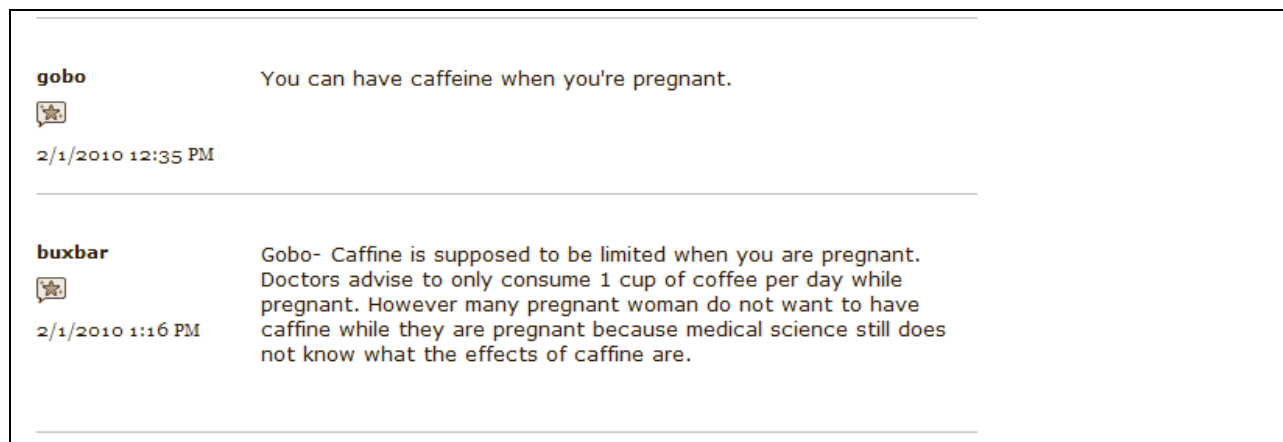
FIGURE 3: Re-iteration of Identity and Validation of Program Claim



“The public representation of [an actor’s identity] often takes the form of a shared story, a narrative” (Tilly, 1998: 456). This storytelling is particularly visible in *one_luv_hawaii*’s description of her plight, because of her “craving” for caffeine, which will not be assuaged even after her pregnancy because she will be staying away from caffeine.

Standing claims “assert ties and similarities to other political actors” (Tilly, 2006: 292) that validate claimants’ program. This refers to efforts to co-opt others, for example, suffragists’ and abolitionists’ initially joint battle for the right to vote. Invoking similar claimants signals increases in the number of subscribers’ to the “issue”. Standing claims entail invoking or referencing sympathetic powerful others. Invoking powerful others increases perceived validity of the cause and confidence that claims will be heard. Action mediated by such expert knowledge reduces actors’ risk (Giddens, 1991). For example, in Figure 4, *gobo* challenges *hyorkstillwate*’s claim that pregnant women should not consume caffeine and *buxbar* responds by invoking doctors and the medical establishment, who represent “systems of accumulate expertise” and “sources of authority” (Giddens, 1991: 3).

FIGURE 4: Defense of an Identity-based Program Claim by Invoking an “Expert”



Response Attributes

“Issues” surface as initial claims diffuse through a social milieu, are challenged, modified, and/or accepted. The responses themselves are claims that elaborate on or qualify earlier claims, evoking further response or lack thereof. We note three response attributes in the communications observed – valence, richness, and reach.

Response Valence is respondents’ expression of attractiveness or likeability of claims articulated. For example, on MyStarbucksIdea, individuals can click an icon for “thumbs-up” or “thumbs-down” to signal their reaction to the “issue” (see Figures 1 and 2). Votes are aggregated below these icons into the total points associated with the “issue”. This is similar to the Facebook “like” button. Other sites such as IdeaTorrent, SourceForge’s location for developers’ enhancement requests, enable other developers to signal positive, negative, or neutral reactions to enhancement requests. Alternatively, respondents may signal reactions via text messages or comments. Acceptance of initial claims represents a positive response; challenges indicate a negative response. Thus, while *mic1011*’s response to *Suz01* in Figure 2 appears to have a positive tone, it actually voices a challenge to *Suz01*’s program claim, asserting the counter-claim that the e-drink suggestion was basically a gift card, which was already available from Starbucks. *Suz01* responds by clarifying and elaborating on her initial program claim.

Response Richness is the degree to which readers of that response can unambiguously ascertain the respondent’s intent (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Votes, for example, are a more ambiguous signal than comments. A respondent might have a negative response to program, identity, or relationship claims articulated or some combination thereof. While comments enable articulation of specific challenges, votes do not. Initial claimants and supporters can subsequently respond to these challenges, whereas positive or negative votes do not offer talking points that advance the conversation. For example, the “Furry Friends” post that suggested Starbucks provide “communal bowls for water in the summer ... or maybe the occasional free treat dog biscuit” garnered -90 points. The post attracted a total of three comments – one positive, one negative, and one neutral (from a Starbucks’ Idea Partner). First, it is not clear whether the -90 points means nine negative votes (each vote is worth 10 points) or some combination of positive and negative votes that aggregate to a net of -90 points. Thus, it is impossible to ascertain the level of support for an “issue” from votes alone. For example, if 50 people supported the idea and 59 resisted it (yielding the -90 points), knowledge that 50 other people were similarly concerned about being able to share their Starbucks experience with their pets could have mobilized other sympathizers to overcome the resisters.

Further, because of the effort entailed, positive responses that are richly articulated signal heightened respondent commitment to the initial claim. Even negative responses, when richly articulated, signal respondents’ commitment to oppose the initial claim, paradoxically validating the status of the initial claim as an “issue” (Latour, 1988).

Response Reach. Web 2.0 allows respondents to an initial claim to broadcast the claim, along with their response to others. For example, a Twitter message can be re-tweeted, email can be forwarded, blogs can hypertext to other sites they wish to endorse. Reach refers to the size of the potential audience the technology permits – it can range from a single person to a group to virtually anyone anywhere.

A SYNTHESIZED MODEL OF INSTRUMENTAL COMMUNICATION

The primary objective of this study was to understand “issue” surfacing. We now consider how attributes of the initial message and responses contribute to escalation of a private “trouble” into a public “issue.”

Consequences of Message Attributes in “Issue” Surfacing

Program claims vary in their level of complexity. More complex program claims appeared to evoke a greater number of responses as individuals attempted to tease apart the separate aspects of the claim – to identify different impediments to implementation, constituents impacted by those impediments, and propose solutions.

What is it about complex program claims then that appear to promote conversation? It is possible that different people with different skill sets perceive and relate to the disparate problems underlying complex program claims. For example, *oscubed* (fourth respondent in Figure 2), who suggests making the e-drink a “Facebook gadget,” clearly has some programming competence. “Judgments of self-efficacy also determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences” (Bandura, 1982: 123). Individuals are most creative when working on complex, challenging tasks (Oldham and Cummings 1996). Thus, program claims with underlying problems that are complex and challenging, appeal to a wide range of individuals

with distinctive competencies, inviting them to articulate and enact their self-efficacy, thereby co-opting them into the movement. Notably, responses to complex claims will be rich because simply casting a vote does not permit the kind of self-efficacy articulations and enactments individuals will be motivated to contribute.

Proposition 1: Complex program claims will evoke a greater number of rich responses.

Identity claims. Extant literature on technology support for group problem solving has focused on the ability of technology to mask individuals' identities, to enable a "participant's identity to 'get lost in the crowd'" (Dennis and Wixom, 2001/2002: 240). Such technology-based anonymity is believed to minimize personal influence, facilitating collectives' adoption of the "group" identity (Whitworth and Felton, 1999). It curtails unequal participation by team members and facilitates information transfer (McLeod, 1992). Individuals in dispersed teams in which the identity of contributors was not revealed experienced less of a shift in their preferences – a key indicator of "groupthink" – following a discussion than did those working face-to-face (Sia et al., 2002). Yet, anonymity is also de-individualizing (Jessup et al., 1990), increasing group conflict, social loafing, and inability to attain consensus (Valacich et al., 1992). Lack of awareness of the participant identity inhibits consensus-building in the presence of disparate member opinions (Kahai et al., 1998).

In the social movement literature, revelation of individuals' identity is paramount. Identity claims are particularly important in environments lacking institutional contexts, since they are devoid of personal cues (Tilly, 2006). The connotation of revealed identity is not that the persona of the individual be revealed, though this information is certainly available via richer social media such as Facebook. Rather, the focus is on revealing one's membership in specific categories.

Category-based connections are beneficial as individuals tend to allocate discretionary resources preferentially to others within their category (Tajfel, et al., 1971). Shared identities evoke favorable attributions by others (Taylor and Jaggi, 1974). Further, a stated identity reduces members' uncertainties about behaviors expected of them (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and non-members' uncertainty about what they may expect from members (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hsu and Hannan, 2005). This enhances others' sense of claimants' predictability. Further, given limited cognitive resources, social entities tend to allocate those available to monitoring similar others (Labianca et al., 2001). Consequently, social movements have been found to diffuse through similar others (Soule, 1997). Thus, on MyStarbucksIdea, we see pregnant women responding to the pregnant woman, remote workers and others interacting remotely with people they care about responding to the remote worker.

Proposition 2: Identity claims of one's membership in a social category will evoke positive responses from members of that category.

Standing Claims. Co-opting powerful others to their cause is an important strategy in getting the cause off the ground (Tilly, 1998). As noted earlier, widely-recognized experts represent a source of power in modern society (Giddens, 1991). For example, admonition by then Surgeon General, Luther Terry, about harmful effects of tobacco smoke was a powerful stimulus to the anti-tobacco movement in the mid 1960s. In figure 4, *buxbar* articulates such a standing by invoking "doctors" who advise only a single coffee per day.

Proposition 3: Standing claims that reference experts will evoke positive responses.

RESPONSE ATTRIBUTES

Response Valence. Earlier, we observed that reactions to a message may be positive, negative, or neutral. Unless exclusively positive responses elaborate on claims of an earlier message, they will end a "movement" as initial claimants and supporters believe support is universal. Such an ending is not necessarily a signal that the movement has failed, just that the conversation has exhausted itself – that the "issue" has ceased to be an "issue".

Proposition 4: When responses are exclusively positive, unless they also elaborate on identity, standing, or program claims from earlier messages, the "issue" will die out.

Exclusively negative responses or the absence of any response, on the other hand, signals opposition to or lack of interest in the claim. This will deter the claimant from pursuing claims further. Under each of these circumstances, the initial claimant is likely to abandon the "issue".

Proposition 5: When responses are exclusively negative or no responses appear, the "issue" will die out.

In contrast, when support for the initial claim is coupled with some negative responses, the initial claimant and supporters will be motivated to re-articulate and clarify their claims, giving the "issue" momentum. The initial

program claim articulated in the thread (available upon request), reflecting *Naromo*'s frustration with Starbucks' change in policy regarding how the free coffee reward would be implemented, is closer to true protest than most appearing on MyStarbucksIdea. What is particularly notable though is the stridently dissenting voices of *SBUXCMM* (responses #14-23), *bowlingb* (#29), *nyc4me* (#31), *Kristyna* (#53), *mirandolynn* (#55), and *betterbefore* (#58) as dissent targeting other Starbucks' customers was not particularly common. Nonetheless, the dissent does appear to serve the function of stimulating discussion that might otherwise have died out. Some dissenters, e.g., *bowlingb*, explicitly challenge supporters to articulate specific program claims. This culminates in the very detailed posting by *qbnjava* (#34). Finally, *betterbefore*'s post elicits a supportive response from a Starbucks' Idea Partner – *sbx_sto* (#59) that closes down the discussion.

Whereas literature on electronic communication has flagged flaming as negative, this research suggests that negative remarks, even when stridently articulated, might be beneficial. The relative success of this conversation marked by flaming may be attributable, in large part, to the steering provided by respondents such as Melody (co-incidentally flagged by Starbucks as a “top commenter” and as someone who has contributed an idea that was implemented) after each negative interjection. Without such skillful steering, the movement may well have collapsed.

Proposition 6: Challenges in conjunction with acceptances of a claim will engender counter-claims re-articulating and clarifying program, identity, and standing claims underlying the “issue”.

Response Richness. As noted earlier, rich responses offer more cues to which prospective supporters or resisters can react. Such responses therefore stimulate re-articulation and elaboration of claims, keeping the “issue” alive. Figure 7 is an example of a re-articulation for the electronic delivery of rewards. Such information provides ground support for the movement, thereby keeping it alive.

Figure 7: Re-articulation for electronic delivery of rewards

The screenshot shows a MyStarbucksIdea thread. At the top, the title is "Electronic delivery of rewards" with a document icon and share buttons for Facebook, Twitter, and a plus sign. Below the title, there are thumbs up and thumbs down icons, and a score of 28,550 points. The post is dated 9/23/2010 11:08 AM and is by "Fat Otter". The text of the post reads: "I have an iPhone and a Starbucks card. While I earn rewards when I use my card and can look up my progress via the iPhone app 'Starbucks Mobile Card'...I receive my free drink card in the mail. It seems in this day and age that an electronic free drink would be easy to implement...perhaps in the form of a bar code that can be scanned at the store delivered via the iPhone, blackberry etc. It seems antiquated that I should have to wait for a card in the postal system." Below the post, there is a link "to Starbucks Card". A horizontal line separates this from a response from Starbucks. The response title is "OPT IN / OPT OUT of receiving FREE DRINK cards by MAIL". It is dated 3/25/2010 1:37 PM and is by "SirMark". The text of the response reads: "I really do appreciate the insights gained from sbx_nat regarding the FREE BEVERAGE coupon redemption issues." At the bottom of the response, there are three dots.

Proposition 7: Richer response articulations will lead to re-articulations and elaborations of the program, identity, standing claims underlying the “issue”.

Response Reach. Responses with greater reach will increase the possibility of getting the message out to new people. Further, different demographics tend to dominate different modalities. For example, the largest growth demographic on Twitter in 2009 was people 24 and younger (Wilson, 2010). Consequently, responses with a wider reach may also result in different demographics being targeted. As these different demographics may have somewhat different perspectives, the claims underlying an “issue” may be further elaborated and modified.

Proposition 8: Responses with a more extensive reach will lead to re-articulations and elaborations of the program, identity, and standing claims underlying the “issue”.

CONCLUSIONS

This work explores how individuals’ “private troubles” diffuse electronically and transform into a “public issue”. Theoretically, this research pushes the boundaries of the social movements literature, examining its applicability and limitations to movements enacted via social media. By applying the lens to MyStarbucksIdea interactions that have less urgency than the typical movement, this project is contributing further to the social movements literature. Non-intuitive insights surfaced include the possibility for *complex* program claims and *resistance*, rather than unqualified acquiescence, to mobilize movements.

Practically, this research has applicability in a number of areas. Understanding of how to structure program claims can benefit initiators of open source projects, enabling them to recruit team members more effectively. Corporate sponsors of brand communities can gain insight into mobilizing participation toward innovation. Protest groups may glean insights on how best to harness the internet to support their activism.

REFERENCES

- Ashforth, B. and F. Mael (1989) Social identity theory and the organization, *Academy of Management Review* 14, 1, 20-39.
- boyd, d. m. and N. B. Ellison (2008) Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13, 1, 210-230.
- Daft, R. and R. Lengel (1986) Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design, 554-571.
- Dennis, A. and B. Wixom (2001/2002) Investigating the moderators of the group support systems use with meta-analysis, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 18, 3, 235-257.
- Dennis, A., B. Wixom, et al. (2001) Understanding Fit And Appropriation Effects In Group Support Systems Via Meta-Analysis, *MIS Quarterly* 25, 2, 167-193.
- Edwards, B. and J. McCarthy (2004) Strategy matters: The contingent value of social capital in the survival of local social movement organizations, *Social Forces* 83,2, 621-651.
- Fjermestad, J. and R. Hiltz (2000/2001) Group Support Systems: A Descriptive Evaluation of Case and Field Studies, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 17, 3, 115-150.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, University of California press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*, Stanford University Press.
- Hogg, M. and D. Terry (2000) Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts, *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 1, 121-140.
- Hsu, G. and M. Hannan (2005) Identities, genres, and organizational forms, *Organization Science* 16, 5, 474-490.
- Jessup, L., T. Connolly, et al. (1990) Toward a Theory of Automated Group Work: The Deindividuating Effects of Anonymity, *Small Group Research*, 21,3, 333.
- Kahai, S.S., B.J. Avolio, and J.J. Sosik (1998) Effects of Source and Participant Anonymity and Difference in Initial Opinions in an EMS Context, *Decision Sciences*, 29,2, 427-460.
- Kiesler, S. and L. Sproull (1982) Managerial Response to Changing Environments: Perspectives on Problem Sensing from Social Cognition, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 27, 4, 548-570.
- Labianca, G., J. Fairbank, et al. (2001) Emulation in academia: Balancing structure and identity, *Organization Science*, 12, 3, 312-330.
- Latour, B. (1993). *The Pasteurization of France*, Harvard University Press.
- Lyles, M. A. (1981) Formulating Strategic Problems: Empirical Analysis and Model Development, *Strategic Management Journal*, 2, 1, 61-75.
- Lyles, M. and I. Mitroff (1980) Organizational Problem Formulation: An Empirical Study, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 25, 1, 102-119.
- McCarthy, J. and M. Wolfson (1996) Resource mobilization by local social movement organizations: Agency, strategy, and organization in the movement against drinking and driving, *American Sociological Review*, 61, 6, 1070-1088.
- McLeod, P. (1992) An assessment of the experimental literature on electronic support of group work: Results of a meta-analysis, *Human-Computer Interaction*, 7, 3, 257-280.
- Mills, C. W. (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Polletta, F. (2000) The Structural Context of Novel Rights Claims: Southern Civil Rights Organizing, 1961-1966, *Law & Society Review* 34, 2, 367-406.
- Pounds, W. (1969) The Process of Problem Finding, *Industrial Management Review* 11, 1-19.

- Quaadgras, A. and K. Golden-Biddle (2010) How Could We Have Missed It? A Process Model of Recognizing Problems, *2010 Academy of Management Annual Meeting*, Montreal, Canada.
- Sia, C., B. Tan, et al. (2002) Group polarization and computer-mediated communication: Effects of communication cues, social presence, and anonymity, *Information Systems Research* 13, 1, 70.
- Tajfel, H., M. Billig, et al. (1971) Social categorization and Intergroup Behavior, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1,2, 149-178.
- Taylor, D. and V. Jaggi (1974) Ethnocentrism and causal attribution within a south Asian context, *Journal of Social Psychology* 5, 162-174.
- Tilly, C. (1998) Social movements and (all sorts of) other political interactions—local, national, and international—including identities, *Theory and Society* 27, 4, 453-480.
- Tilly, C. (2004) *Social Movements, 1768-2004*, Paradigm Publishers.
- Tilly, C. (2006) *WUNC. Crowds*. J. Schnapp and M. Tiews (Eds), Stanford University Press.
- Valacich, J., L. Jessup, et al. (1992) A conceptual framework of anonymity in group support systems, *Group Decision and Negotiation* 1, 3, 219-241.
- Weick, K. (1993) The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch disaster, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38, 4.
- Weick, K. (1995) *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Sage Publications, Inc.
- Wilson, D. (2010) A Look at Twitter Demographics Retrieved September 4, 2010, 2010, from <http://social-media-optimization.com/2010/02/a-look-at-twitter-demographics/>
- Whitworth, B. and R. Felton (1999) Measuring disagreement in groups facing limited-choice problems, *ACM SIGMIS Database* 30, 3-4, 22-33.
- Zott, C. and Q. N. Huy (2007) How Entrepreneurs Use Symbolic Management to Acquire Resources., *Administrative Science Quarterly* 52, 70-105.