
Digital Civic Engagement among Anarchist Activists in Poland¹

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Abstract

The effective mobilization of many disaffected blocs of young people has been facilitated through the strategic development of a digitized global saboteur network involving anarchists and other activists who take possession of a space online. By offering alternatives to knowledge and consumption dependency patterns, by deconstructing failure camouflage in 'primitive' societal settings, and by providing opportunities to obtain alternative intrinsic and extrinsic rewards through collective action; digitized activists are in the process of acculturating subversive dissenters into non-occupational mechanisms of achievement through the reorientation away from private goods toward collective labor. The analysis will demonstrate that anarchist online discourse highlighting the uneven distribution of extrinsic and intrinsic occupational rewards provides audiences with valuable insight into the possibility of minimizing power distances, reversing democratic failures, and creating a more hospitable socioeconomic and political environment to foster harmonious cooperative exchanges within a politically-mobilized climate. Through technical path and pattern recognition systems of filtration, ICT is now capable of bringing users with anarchist sensibilities the information they demand based on immediate analysis of similar user needs. This technological breakthrough has brought users relevant online information with unprecedented precision regardless of subject content. In this way, fragmented activist communities living in geographically distinct regions gain rapid access to content deemed popular with users reflecting similar needs. The precision path and pattern recognition available through ICT platforms sensitizes users to specificities of alter globalization through content that brings about a level of awareness that has not merely resulted in protests or other participatory democratic attacks on hegemonic agents of dependency stratification on and offline, but has directed content that has actually increased cultural capital among resisters as they exchange aesthetic, social, cultural, political and other informative resources throughout their consensually oppositional digitized network. This has led to a powerful form of insurgency and related community building within the constraints and limitations of different formations of struggle. By examining the case of popular anarchist networks active online in Poland, the paper offers a content analysis examining network connectivity, ideological orientation, transaction exchange types, and moti-

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vating rewards. The analysis will demonstrate that the more embedded a regional anarchist network is, the more salient their adherence to multiple anti-hegemonic ideologies, the more cooperative their exchanges, the more successful they are in offering participants opportunities for achieving intrinsic rewards and other lively resistance activities being sought among those immersed in cultures of principled contestation and emerging forms of radical digital civic engagement.

According to Habermas, the quest for emancipation and liberation must begin with the achievement of undistorted communication. Habermas identified the institutionalization of domination in the reproduction of distorted communication. Individuals must work to create a dialogue in which all participants are treated as equals.

(Wilkie and Bartoy, 2000)

Introduction

The effective mobilization of so many disaffected young people has been facilitated through the strategic development of a digitized global saboteur network involving anarchists and other activists who “take possession of a space” online (Bodker and Christiansen 2006). By offering *Do it Yourself (DIY)* alternatives to knowledge and consumption dependency patterns, by deconstructing failure camouflage in traditional societal settings, and by providing opportunities to obtain alternative intrinsic and extrinsic rewards through collective action; digitized anarchists are in the process of acculturating subversive dissenters into non-occupational mechanisms of achievement through the reorientation away from private goods toward collective labor. These resistance efforts simultaneously addressing the global and the local enable young activists to maximize their political agency, become empowered through diverse opportunities for civic engagement, and develop their human potential by focusing upon nonmaterial, esoteric, intrinsic rewards increasingly rare in an unregulated neoliberal market context. The analysis will demonstrate that anarchist discourse highlighting the uneven distribution of extrinsic and intrinsic occupational rewards provides audiences with valuable insight into the possibility of minimizing power distances, reversing democratic failures, and creating a more hospitable socioeconomic and political environment to foster harmonious cooperative exchanges within a politically-mobilized climate of

autonomous living. The *sources* of distributed resources, as well as the *method* of distribution that can breed dependency, will be shown to significantly influence broad anarchist coalitions throughout the trans-Atlantic activist community. By exploring these factors, our analysis will be able to capture with some level of specificity, efforts to reverse sentiments of alienation that are inherent in rapidly deteriorating labor markets via the construction of defiant networks of anarchist resistance on and offline.

The detrimental effects of dependency relations from a world systems perspective are rooted in a complex series of resource exchanges that are transferred in an environment of artificial scarcity constructed using asymmetrical power relations contingent upon maximizing social distances through the alienation of collusive elite away from a fragmented semi-peripheral deindustrialized labor class in an unrestricted exploitative neoliberal failing market economy exacerbated by the lack of industrial production and conspicuous consumption without legitimating mediation from either private charitable or public welfare institutions resulting in severe socioeconomic and cultural deprivation camouflaged by family discretion and predatory lending. To begin to unravel the role of ICT in these complex socioeconomic and political conditions, it might be useful to examine the online elements of political resistance that are attempting to prevent these unequal power exchanges from continuing to take place. These complex deleterious systemic conditions have led to the emergence of a formalized discursive oppositional anarchist online community using communicative resistance strategies that deploy dual-edged tactics of bodily and disembodied digitized mechanisms of dissent. In examining these digital activities in the cultural context of a transitional environment like Poland, evidence will be presented to demonstrate that failed democracy in lieu of plebiscitary rule by postcommunist elite maximizing power distances through a series of normative transactions coercively transferred from core to periphery in a scarce resource environment perpetuates smoldering discontent among a defiant youth. This smoldering discontent leads to the construction of embodied discursive resistance communities on and offline, who are in the process of building an inclusive oppositional sabotage dialogue project, to assure that autonomous voices perpetuating independent living are represented. This mobilization approach

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toward activist cultures falls under the rubric of consensus building, which makes it possible for members of a cultural group to demonstrate a significant degree of conformity (Aunger 1999).

This *cultural consensus approach* can be useful to illustrate the distinct ways that stakeholders in dissenting anarchist networks discursively resist processes of political integration, capitalist transformation, and disparate class stratification through online activism. This effort represents the construction of a powerful *system of oppositional consensus* that unifies geographically and philosophically fragmented activists by constructing an alternative to world systemic globalization, or an alterglobalization. The analysis intends to show that body modified anarchist activists are profoundly affected by an environment that presents significant challenges to their existence based on unequal economic, political, and social power relations in a developing setting. By linking the political and social structure to individual resistance ideologies articulated upon the body and through digitized networks, we may begin to understand the ways in which the awareness of deprivation due to emerging systemic inequalities and modernity is vehemently contested by this contemporary digitized discursive resistant anti-state movement.

Not only activists and movement scholars but also Western governments are impressed by the Internet as a mobilization facilitator. As evidenced in an official report on the website of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service devoted to anti-globalization protest: 'The Internet has breathed new life into the anarchist philosophy, permitting communication and coordination without the need for a central source of command, and facilitating coordinated actions with minimal resources and bureaucracy.' (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002, 469)

Keeping in mind the lack of conventional mediating institutions (Gillett 2003) and predominance of coercive transactions imposed by west-placting hegemonic elite exacerbating the profound inequality found in transitional contexts (Szelenyi 1988), it might be helpful at this point to focus on the technological factors that enable these popular, powerful, tightly-knit, body modified, alterglobalizing anarchist networks to proliferate in Poland and beyond (Jones 1999; Marham 1998).

Alternative Media

According to many anarchists interviewed throughout this study, conventional media is construed as tremendously skewed in the interest of economic power holders that own and disseminate biased information to distract the public. They are not alone in their assessment. Research has shown that very little content is devoted to critical analyses of business or government, and nearly no space or time in conventional media is devoted to social problems that economic arrangements create or the social movements that seek to reverse these trends (Dahlgren 2005). Substantive media coverage has, as demonstrated in longitudinal analyses, actually decreased reporting on socially relevant issues over time.

{The trend in} levels of environmental reporting are lower [representing merely] two percent of key evening news coverage. Furthermore, in a tightly reasoned study [researchers] have demonstrated that existing media coverage generally reflects the dominant ideological and economic power-structures operating in a particular market. {T}he tendency of the media [is] to rely upon industrial sources of information more than the public relations of {advocacy} groups. In an effort to be sensational, timely, and simple, media formats underemphasize risks and over-dramatize the spin on...disputes. Thus the general public is left with a body of hardly controversial information and very little direction in terms of what one should do with such input. (Cantrill 1993, 80)

Given the innocuous orientation of conventional media, ICT has provided a powerful and stable platform for the conceptualization, dissemination, and evolution of independent, unbiased, and uncommodified sources of alternative information benefiting individuals concerned with sense-making in an otherwise complex world (Bansler and Havn 2006; Earl 2006; Robertson 2002). Prior research has shown that the key elements in the platform's rapid popularity among communities of activists are primarily user and environmental awareness (Sanchez-Franco and Roldan 2005) as well as potential opportunities for interaction (LaRose, Mastro & Eastin 2001). The web provides refreshing opportunities to expand awareness of the existence of like-minded others (Leinonen, Jarvela & Kakkinen 2005) and for direct interactive involvement among highly motivated users (Stivers 2004). These are just a few of the many extrinsic

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and intrinsic rewards offered by ICT that are left completely unsatisfied by conventional content historically made available through passive unidirectional communications offered through television and print media.

[E]xpectations were significant predictors of Internet usage. [P]ersistence is an inherent characteristic of individuals with high self-efficacy. Self-disparagement and self-slighting had strong negative correlations with Internet usage in themselves. It may be that the interactive nature of Internet consumption makes it more salient than passive consumption of conventional mass media.

(LaRose, Mastro & Eastin 2001, 406)

How does ICT provide motivated users with the potential for environmental and interaction awareness? Opportunities are fostered through technical filtering known also as *path and pattern recognition systems*. Through technical path and pattern recognition systems of filtration, ICT is now capable of bringing users the information they demand based on immediate analysis of similar user needs. This technological breakthrough has brought users relevant online information with unprecedented precision regardless of subject content. In this way, fragmented communities of any type living in geographically distinct regions may gain rapid access to content deemed popular with users reflecting similar needs. Through these high tech pattern and path collaborative filtering systems, users become aware of online tendencies of alike users, enabling environmental and interactive awareness to emerge simultaneously. Whether rural swingers in search of partners for wife-swapping, religious fanatics who articulate hate in the American 'Bible Belt', or industry day trading stock analysts; these path and pattern recognition systems are able to spatially concentrate and deliver tailored content of interest swiftly and with stunning precision.

Also known as recommender systems, collaborative filtering forms an important approach to the sharing and awareness of information amongst a group of people. In loose terms, collaborative filtering [elicits website activity patterns and] recommends new objects that similar people liked. Patterns to some extent involve awareness of a trusted author, while paths involve awareness of colleagues to draw on. In making such comparisons...we wish to show...how artifacts, human activity involving them, and particular people are represented using the formal

vocabularies of computers. This in turn determines what aspects of awareness and interpretation the computer supports, and what is left to human interpretation and language. (Chalmers 2002, 395& 399).

Though the role of computers in unifying fragmented communities is a relatively new area for scholarly inquiry, these recommender systems and the egalitarian platforms they provide are becoming the key element in the unification of diverse disenfranchised publics. Technological advances in these recognition systems have leveled the playing field and enabled sabotaging resistance efforts to be integrated just as rapidly and precisely as the strategic circulation of unregulated neoliberal capital around the world. These recognition systems furthermore enable important information to be exchanged among relevant audiences, and in the process enhance awareness of like-minded users, as well as the conditions of deprivation and other environmental factors they operate within. According to Ben-Rafael and Sternberg, “[t]ransnational diasporas crystallize lines of social solidarity that cross-cut nations and continents and become a driving power for both the multiculturalism of societies, and for globalization” (Ben-Rafael & Sternberg 2001, 16). For our analytic purposes, user and environmental awareness of *diasporic deprivation* will be shown to be the primary unifying concept enabling philosophically diverse, geographically-distinct alterglobalizing anarchists to access the online content they require to advance, legitimate, and unify (through articulation of public dissent) their geographically fragmented but periodically coalesced oppositional consensus movement. In the process, they exhibit highly efficient, technology-driven, defiant community construction capabilities among world system saboteurs around the globe.

The very term “antiglobalization movement” is controversial and suggests a somewhat artificial coherence. Nevertheless, in the wake of Seattle, this quite diverse and eclectic mix of groups and movements was now lumped together...and there was a broad--if often grudging--recognition across the political spectrum that this was a politically significant movement. The broad point was that the effort to cast questions of trade as exclusively about trade served precisely to obscure their more wide-ranging connections and contradictions. To privilege the mobility of capital was thus to disparage the mobility of labor and with that to contribute to a sometimes xenophobic anti-immigrant racism. The enhanced

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capital mobility of neoliberal globalization created competitive pressures that drove down wages and labor conditions. For activists, the project of globalization was less about dissolving boundaries for the greater good of all, but rather in configuring various boundaries in ways that selectively privileged an already global elite. (D'Arcus 2006,139)

The interconnectivity facilitated by ICT and the precision of its filtering recognition systems brings integrative content as well as non-integrative content associated with globalization. While there may be many geographic, ideological, dogmatic, educational, and philosophic distinctions among its members, the online alterglobalizing platform has provided a discursive space to explore the interconnectedness of contemporary social problems, which in turn leads to discourses on the interconnectedness of solutions, which in turn leads to interconnectedness of a mass societal world-wide resistance endeavor to publicly implement these de-volutionary tactics.

Increasingly, social problems are expanding beyond national borders. A shift in one country's economy can have profound effects on the international market and economic health of other nations. As problems are becoming more transnational, so too are movements for social change. Activists are stretching beyond state boundaries to work in solidarity with those with whom they identify in distant countries. (Nepstad 2002,133)

The precision path and pattern recognition available through ICT platforms sensitizes users to specificities of anarchist philosophies through content that brings about a level of awareness that has not merely resulted in protests or other participatory democratic attacks on hegemonic agents of dependency stratification on and offline, but has directed content that has actually increased cultural capital among resisters as they exchange aesthetic, social, cultural, political and other informative resources throughout their consensually oppositional digitized network. This has led to a powerful form of insurgency and related community building within the constraints and limitations of different formations of struggle.

The beginnings of the twenty-first century have been dominated by contradictory and chaotic processes of globalization. Right across the planet there are signs of the changes at work, from globalization of the economy...to the increasing import of global fashion, architectural styles, consumption patterns, and celebrities. Our sense of living in a global world has been heightened by increased awareness of the interconnectedness of new types of problems from pollution, global warming, or failed states. All these cut across borders [enabling] new kinds of networks and flows of communication, action, and experience [called] global movements. [C]ondemnations of globalization...perpetuate a view of the global as constituted by an active dominant center...forced to defend themselves against a process originating from outside. (McDonald 2006, 3& 5)

This new century digitized discourse revolves around the articulation of defense strategies against a coercive, hegemonic, dominating other whose demands for obedience from the masses results in oppositional fervor globally (Jordan& Taylor 2004), while enabling activists to accumulate high levels of alternative cultural capital locally (Nakamura 2002). Although the amassing of human capital including defiant displays of piercing and other forms of body modification may indeed be occurring in distinct ways at the individual level, of interest here are the particular ways that these resistance efforts lead to online interaction known as *interfacing* to facilitate the circulation of resistance capital at the community level (Johnson 1997). The involvement of individuals in resistance capital circulation occurs through profound familiarity with complex social, economic, and cultural knowledge disseminated by both body modified and unmodified activists, which provides strong evidence that the pacification, dependency, and antiknowledge campaigns attempted by hegemonic partnerships between big business and big government are already in the process of being significantly sabotaged online. Research suggests there are four dimensions of capital accumulation leading to conventional online community building that are widely in operation (Pinkett 2003).

I define community cultural capital as various forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests which have particular relevance or value within a community. Activated community cultural capital constitutes: a.) exchanging knowledge and resources b.) improving technology fluency and the ability of community

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members to express themselves via technology c.) coalescing around shared interests and d.) shifting individuals' attitudes and perceptions of themselves and the world. (Pinkett 2003, 375)

The current treatment seeks to extend this conventional capital argument to suggest that the accumulation of cultural capital among online politically-oriented anarchist activists is so high at both individual and community levels, that users are not only satisfied by their interfacing integration into existing consensual digitized global resistance endeavors, but are also motivated and gratified by very high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards available through alternative digitized media content. ICT offers users genuine opportunities for subversive activities and a variety of other collective action on and offline, while providing interactive content to immediately rectify dependency-breeding lifestyles through the Do it Yourself punk world view, enabling online alternative cultural capital to flourish through access to relevant literary, visual, music, and other aesthetic accoutrement.

[U]nder conditions of globalization, it must certainly retain all its' former capacity to speak to the conditions of human beings whose way of life is impinged upon by the pressures of an alien modernization. There are various components of action under this revolutionary narrative: the prospect/threat of irreversible change, the supposition of power on the part of some or other agents to advance, prevent, or divert that change; and some end-state to which that change is directed.

(Parker 2003, 46)

With goals of these revolutionary narratives explicitly articulated as the reversal of dependency through self-sufficiency and a reorientation of achievement, coupled with the unique independence and empowerment associated with anarchist world views and related discourse; online content enables users to subvert asymmetrical power distances under a one world economy by obtaining rewards previously available only through participation in primary tier labor market opportunities. Although online alterglobalization content makes low or no user demands with nearly no normative mechanisms of social control, the willingness of activists to conceptualize and struggle concretely toward an alternative vision for a

globalized utopian future is a powerful and efficient motivating factor to coalesce previously fragmented activists under broader universal ideological auspices of self-sufficiency and socioeconomic justice. Thus, conventional community organizing and participation in occupations become increasingly abandoned for their failures to create needed social change, in lieu of digitized community alternatives to lived activism. User gratification needs remain unchanged, but are instead reoriented and redirected toward non-remunerative mechanisms of achievement involving intrinsic rewards circulated among virtual fellow saboteurs that may be geographically isolated and fragmented.

The communications field has witnessed an explosion of Internet studies employing uses and gratifications approach. The major assumptions of this theory—that audiences are goal directed and actively seek out media to satisfy specific needs—appears well suited to study a medium with interactive applications. [P]olitically interested Internet users [access] the web mainly for guidance [and] information. [Our] study found that politically interested web users were motivated to go online for different reasons than the general public, and therefore participated in [action and knowledge based] activities online.

(Johnson & Kaye 2003, 305& 319)

If digitized platforms have indeed been effective in unifying distinct voices of systemic resistance around the globe through new awareness of alternative guidance and information (Terranova 2004), how does it accomplish these political objectives, and what, if anything, motivates users, known as cyber activists or hacktivists, to engage in these innovative mechanisms of unconventional community building? ICT digitized discursive platforms place low or no demands on users, have virtually no rules and regulations, possess essentially no censorship policies, have relatively no stipulation for participation, attempt no normative imposition of censorship or other social controls distorting communication, perpetuate essentially no hierarchies, and offer no financial remuneration or other immediate tangible rewards for participation. Yet together these online community mechanisms of discursive dissent have enabled these digitized platforms of consensual opposition to become wildly popular among anarchists and other body modified activists.

[W]e see how the internet helps to promote what are called alternative or counter public spheres that can offer a new, empowering sense of what it means to be a citizen. [G]iven the fluid character of many of these networked-based movements, and the ease of joining and withdrawing, it is really difficult to estimate what portion of the citizenry is actually involved. Yet contemporary social movements and their use of ICTs constitute a major element in the landscape of late modern democracy. Moreover in the new media environment, traditional hierarchies based on differential knowledge and information access are challenged. Counter-expertise and counter-information, not least in the form of alternative interpretation of current events and access to databanks, modifies to an important degree traditional imbalances of power between elites and protesters. The internet may facilitate the traditional forms of protests such as rallies, demonstrations, and collections of signatures, but it will hardly replace their forms. What the internet does allow is for immediate mobilization. The internet may also serve as a tool to provide information that tends to be suppressed by the more established media. (Dahlgren 2005, xv, xiii & 18)

As an essentially blank slate of potential social constructivist opportunity, this platform is a neutral canvas reflecting a community eagerly willing to integrate creative multimedia input on a variety of multimedia methods and mechanisms useful for exercising human agency in the active construction of an improved world system and alternative forms of globalization.

Voices from the periphery are now taking their place within the contemporary dialogue, displacing and revealing the ethnocentrism that has characterized modernity. People who have been pushed to the margins often have a particularly acute understanding of processes to which those in the center remain blind. This is because the power necessary to sustain the centre's position has operated against those being peripheralized. (Mackie 1996, 40)

Given the seemingly limitless potential that these digitized discursive platforms provide to the historically disenfranchised, marginalized voices are now using these online opportunities amenable to the carving of new spaces for creativity, freedom, and constructivism offered through these unique vehicles of resistance. This powerful combination of free and creative constructivism falls under the rubric of esoteric intrinsic rewards, where the creation of an alternative globalized DIY world takes prece-

dence over material needs persistently left unsatisfied by faltering labor markets and reinforced by unmediating welfare systems. Furthermore, the innocuous occupational opportunity structure, even under the most fortuitous of industrialized conditions, operates under such an inhospitable atmosphere typified by consistently coercive and demoralizing exchanges for these young people, that conventional occupations can no longer provide any promise to humanity of even minimal stability or occupational rewards, even in advanced industrialized nations indicative of a strong civil society. Featherstone (1995) refers to these alienated online anarchist activist community builders as *cyberpunks*.

The cyberpunk view of the world is also one which recognizes the shrinking of public space and the increasing privatization of social life. Close face to face social relations...are becoming increasingly difficult to form. As patterns of both social and geographic mobility increase the fluidity of social life they undermine the formation of strong social bonds. The...retreat...into their increasingly fortified, technologized, privatized worlds away from the increasingly remote and ungovernable spaces occupied by the repressed...only serves to further close off the more proximate 'social' sources of identity. All that is left is technology.

(Featherstone 1995, 12)

In order for hegemonic systemic arrangements to continue in their present form, the illusion of stability and the circulation of symbolic piecemeal rewards to collusive elites are fundamentally contingent to assure continued pacification of the masses. The redirection of achievement away from a decomposing labor market toward robust networks of achievement-oriented activism creates increasingly fragile circumstances for coercive institutional arrangements that benefit an ever smaller cadre of clandestine elusive industrialists and their cooperating agents of dependency stratification.

To the extent that employees do not perceive themselves controlling their own work, they will be in no position to receive intrinsic rewards, develop intrinsic satisfaction. Job orientation is based on one's personal value system, with intrinsically-oriented people being more interested in job content and extrinsically-oriented people more interested in context. (Broedling 1977, 269& 271)

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In the hope to stabilize the tenuous position of a privileged elite left highly vulnerable by these fragile institutional arrangements secured through the strategic distribution of ever diminishing rewards and the dissemination of illusions of optimism and stability from collusive agents from below, scholarly inquiry has explored employee satisfaction from nearly every international angle (Huang & Van de Vliert 2003). Organizational theorists have identified ways of extracting more and more labor surplus from workers while distributing fewer and fewer rewards (Eisenberger 1998; Pinder 1977). Conspicuous consumption, greed, and colonization continue to expand power distances between the bourgeoisie and an increasingly alienated proletariat on a global scale unlike any witnessed before in history. Worker alienation has become so ubiquitous, rewards so miniscule, and working conditions so irrelevant, that competition among disposable workforce participants creates superfluous veneers of collegiality at the most superficial levels (Appold, Siengthai & Kasarda 1998). As a result, dissention and discontent is fomenting in nearly every corner of nearly every workplace.

Corporate individuality is the new rational and privileged form of individuality. The struggle over the coming American modernity is... a program for breaking up of society itself, and ultimately for breaking up of any collectivity that cannot meet the criteria of corporate individual. In the end, it is the social bond that must be broken, allowed to continue only in the form of the contractual reciprocity of the market. The family, in its obligation to the corporation and the market [is being] materially attacking its' ability to survive.

(Grossberg 2005, 301)

With the breakdown of authentic social bonds among laborers and other conventional communities, the prevalence of consumptive pseudoindividuality, failure camouflage, paternalistic obedience that permeates nearly all aspects of social life, and the increasingly coercive role of the state; fewer and fewer opportunities are presented where the modern human feels free to allow his or her genuine self to surface.

Now the key resources that governments use to suppress opposition are of two broad types: violent means of coercion, persuasion, and inducement, typically

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wielded by military and police forces; and nonviolent means of coercion, persuasion, and inducement, or, as they will be called here, socioeconomic sanctions, chiefly in the form of control over economic resources, means of communication, and processes of education and political socialization. The circumstances most favorable for competitive politics exist when access to violence and socioeconomic sanctions is either dispersed or denied to opposition and to government. The least favorable circumstances exist when violence and socioeconomic sanctions are exclusively available to government and denied to opposition.

(Dahl 1971, 48 & 51)

Perpetually under threat from state violence, these alienating conditions of double-edged modernity coupled with hegemonic capitalism have caused such profound disenfranchisement among youth, that digitized anarchist activist platforms have become extremely popular by providing on and offline forums for a return to authentic living that encourage critical thinking and provide opportunities for lived political action that satisfies nonmaterial esoteric intrinsic needs driving alternative social constructions of society. The orientation toward achievement, left persistently unsatisfied by disingenuous fragmented conventional communities, increasingly unregulated markets, coercive states, and welfare systems incapable of any redistributive justice; are conditions that together encourage reflexive thought among even the seemingly most obedient of workers and motivates new forms of social bonds and lived activism online and at the picket line.

{T}he great intensification of the reflexivity in the current advanced societies ... is explained by the rational and reflexive nature of the human beings integrating society. These individuals, as rational thinkers, do not act mechanically inside social structures or in front of them but, to a greater or smaller extent, tend to discuss, reconsider, or think continually about their vision of these structures and their place in them. {This may be} why some local societies are capable of devising competitive responses to globalization processes, and other local communities are subjected to intense socioeconomic erosion as a result of these processes. (Entrena 2003, x, 196)

Nowhere are these online anarchist activist communities more authentic and lively than in the cultural context of Poland. With these theoretical,

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technical, and cognitive caveats in mind, the analysis will now focus upon discursive digitized consensus systems of opposition created by body modified anarchist activists in urban areas throughout this defiant developing nation of a deprived and demoralized youth.

Digitized content analysis

To conduct the content analysis of websites that are of interest to the politically-oriented body pierced community of Poland, a snowball sample was identified and relevant body modified politically-active individuals were interviewed between 1999 and 2001 and again between 2005 and 2009. The website that was consistently reported as the primary contact point for all matters pertaining to political activism among those engaged in body modification is the site of Anarchist Federacja [the Anarchist Federation]. This has a subtle double meaning in Polish language when compared to the English version, as 'racja' means 'right' or 'justice' and federacja means 'rights at the federal level'. While 'Anarchist Federation' is a loosely-accurate translation, it does not capture nuances of the Polish version in its entirety, which could better be described as 'the federation for national rights through anarchy'. FA's subtitle further describes their website as "the one that's NOT for government." A preliminary examination was conducted within a user-oriented framework where the delivery of information for broad audiences appears to be an important part of activism web design. For the casual user investigating the site at even the most superficial levels, there are a variety of aesthetic, artistic, political, and ideological interactive services offering extrinsic rewards such as concert information, protest invitations, downloadable brochures, downloadable books, downloadable music, and numerous other sophisticated multimedia bells and whistles. For the committed returning user, this main national source for information deemed relevant for all anarchists is updated almost daily, with intrinsic and extrinsic rewards offered through access to new information, current events, news content, invitations to national and international events, and colorful multimedia. While the links were numerous and offered a wide variety of information representative

of the global anarchist world view, website designers made tremendous effort to assure that users are exposed simultaneously to regional indigenous justifications for alterglobalization for tangible purposes at local community levels. Thus, website designers bifurcated sites as either representative of FA's endogenous activities through knowledge categorized in the current analysis for our purposes as *internal content*, as well as exogenous activities and knowledge beyond the imminent Polish anarchist network considered for our analytic purposes as *external content*. This approach, coupled with a stable and timely provision of information and other services offering a variety of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, has resulted in FA becoming Poland's primary and most significant *virtual anarchist umbrella organization* for all communication necessary for community construction among politically oriented body modified activists throughout the nation.

Internal content

There are 9 internal links, the first of which offers an English language version for international guests. The second internal link is called "Propaganda" which offers four main ideological documents or organizing principles that justify the need for FA. The third is a geographic link to 26 regional headquarter-affiliates within Poland. The fourth provides official addresses, emails, and procedural information for contacting the members at regional levels. The fifth provides an official mission statement and manifesto with the title, "Plastic Majority" [English translation attached], which includes FA position statements on topics such as creating alternative futures, the illegitimacy of societal control by the government, the alternative status and distinct privileges associated with marginality, unethical taxation, punk independence strategies, and institutional problems associated with defense industries, religious institutions, and criminal justice systems. Documents advancing FA's organizing principles further advocates their vision of an ideal green lifestyle that maximize freedom of speech and encourages members to participate in frequent collective action such as strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, refusal to pay taxes,

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strategies to resist obligatory national military service (for males), and other mechanisms of human empowerment. The sixth and largest link from the main page of this virtual anarchist umbrella organization website provides relevant news from around the world which is updated frequently. The seventh link discusses the history of anarchy and the evolution of FA in contemporary Poland (discussed elsewhere in the current treatment), and includes documents pertaining to membership obligations and other regulations. The eighth link has 15 lengthy articles written originally in Polish or where necessary translated into Polish including works by American born contemporary theorists of Polish-Jewish ancestry such as Noam Chomsky, as well as historical figures in the evolution of anarchist thought of Polish ancestry such as Rosa Luxembourg and Jozef Edward Abramowski. There are also works by anarchist theorists beyond Polish culture. The website concludes with a final link offering a short self-test to determine if a given user might be an anarchist, and an archival gallery of photographs, flyers, party invitations, protest invitations, theatrical performances, brochures, alternative art gallery shows and openings, and other visual examples of community construction that have already taken place through political and aesthetic activities.

External content

There are also over 40 external links to relevant websites outside the FA. The first link directs users to the General Network of Anarchy in Poland website [Ogolnopolska Siec Anarchistyczna], which is the nonvirtual organized network of regional squatter residential and organizational bases located throughout Poland. The second link offers a free subscription to an online information service, known as the FA Internet Bulletin [Internetowy Biuletyn FA]. The third link directs users on helpful advice and other procedures on becoming formally and informally affiliated, ranging from full-time residential squatting to the most casual participatory support of cultural capital accumulation in the form of attending punk rock music performances at one of the many alternative cultural centers found throughout the national network. The fourth link directs users to officially en-

dorsed websites of political, aesthetic, and subversive interest to users. The fifth link offers a discussion area on where subscribed members can post messages or information that advance FA-related activities, submit personal commentary, or make other discursive contributions.

The next link directs users to 9 regional sections of FA geographically distributed throughout Poland. These regional sections usually concentrate their activities around a geographically tangible cultural center or anarchist squat or both. The remaining 25 external links can be characterized as ideologically substantive links, including one website offering an online critical theory 'zine' called "Idea Recycling" [Recykling Idei] enabling users to submit articles for publication. The second link offers direct access to the now world-renowned alternative source for media information and beyond known as "Indymedia" (i.e. independent media). The third external link offers free around the clock access to an online library composed of anarchist-oriented literature translated into Polish. The fourth and fifth links explain the FA's integration into the worldwide anarchist movement by offering users access to activism opportunities inherent in the international anarchist network known as Anarchist Black Cross [Anarchistyczny Czarny Krzyz]. The sixth is an online anarchist bookstore [Ksiegarnia Anarchistyczna], the seventh is an organization called the Official Automatic Red Rat [Oficyna Automaticzna Red Rat], and the eighth offers a link to an organization known as Another World [Inny Swiat]. Link nine is another 'anarchist solidarity' website, ten directs users to a 'freedom activism' website, eleven through fourteen offer direct access to four anarchist-endorsed pacifism and anti-war websites, sixteen to a neighboring German anarchist website, seventeen an international 'alternative social thought' website, and finally a 'radical action through creativity' website. The links conclude with other FA anarchist-endorsed websites advocating alternative visions of globalization in the form of aesthetic, feminist, anti-dogmatic, or ecological community [re]construction.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was then used to capture the efficacy of community building and information dissemination under observation. Because the current analysis seeks to demystify knowledge-generating and other resistance activities of body modified, politically active, anarchist youth on and offline; the website's internal network content was a primary concern and was approached within a social constructivist perspective, where member beliefs and sentiments are perceived to construct their social realities and hence operational activities in regional centers. This approach led to the conceptualization of 4 categorical independent variables that are believed to influence the kind of operations occurring at regional centers. These independent variables capture dimension of 1.) network connectivity, 2.) ideological orientation, 3.) transaction exchange types, and 4.) motivating rewards. Thus the distinct operational activities occurring in each regional headquarters are hypothesized to be dependent on member capabilities of embedding the center within the larger network, on articulating relevant ideology, on the method of resource exchanges, and on the distribution of relevant rewards. To that end, high or low network connectivity was examined based on the number of links. Ideological orientation was assessed by evaluating local adherence to a variety of anarchist-endorsed paradigms articulated nationally in the FA anarchist organizing document known as the "Plastic Majority" manifesto [attached elsewhere]. These were then examined in light of how the resources are exchanged among users based on transaction types [either cooperative, calculative, and coercive]. Use of this contract typology is based on the expectation that anarchist philosophies are highly antagonistic to match their perceptions of the environment. The final dependent variable involved opportunities for rewards to motivate achievement among users so that high levels of satisfaction are capable of being experienced by participants within the online anarchist-activist framework. These were hypothesized to manifest either as opportunities for tangible material needs, no rewards, or expected to be likely found in intangible esoteric intrinsic nonmaterial rewards. Anarchist operations occurring at regional headquarters are thus deemed to be dependent upon a combination of these four variables involving connectivity,

ideology, exchanges, and rewards. The current hypothesis suggests that the more embedded a regional anarchist network is, the more salient their adherence to multiple ideologies, the more cooperative their exchanges, and the more successful they are in offering opportunities for achieving intrinsic rewards; the more active and lively are the resistance activities that they offered. Since prior research suggests that the more institutionalized activities and organization engages in, the more formal and stable its' operations (Dobbin 1994; Tolbert & Zucker 1983); the current treatment theorizes that activities occurring at each of these nine regional centers [residential squats, culture centers, pubs, meetings spaces] are a reflection of the community sentiments of the digitized and non-digitized local operational network, the adherence of members to anarchist ideologies, the flow of resource exchanged among the network, and orientation of members toward intrinsic rewards. These independent variables are local determinants that are indicative of the extent to which each nine regional anarchist center offers the local oppositional *alter community* a variety of opportunities for lively action and activism. Thus, online dimensions of community constructions based on network centrality, ideology, exchanges, and rewards are expected to reflect the frequency and breadth of activities offered locally at these regional oppositional consensus centers. Furthermore, regional fluctuations regarding local networks, local philosophies, local transactions, and local rewards are advanced to be independent factors that influence what activities individual centers offer in terms of local opportunities for squatting, expansion of cultural capital, concerts, pubs, and regularly gatherings. The salience of anarchist operations on and offline by region are therefore believed to provide some representative levels of the genuine scale of socioeconomic and political resistance that has been steadily perpetuated among activist youth in Poland since the fall of communism.

Given this conceptualized model extracting relationships among categorical variables, the first part of the analysis explored the 9 regional headquarters where resistance operations tend to be concentrated around a variety of alternative culture production. According to data presented on websites, coupled with triangulation through direct observations in the field, anarchist activities tended to concentrate around full-time residential

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squats, and/or centers for alternative culture providing the forum for music-spoken word-performances for the expansion of relevant cultural capital, and/or non-commercial pubs, and/or through regular meetings to articulate the need for and organize political actions that advocate anarchist philosophies. These centers as well as the websites they produce offer authentic evidence of active, ongoing, social and political mobilizing among members. By comparing region differentiation regarding tangible operations in these lively viable collective venues [our dependent variable], the analysis can accurately portray how anarchist activists' connectivity, ideology, exchanges, and rewards operate together to influence the efficacy of resistance activities offered. The analysis intends to show that the extent to which participants are able to access existing networks, ideological information, resource exchange, and satisfactory rewards; together determine the diversity and stability of authentic local anarchist resistance activities reflected on and offline. This approach will demonstrate that these websites and the online collectivities that they represent not only offer users knowledge surrounding globalization and unique alternate philosophical anarchist strategies to combat contemporary deleterious conditions it imposes, but does so through a variety of motivational rewards delivered through complex transactional mechanisms that authentically capture the alienating sentiments, adversarial institutional relations, and other minutiae needed to clarify the complex contemporary struggles of our times. The analysis will qualitatively demonstrate that network activity, ideological orientation, transactions involving political, aesthetic, and socioeconomic exchanges of human capital, and access to alternate sources of achievement greatly influence the activities offered by saboteurs concentrated around these unique regional centers of resistance in Poland and around the world.

Results

With these modeled constructs surrounding operational authenticity in place, 7 centers and their websites were examined in light of network interconnectivity. There was significant differentiation in regional centers

with regard to all four dimensions of operations. Network connectivity results ranged from the smallest number of links in the capital city of Warsaw with only 5, to the largest created by the squat and cultural center located on the Eastern border in Bialystok with 35 links. The oldest and largest anarchist cultural center and squat located in Poznan had fewer than 25 links, despite the fact that they, in actuality, had the designation of being the national contact point for the international global anarchist network. Thus high or low regional website connectivities may not necessarily reflect the genuine depth and breadth of regional or international integrated action, and may actually run the risk of underestimating the political, social, and cultural capital circulating in these centers. Low connectivity platforms such as Warsaw and Gorzow did not necessarily disclose all the resistance activities occurring in their catchment area. The Warsaw website, for example, failed to mention another nonresidential anarchist center for critical thinking loosely affiliated with Warsaw University in existence for almost 20 years. Specific activities regarding residential squatting were also underrepresented nationwide, perhaps due to police attacks on squatter settlements in Paris, Copenhagen, and other cities on the rise throughout Europe (see Bennhold 2005; Isherwood 2007; Squatters Practical Network 2005). Archival data regarding evidence of past protest action were also incomplete and did not tend to capture the full scale nor the measurable successes of past world systemic globalization resistance efforts that regional members were involved in. Thus it appears that online digitized platforms provide users with only a vague indication of resistance activities, offering a preliminary but discrete road map to explore the broad brush of anarchist ideologies, transactions, and rewards that are truly motivating this unique community. Portrayals of past mobilizing activities may be only partially disclosed in order to avoid the risk of participant recognition by law enforcement officials, or perhaps to make an atmosphere for new activists considering participation as inclusive as possible. Nevertheless, digitized website platforms can capture some of the depth and breadth of resistance activities on and offline, and should primarily be used to augment a fuller inquiry triangulating data to fully capture the genuine extent of collective action. Studies of online resistance communities and other forms of digital

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activism might perhaps best be used in conjunction with participatory action or other forms of direct observation in the field.

Ideology was found not to fluctuate significantly, with little vacillation evident in promoting specific combinations of ideology that each regional collective advanced as crucial to their resistance vision. Although each offered their online version of what anarchist priorities might take precedence over others, it was notable that all approaches, while working to advance local interpretations, tended to deviate little from the national anarchist manifesto, "Plastic Majority." Warsaw and Lodz presented primary orientations toward ecological concerns, advocating bicycling and vegetarian lifestyles. Poznan and Bialystok tended to focus on Food Not Bomb activities to reverse the deprivation of the surrounding community. Use of military or other forms of state violence by dominating institutional powers was widely documented by nearly every regional center, with little evidence to demonstrate that anarchists espoused use of violent means to achieve their own political goals individually or collectively. On the contrary, nonviolent protest and harmonious peaceful living with all living beings regardless of ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, and religious diversity was consistently advocated (including animal species). In fact, there are many anarchists that are so opposed to violence of any form who espoused such universal egalitarian lifestyles that they use these digitized platforms to discourage consumption and exploitation of animals either through experimentation or as a source of food. Regardless of ideological orientation, no regional site advanced any approach to resisting world systemic globalization employed any necessarily coercive polemics or discursive imposition. Instead, audiences were encouraged to explore, at their own pace and comfort levels, the underlying philosophies that drive these alternative lifestyles, and to personally consider them as viable options to resist the status quo. One methodological complication regarding online ideological analysis did, however, arise in the question of validity with regard to *sequentiality*. It may be methodologically flawed to advance the sequential order of a given variable online (in this case ideology), thus running the risk of misrepresentation. No research to date has demystified what significance or primacy, if any, the sequential content patterns represent for designers or the community members. In other

words, when a given anarchist center (or any other entity) positions one form of anarchist ideology first on its online content, does it necessarily mean that the ideology holds a similar salient location of primacy among members of that community offline? Thus, the significance of sequentiality as an accurate indicator of community offline sentiments may be methodologically problematic and require further study to determine construct validity.

The mechanisms by which anarchist websites sought to portray their ideologies and activities to users were, nevertheless, surprisingly cooperative, with excessive enthusiasm articulated in all but two sites. Being the newest community and less than a year old, Szczecin, displayed the most coercive exchanges, with anti-fascist defiance firmly articulated throughout. The most provocative was their assertion that members support “war among classes, not wars among nations” and the notion that “theft from the rich is ethical.” The second most defiant was found in Wroclaw, with anti-fascist mobilization also being a strong element prioritized among their activities. It is interesting to note that the very two cities where the most coercive forms of resistance against fascism and nationalism were articulated online (Wroclaw and Szczecin) were the very same cities located on territories annexed after World War II due to the Yalta agreement. As such, these regions are under constant attack in the courts and the media by German nationalists (see neocolonization elsewhere). Given the levels of coercive dialogue online, the institutionalized threats from aging nationalist German adversaries in the courts and conventional media may manifest as equally defiant resistance on and offline. Among those with the highest network centrality, Lodz was highly cooperative and oriented toward providing users access to literature online. This center also used their interactive platform as an opportunity to conduct technologically and methodologically sophisticated surveys on the needs and orientation of users, and found that 35% adhered to unlimited anarchy principles (as opposed to specifically green anarchy [17%], anarcho-syndicalist anarchy [12%], socialist anarchy [11%], capitalist anarchy [only 6% support among users]). These disseminated results describing Lodz anarchists may indicate that users have highly generalized and salient anarchist identities and want to see the freedom this ideology espouses to

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infiltrate all aspects of public and private life. When the current analysis was being conducted, Lodz was in the process of gathering data for tolerance of violent tendencies among members. The most balanced and thorough delivery of information overall was also the oldest squat in the country and the oldest Polish anarchist website in the country located in Poznan, which is also distinguished with having the largest anarchist library in the nation, and the largest squat. Rather than advance any necessarily informative literary role that Lodz seems eager to fulfill, Poznan was oriented more toward dissemination of legal and other rights-based tactical knowledge.

Rewards were perhaps the most surprising element of the analysis, as all regional headquarters offered new and returning users concrete opportunities for both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Through paths and patterns that brought users highly relevant internal and external content, nearly every region had a 'public relations' component, explaining activities in very fundamental terms so as not to contribute to misunderstandings or perpetuate moral media panics. There were very profound explanations for casual users, and an effort was made whenever possible to universalize the goals of the anarchist alterglobalization project to appeal to political moderates and other broad sympathetic audiences. Thus, Polish anarchists used their digitized platforms to describe the continuum of available anarchist resistance efforts (ranging from libertarian to complete stateless anarchy) by stressing the universality of the social benefits they struggle for through the tactic of minimizing or completely eliminating state intervention in civil life. Rewards were not merely limited to the intangible or the esoteric to be realized among future generations as originally hypothesized through an orientation toward intrinsic rewards, but rather the immediacy of individual benefits were consistently stressed in the form of cultural capital accumulation, access to knowledge, the opportunities inherent in residential squatting, and other short and long term benefits that anarchist lifestyles provide. Furthermore, DIY punk paradigm and the empowerment that comes with it was a constant theme of nearly all regional headquarters. Users were heavily encouraged to feel free to interface their creative actions with the integrated regional activities already under way. This included encouraging users to participate through formal members, in order to articulate and construct individualized visions

for the anarchist project by providing opportunistic spaces through personal blogs, recommendation on how to produce or consume independent music (usually punk), venues for independent publishing, encouraging audience participation by attending upcoming concerts and other political or aesthetic resistance efforts that increased cultural capital. This included impressive levels of transparency such as procedures useful in starting another independent squat, legal assistance when met with police intervention at protests or while on the street, and ways to start “Food Not Bombs” actions in local communities to nourish, empower, and reverse diasporic deprivation closer to home (See *Table 6*, page 298).

Summary

Although certain methodological complications did arise, content analysis of anarchist activist websites was particularly fruitful in augmenting the larger inquiry surrounding this unique defiant community. As expected, internal content did provide a platform to demonstrate systems of oppositional consensus, particularly by sensitizing users to environmental awareness of the universality of diasporic deprivation brought on by world systemic globalization. By providing users with a variety of ideological alternatives to approach the project of deconstructing hegemonic empires, users were exposed to many philosophical activist frameworks through which they could participate in to contribute to resistance endeavors. Internal content did not, incidentally, strive to represent the full depth and breadth of past, present, or future resistance activities. This lack of transparency may be an indication of the limitations of online dialogue, or it may be inherent in the need for discretion to combat persistent attacks by violent state militia and members of the post-fascist movement operating in the interest of dominant groups to dismantle these increasingly powerful subversive social justice networks of worldwide dissent and subterfuge. Digitized discursive content was, nevertheless, able to provide even the most casual users with a plethora of resistance tactics capable of transferring a variety of desirable intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. By expanding members’ access to aesthetic, political, literary,

and visual accoutrement through information, events, and downloads of music files, posters, stickers, and protest brochures; individual and community accumulation of alternative cultural capital was fully operational. Dependency-reversing strategies were a salient feature on many regional sites, where failure by conventional standards was rewarded, independence was highly encouraged, and alternative consumption patterns advocated. In this way, online content was able to advance, empower, legitimate, and otherwise unify fragmented anarchist activist communities through concrete tactics of resistance on and offline. In the process, the Polish anarchist activist community perpetually exhibits highly efficient, technology-driven, defiant community construction capabilities; and carved an admirable digitized space indicative of innovative use, providing users unlimited potential for rewarding experiences of discursive dissent through integrative, interactive, independent interfacing among geographically isolated saboteurs around the country and around the world.

Note

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**Table 6. Anarchist Websides in Poland
Internal Content Analysis by Region**

	Resistance <i>Operations</i>	Network <i>Centrality</i>
Warsaw http://alter.most.org.pl/infoszop/	bicycling meetings	5 (3.7)
Wroclaw http://www.wroclaw.ibw.com.pl	live concerts/performance publishing formal membership subscriptions downloadlabel graphics/stickers	8 (6.0)
Lodz http://www.czszy.prv.pl	research publishing strategic events (calendar) lobbying for jailed activists (murder) public relations	32 (24.0)
Poznan http://www.rozbrat.org/fa.htm	national anarchy library live concerts/performance strategic events (calendar) publishing downloadlabel graphics/stickers	25 (18.7)
Szczecin http://www.faszczecin.most.org.pl	subscription philosophy dissemination	15 (11.2)
Bialystok http://decentrum.bzzz.net	member website publishing live concerts/performance downloadlabel graphics/stickers/music	35 (26.1)
Corzow http://www.fa-gorzow.prv.pl	protests strategic events	14 (10.5)

Note: 2 missing cases due to technical construction. Column per centages in parantheses.

Ideology <i>Articulation</i>	Transactions <i>Exchange Types</i>	User Satisfaction <i>Reward Types</i>
ecological anti-war animal rights women's rights	cooperative	intrinsic extrinsic
anti-fascist anti-nationalist anti-education indoctrination adversal relations w/Parliament	coercive calculative	intrinsic extrinsic
ecological animal rights labor rights anti-war anti-fascist	cooperative calculative	intrinsic extrinsic
Food Not Bombs anti-war homeless property rights (squat) national legal right updates ecological	cooperative calculative	intrinsic extrinsic
anti-war anti-fascist	coercive calculative	intrinsic extrinsic
Food Not Bombs anti-missile anti-dogma ecological	calculative cooperative	intrinsic extrinsic
international historic founders national historic founders chat/guest book	cooperative	intrinsic extrinsic

Network connectivity data excludes links to external sites.