

The Internet Freedom Movement from SOPA-PIPA to Net Neutrality  
A Descriptive Analysis of a Social Movement in the Digital Age

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## Abstract of Thesis

### The Internet Freedom Movement from SOPA-PIPA to Net Neutrality A Descriptive Analysis of a Social Movement in the Digital Age

This thesis takes an inside look at the Internet freedom movement, a loose coalition of groups working together to promote an open and free Internet. By looking at the movement through both the lens of traditional social movement theory, as well as new digitally-enabled collective action theory, I am able to conduct a deeper analysis of the processes of the movement. Whereas past studies only focused on a single episode within this social movement, this descriptive study looks at the movement as a whole, across three episodes, in an effort to better understand both the movement's past and future actions.

For this study, I analyzed the political context and allies, tactics, coalition relationships, and network structures of the coalitions that have formed around the flashpoints of online censorship, surveillance reform, and net neutrality. By conducting a longitudinal study from SOPA-PIPA to the Day We Fight Back Against Surveillance to net neutrality, I was able to discern that the tactical strategies and roles played by a core group of participating organizations has increasingly coalesced as certain political opportunities arise.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Internet Freedom Movement

The impacts of society's shift to a networked world is playing out in interesting ways, most notably within the realm of activism by and for the Internet. The rise of online activism has not only greatly altered social movement theory but also the online medium in which this activism operates. In order for online activism to continue to create such a noteworthy impact, the structure and mechanisms of the Internet should be protected and shifted to match the needs of the people. However, in the cases I will be examining, the United States government and various corporations continue to attempt to thwart Internet freedoms. This will be a study looking at how groups have come together to better protect free speech, privacy, and net neutrality, and how they have found ways of working together to maximize their networked capacity for change.

As Rebecca MacKinnon sees it, echoing the ideas of Harvard law professor Lawrence Lessig in his book *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*: “In the Internet age, a whole new sphere of de facto lawmaking has emerged in the guise of software code and technical standards that channel and constrain what people do with their technology.”<sup>1</sup>

What makes the Internet special is that it is an open medium in which most anyone can participate, although this is continually being challenged by corporations and governments wanting to erect a variety of laws and technical standards that would build

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca MacKinnon, *Consent of the Networked: The Worldwide Struggle for Internet Freedom* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 25.

lanes, walls, and backdoors. This played out recently with the Apple v. Department of Justice case regarding encryption.

This area of contention between digital rights advocates and government lawmakers has led to the rise of various social movement organizations who have been at the intersection between these two sides. The Internet freedom movement (IFM), as I will call the fluid coalition of groups that work together, continues to tackle new issues that arise within the area of digital rights and human rights in the networked age. Creating alliances of partners within the three areas of “civil society defenders of the digital commons, powerful corporations..., and champions within government”, the IFM is trying to create a formidable presence for itself.<sup>2</sup> The Internet freedom movement is a unique movement in that the majority of its actions take place online, so this is an excellent opportunity to understand the structure of digitally-enabled movements and their mobilization over time.

Where the literature now stands, there is a gap that I am seeking to fill. The literature on the Internet freedom movement only focuses on specific episodes, which limits the scope of understanding the broader movement. This paper will therefore be a descriptive and longitudinal analysis of all the major episodes within the Internet freedom movement to ascertain if it has gained in capacity. This will be looked at in four ways: through the streamlining of the political opportunity structures, the tactics used for the episodes, the coalition relationships, and the actors involved in the advocacy efforts. These four areas

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<sup>2</sup> MacKinnon, *Consent of the Networked*, 256.

will be examined in the context of the efforts to defeat the congressional bills SOPA and PIPA, to effect surveillance reform, and to protect net neutrality. What I discover is that a core group of organizations are now working with a core group of political elites--as well as an increasing lobbying budget--to push through goals backed by their digitally-enabled mobilized masses. Through this, the coalitions that have formed are strengthening their ties to one another and establishing clearer roles.

### **Background of the Internet Freedom Movement**

But how did all of this movement come about? The Internet freedom movement is an evolving coalition of organizations working on issues of digital rights, encryption, and Internet governance. Many of the organizations have their own specific topics within these issues spaces, but every so often an event occurs that causes these organizations to band together. I will now explore three such events, parts of which I will be examining in greater detail in my subsequent research.

#### *SOPA-PIPA*

The events surrounding the twin bills Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and Protect IP Act (PIPA) are sometimes described as the day the Internet grew up. But before we get there, let us start at the beginning of this momentous Internet mobilization. Prior to SOPA-PIPA, a lot of groundwork had been laid in terms of networked activism. As Josh Levy, then of Free Press, points out:

*“In fact, from 2006 through 2010, activists, civil society groups, academics, artists, bloggers, and everyday Internet users laid the groundwork for effective networked activism. If it weren’t for these efforts, the anti-SOPA Internet blackout on January 18, 2011 very likely would not have had close to the same reach and impact.”<sup>3</sup>*

Before the public became aware of SOPA and PIPA, those more in tune with issues of digital rights and copyright had been following the bills (and their predecessor COICA--Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act) for about a year, slowly building up awareness and anger.<sup>4</sup> It was an uphill battle, as “Big Content” (Hollywood and music companies) exerted their lobbying efforts on Congress, who were trying to pass the bills unnoticed in the winter of 2011.<sup>5</sup>

The protests surrounding SOPA-PIPA did not arise in a vacuum. Rather they tapped into a myriad of resources now available due to the networked sphere and technological affordances. Resources such as large scale interaction throughout the network, which was

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<sup>3</sup> Josh Levy, “Before SOPA There was Net Neutrality,” in *Hacking Politics: how geeks, progressives, the Tea Party, gamers, anarchists, and suits teamed up to defeat SOPA and save the Internet*, ed. David Moon, Patrick Ruffini, and David Segal (New York: OR Books, 2013), 49.

<sup>4</sup> Yochai Benkler, Hal Roberts, Robert Faris, Alicia Solow-Niederman, Bruce Etling, “Social Mobilization and the Networked Public Sphere: Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate,” *Berkman Center Research Publication*, no. 2013-16 (2013): 16.

<sup>5</sup> “TLDR” in *Hacking Politics*, 15.

then reshaped by experts within the field, before it was all refocused to shift public feelings to alter Congressional support of the bills.<sup>6</sup>

The most important result of Benkler, et al.'s study was to reveal that it was not just the major technology companies and advocacy groups that defeated SOPA-PIPA, but rather it was also this groundswell of opposition from the networked sphere. Once word began spreading, and with the creation of the advocacy group Demand Progress—who leveraged the technological affordances of the Internet to create a successful online petition against COICA and urged people to call Congress—more awareness and more connections between organizations began happening. The opposition against SOPA-PIPA, that spread to blogs and Reddit, grew to give power to highly engaged, often periphery actors before it broke to mass media.<sup>7</sup> The network surrounding anti-SOPA-PIPA action was diverse—ranging from libertarians to lobbyists to gamers and geeks—and this diversity is becoming the norm for this issue and type of advocacy.<sup>8</sup>

After SOPA-PIPA, the Internet freedom movement became self aware and realized the power it had. The movement was not likely to dissipate, rather it was on the hunt to find another contentious event in which to sustain itself.

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<sup>6</sup> Benkler, et al., “Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate”, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Benkler, et al., “Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate,” 17-19.

<sup>8</sup> Alison Powell, “Assessing the Influence of Online Activism on Internet Policy-Making: SOPA and ACTA,” Paper presentation at EuroCPR, 2013.

## *Surveillance Reform*

No discussion can be had about surveillance without bringing up Edward Snowden, as his whistleblowing on the National Security Agency's surveillance is what prompted actions and reform. After his revelations, citizen anger turned into action, as protests were planned through the Reddit website to stage rallies in over 70 cities across the country.<sup>9</sup> The organization that formed around those protests, Restore the Fourth, soon gained the support of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union.<sup>10</sup>

From this, other organizations started to work together to create pressure on Congress to enact surveillance reform. This is how the Stop Watching Us rally came to be, when a hundred member strong diverse coalition of organizations planned a large rally to march through DC and hand over petitions to Congress.<sup>11</sup> As a way to keep the momentum going, as Congress was wrestling with the USA FREEDOM Act to partially curtail the surveillance programs, the Day We Fight Back Against Mass Surveillance digital protest was organized. Meant to coincide with the two year anniversary of SOPA-PIPA and the one year anniversary of Internet activist Aaron Swartz's death, this online protest would reuse some of the same tactics as SOPA-PIPA in getting participating websites to host a

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<sup>9</sup> Rebecca Bowe, "NSA Surveillance: Protesters Stage Restore the Fourth Rallies Across US," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/04/restore-the-fourth-protesters-nsa-surveillance>

<sup>10</sup> Bowe, "NSA Surveillance."

<sup>11</sup> Bart Jansen and Carolyn Pesce, "Anti-NSA Rally Attracts Thousands to March in Washington," *USA Today*, October 26, 2013. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/10/26/nsa-dc-rally/3241417/>

banner image, directing people to sign the petition or call their Congress member to support the USA FREEDOM Act.

### *The FCC and Net Neutrality Meets the Internet Slowdown*

The battle for net neutrality is an old battle, but a unique moment that would lead to victory happened on January 14, 2014. A federal court ruled against the Federal Communications Commission's rules regarding net neutrality, leaving a space for IFM groups to mobilize around. Internet activists immediately started organizing, creating a White House petition in favor of net neutrality that over 100,000 people signed.

Campaign websites, like savetheinternet.com, as well as comedian John Oliver help drive comments to the FCC demanding Title II reclassification of the Internet to prevent paid prioritization of content. By the time the first round of commenting had closed, over one million comments had been submitted.<sup>12</sup>

As pressure continued to mount, the White House came out in favor of net neutrality and Title II reclassification. After a year of public pressure FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler agreed to consider Title II reclassification. It was then put to a vote, and, by a 3-2 win, net neutrality is protected on February 26, 2015.

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<sup>12</sup> Battle for the Net <https://www.battleforthenet.com/how-we-won/>

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Before moving on to the specifics of the Internet freedom movement, we first need to step back and look at the underlying theories that are necessary to understand the processes of the movement. By understanding these processes and mechanisms, in both their pre-digital and digital contexts, we will lay the groundwork to gaining a better understanding of the IFM. These theories relate to traditional social movement theory, as well as understanding social movements in their new digital contexts with networked connections. Therefore, I will be examining the various parts of social movement theory that still pertain to a mainly digital movement like the IFM, as well as looking at how the IFM has used these digital capacities to further its goal. Lastly, social network analysis will be explored as a theory to better understand the relationships between participating organizations.

### **Social Movement Theory**

Understanding the offline world of how social movements are structured and operate is necessary to understanding the shifts that have taken place in digitally-enabled social movements, such as the Internet freedom movement. Contentious politics—where claim makers publically and periodically demand something of an entity—is one arena in which collective action takes place.<sup>13</sup> Collective action is the basis of what I will be examining in the rest of this study.

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<sup>13</sup> Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5.

These collective actions are an attempt to subvert a government's control over the processes of contention, an attempt to reclaim the ability to make claims. When looking at any social movement, it is necessary to understand the political context in which it operates to gain a fuller understanding of its possibilities and constrictions. The contextual "polity model", as political scientists Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly lay out in their seminal work *Dynamics of Contention*, consists of government agents, political actors with access to government agents, challenger actors without this access, outside people not politically organized, and outside political actors.<sup>14</sup> This is a necessary framework in which to understand the context of any social movement and its impact.

A slightly similar concept, called political opportunity structures, is a helpful way of understanding how a network can shift in goals and members over time depending on the political context. This will be a key component in my longitudinal study of the Internet freedom movement. McAdam's clearly lays out the four elements that control political opportunities: "1. popular access to the political system; 2. divisions within the elite; 3. the availability of elite allies; and 4. diminishing state repression."<sup>15</sup> I will be looking at some of the four elements in relation to the contentious episodes within the Internet freedom movement in an attempt to uncover commonalities.

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<sup>14</sup> McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) as quoted in Jennifer Hadden, *Networks in Contention* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 66.

But since many of the goals of the IFM relate to policy, it is important to understand policy activism. Within those political opportunity structures and the access to the elites lies the work of leadership networks within policy activism. Leadership networks connect to policy advocacy networks. Leaders within the social movement create ties with allies in the political sphere, particularly ones who are resource-rich or influential in the particular issue space.<sup>16</sup> This concept is a key part of the political opportunity structures I will be analyzing later. Much of the work the Internet freedom movement has done revolves around policies, whether it has been bills regarding censorship or surveillance or an attempt to reclassify the Internet. Therefore, the idea of policy activism is important to understanding the larger context in connection with the Internet freedom movement. This type of activism seeks to create specific discourses around policies, as well as “lobbying efforts that intend to directly influence the public representatives who make decisions, and broad mobilizations, in that they aim to solicit broad participation from citizens.”<sup>17</sup>

Once the stage is set with the actors within the political sphere, one must look at the underlying mechanisms and processes that impact the actors. In an effort to not conflate the two things, it is helpful to look at the definitions laid out by Tarrow and Tilly. Mechanisms are “changes that produce the same immediate effects over a wide range of circumstances”, whereas processes “assemble mechanisms into different sequences and

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<sup>16</sup> John Krinsky and Nick Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social, Cultural and Political Protest* 13, no. 1 (2014): 6.

<sup>17</sup> Alison Powell, “Assessing the Influence of Online Activism on Internet Policy-Making: SOPA and ACTA.”

combinations, thus producing larger-scale outcomes than any single mechanism.”<sup>18</sup>

Mechanisms are the parts that make up processes, and their differences in both content, size, and timing impact the larger processes. There are a few key mechanisms and processes that we will be taking a closer look at now in relation to future discussions on their role in the Internet freedom movement.

The concept of brokerage, a relational mechanism, is a key element leading to the growth and vitality of a social movement. Brokerage, like diffusion, can pertain to tactics, framing, and resource mobilization, among other things. Brokerage is the connection of seemingly disparate groups who find commonality in the interests and goals of the larger movement, thereby creating a more connected and broader organizational network.<sup>19</sup>

Brokerage differs from the diffusion mechanism in that diffusion often takes place with actors already involved in the movement, through ties previously created. Brokerage between groups can lead to coordinated action, in which “two or more actors’ engagement in mutual signaling and parallel making of claims on the same object” occurs.<sup>20</sup> The more coordinated actions that occur and the more brokerage and diffusion that is employed, the more the potential for upward scale shift increases. For example, the advocacy efforts to defeat SOPA-PIPA relied in part on non-traditional allies like libertarians, gamers, and hackers (brokerage) and more traditional allies like

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<sup>18</sup> Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2015, 2nd edition), 240-241.

<sup>19</sup> McAdams, Tilly, and Tarrow, *Dynamics of Contention*, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 31-32.

progressives, tech blogs, and human rights activists (diffusion). These concepts are key to the work I am doing concerning the IFM's potential for capacity growth.

Scale shift is a complex process that has been ill-defined due to its fluidity and reliance on its operational context. Generally speaking, scale shift is seen as “a change in the number and level of coordinated contentious actions leading to broader contention involving a wider range of actors and bridging their claims and identities.”<sup>21</sup> There has been some agreement on the parts that together lead to scale shift, and they are: diffusion, attribution of similarity, brokerage, and emulation.<sup>22</sup> Two roads can lead to scale shift, with either brokerage or diffusion as the alternate gatekeepers.

Scale shift through brokerage is determined through coalition building. This coalition building within the network can lead to the growth of separate clusters of organizations linked together with a handful of organizations bridging the clusters together. Once the organizations see commonalities between themselves, they are more likely to band together. While brokerage-created scale shift is less common, it can prove to be more formidable, as it can “quickly spread [contention] beyond narrow geographic, institutional, and/or categorical boundaries and produce new identities that are more durable than the incidents that give rise to them.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> McAdams, Tilly, and Tarrow, *Dynamics of Contention*, 331.

<sup>22</sup> Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 229.

<sup>23</sup> McAdams, Tilly, and Tarrow, *Dynamics of Contention*, 335.

Scale shift through diffusion is determined by emulation. The pathways connecting organizations in this network are already in place, allowing for an easier transference of goals and for the larger network to operate as more cohesive whole. Diffusion is also easier because it “requires a much lower investment in time, entrepreneurship, and frame transformation than brokerage.”<sup>24</sup> However, diffusion can potentially limit the scope of the larger movement, due to the fact that it operates along already established pathways, rather than by forging new links.

Traditionally, brokerage scale shift was created through face-to-face interactions between coalition members, as well as recruitment of members to the cause. In these meetings, a realignment of frames often took place; however, with digitally-enabled movements, this alters the ways in which brokerage scale shift occurs.<sup>25</sup> While yes, social interactions and frame processing are still vital, what is actually changing is the way in which they are carried out now through digital networks. This networked connection helps by lessening the need to continually shift the identity and framing processes of the shifting coalition.<sup>26</sup> Rather it is a more organic process now.

It is also important to note that social movements should not be dichotomized into online versus offline alone, as having a fluidity between the two will allow for greater success.

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<sup>24</sup> McAdams, Tilly, and Tarrow, *Dynamics of Contention*, 335.

<sup>25</sup> W. Lance Bennett, “Communicating Global Activism: Strengths and Vulnerabilities of Networked Politics,” *Information, Communication, and Society* 6 (2003): 149.

<sup>26</sup> Bennett, “Communicating Global Activism,” 149.

Each has their own strengths and weaknesses, as street protests do not always yield success or win over hearts and minds, while online activism can lose its power through repetition.<sup>27</sup>

Scale shift is an important part of overall network health, as health, in terms of social movements, is often related to growth. But first, we must turn to how social movements have been impacted by the rise of information communication technologies (ICTs), as the Internet freedom movement relies heavily on ICT usage.

### **Digitally Enabled Collective Action**

How has the Internet and other forms of ICTs impacted the way social movements are conducted? Much has been written about this topic. Most notably is the discussion surrounding whether the Internet creates ‘weak ties’ or ‘strong ties’ for collective action participants. Some note that the Internet is unable to create strong ties due to the seeming ease of engagement which weakens the commitment levels of participants.<sup>28</sup> Completely refuting this claim, as well as the dubious mischaracterization of what strong and weak ties are, sociologist Zeynep Tufekci states: “Large pools of weaker ties are crucial to

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<sup>27</sup> Zeynep Tufekci, “Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age: Evaluating a Complex Landscape,” *Journal of International Affairs* 68, No.1 (Fall/Winter 2014): 9.

<sup>28</sup> See Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted,” *New Yorker*, October 4, 2010, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell> ; Jeroen Van Laer and Peter Van Aelst, “Internet and Social Movement Action Repertoires: Opportunities and Limitations,” *Information, Communication, and Society* 13 (2010): 1146-1171; Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (PublicAffairs: 2012).

being able to build robust networks of stronger ties – and Internet use is a key to this process.”<sup>29</sup>

Looking more at the processes within digitally mediated activism itself is another area of intense debate. Do new technologies alter the processes of activism itself? One theory, what political scientists Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport called “supersize”, believes that only the scale of activism will be altered by the influence of ICTs. Due to the ability of the Web to alter the costs of participation, as well as the speed and scope, the scale of activism has reached new heights.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, the other theory resulting from ICT use and activism--succinctly named theory 2.0-- , believes that the processes of activism will be changed themselves. Political scientist Clay Shirky believes that the way people organize will shift due to the diminishing role of organizations in rallying activism, as ICTs reduce the costs of organizing.<sup>31</sup> Earl and Kimport believe that one of the major theoretical discrepancies between these two theories is what cases they study. Supersize theory tends to look more at physical organizations, whereas theory 2.0 tends to analyze mainly online organizations.<sup>32</sup> For my study, I will be looking at a mixture of the two types of organizations.

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<sup>29</sup> Zeynep Tufekci, “What Gladwell Gets Wrong: The Real Problem is Scale Mismatch (Plus, Weak and Strong Ties are Complementary and Supportive),” *Technosociology* (blog), September 27, 2010, <http://technosociology.org/?p=178>

<sup>30</sup> Jennifer Earl and Katrina Kimport, *Digitally Enabled Social Change: Activism in the Internet Age (Acting with Technology)* (MIT Press, 2011), 24.

<sup>31</sup> Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Earl and Kimport, *Digitally Enabled Social Change*, 29.

With the rise of technological communication and the networks they create between groups of people, organization arises in situations where they have not usually been formed. Technology puts the tools for organization, which are often highly efficient and inexpensive, into the hands of the individual and loosely formed groups, who then use them for collective action.<sup>33</sup> The ability to communicate in this manner is vital for a fledgling movement to coalesce into a more effective organization. Participation within the connective space of ICT-driven action allows for more horizontally defined relationships that channel information.<sup>34</sup> The participants interact with the “logic of connective action” by finding areas of commonality in the larger group through using personalized action frames to understand broader issues within their own context, thereby enabling greater commitment and connectivity to the movement as a whole.<sup>35</sup> This concept has played a pivotal role in the successes of the IFM, which will be discussed later.

One of the reasons that ICTs have impacted the field of activism so much is due to their technological affordances being leveraged, something that the IFM has successfully done. Technological affordances, as described by Earl and Kimport, are “the actions and uses that a technology makes qualitatively easier or possible when compared to prior like

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<sup>33</sup> Bruce Bimber, Andrew Flanagin, and Cynthia Stohl. *Collective Action in Organizations: Interaction and Engagement in an Era of Technological Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, *The Logic of Connective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 196.

<sup>35</sup> W. Lance Bennett, Alexandra Segerberg, and Shawn Walker, "Organization in the Crowd: Peer Production in Large-Scale Networked Protests," *Information, Communication & Society* 17.2 (2014): 232-260.

technologies.”<sup>36</sup> For example, the creation of online petitions, utilized extensively as an e-tactic by the IFM, are able to spread rapidly and gain greater awareness thanks to the technological affordances of the Internet. It is valuable to try and avoid a technologically deterministic view, wherein a technology, due to its capacity, is seen as a game changer without taking in the political and social context in which it operates. The way individuals interact with technology is determined also by the interplay of power inequalities and information asymmetry, meaning it hinges on their access and understanding.<sup>37</sup> With that in mind, Earl and Kimport modified their affordances approach to include the human interaction with the technology and how it is or is not leveraged.<sup>38</sup>

While ICT use allows for greater scale and lowered costs in terms of participation, it often comes at the price of organizational capacity.<sup>39</sup> Scholar Zeynep Tufekci believes that this may be a weakness, as they “do not necessarily pose the same threat to governments and power.”<sup>40</sup> Some scholars have contended that the rise of digitally mediated communications will change the reliance on hierarchical organizations. Clay Shirky in particular believes that the technological affordances will render the need for

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<sup>36</sup> Earl and Kimport, *Digitally Enabled Social Change*, 32.

<sup>37</sup> Jerry Kang and Benedikt Buchner, “Privacy in Atlantis,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Technology* 18, no. 1 (2004): 244.

<sup>38</sup> Earl and Kimport, *Digitally Enabled Social Change*, 33.

<sup>39</sup> Tufekci, “Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age”, 15.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, 15.

organizations obsolete, allowing for a more horizontalist activism.<sup>41</sup> This idea fits in well with the horizontal networks proposed by Benkler and Castells. Networks brought about by the rise of communications technologies have begun the process of counteracting the material-limits based hierarchical system to the more limitless based information technology system that will enable a more horizontal structure of power (Castells 2009). Tying into this idea of a networked sphere is commons-based peer production, where loosely connected, decentralized individuals work together to create (Benkler 2006), a phenomenon that is appearing with more regularity in social movements.

Counteracting this idea is the work of political scientist David Karpf, who argues that organizations should not be ruled obsolete in their impact on collective action.<sup>42</sup> Rather many organizations are either retooling themselves to take advantage of the affordances of being digitally connected or being a fully digitally-enabled organization, thereby still being a necessity for a successful movement. In their work regarding SOPA-PIPA, Yochai Benkler, et al. have this to say about the need for organizations in networked movements: “In their many manifestations, digitally mediated organizations are increasingly recognized as providing alternatives to existing intermediaries in political processes and opening new avenues for social movements, political campaigns, and public policy advocacy as well as threatening traditional institutions.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*.

<sup>42</sup> David Karpf, *The MoveOn Effect: The Unexpected Transformation of American Political Advocacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Benkler, et al. “Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate,” 9.

Political scientist Andrew Chadwick echoes this awareness of a new breed of organization in the networked sphere. While he discusses the reactionary aspects of these new organizations due to their lack of “routine power”, he makes sure to note that the work they do does not simply appear out of nowhere. Rather, as he states in his book *The Hybrid Media System*: “It is clear that ‘scenario planning’ for different potential outcomes, ‘power analysis’ to determine where to apply pressure, and identifying ‘members’ concerns’ through polling and monitoring of social media takes up a great amount of daily effort.”<sup>44</sup> These organizations are “opportunistic within a strategic framework”, as Chadwick’s interview subject 38 Degrees Executive Director David Babbs put it.<sup>45</sup>

The hybrid organization within a social movement is another important concept to delve into. As Bennett and Segerberg describe, organizationally-enabled networks rely more on an evenly distributed connectivity, where power comes from the organizations themselves as well as the links among websites (“which can include campaign websites as stand-alone organizations in themselves”).<sup>46</sup> These organizationally-enabled networks operate within the complementing logics of collective and connective action, where collective action relies on the more organization driven actions with “backbone networks that host

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew Chadwick, *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 192.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 192.

<sup>46</sup> Bennett and Segerberg, *The Logic of Connective Action*, 198.

the digital engagement mechanisms for individuals to use” and connective action is a more people driven creation of engagement mechanisms.<sup>47</sup>

While much can be written about identity and frames within social movements, I just want to focus briefly on the idea of framing within the networked sphere. Political scientists W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg speak at length in their work *The Logic of Connective Action* about personalized action frames. Rather than the more top-down identity frames of collective action, the ICT driven personalized action frames of connective action gives people the space to connect to the movement in their own way, creating a deeper connection.<sup>48</sup> Not only that, but these personalized action frames are more easily transferable and reappropriated by others, creating new opportunities for engagement with the action, allowing a layering and scaling up of the connective action.<sup>49</sup> These action frames are important because they help the participants and the social movement actors pinpoint the issues they are mobilizing to change.<sup>50</sup>

### **Networks in Digitally Enabled Social Movements**

Returning to the idea of relational mechanisms brought up previously under the topic of brokerage is a necessary step to understanding how networks interact with one another organizationally. This will be an important factor of my study, as I look at the coalition

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 196.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, 197.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, 197.

<sup>50</sup> William Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

relationships within the IFM. For just as it is important to understand the polity model of McAdams, Tarrow, and Tilly or whether the organization is connective or collective, so to is it necessary to study the relationships between the various organizations in a network. By doing so, one can gain a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the network.

Borrowing heavily from Jennifer Hadden's award-winning book, *Networks in Contention*, I want to look at the three areas she lays out that tie into how the relationships between organizations can aid in social movement building. My reason for this is to more fully understand what roles the organizations within the IFM play to explain the connections between the key members.

#### *Information Sharing*

The understanding of the social movement situation and the political opportunities therein is greatly determined by information sharing between organizations, as each organization has a different perspective and connections to the movement.<sup>51</sup> This is an integral part of my reasoning for needing to conduct elite interviews with people at these organizations. By focusing on information sharing in terms of the network and a particular organization's location within that network, Hadden is able to differentiate between various organizations, determining who the key hubs are and how that impacts the flow of information in the network.<sup>52</sup> Also, the

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<sup>51</sup> Hadden, *Networks in Contention*, 109.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, 8.

way an organization weighs the risks and benefits of actions depends in large part on who the organization is connected to, thus making it an interdependent decision.<sup>53</sup>

### *Resource Pooling*

Drawing again on the interconnectedness of the network, resource pooling allows for a redistribution of resources between organizations if needed for an action. Not only that, but Hadden argues that “...resource pooling can be an important factor in the organizational selection of particular forms of collective action because it can allow organizations to overcome their individual resource limitations when they act with others.”<sup>54</sup> Understanding which organizations in the IFM brought which resources will help me understand how resource pooling enabled their successes.

### *Social Influence*

Social influence is the ability to alter the actions of another organization due to their connections with other organizations. For example, if an organization is only connected to three other organizations, two of whom are participating in a direct action, that original organization is more likely to participate in that action than not. As with the other two benefits of network relationships, social influence is

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<sup>53</sup> Mark S. Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology* 78 no. 6 (1973): 1360-1380 as quoted in Hadden, *Networks in Contention*.

<sup>54</sup> Hadden, *Networks in Contention*, 70.

dependent upon the location and connections of the organization within the larger network.<sup>55</sup>

Speaking more on the role of organizations in information sharing, political scientist W. Lance Bennett says that digitally-enabled networks are not only fluid but that hub organizations within them can also “be changed by their place in the flow of communication,” meaning network location impacts the organization.<sup>56</sup> Tying the impact of ICTs on activism within network structure, Bennett generalizes that “uses of the Internet may have important effects on organizational structures, both inside member organizations, and in terms of overall network stability and capacity.”<sup>57</sup> This is part of what my study will seek to determine, as I look at the Internet freedom movement longitudinally to determine the network structure and relationships therein through my elite interviews.

### **Social Network Analysis and Social Movements**

Increasingly Social Network Analysis (SNA) is being used to analyze social movements, particularly as social movements continue to become digitally enabled. The increase of available information through these digital means allows for greater analysis of the network structure of movements. Therefore, for this project, this methodology seemed

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<sup>55</sup> Hadden, *Networks in Contention*, 71.

<sup>56</sup> W. Lance Bennett, “Communicating Global Activism,” 151.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, 156.

like a useful way to dig below the surface a bit when looking at a coalition network structure to uncover otherwise unseen relationships and structures.<sup>58</sup>

As previously stated by the work of McAdams Tilly, and Tarrow (2001), diffusion and brokerage are two of the mechanisms that can cause scale shift. These concepts are also present in SNA literature, though typically brokerage is called bridging within SNA.

Brokerage is usually caused by connecting two diverse clusters together who otherwise would not be connected. This bridging often leads to the flow of information and resources between the clusters, as Hadden pointed out.

In terms of SNA, these bridges are not always obvious because importance is usually only seen as the number of ties a node has to other nodes. However, bridgers, or as sociologist Ronald S. Burt calls them ‘structural holes’, “provide valuable opportunities for innovation, growth, and impact because they have access to perspectives, ideas, and networks that are otherwise unknown to most network members.”<sup>59</sup> In most situations, structural holes play a powerful role in determining diffusion and the flow of information. They have the power to decide on whether or not to bridge the holes or to keep them separate, thereby insuring their position of power.<sup>60</sup> However, since the predominant nature of social movements is to bridge these divides and to expand the network, most

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<sup>58</sup> Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 1.

<sup>59</sup> Bruce Hoppe and Claire Reinelt, “Social Network Analysis and the Evaluation of Leadership Networks,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 21 (2010): 603.

<sup>60</sup> Ronald S. Burt, *Brokerage and Closure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).as quoted in Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 11.

structural hole brokers seek to make the connections and ‘close the triad’ to achieve a common goal.<sup>61</sup>

Social movements are predominantly made up of a group of organizations attempting to achieve a common goal, bound together for a time to achieve this outcome. Since the changing structure of the movement is a vital part of understanding it, learning about the coalitional nature of the network is key. As Krinsky and Crossley note in their overview paper, “coalitions, however, vary considerably in the strength and the number of bonds that hold their members together, in the density of relations among their members...what counts is not just the *presence* of a tie, but its content and its patterns.”<sup>62</sup>

These patterns and content shift as new groups come into contact with the network, creating a dynamic process.<sup>63</sup> The way in which the social network is constructed changes the identity and actions of the members, and the new groups cause the relational structures of the network to change, “structural relations [that] are crucial to sustaining cohesion and solidarity within a group.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Omar Lizardo. “Brokerage is a process not a structure; repeat after me: Brokerage is a process not a . . .” orgtheory.net (blog). 2008. <http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/2008/01/29/brokerage-is-a-process-not-a-structure-repeat-after-me-brokerage-is-a-process-not-a/> as quoted in Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 11.

<sup>62</sup> Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 8.

<sup>63</sup> David Easley and Jon Kleinberg, *Networks, Crowds, and Markets: Reasoning about a Highly Connected World* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 2.1.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, Chapter 2.1

Also, coalitions often have an interesting network structure, usually represented in a strong core with a prevalence of more periphery members. By understanding this structure, it is easier to understand the different relationships within the network, as the actions of the core members will differ from those of the periphery.<sup>65</sup> I will be exploring this structure later on in my study when examining the participation of groups in the three contentious episodes.

In an effort to understand network visualizations, looking at the concept of hubs is important. As can be assumed by their name, hubs are centers of influence within a larger network. Hubs can often be found by the number of other nodes within the network that have ties to them. Due to their centrality and connections, hubs are often of great importance within a network, as they can serve as the central repository of information. Hubs can usually be found bounded within a cluster or bridging across clusters.<sup>66</sup>

The strength of hubs can often be measured by its density, which is the calculation of total number of ties present between actors in the network as compared to the total number of possible ties. The more actual ties there are in relation to the possible ties, the higher the density of the network. A complete network is one in which all possible ties are present.

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<sup>65</sup> Krinsky and Crossley, "Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction," 14.

<sup>66</sup> Hoppe and Reinelt, "Social Network Analysis and the Evaluation of Leadership Networks," 603.

Density within a social movement network is an important measure, due to the fact that the more tightly connected the network, the greater the increase in solidarity, mutual support, and the generation of incentives for self-sacrifice.<sup>67</sup> Not only that, but these close connections help create and sustain the various frames and unique identities associated with the movement.<sup>68</sup> Studying clusters helps identify different groups within the larger network, as clusters are dense, connected ties between a group of nodes.<sup>69</sup>

How can density relate to the building of coalitions, which requires a bridging to other clusters to expand the network? Since most coalitions are a “core-periphery structure”, understanding the actors and the relations in the dense core will help one understand how they are able to connect to members on the periphery of the network.<sup>70</sup> In terms of building the network, the lower-density area of the periphery is where that action is most likely to occur.<sup>71</sup>

## **Summary**

As the Internet freedom movement is mainly an online movement, it is important to understand the interactions between traditional social movement theory and new digital affordances that are changing how action is carried out. Now with an understanding of

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<sup>67</sup> Coleman, 1988; Crossley & Ibrahim, 2012; Gould, 1991, 1993, 1995; Pfaff, 1996, as quoted in Krinsky and Crossley, 2-3.

<sup>68</sup> Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 2-3.

<sup>69</sup> Hoppe and Reinelt, “Social Network Analysis and the Evaluation of Leadership Networks,” 603.

<sup>70</sup> Krinsky and Crossley, “Social Movements and Social Networks: Introduction,” 14.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, 14.

the theoretical context in which the IFM is operating, we can turn back to the main point of this study: to conduct a descriptive analysis of the movement through the lens of digital and social movement theory to learn if the movement is gaining in capacity over time.

## Chapter 3: Research Design

### **Statement of Purpose of Research**

For my thesis I will be looking at how the Internet freedom movement has operated throughout its major iterations in three separate contentious episodes. While much has been written on SOPA-PIPA, as it was and remains the largest Internet protest in history, the amount of scholarly work pertaining to the other two episodes is minimal at best. The goal for taking this deeper look into the movement is to find the main commonalities between each episode, to understand which organizations get involved, how the movement attaches itself to a political opportunity, and what the tactics are. By doing so, we may gain insight into what contentious episodes in the future the IFM might be involved in and how this social movement is pushing its goals towards Internet freedom and digital rights. We might also better understand what works best and when in order to learn what will create a more effective movement.

### **Research Questions**

#### *Research Parameters*

I will only be looking at the three major contentious episodes of the Internet freedom movement: the SOPA-PIPA/Internet Blackout protest of 2012, the Day We Fight Back Against Mass Surveillance of 2013, and the FCC/Net Neutrality/Internet Slowdown protest of 2014. While the Internet freedom movement has many causes, I am looking at these episodes in particular because they were the most visible actions this social

movement has achieved. By analyzing the movement over time, I will be better able to discern patterns that link the movement together.<sup>72</sup>

### *Overarching Research Question*

After reviewing the theoretical literature, I want to examine the following question regarding the IFM: Over the course of the contentious episodes of SOPA-PIPA, surveillance reform, and net neutrality, has the movement been gaining capacity?

### *Research Questions and Measurements*

I define capacity as greater cohesion of political opportunities, tactics, coalition relationships, and networks, so therefore my research questions will reflect these different aspects. Cohesion is an important factor of any social movement as it connotes unity of purpose, which most often leads to more effective and more successful movements.

### *Research Question 1. Political Opportunity Structures*

*As the IFM has progressed, the political opportunity structures have become routinized.*

This research question is important for understanding the context in which the contentious episodes happened and will be measured by unpacking the concept of political opportunity structures in detail, which according to Doug McAdam's includes access to the political system, divisions within the elite, and the availability of elite allies.

### *Access to the Political System*

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<sup>72</sup> Benkler, et al. "Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate," 15.

Lobbying is one of the most quantifiable ways to determine access to the political system. Using data from OpenSecrets.gov, which is a research group tracking money in politics, I will be analyzing the lobbying expenditures of some of the major names within the Internet freedom movement from 2009-2015. Specifically, I will be looking at the members of the Reform Government Surveillance coalition—formed after the Snowden revelations—who are major technology companies. Since these are for-profit companies, rather than advocacy organizations, they have larger monetary resources to spend on lobbying. The technology companies of the Reform Government Surveillance coalition have all participated in each of the three contentious episodes of this study. I will be looking at their expenditures to determine if they have risen between the years of 2009-2015. If they have, their access to the political system has increased, regardless of if the money was actually used for policy issues related to the IFM. Pathways created once are easier to retread. This empirical component shows a routinization of access, which is an important part of my political opportunity structure question.

### *Divisions within the Elite*

To further analyze this, I will be looking at the political situations surrounding the igniting spark of each episode by reading news articles from each of the organizations I looked at, as well as from major news outlets and technology news. I will be looking to see if a pattern has emerged regarding where the divisions within the political elite occur.

### *Availability of Elite Allies*

To determine the Internet freedom movement's use of allies and sponsors within Congress from 2011-2015 (the years pertaining to the episodes I am looking at), I will be looking at press releases documenting support of lawmakers, whether through their personal websites or the websites of participating organizations. The political allies of the IFM will be closely analyzed using the leadership graph methodology of OpenSecrets.gov to determine their power within Congress. This will help prove the routinization of elite allies within the larger research question concerning the political opportunity structures.

### *Research Question 2. Tactics*

*As the IFM has progressed, the similarity of tactics has increased.*

The tactics research question is important for understanding the timeline of actions and will be measured by analyzing the variety of tactics as seen on the rallying and action pages created for each contentious episode. Tactical observations will be obtained by looking at the action pages of each contentious episode, as well as the rallying stage action pages.

SOPA-PIPA:

American Censorship Day<sup>73</sup> (rallying stage); SOPA Strike<sup>74</sup> (major action)

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.americancensorship.net>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.sopastrike.com>

Surveillance Reform:

Stop Watching Us<sup>75</sup> (rallying stage); The Day We Fight Back<sup>76</sup> (major action)

Net Neutrality:

Save the Internet<sup>77</sup> (rallying stage); Battle for the Net<sup>78</sup> (major action)

I will then be analyzing this data by looking at the tactics of the organizations to determine if the commonalities between organizational tactics has increased over the time period contained within the contentious episodes I am studying.

### *Research Question 3. Coalition Relationships*

*As the IFM has progressed, the coalition relationships have become more defined regarding organizational roles.*

This research question is vital for understanding how the organizations worked together and how their relationships impacted that. I will operationalize coalition relationships in three ways, as laid out by Jennifer Hadden in her book *Networks in Contention*,: information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence. This information is more difficult to ascertain from an outsider's perspective, therefore elite interviews with people working at participating organizations are needed to measure this research question.

Much as Benkler, et al. did in their study *Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate*, I too will be

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<sup>75</sup> <https://optin.stopwatching.us/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://thedaywefightback.org>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.savetheinternet.com/sti-home>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.battleforthenet.com/sept10th/>

engaging with key actors within core organizations to better understand the qualitative parts of my research and to gain deeper insights.<sup>79</sup>

To narrow my focus for this research question, I will only be looking at the following organizations: Demand Progress, Open Technology Institute, Free Press, and Access Now.<sup>80</sup> I chose these organizations in order to gain a multifaceted view of the movement.

Demand Progress is the vanguard organization that leads online mobilization; Open Technology Institute is the policy-driven organization that knows how to play the inside game; Free Press is a hybrid organization doing both grassroots mobilization and policy work; Access Now bridges the national and international aspects of the IFM.

By conducting interviews with members of the individuals who work at Demand Progress, Open Technology Institute, Free Press, and Access Now, I will gain first-hand information about how these organizations have used information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence throughout the Internet freedom movement.

By analyzing the interviews, I will use that information to gain a deeper understanding of what roles each of the organizations play in the movement and how this impacts the potential for greater capacity.

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<sup>79</sup> Benkler, et al. "Mapping the SOPA-PIPA Debate," 15.

<sup>80</sup> An effort was made to reach the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a legacy organization in this issue space, but schedules did not align.

#### *Research Question 4. Network Analysis*

*As the IFM has progressed, a common cluster of organizations has formed, establishing a key core and a “loose coalition” of organizations.*

This research question is important for understanding how the network as a whole looked, to determine if there are any unique relationships that can be discovered through visualizations. I will be looking at which organizations have participated in each contentious episode. Participation will be defined as the organization/company having their name under the list of participants on the action page associated with the contentious episode. In my elite actor interviews, in an effort to contextualize my data collection, I will be asking them which organizations they see as the core of this movement.

By having a collection of organizations that have participated in each individual action, I will create a social network analysis visualization to better represent the overall network. By doing so, I will then be able to visualize the core members versus the periphery members of the Internet freedom movement network. This dense cluster will most likely be represented by its high level of information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence, all of which I will ask my elite actors about in my interviews.

#### *Data Limitations*

The topics and contentious episodes I am covering in my study have many moving pieces that have shaped their outcomes. However, due to time and expertise constraints, I will

not be able to cover all of these pieces, nor would it be a narrow enough topic to cover in a Master's thesis.

My data will also be limited by the fact that I am only focusing on four organizations within the IFM rather than the dozens and dozens that participated in each action. This is due to wanting to keep the data manageable, as analyzing the data for the entirety of the organizations involved would be unwieldy.

My interviews will be limited to only covering how the four organizations operated, and not how all of the other organizations participated in each action. I also do not have access to their private communications, emails, or listservs to learn about the coalition building and collaboration that went on behind the scenes, so I can only rely on what is told to me. Limitations are also present within the experiences of those I interviewed, as some people did not work at their current organization during certain contentious episodes, making it difficult at times to gain a fuller picture of organizational relationships over time.

## Chapter 4: What Was Discovered and What It Means

### **Research Question 1: Political Opportunity Structures**

*As the IFM has progressed, the political opportunity structures have been routinized.*

Political opportunity structures are broken down into three parts: access to the political system, divisions among the political elites, and political elite allies.

### **Results of Research Question 1: 1. Access to the Political System**

Using the data collected from OpenSecrets.org, I looked at the lobbying expenditures of Apple, Microsoft, Twitter, AOL Time Warner, Yahoo!, Facebook, Google, and LinkedIn between the years of 2009 and 2015. These companies are a part of a coalition that formed after the Snowden revelations called Reform Government Surveillance. (Evernote and Dropbox are also a part of the coalition, but they have no lobbying expenditures.) All of these companies participated in the three contentious episodes in various capacities. While the IFM did not begin to take shape until 2011, I wanted to show the years prior to that to create a fuller picture of how these companies were spending their money and if there was an increase.

The following table shows the expenditures of the individual companies from 2009-2015, as well as the overall totals. I must note, however, that Google's spending for 2015 is incomplete, as they only reported their lobbying expenses for the first quarter of 2015.

However, news reports note that the \$6 million first quarter spending is a record-breaking high for Google, who has become one of the biggest spenders in Washington.<sup>81</sup>

**Table 1: IFM Company Lobbying Totals from 2009 to 2015**

Company	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Percent Change from '09 to '15
Google	4	5.16	9.68	18.22	15.8	16.83	<b>6</b>	+321*
Facebook	.21	.35	1.35	3.85	6.43	9.34	9.85	+4590
Yahoo!	1.97	2.23	2.47	2.75	2.78	2.94	2.84	+44
Apple	1.5	1.61	2.26	1.97	3.37	4.11	4.48	+199
Microsoft	6.72	6.9	7.33	8.08	10.49	8.33	8.49	+26
Twitter	.0	.0	.0	.0	.09	.31	.5	+5000
AOL Time Warner	4.39	3.09	3.49	3.55	3.64	3.34	2.76	-37
LinkedIn	.0	.0	.0	.09	.12	.19	.2	+2000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18.82mil</b>	<b>19.34mil</b>	<b>26.58mil</b>	<b>38.51mil</b>	<b>42.72mil</b>	<b>45.39mil</b>	<b>34.62mil</b>	<b>+84**</b>

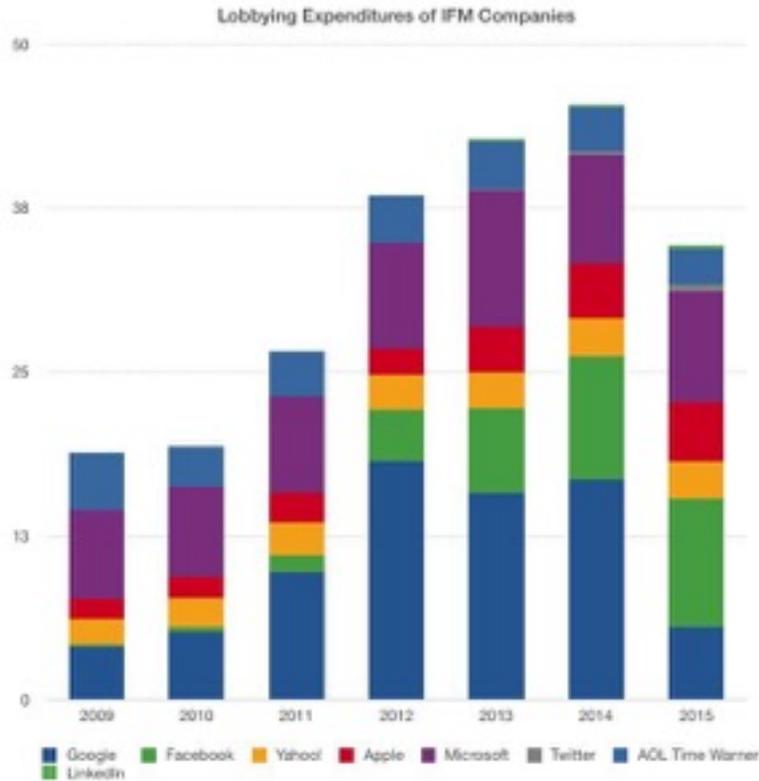
\* This number is based off Google's expenditures from 2009 to 2014

\*\* This number, based off of data from 2009 to 2015, would be even higher if we had Google's lobbying expenditures for all of 2015

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<sup>81</sup> Diane Bartz, "Google Lobbying Spending Reached New High in Early 2015", Reuters, April 21, 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-google-lobbying-idUSKBN0NC1UO20150421>

**Figure 1**



To get a more nuanced view of the expenditures of these companies, I want to look specifically at the changes in spending during the time periods of specific contentious episodes. All three of the contentious episodes I am looking at would have significantly impacted the way these companies do businesses, therefore they have a potential incentive to increase their lobbying spending.

a. SOPA-PIPA:

Build up throughout 2011, including American Censorship Day, and the large day of action, the Internet Blackout, was on January 18, 2012. The SOPA and PIPA bills were indefinitely postponed a few days later.

**Table 2: SOPA-PIPA Lobbying**

Company	2011	2012	Percent Change
Google	9.68	18.22	+88
Facebook	1.35	3.85	+185
Yahoo!	2.47	2.75	+11
Apple	2.26	1.97	-13
Microsoft	7.33	8.08	+10
Twitter	.0	.0	0
AOL Time Warner	3.49	3.55	+2
LinkedIn	.0	.09	+9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26.58mil</b>	<b>38.51mil</b>	<b>+45</b>

## b. Surveillance Reform:

Build up throughout 2013, including the Stop Watching Us action and rally, with the large day of action, the Day We Fight Back on February 11, 2014. The USA Freedom Act, after a second round through Congress, was signed into law on June 2, 2015.

**Table 3: Surveillance Reform Lobbying**

Company	2013	2014	Percent Change
Google	15.8	16.83	+7
Facebook	6.43	9.34	+45
Yahoo!	2.78	2.94	+6
Apple	3.37	4.11	+22
Microsoft	10.49	8.33	-21
Twitter	.09	.31	+244
AOL Time Warner	3.64	3.34	-8
LinkedIn	.12	.19	+58
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42.72mil</b>	<b>45.39mil</b>	<b>+6</b>

c. FCC and Net Neutrality:

Began January 2014, culminating in the Internet Slowdown Day on September 10, 2014, and then the final FCC vote in favor of net neutrality on February 26, 2015.

**Table 4: FCC and Net Neutrality Lobbying**

Company	2014	2015	Percentage Change
Google	16.83	6*	n/a
Facebook	9.34	9.85	+5
Yahoo!	2.94	2.84	-3
Apple	4.11	4.48	+9
Microsoft	8.33	8.49	+2
Twitter	.31	.5	+61
AOL Time Warner	3.34	2.76	-17
LinkedIn	.19	.2	+5
Totals	<b>45.39mil</b>	<b>34.62mil</b>	<b>-24**</b>

\*Google has not reported their total lobbying expenditures for 2015; they have only reported the first quarter

\*\*If Google's numbers were reported, it could be assumed, based on Google's first quarter trajectory, that the total spending for 2015 would be higher than 2014, despite some of the companies' expenditures being a bit smaller in 2015.

**Discussion of Research Question 1: 1. Access to the Political System**

The increased spending of these coalition companies is strengthening the capacity of the larger Internet freedom movement network. As many of the goals of the IFM are policy initiatives, it is important for the IFM to always have these large tech companies participate in their actions, due to the companies' abilities to leverage their economic

powers in lobbying efforts. They are now establishing deep ties within Washington through lobbying, which will further the ability of the smaller tech companies, civil liberties groups, and digital rights groups of the IFM to have more of a stable presence in the political game.

Before diving into the numbers, it is important to provide some context to why I choose these companies and how these companies were operating. These companies are some of the wealthiest and most consistent actors within the IFM, therefore they would be more likely to use their wealth for political aims. The Reform Government Surveillance coalition that all of these companies are a part of did not form until December 2013.

How, therefore, did these companies operate against SOPA-PIPA in 2012 before they coalesced into this coalition? And how did they operate in the different issue space of net neutrality?

All of the companies opposed SOPA-PIPA in the end; however, both Apple and Microsoft were originally supporters of SOPA, due to their being a part of the Business Software Alliance.<sup>82</sup> All of the companies in the RGS coalition were in support of the actions surrounding the Day We Fight Back Against Mass Surveillance and were supporters of the USA FREEDOM Act bill being passed. The FCC net neutrality issue is a bit more complex. Almost all of the members of the RGS coalition signed a letter urging the FCC

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<sup>82</sup> Sean Gallagher, "Even the Business Software Alliance Now Backpedaling on SOPA Support," Ars Technica, November 21, 2011. <http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2011/11/even-the-business-software-alliance-now-backpedaling-on-sopa-support/>

to protect net neutrality, except for Apple and AOL Time Warner.<sup>83</sup> Some assumptions have been made as to why they did not sign (such as the fact that Apple and Comcast were in talks about a streaming-television service while Comcast was in the process of acquiring Time Warner Cable).<sup>84</sup>

Within the Internet freedom movement, there has been at times a lackluster showing of support for actions from the members of this coalition. For example, Microsoft did not participate in the Internet blackout action of SOPA-PIPA, yet they publicly opposed the legislation.<sup>85</sup> But the lobbying numbers present a more nuanced view of these companies' participations in actions. Perhaps their efforts for the greater movement were being exerted behind closed doors. In most cases, during the time of contentious episodes, lobbying expenditures rose. While we do not know what exactly the lobbying money is being spent on or if it relates to IFM issues, these companies are, however, creating connections and pathways into the political system. Wedging themselves into the political system is giving tech companies access to another kind of power, besides mass online mobilization.

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<sup>83</sup> Dear FCC, May 7, 2014, [http://cdn1.vox-cdn.com/assets/4422119/letter\\_to\\_FCC.pdf](http://cdn1.vox-cdn.com/assets/4422119/letter_to_FCC.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> Daisuke Wakabayashi, "Why Didn't Apple Join Opposition to FCC Net Neutrality Proposal?", Wall Street Journal, May 8, 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2014/05/08/why-didnt-apple-join-opposition-to-fcc-net-neutrality-proposal/>

<sup>85</sup> Gregg Keizer, "Microsoft opposes SOPA, declines to join blackout strike", ComputerWorld, January 18, 2012, <http://www.computerworld.com/article/2501511/technology-law-regulation/microsoft-opposes-sopa--declines-to-join-blackout-strike.html>

While some of these companies were created only in the mid to late aughts, their profits have always been relatively substantial. So why the push to increase lobbying? As my numbers show, from 2009 to 2015, there was an 84% increase in spending. If you look at 2009 to 2014, in which the data is complete, the increase is even larger at a 141% increase. These companies' abilities to do business effectively or to maintain customer trust hinged, on part, with the success of the goals of the IFM during these contentious episodes. Therefore, they wanted the policy initiatives to go through.

Also in recent years these tech companies have expanded their reach into many different areas of politics. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, for example, created Fwd.us, a lobbying group working on immigration reform for the purposes of retaining and enticing highly skilled immigrants to work for tech companies, such as Facebook.<sup>86</sup> As Patrick Griffin of American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies says in an OpenSecrets.org article about Silicon Valley lobbying:

*“Looking through history you see evidence of that whether it's the energy industry, or the rail industry, or the telecom industry. The more important they are to the livelihood or the culture of the country — government's involvement with them expands and they respond accordingly. All those regulated industries have*

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<sup>86</sup> Om Malik, “Why I Have Issues With Mark Zuckerberg's Fwd.us”, Gigaom, April 11, 2013, <https://gigaom.com/2013/04/11/why-i-have-issues-with-mark-zuckerbergs-fwd-us/>

*gone through some variation of that story and I think that's what you're watching now."*<sup>87</sup>

I think we are only seeing the beginning of Silicon Valley's influence in Washington. This, however, greatly increases the political access of groups on the frontlines of the Internet freedom movement.

### **Results of Research Question 1: 2. Divisions within the Political Elite**

A political opportunity in which a movement can insert itself and take advantage often comes amidst the discord and debate of the political elites. More often, there is an igniting spark, which sets off the discussion. I will be analyzing the elite divisions at the beginning that eventually led to SOPA/PIPA, the Day We Fight Back, and the FCC/Net Neutrality actions.

#### *SOPA-PIPA*

What was surprising about SOPA-PIPA is how many lawmakers were originally in support of the bills. Unlike the other episodes of contention I am looking at, this episode required a mass mobilization of concerned citizens to put pressure on their representatives before lawmakers became more divided. Quick mobilizations of this type are much easier now due to technological affordances being leveraged by such organizations as Demand Progress and Fight for the Future. But first, it is necessary to go back to COICA (Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act), in which the bill

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<sup>87</sup> Clark Mindock, "West Coast, East Coast: Silicon Valley Blurs the Distinction with Washington Presence", OpenSecrets.org, March 6, 2015. <http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2015/03/west-coast-east-coast-silicon-valley-blurs-the-distinction-with-washington-presence/>

was passed unanimously out of committee, only to be halted and effectively killed by Sen. Wyden, forcing the bill to be reconsidered in a new session and go through committee again.<sup>88</sup> Due to this, two more stringent bills were introduced, first Protect IP Act (PIPA) and then later Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA).

Only a few lawmakers, like Sen. Wyden, were speaking out against the bills at first. Leading the charge of the mobilization to sway more lawmakers were organizations like Demand Progress, who wanted to prevent a partisan divide among the elites by instead bridging them together on the issue to defeat the powerful Hollywood lobby. After PIPA was introduced, those at Demand Progress—with a growing base of supporters who were watching the issue closely—invited libertarian activists to participate in a conference, as they would undoubtedly be against such government overreach. As David Segal describes, “Fighting PIPA seemed like an opportunity to build a powerful Left-Right alliance and shock the establishment into recognizing the broad base of (still largely latent) opposition to the bill.”<sup>89</sup>

As the opposition grew and American Censorship Day happened, lawmakers started to slowly trickle over to the opposition side. After the Internet Blackout happened on January 18, 2012, that trickle turned to a flood. By the end of the campaign, only fifty-

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<sup>88</sup> David Segal, “Now I Work for Demand Progress,” in *Hacking Politics: how geeks, progressives, the Tea Party, gamers, anarchists, and suits teamed up to defeat SOPA and save the Internet*, ed. David Moon, Patrick Ruffini, and David Segal (New York: OR Books, 2013), 61.

<sup>89</sup> David Segal, “The Tea Party Enters the Fray,” in *Hacking Politics: how geeks, progressives, the Tea Party, gamers, anarchists, and suits teamed up to defeat SOPA and save the Internet*, ed. David Moon, Patrick Ruffini, and David Segal (New York: OR Books, 2013), 81.

five Senators and Representatives still supported the bills, before the bills were indefinitely postponed on January 20, 2012.

### *The Day We Fight Back*

The catalyst for this action must begin with Edward Snowden, the former NSA contractor who blew the whistle on massive surveillance conducted by the United States and its Five Eyes partners (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada). After the revelations, the House Intelligence Committee convened a panel with NSA officials, after which many of the members of the committee reaffirmed the need for surveillance to thwart terrorist attempts.<sup>90</sup> However, some lawmakers wanted surveillance reform.

Due to the more post-Tea Party, libertarian makeup of Congress, the possibilities for greater divisions from mainstream Republicans and Democrats had increased. But, just as with SOPA-PIPA, the Day We Fight Back was about government overreach, a primary concern of libertarians. This led, yet again, to a progressive-libertarian alliance against the more traditional Republicans and Democrats, further strengthening the alliance created during SOPA-PIPA. When Representative Justin Amash (R-MI), considered more libertarian, introduced his amendment to defund the portion of the NSA that does bulk

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<sup>90</sup> Patricia Zengerle and Tabassum Zakaria, “NSA Head, Lawmakers Defend Surveillance Programs,” Reuters, June 19, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-security-idUSBRE95H15O20130619>

collection, a bipartisan lobbying effort from both Republican House Speaker John Boehner and Democratic Minority leader Nancy Pelosi sought to shut it down.<sup>91</sup>

Into this fold stepped the organizations and companies of the Internet freedom movement who saw the congressional desire for reform as a perfect opportunity to create pressure to make sure real reform happened. Using both that desire, as well as the citizen anger they felt from their base, the IFM began to organize.

### *FCC/Net Neutrality*

A court case brought by Verizon set off the chain of events that was to end up protecting net neutrality. On January 14, 2014 a DC Circuit Court ruling overturned the 2010 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Open Internet Order.<sup>92</sup> Now the task of figuring out how to regulate net neutrality was back in the hands of the FCC.

The FCC had two possible options:

1. Reclassify broadband providers as common carriers subject to regulation under Title II of the Telecommunications Act, which would give the FCC more regulatory authority and make the Internet a “telecommunications service”. This is what pro-net neutrality advocates wanted.

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<sup>91</sup> Spencer Ackerman and Paul Lewis, “NSA Controversy Gives Unfamiliar Allies Impetus For and Against Reform,” The Guardian, August 2, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/02/nsa-washington-congress-obama-reform>

<sup>92</sup> Robert Faris, Hal Roberts, Bruce Etling, Dalia Othman, and Yochai Benkler, “Score Another One for the Internet?: The Role of the Networked Public Sphere in the U.S. Net Neutrality Policy Debate”, The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, February 2015, 11.

2. Still consider the Internet as an “information service” under Title I of the Telecommunications Act. This is what companies such as Comcast wanted.

Divisions within Congress began almost immediately after the court case. Democrats created a bill that would restore the FCC’s net neutrality rules, but in a GOP-controlled House it was unlikely to pass, as most Republicans did not want to extend government regulatory power.<sup>93</sup> This episode was different for the IFM because their traditional libertarian allies would not be standing by them with this issue, due to the fact that it would be granting a government body more power. Instead the fight for net neutrality would be divided among more traditional partisan lines, with Democrats for and Republicans against.

When FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler opened up new proceedings, which for the FCC includes a time for public comments, this became a key opportunity for the IFM. This would end up becoming the central mobilizing point around which a good portion of the IFM organizing would focus on.

### **Discussion of Research Question 1: 2. Divisions within the Political Elite**

A key element allowing the IFM to be as successful as it has been is their broad coalitions, particularly within the halls of Congress itself. The fact that the traditional, progressive allies of the IFM are working in tandem with libertarian allies makes it more

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<sup>93</sup> Mike Ludwig, “Democrats Introduce Bill to Restore FCC’s Net Neutrality Rules.” Truthout, February 4, 2014, <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/21659-democrats-introduce-bill-to-restore-fccs-net-neutrality-rules>

difficult for other lawmakers to ignore them. As Nathan White of Access Now said, “...tech policy and really human rights are not partisan. They don’t really fit the traditional left vs right or libertarian vs socialist type of model. So you get organizations where it wouldn’t be weird if the NRA and ACLU are in an office together... the friendships and the alliances that people build here are not partisan.”<sup>94</sup>

Not only that, but this ability to take advantage of these more traditional elite divisions to create a unique brokerage coalition surrounding SOPA-PIPA, later led to those same partnerships being used again through the mechanism of diffusion during the Day We Fight Back.

### **Results of Research Question 1: 3. Political Elite Allies**

The following is a look at some of the key Congressional allies that have aligned most often and most outspokenly with the missions of the IFM. Some of these allies are noteworthy due to their persistent fighting for digital rights and Internet freedom, while others are noteworthy due to their position on powerful congressional committees.

Despite bipartisanship being an important part of the Internet freedom movement, allies will fluctuate based on the particulars of the issue, as I previously mentioned. However, the following allies have been fairly steadfast supporters within this movement.

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<sup>94</sup> Nathan White (Senior Legislative Manager at Access Now) in discussion with the author, March 15, 2016.

## *Leadership Graphs*

While many of the following Congressional allies were listed in the press releases and articles relating to the contentious episodes I looked at, I wanted to find a more robust way to analyze their importance for the movement. The congressional data website, Govtrack.us, has a unique methodology for analyzing the ideology and leadership levels of each member of Congress. The data, however, only goes back to 2013. The leadership score is determined by the number of members of Congress who cosponsor the bills of a specific member of Congress. This analysis is based off of the Google PageRank idea that “the more members of Congress that cosponsor member X’s bills, and the more cosponsors those other members of Congress have, the higher X’s leadership score.”<sup>95</sup> In a way, this is like the social network analysis concept of eigenvector centrality, where a node is more connected not necessarily by the number of connections it has, but by the connections of those connections.

This is why these leadership graphs are so unique and important:

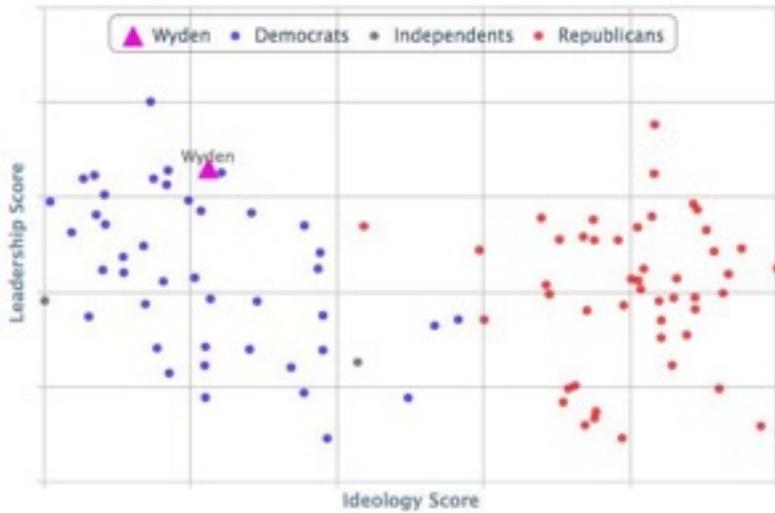
*“These leadership and ideology scores give us a view into Congress that is normally hidden to us. We can’t observe leadership. We’re not there, in Congress, to see it. We’re not in the meetings where you can see relationships form. But those relationships are known to the representatives and senators. It’s obvious to them. They know whether they lead or follow. Their staff know. This is a sort of*

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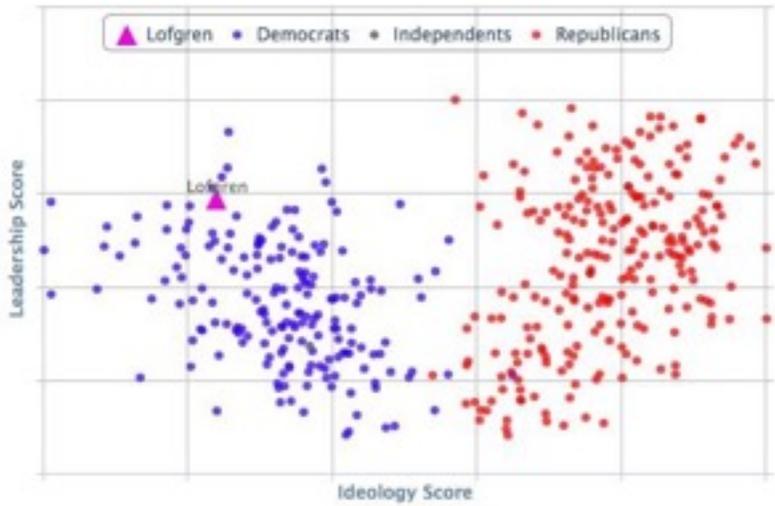
<sup>95</sup> GovTrack Analysis Methodology, Leadership. <https://www.govtrack.us/about/analysis#leadership>

*social knowledge that is locked within the institution of Congress, unless we get a little creative with how we try to observe it.”<sup>96</sup>*

**Figure 2: Leadership Graph of Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)**  
Committee: Senate Select Intelligence Committee



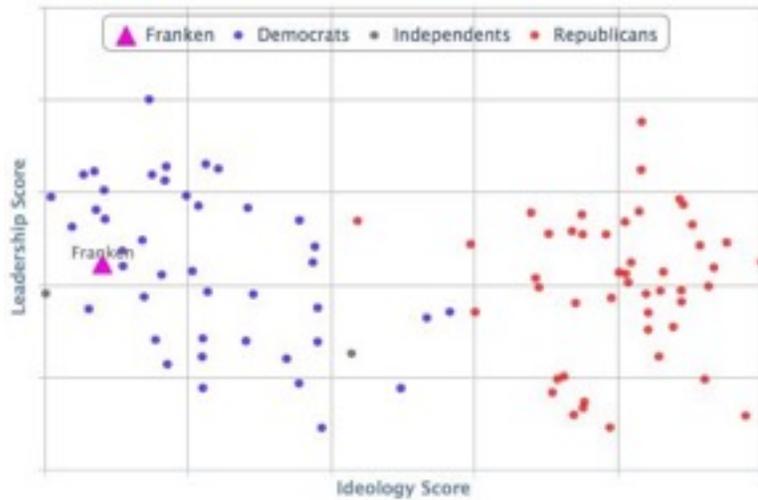
**Figure 3: Leadership Graph of Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**  
Committees: House Committee on the Judiciary; Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet



<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

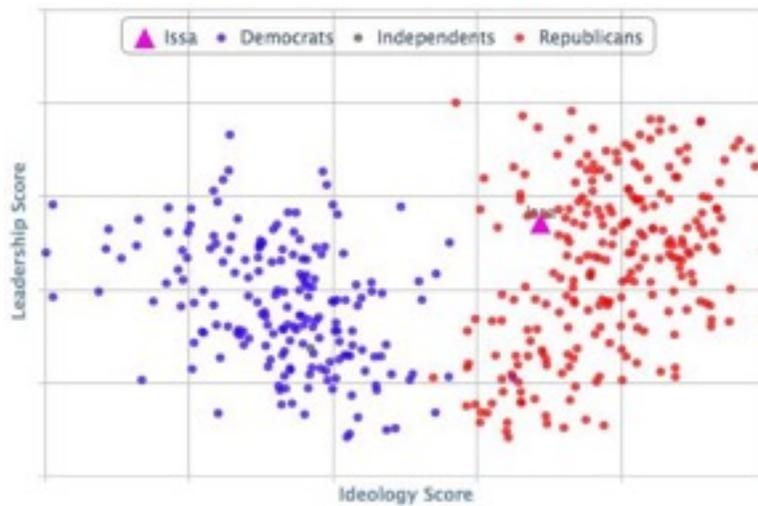
**Figure 4: Leadership Graph of Sen. Al Franken (D-MN)**

Committee: Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Ranking Member of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law



**Figure 5: Leadership Graph of Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA)**

Committee: Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet



## Discussion of Research Question 1: 3. Political Elite Allies

### Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR)

#### *Background*

Senator Ron Wyden, a Democrat from Oregon, is the chief ally for the Internet freedom movement, and due to this some call him the Internet's senator.<sup>97</sup> He is an outspoken critic of attempts to curb Internet freedom, and he has been a frequent collaborator within the IFM.

Most notable is his role in American Censorship Day in the lead-up to the Internet Blackout of the SOPA-PIPA episode. In a video for the website that was created for the action by Demand Progress, Sen. Wyden urged people to sign their names to the petition to oppose SOPA-PIPA.<sup>98</sup>

Working in tandem with Demand Progress, Sen. Wyden created a new tactic for the movement: he would read the names of the petition signers during his filibuster of the bills (this incentivization tactic was never used, as the bills were killed before he could do it).<sup>99</sup> Being a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, the Snowden revelations that led to the Day We Fight Back Against Mass Surveillance action were not a surprise to

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<sup>97</sup> Eric Geller, "Ron Wyden, the Internet's Senator," The Daily Dot, March 24, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/ron-wyden-profile-senate-privacy-surveillance-reform/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://stopcensorship.org/>

<sup>99</sup> David Segal, "What Was Lamar Smith Thinking?" in *Hacking Politics*, 105.

Sen. Wyden.<sup>100</sup> Due to his unique knowledge and strong surveillance reform desires, Sen. Ron Wyden was a key ally for the IFM, as it was the goal of the coalition during the Day We Fight Back to make sure his Committee mate Sen. Dianne Feinstein’s FISA Improvements Act was not passed and that the surveillance reforming USA FREEDOM Act was. With all of this in mind, it is not surprising that Sen. Wyden was also a big supporter of the FCC’s decision to reclassify the Internet and protect net neutrality.<sup>101</sup>

### *Leadership Graph*

From his leadership graph, one can see that he has a high leadership score; in fact, he is ranked fifth highest among all Senators.<sup>102</sup> In terms of his ideology, Sen. Wyden is more centrist amongst the Democratic Senators, which may also explain his higher leadership score. The fact that he holds such a high score is beneficial for this movement, as his support on their issues—including opposition or support of certain bills—could potentially sway the other members of his party and those across the aisle.

### *Committees*

Most notably, within the issue spaces I am looking at, Sen. Wyden is a member of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee. He is the second highest among Senate Democrats in terms of committee positions, with a leadership position on one committee and two

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<sup>100</sup> Geller, “Ron Wyden, the Internet’s Senator.”

<sup>101</sup> Mike Rogoway, “Net Neutrality: As FCC Readies Vote, ‘things have shifted’ for Oregon lawmakers Walden and Wyden,” *The Oregonian*, February 25, 2015, [http://www.oregonlive.com/silicon-forest/index.ssf/2015/02/net\\_neutrality\\_as\\_fcc\\_readies.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/silicon-forest/index.ssf/2015/02/net_neutrality_as_fcc_readies.html)

<sup>102</sup> Senator Ron Wyden’s 2015 Report Card, GovTrack.us, [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/ron\\_wyden/300100/report-card/2015](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/ron_wyden/300100/report-card/2015)

subcommittees.<sup>103</sup> The FISA Improvements Act that the IFM wanted defeated during the Day We Fight Back action, as well as the USA FREEDOM Act that the IFM wanted passed, went through Wyden’s Senate Select Intelligence Committee.

### **Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

#### *Background*

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, a Democrat from California, is a long-term ally of Wyden: they coordinated their efforts to stop PIPA (Wyden in the Senate) and SOPA (Lofgren in the House).<sup>104</sup> Rep. Lofgren even censored her website during American Censorship Day. Rep. Lofgren is in the highest 10% of long-term (10+ years) lawmakers who support government transparency bills.<sup>105</sup> Due to that, she opposed the first USA FREEDOM Act because parts of the bill had been weakened by those with pro-intelligence allegiances.<sup>106</sup> However, Rep. Lofgren did vote for the stronger, second version of the bill that was passed and signed into law in June 2015. Rep. Lofgren also has a record of bipartisanship for bills that she has introduced.<sup>107</sup> Bipartisanship is something the IFM has consistently sought out in an effort to achieve effective change.

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Geller, “Ron Wyden, the Internet’s Senator.”

<sup>105</sup> Representative Zoe Lofgren’s 2015 Report Card, GovTrack.us, [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe\\_lofgren/400245/report-card/2015](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe_lofgren/400245/report-card/2015)

<sup>106</sup> David Kravets, “NSA Reform Falters as House Passes Guttled USA Freedom Act”, Ars Technica, May 22, 2014, <http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2014/05/nsa-reform-falters-as-house-passes-guttled-usa-freedom-act/>

<sup>107</sup> Representative Zoe Lofgren’s 2015 Report Card.

### *Leadership Graph*

As can be seen from her graph, Rep. Lofgren is more towards the progressive side on the ideology score, which is somewhat surprising given the bipartisanship cosponsors of her bills. Among House Democrats' leadership scores, she is in the top ten. This make Rep. Lofgren a valuable partner for the IFM in leading the conversation. In 2014, she held the fifth highest leadership score among House Democrats; in 2013, she was the first among the same demographic.<sup>108</sup>

### *Committees*

Within the House Committee on the Judiciary, she is a member of the subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet. Due in part to her membership on this committee, she is an important ally for various Internet organizations and companies.<sup>109</sup>

## **Senator Al Franken (D-MN)**

### *Background*

Sen. Franken has an interesting history within the IFM. Many netroots activists were encouraged by his previous record on net neutrality and privacy, so the fact that Franken

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<sup>108</sup> Representative Zoe Lofgren's 2014 and 2013 Report Cards, GovTrack.us, [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe\\_lofgren/400245/report-card/2014](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe_lofgren/400245/report-card/2014) and [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe\\_lofgren/400245/report-card/2013](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/zoe_lofgren/400245/report-card/2013)

<sup>109</sup> Representative Zoe Lofgren, Innovation and Technology, <https://lofgren.house.gov/issues/issue/?IssueID=111856>

was a supporter of PIPA until the bitter end came as a shock. Perhaps this was due in part to the senator's strong ties to Hollywood, which was the major pro-PIPA backer.<sup>110</sup>

While Sen. Franken supports NSA surveillance, he voted to pass the USA FREEDOM Act, which would curtail surveillance. This is due in part to his long record at wanting to increase government surveillance transparency.<sup>111</sup> Many of the bills that he introduces have to do with limiting surveillance and increasing privacy, making him an important ally for the IFM in the past and in future actions. Sen. Franken was also an outspoken advocate for the FCC's reclassification of the Internet, even trading barbs with Sen. Ted Cruz.<sup>112</sup>

Perhaps not a surprise, Sen. Franken's bills and resolutions in 2015 gained cosponsorship of powerful committee members, making him the fifth highest among Senate Democrats in terms of powerful cosponsors. Franken also cosponsored the most bills and resolutions than any other Senator, demonstrating his willingness to work with others.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Brett Neely, "Franken, Klobuchar in Tough Spot on Internet Piracy Bill," MPR News, January 20, 2012, <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2012/01/20/minn-sopa-pipa>

<sup>111</sup> Senator Al Franken, "Sen. Franken Backs Bipartisan Senate Bill to Boost Transparency over Government Surveillance Programs," June 30, 2014, [https://www.franken.senate.gov/?p=press\\_release&id=2880](https://www.franken.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=2880)

<sup>112</sup> Josh Israel, "Al Franken Explains Why Ted Cruz Doesn't Understand the Internet," Think Progress, November 16, 2014, <http://thinkprogress.org/politics/2014/11/16/3592811/al-franken-ted-cruz-wrong-net-neutrality/>

<sup>113</sup> Senator Al Franken's 2015 Report Card, [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/alan\\_franken/412378/report-card/2015](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/alan_franken/412378/report-card/2015)

### *Leadership Graph*

Franken consistently scores in the middle range in terms of his leadership score, despite the powerful cosponsorship of committee members of his bills.

### *Committees*

Sen. Franken is the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law, which is an important ally for the IFM to have regarding surveillance issues. He is also on the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, which had PIPA and the USA FREEDOM Act pass through it.

### **Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA)**

#### *Background*

This quote sums up the role Rep. Issa is playing: “today the Republicans are making a play to become the Party of Silicon Valley, with Congressman Darrell Issa helming the charge.”<sup>114</sup> He has been steadily involved in IFM issues. To counteract SOPA-PIPA, Rep. Issa joined with Sen. Wyden to create the Online Protection and Enforcement of Digital Trade Act (OPEN), which later attracted a coalition of other lawmakers, such as Rep. Zoe Lofgren and Rep. Anna Eshoo.<sup>115</sup> Rep. Issa was a major proponent of the USA FREEDOM Act, as he was a co-sponsor for the bill. But like Lofgren, he opposed the

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<sup>114</sup> David Segal, “That Was Amazing. Can We Do It Again Sometime?” in *Hacking Politics*, 272.

<sup>115</sup> SOPA/PIPA Timeline, ProPublica, <http://projects.propublica.org/sopa/timeline.html>

revised version of the bill.<sup>116</sup> However, when the new version of the USA FREEDOM Act was sent through Congress in 2015, he was again a co-sponsor and supporter of the bill that was ultimately passed. However, Rep. Issa was against the FCC stepping in to regulate net neutrality, joining with the chorus of other House Republicans calling it “Obamacare for the Internet”.<sup>117</sup>

### *Leadership Graph*

What is interesting to note about his graph is his more centrist position within Republicans, which may explain why he is able to sometimes agree with the same legislation and opinions as the IFM. However, Rep. Issa does not hold a strong leadership score according to GovTrack, where he regularly scores in the 90s out of 230+ House Republicans.<sup>118</sup>

### *Committees*

Rep. Issa is the Chairman of the powerful House Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, of which Rep. Zoe Lofgren is also a member.

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<sup>116</sup> Darrell Issa, “Issa on USA Freedom Act Vote: Revised Bill Doesn’t Do Enough To Stop NSA Abuses,” May 22, 2014, <http://issa.house.gov/press-releases/2014/05/issa-on-usa-freedom-act-vote-revised-bill-doesnt-do-enough-to-stop-nsa-abuses/>

<sup>117</sup> Philip Bump, “How ‘Net Neutrality’ Won, and ‘Obamacare for the Internet’ Lost,” *The Washington Post*, February 26, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/02/26/how-net-neutrality-won-and-obamacare-for-the-internet-lost/>

<sup>118</sup> Representative Darrell Issa’s Report Cards, GovTrack.us [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell\\_issa/400196/report-card/2013](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell_issa/400196/report-card/2013) [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell\\_issa/400196/report-card/2014](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell_issa/400196/report-card/2014) [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell\\_issa/400196/report-card/2015](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/darrell_issa/400196/report-card/2015)

## **Overall Analysis**

By conducting this deeper dive analysis of the political elite allies of the IFM, it can be seen that they have powerful leadership roles within their party and/or powerful committee membership roles. This also highlights the importance of understanding the specifics of the issue space before approaching a particular ally, as their support is not always a guaranteed thing, as was the case with Sen. Al Franken and Rep. Darrell Issa. However, this analysis does show a further routinization of elite allies as proposed in my research question, as these four allies have become the major supporters of the movement.

## **Research Question 2: Tactical Analysis**

*As the IFM has progressed, the similarity of tactics has increased.*

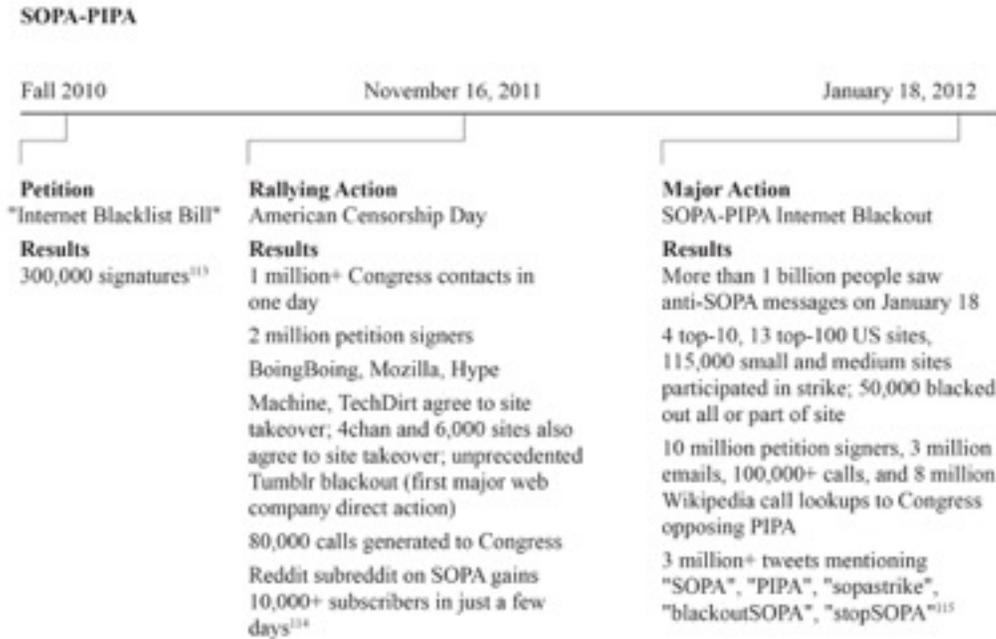
## **Results of Research Question 2**

For the three contentious episodes I looked at, I analyzed the main tactics of each particular episodes by looking at their corresponding action pages. A pattern of tactics used has emerged based off the three contentious episodes I looked at. The tactics are: petitions, a rallying action, and a major action. I define a major action as the culmination of the previous stages that also seeks to tackle the major contentious issue.

While there were many other smaller segments and build-ups between these three tactic types, these were the main building blocks of mobilization and change. After the rousing success of the SOPA-PIPA protests, the pattern has been repeated in subsequent IFM

actions. These patterns rely on each of the roles and skills of the groups participating, from mass mobilization to policy construction.

**Figure 6: Tactic Timeline of SOPA-PIPA**

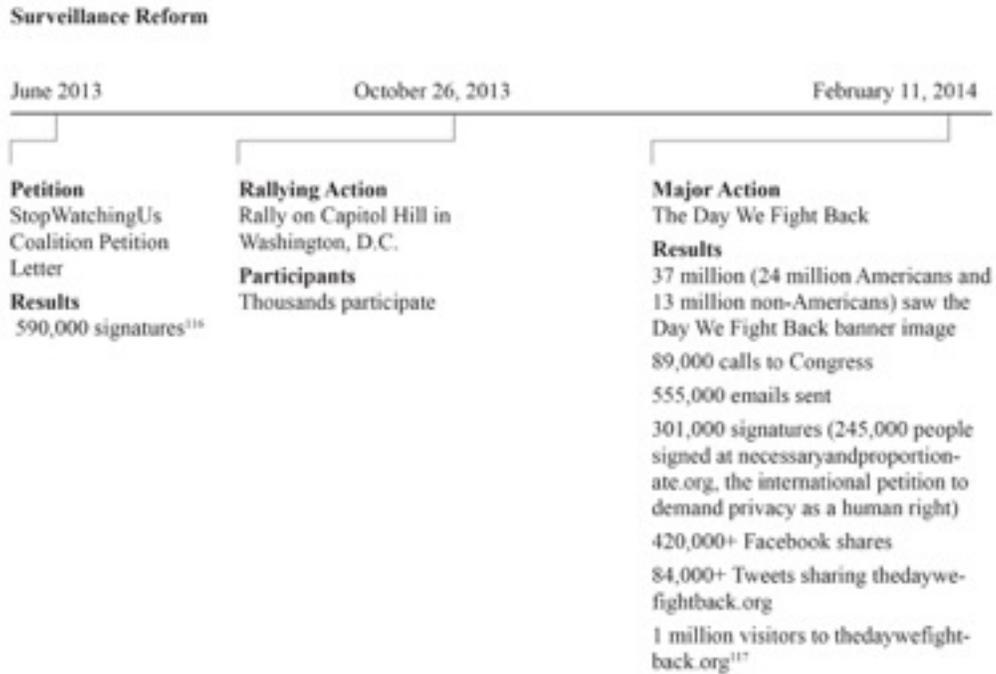


<sup>119</sup> David Segal, "Now I Work for Demand Progress," in Hacking Politics, 60.

<sup>120</sup> SOPA Strike Timeline, <http://www.sopastrike.com/timeline>

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

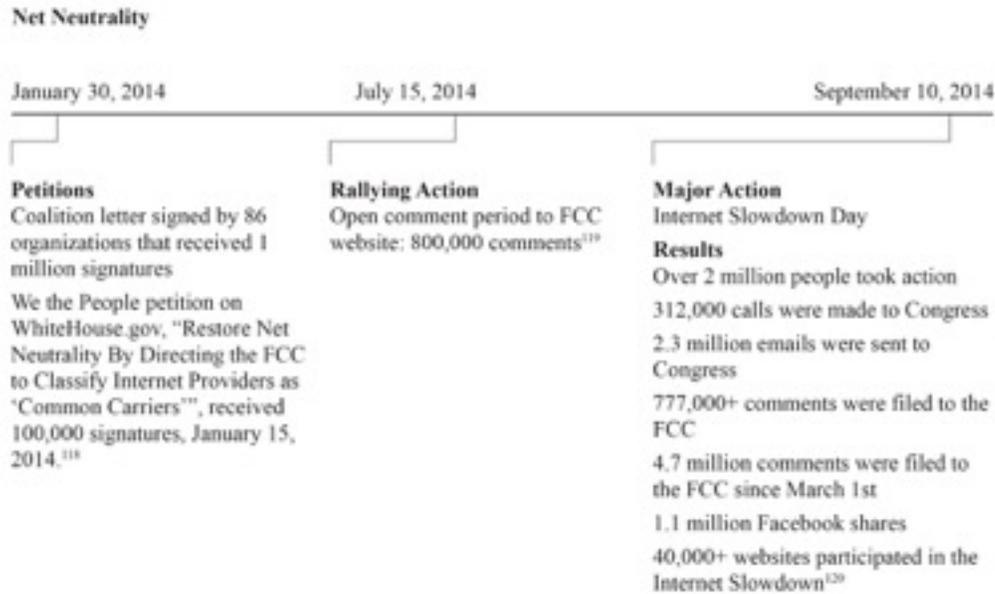
**Figure 7: Tactic Timeline of Surveillance Reform**



<sup>122</sup> Stop Watching Us, <https://optin.stopwatching.us/>

<sup>123</sup> The Day We Fight Back, <https://thedaywefightback.org>

**Figure 8: Tactic Timeline of Net Neutrality**



<sup>124</sup> "Restore Net Neutrality By Directing the FCC to Classify Internet Providers as 'Common Carriers'", January 15, 2014, <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/restore-net-neutrality-directing-fcc-classify-internet-providers-common-carriers>

<sup>125</sup> Robert Faris, et al., "Score Another One for the Internet?"

<sup>126</sup> Battle for the Net, <https://www.battleforthenet.com/sept10th/>

## *Petitions*

As a political opportunity begins to open, specific groups within the IFM start to raise awareness about the current issue. The groups that start this process are usually the more connective groups with large email lists whose primary purpose is mobilization, such as Demand Progress and Fight for the Future. One of the most effective ways of building mobilization is by creating a petition asking people to sign on to show their support or opposition of a certain measure.

Before SOPA-PIPA, there was the bill COICA, which led to the group Demand Progress sending out its first major petition against this so-called “Internet Blacklist Bill”, a petition that ended up garnering 300,000 signatures.<sup>127</sup> In the anger surrounding Snowden’s surveillance revelations, petitions went out again. The StopWatchingUs coalition petition letter received over 590,000 signatures.<sup>128</sup> With the FCC/Net Neutrality action, there was a coalition letter signed by 86 organizations that received over 1 million signatories.<sup>129</sup> There was also a We the People petition on the White House website, signed by over 100,000 people, urging President Obama to request that the FCC reclassify the Internet.<sup>130</sup> Another integral part of petitions are the phone calls directed at

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<sup>127</sup> David Segal, “Now I Work for Demand Progress,” in *Hacking Politics*, 60.

<sup>128</sup> Stop Watching Us, <https://optin.stopwatching.us/>

<sup>129</sup> Lorenzo Franceschi-Bicchierai, “The Fight to Save Net Neutrality: 1 Million Signatures and Counting”, Mashable, January 30, 2014, <http://mashable.com/2014/01/30/fcc-net-neutrality-petition/#HnKHpbyc8Zqr> and the Dear FCC Reclassify the Internet Petition Letter, Free Press, January 30, 2014, <http://www.freepress.net/resource/105623/dear-fcc-reclassify-broadband>

<sup>130</sup> “Restore Net Neutrality By Directing the FCC to Classify Internet Providers as ‘Common Carriers’”, January 15, 2014, <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/restore-net-neutrality-directing-fcc-classify-internet-providers-common-carriers>

Congress, which was made much easier during the net neutrality debate due to the creation of a new tool that would send daily phone calls to the FCC. According to Battle for the Net, “the tool was used by 2,000 daily callers at its peak and over 50,000 total”.<sup>131</sup>

### *Rallying Actions*

After the initial petition stage, when enough public support has been demonstrated, there is usually a smaller day of action to rally more support and to build organizational coalitions before the big day of action later on. This is usually where the coalition measures its current capacity.

Before the Internet Blackout of SOPA-PIPA there was American Censorship Day on November 16, 2011 organized mainly by Fight for the Future. The results of this action can be seen on the timeline at the start of this section. Prior to the Day We Fight Back on February 11, 2014, many of the same organizations and companies banded together for the Stop Watching Us action on October 26, 2013. The Stop Watching Us action was a hybrid action, with the aforementioned online petition as well as an offline rally. The rally drew thousands to the steps of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.<sup>132</sup> The FCC/Net Neutrality preliminary action revolved around the public comment period. The first submission window for comments saw the number reach 800,000, spurred on in part by

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<sup>131</sup> Battle for the Net. <https://www.battleforthenet.com/how-we-won/>

<sup>132</sup> Jim Newell, “Thousands Gather in Washington for anti-NSA ‘Stop Watching Us’ Rally,” *The Guardian*, October 26, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/26/nsa-rally-stop-watching-washington-snowden>

advocacy efforts by the EFF and Battle for the Net website, as well as a popular YouTube video of comedian John Oliver urging viewers to submit comments to the FCC.<sup>133</sup>

### *Major Actions*

All of these rallying actions were building grounds for the bigger events created out of the new coalitions formed. Most famous of these actions is the Internet Blackout of January 18, 2012 in protest of SOPA-PIPA, which was the largest online protest in history. The action also included offline protests outside of senators' offices in New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C., in which thousands participated.<sup>134</sup> The results of this action can be seen on the timeline at the start of this section.

The second major action of the IFM was the Day We Fight Back. It was organized by Demand Progress, Access Now, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Fight for the Future, Internet Taskforce, Free Press, Mozilla, Reddit, ThoughtWorks, and BoingBoing. Staging the action in the early months of 2014 was meant to coincide with the one year anniversary of the death of Internet activist Aaron Swartz and the two year anniversary of the SOPA-PIPA Internet Blackout.

The results of the Day We Fight Back protest on February 11, 2014 can be seen on the corresponding timeline at the start of this section.

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<sup>133</sup> Robert Faris, et al. "Score Another One for the Internet?"

<sup>134</sup> SOPA Strike, <http://www.sopastrike.com/timeline/>

The international aspect of this protest against mass surveillance made it unique, allowing organizations like Access Now with their international reach to engage in advocacy efforts overseas. The Necessary and Proportionate petition—created by Access Now, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and Privacy International—was one of the ways in which this was done, encouraging people to sign on demanding privacy from surveillance to be considered a universal human right.<sup>135</sup> Leveraging international pressure was a wise tactic to encourage US lawmakers to reform government surveillance, especially as there already was international outrage due to US surveillance overseas.

Lastly, the FCC/Net Neutrality debate resulted in an online action: the Internet Slowdown on September 10, 2014. This event was organized mainly by Fight for the Future and Demand Progress, and the main tactic was having as many participating websites as possible display the “spinning wheel of death”, as a way to drive home the point that the lack of net neutrality would create slow lanes for Internet traffic. The results of this action can be seen on the corresponding timeline at the beginning of this section.

One thing all of the major actions had in common was the creation of action websites, a repository of information that all of the participating organizations could point to as a place for citizens to sign the petition and find out about rallies, to get information about the legislation, and to find ways to contact their members of Congress. By creating a central portal for the action, this allowed organizers to better measure results and to streamline their actions.

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<sup>135</sup> “July 2013 version: International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance,” Necessary and Proportionate, <https://en.necessaryandproportionate.org/text/2013/07/10>

### *Post-Major Action Pressure*

After the major action, the coalitions formed do not let up if their goals have not been achieved. However, luckily for the groups involved, this is often not the case. After the Internet Blackout, both SOPA and PIPA were indefinitely postponed in Congress. After the deluge of comments to the FCC, as well as President Obama's statement in support of net neutrality, the FCC voted in favor of net neutrality. However, surveillance reform was not as clear cut. Part of the reason for that had to do with the fact that the action was about pushing for one bill and against another, rather than just being purely against a bill. Also surveillance is entrenched into many different aspects of the government, making it harder to reform. Not only that but surveillance and privacy are difficult and nebulous issues to rally around. As privacy scholars Colin Bennett and Charles Raab note these issues create "an inescapable dilemma about how to bring together a larger social movement for an issue that everyone might potentially benefit from at some point in the future, but for which few can see any direct, visible, and personal gain."<sup>136</sup> Many of the same groups are still advocating for surveillance reform now, hoping for another political opportunity to open up.

### *Citizen Participation*

In an effort to create greater involvement in the protests, organizers created some unique and fun tactics. For example, during the American Censorship Day protest, Fight for the Future enabled a way for participants to post to social media with part of their message

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<sup>136</sup> Colin Bennett and Charles Raab, *The Governance of Privacy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006), 233.

blacked out. The only way people could unveil their friend’s message would be to contact their member of Congress.<sup>137</sup> For *The Day We Fight Back*, there really was not any interesting attempts at creating personalized action frames for the participants, besides having profile and banner photos available for download. With the *Battle for the Net* website for the Internet Slowdown, the organizers provided multiple ways for participants to show their support: banner images, Twitter profile images of the “spinning wheel of death”, and even app push notifications for those who were app creators. It was at this time that the website, <https://www.protestsign.org/>, launched, allowing any screen to be used as a protest sign. For the net neutrality debate, the website displayed the image #InternetEmergency. To make things incredibly easy and to further personalize the action, over 535 websites—one for each member of Congress—was created for citizens to call in or email their Congressman to make sure they did not give their support to bills proposed that would stop net neutrality.<sup>138</sup>

## **Discussion of Research Question 2**

By doing a longitudinal comparison, I am able to better see the process patterns that emerge. These tactics capitalize on aspects of the digital affordances of ICTs, such as lowered costs to participation, the rapid spread and replicability of certain e-tactic mechanisms like petitions, and contextualizing actions to fit the individual.

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<sup>137</sup> David Segal, “Nearing the Point of No Return,” in *Hacking Politics*, 120.

<sup>138</sup> Battle for the Net <https://www.battleforthenet.com/how-we-won/>

Petitions allow people to quickly participate in an action, and the fact that many of these petitions are pre-written makes it even more convenient for someone to quickly sign their name. Even with technological advances, they are still one of the most effective mechanisms for showing Congress how the public feels about an issue. Due to the ease with which petitions can be signed and shared, they allow for a larger number of people to participate in comparison to other tactics. The organizations that host the petition websites are often the more connective organizations, leveraging their technological affordances based on the interactivity of their websites. But different organizations often used different petitions, especially at the start of the mobilizations. It was not until later, particularly when there was a central portal website, that things become more cohesive.

This was a key hurdle for the coalitions to get over. One of the ways in which this was achieved by the time the Stop Watching Us petition came around was through a technical workaround, according to David Segal, Executive Director of Demand Progress, and Josh Levy, Advocacy Director at Access Now. For the central petition website, when a participant input their email there was a checkbox saying “add me to (coalition member)’s website.” The name of the coalition member would rotate between every member every time the page was reloaded. This meant that participating organizations would have an equal opportunity on growing their email list. However, this method requires a commitment from all participating groups to push the site equally, and the technicality of it is difficult.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Josh Levy (Advocacy Director at Access Now) in discussion with the author, April 13, 2016.

One of the interesting things I noticed regarding the timeline of tactics by comparing these three contentious episodes is the preliminary action stage. These are actions that serve as the staging ground for the later actions, allowing the core network of organizations and companies to expand and reach out to their networks to create a bipartisan coalition before the larger action. As Nathan White of Access Now mentioned, “[American Censorship Day] was created as a moment of let’s get all the people who care about this issue to start caring at one moment at one time because that’s when we get noticed, that’s when the press is talking about it, that’s when activists want to share with their friends, that gives you something to organize around to bring other groups in.”

In these initial stages, it is usually the organizations like Demand Progress and Fight for the Future that are driving the petitions, reaching out to their large email lists. As these are the more connective organizations, they are better able to quickly navigate the shifting issue spaces and to mobilize their main resource: their member list.

Then when the rallying action stage begins to take shape, these connective organizations work with the more collective organizations to build a more comprehensive and robust coalition. Creating open communication between organizations regarding their tactical approaches is vital to the success of the coalition. Part of this is also understanding which tactics to use and when based on the context of the situation, and as these groups continue to work together that process gets simplified. According to Josh Levy, Advocacy Director

at Access Now, his team is currently working on creating a flowchart of this very thing.<sup>140</sup>

This in particular supports my research question regarding tactical patterns.

In the later stages, as the movement has grown to include mass mobilization, the IFM needs to be able to effectively communicate policy issues with the government. This is where groups like Open Technology Institute, the Free Press, and Access Now come in. As Rian Wanstreet of Access Now pointed out, organizations like hers are often doing more behind the scenes policy work that may not be as visible as some of these other tactics, yet it is still just as meaningful.<sup>141</sup> Getting this policy work done in order to cement the goals of the movement is one of the most important objectives of the tactics.

Through this analysis of the tactics, it can be seen that a similarity of tactics has formed over the various contentious episodes, as I predicted in my research question.

### **Research Question 3: Coalition Relationships**

*As the IFM has progressed, the coalition relationships have become more defined regarding organizational roles.*

In order to get a better understanding of how the organizations within the Internet freedom movement have operated, I conducted several elite interviews. In choosing the organizations, I tried to get a sample size that was varied based on the area of expertise in

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<sup>140</sup> Josh Levy (Advocacy Director at Access Now) in discussion with the author, April 13, 2016.

<sup>141</sup> Rian Wanstreet (Grants Program Manager at Access Now) in discussion with the author, March 15, 2016.

an effort to gain a broader understanding. To this end, I choose the following organizations and talked with these individuals:

- Access Now, an international digital rights advocacy organization:
  - Nathan White, Senior Legislative Manager for the Advocacy Team
  - Rian Wanstreet, Grants Program Manager
  - Josh Levy, Advocacy Director
- New America Foundation: Open Technology Institute, a policy think tank:
  - Sarah Morris, Senior Policy Counsel
- Demand Progress, a progressive online mobilization organization
  - David Segal, Co-founder and Executive Director
- Free Press, a lobbying group to protect Internet and press freedoms
  - Craig Aaron, President and CEO

Getting this inside look at the ways in which these organizations operate is important for understanding how they interact with technological affordances and with the political opportunity structures in which they operate. Not only that, but this also allows a deeper look at the strengths and weaknesses of the movement. This has given me a unique perspective inside the Internet freedom movement and the particular roles that each organization plays.

### **Results and Discussion of Research Question 3**

#### *Information Sharing*

Information sharing can range from spreading political knowledge to tactical awareness to learning about political opportunities.

One of the key elements of creating an effective social movement is finding a particular moment in the political environment that groups can leverage and mobilize around.

Speaking on this, Senior Legislative Manager Nathan White believes that these moments force everyone to focus their efforts and care at the same time, which enables greater influence.<sup>142</sup>

By finding these moments and coordinating with other organizations, momentum can start to be built around an issue. Speaking about the community that was created through the SOPA-PIPA fight, Advocacy Director Josh Levy said that now the network was easier to reconnect and be built out quickly regarding the next point of action: surveillance reform.<sup>143</sup>

However, bringing in new organizations can lead to some challenges for information sharing. At the beginning of the Internet freedom movement, when mobilization was beginning around the SOPA-PIPA bills, new organizations entered into this issue space.

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<sup>142</sup> Nathan White (Senior Legislative Manager at Access Now) in discussion with the author, March 15, 2016.

<sup>143</sup> Josh Levy, April 13, 2016.

Demand Progress was one such organization, and Executive Director David Segal spoke of a lack of shared experience and therefore limited trust being a part of the movement at this early stage.<sup>144</sup> Creating common goals would become an important stepping stone to building more network cohesion. As time went on and many of the same groups worked together during other contentious episodes, Segal said, “organizations figured out what their roles were going to be and it actually was pretty smooth.”<sup>145</sup>

Not only were the roles clearer, as my research question predicted, but also the awareness of what tactics would work or not work in particular situations became more well known.<sup>146</sup> But these roles can fluctuate a bit, depending on the issue at hand, so with every new iteration of the coalition that forms work needs to be done to determine the goals and the gaps, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the participants.<sup>147</sup>

One way in which these roles became clearer is through greater dialogue between participating groups. The Open Technology Institute (OTI) took a lead in convening a variety of meetings for those involved, particularly for the net neutrality episode. Sarah Morris, Senior Policy Counsel at OTI, explained that OTI had working groups for various parts of the issue, including groups on Hill strategy, media strategy, and legal strategy.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> David Segal (Executive Director at Demand Progress) in discussion with the author, March 5, 2016.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Josh Levy, April 13, 2016.

<sup>148</sup> Sarah Morris (Senior Policy Counsel) in discussion with the author, April 8, 2016.

However, she spoke of the challenge of making sure that all of the groups were represented and involved in ways that worked for both the group and for the larger coalition. Not only that but the way in which follow ups were communicated was difficult, as the frequency of emails and which members of the email list to include needed to be figured out for maximum effectiveness.<sup>149</sup>

At times, working together with a diverse set of actors could be difficult. Sarah Morris and Nathan White spoke of times when issues of substance were disagreed upon, and there being a necessity to reconcile with respect and with the shared goal in mind. This is why groups that once had differing opinions about net neutrality, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Free Press, back in 2010 were able to work together for the coalition in 2014.

But sometimes a differing approach can be beneficial for the larger coalition. Take the Restore the Fourth group, for example. When revelations regarding massive surveillance were revealed, people took to Reddit and Tumblr to form their own rallies in cities around the country, which created Restore the Fourth. This was organizing without organizations. But then groups such as Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the beginnings of the Stop Watching Us coalition reached out and started sharing the expertise with this movement.<sup>150</sup> These groups also lended some of their resources to the Restore the Fourth movement, which is another important marker of network cohesion.

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<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Nathan White, March 15, 2016.

### *Resource Pooling*

Resource pooling takes into account the specific attributes that an organization or company might be able to offer for the benefit of the larger coalition. When an organization lacks a certain resource for action, it often joins with a coalition in order to have access to that resource.<sup>151</sup> The organizations that I chose to take a closer look at each have valuable resources.

Demand Progress is a massive online mobilization organization with a membership base of over two million people. However, when the organization just started out in the beginning stages of protest against COICA, that number was only in the hundreds of thousands. But now, in comparison to the other organizations in the Internet freedom movement, this base is a huge resource. Demand Progress was able to leverage technological affordances to create an agile organization. As David Segal explained, having a large group of citizens backing your position lends a lot of power, much like the way money does.

This power also enables Demand Progress to take a much more adversarial role. Access to elite allies is an important part of taking advantage of the political opportunities to create change. But Demand Progress does not have to rely on this access; it is not constrained by its need for access to operate, much like other organizations are.<sup>152</sup> This lets Demand Progress be a “flank organization”, as Segal put it, leading the charge and

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<sup>151</sup> Hadden, *Networks in Contention*, 71.

<sup>152</sup> David Segal, March 5, 2016.

gathering support that the other organizations can tap into to leverage pressure on their targets that they have access to.

The Open Technology Institute is one such organization. Their main resource is their inside access to political elites. Regarding net neutrality, Sarah Morris spoke of the role that OTI played in regards to thought leadership and in creating the framework for the policy recommendations to the FCC. This “public interest diplomacy”, as Morris calls it, is a necessary complement for the netroots organizations. OTI also played a role in framing the net neutrality debate by writing a lot of media coverage for both policy publications and more mainstream ones like Slate.<sup>153</sup>

Free Press is an organization between these two worlds, working on both the grassroots mobilizing side of things as well as the policy issues. Their organization is comprised of both lobbyists and organizers, so they are able to speak both languages of organizations like Demand Progress and Open Technology Institute. Free Press prides themselves on being the connective tissue between inside policy groups and outside mobilizing groups.<sup>154</sup> Part of the reason for Free Press’ success at being a good coalition partner relies on their willingness to stick to their demands. Craig Aaron, CEO of Free Press, said, “we [aren’t] trying to convince them where they should compromise or sell out or where they should settle for the compromise on the compromise on the compromise

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<sup>153</sup> Sarah Morris, April 8, 2016.

<sup>154</sup> Craig Aaron (President and CEO of Free Press) in discussion with the author, April 14, 2016.

that’s always being pushed in Washington.” This is another reasons why having groups with ties outside of Washington can also benefit the coalition.

Bridging both the policy world and the tech world is the international group Access Now. Their added value to the coalition lies in their being both an inside and outside player in the political game. Nathan White sees mobilizing groups at being really good at grabbing headlines and people, but when it comes to matters of process groups like Access Now are needed. Access Now also plays an activist role, due in part to their work at protecting activists around the world through their Digital Security Helpline. That work also relies on Access Now being home to both policy experts and technologists, which is an important and unique resource within Washington, D.C.<sup>155</sup> But Access Now also lends an international perspective to the coalition that is often lacking. Regarding surveillance reform, Nathan White said, “We don’t say stop spying on Americans because the Constitution forbids it. We say stop mass spying because it’s a violation of fundamental human rights. They overlap, but we’re bringing a different voice and a different audience.”

Some of the more periphery members that fluctuate depending on the issue area are still able to bring important resources. These diverse coalition members create a fuller range of assets for the coalition to draw upon. The organizations I spoke with always mentioned the importance of these members. The Media Action Grassroots Network (Mag-NET)

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<sup>155</sup> Nathan White, March 15, 2016.

represents low income communities and communities of color, which were vital voices to hear from regarding net neutrality, specifically as it pertains to mobile, which many in these communities rely on as their main network connection.<sup>156</sup> By having this resource of different voices represented, as well as more extraordinary coalition partners, the coalition becomes more effective as it is seen as being more surprising, big, and diverse.<sup>157</sup> This diversity within a coalition is often created through the influence of other organizations within their network.

### *Social Influence*

Social influence reflects the behaviors and perceptions of groups based on those they interact with.<sup>158</sup> It can play out in both positive and negative ways, depending on the strength of the coalition.

Internet freedom issues are different than other policy issues because most people rely on the Internet, so it is a matter that touches everyone. Ideally, human rights are also a non-partisan issue. Both of these aspects of the Internet freedom movement allow it to expand into various policy areas, and due to this, Nathan White says, it forces groups that oppose each other on another issue to be friendly to one another.<sup>159</sup> As previously stated, the coalition that formed around net neutrality included groups that represented communities

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<sup>156</sup> Sarah Morris, April 8, 2016.

<sup>157</sup> Nathan White, March 15, 2016.

<sup>158</sup> Hadden, *Networks in Contention*, 71.

<sup>159</sup> Nathan White, March 15, 2016.

of color and low income communities, who are traditionally at odds with the more conservative groups that were part of the coalition. But Craig Aaron of Free Press said that things continue to improve regarding groups being able to put their egos away to focus on the common goals.

Despite the diversity of the coalition members over the three contentious episodes, there is a certain protectiveness among those organizations that share a lot of similarities. If a similar organization will be participating at a protest, then the other organization will feel pressure to also be there, in order to protect and engage with its members. Relating these members to political constituencies, Nathan White of Access Now says, “[it’s] not that I want [them] to fail or anything. In any institution there is a desire to continue to exist...so even if there is going to be the same end goals, you still want to continue to operate.” The same is true for list-based organizations to continue to participate in coalitions since they are constantly needing to replace lost or inactive members.<sup>160</sup>

The fluid relationship between the coalition members plays out in interesting ways. For example, despite having the same goal in mind, groups go about achieving it with different methods and skills sets. The need to work in tandem in these situations is important. Illustrating this point, Sarah Morris of OTI noted a time when she had to meet with the general counsel of the FCC the day after there was a large netroots push for people to flood the phones of the FCC. Unable to cope with the volume of calls, the FCC

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<sup>160</sup> Nathan White, March 15, 2016.

was frustrated. Due to the fluid nature of the coalition, Morris was able to say that it was not tied to her organization. This relates to what Segal was saying regarding these netroots organizations being the flanks in the movement. This tactical timing tension sometimes caused issues, but in other ways it proved to be a useful tool.

Since this movement is less of a formal, hierarchical coalition and more of a network, it allows for this tactical aggressiveness. If a coalition operates only on consensus, then they will only achieve, according to Segal, the “lowest common denominator”. By having more vanguard groups, this pushes the target to do more than just the status quo. This networked coalition also allows members to not be fully constrained by other members, giving the ability for them to use tactics without other members being held accountable for their actions.<sup>161</sup> As is seen in the Morris/FCC story, this is a useful attribute of the coalition.

### *Movement as a Whole*

The general consensus from the interviews that I conducted revealed that the Internet freedom movement was becoming more defined in regards to the roles each group needs to play. Splitting that up into the various subsections of roles regarding information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence shows that my research question was correct. As Josh Levy of Access Now said, it is becoming easier for the community to come together and to figure out the goals and the roles. Regarding network cohesion,

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<sup>161</sup> David Segal, March 5, 2016.

Craig Aaron of Free Press spoke of pressures on the coalitions to accept half measures from their targets, pressures that have in the past caused division. But he sees that now becoming less of an issue, as trust building and shared experience continue to bind these groups together.

However, there is always the possibility of splintering. If the ties binding these groups together are weak and if groups are not willing to sacrifice for the greater good of the coalition, issues may arise. This happened in regards to the USA FREEDOM Act, as some groups of the surveillance reform coalition were in support, while others were in opposition. The victories of the Internet freedom movement make it seem as if the work is over in regards to network cohesion. But these groups are continuing to work together, despite any setbacks, to create a formidable movement to protect freedoms online.

#### **Research Question 4: Network Analysis**

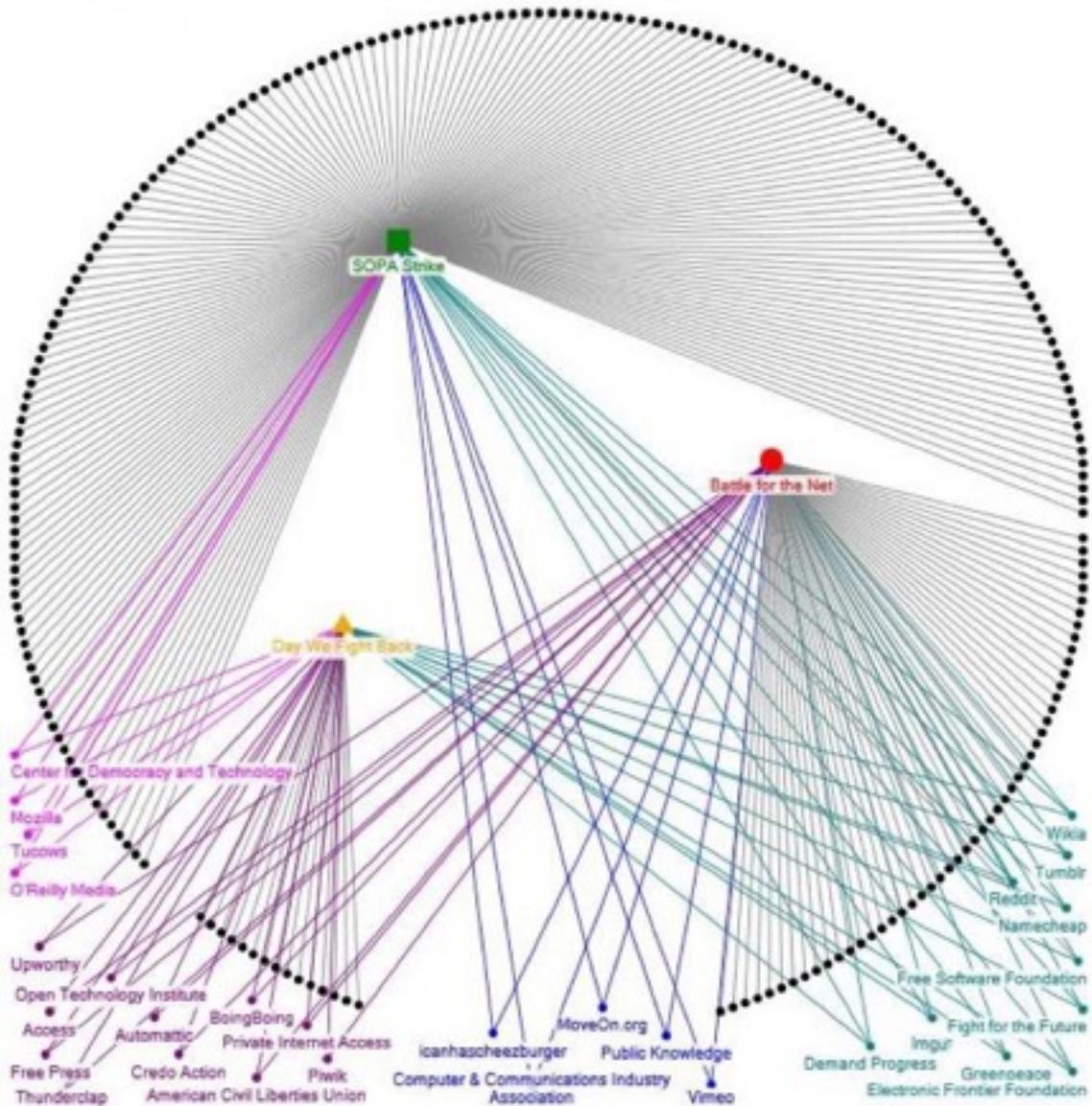
*As the IFM has progressed, a common cluster of organizations has formed, establishing a key core and a “loose coalition” of organizations.*

## Results of Research Question 4

Figure 9: Network Visualization of the Internet Freedom Movement

### Participation in Major Actions of the Internet Freedom Movement

Groups participating in Day We Fight Back and SOPA Strike  
Groups participating in Battle for the Net and Day We Fight Back  
Groups participating in Battle for the Net and SOPA Strike  
Groups participating in SOPA Strike, Battle for the Net, and Day We Fight Back



Created with NodeXL Pro (<http://nodexl.codeplex.com>) from the Social Media Research Foundation (<http://www.smrfoundation.org>)

The data I used to create this visualization comes from the participants listed on the ‘major action websites’ for each contentious episode. Again, that is SOPA Strike (<http://www.sopastrike.com>), surveillance reform issues with The Day We Fight Back (<https://thedaywefightback.org/>), and net neutrality issues with Battle for the Net (<https://www.battleforthenet.com/>). The network map only works on a binary on whether the groups participated or not; it does not differentiate between types and levels of participation, or when the groups got involved.

I chose only to highlight the groups that participated in two or more actions to keep the visualization readable. All of the black dots in the image are organizations that participated in only one action. As can be seen, the action around SOPA-PIPA garnered the most participation from one time organizations, and is then followed by Battle for the Net in terms of one-off participation. The Day We Fight Back had the fewest one-off participation.

#### **Discussion of Research Question 4**

This network visualization both reveals surprising and unsurprising findings. Some of these findings confirm my suspicions and others I would not have discovered if it were not for visualizing the data.

Also of note is the fact that three of the organizations that I talked with for my study did not take a major leadership role in the campaign against SOPA-PIPA. However, based on my readings and interviews, Access Now, Open Technology Institute, and Free Press

were strong leaders in surveillance reform and net neutrality. According to Craig Aaron, President and CEO of Free Press, his organization took more of a peripheral role in SOPA-PIPA because the issue was originally framed as a copyright issue, which is an issue Free Press did not traditionally participate in. However, once word spread about the bad measures in the SOPA and PIPA bills, Free Press began to lobby the Hill and activate their email list.<sup>162</sup> Unfortunately, due to my data limitations regarding most of my other interview subjects, none of them were present at their organizations during SOPA-PIPA. Therefore, I am unable to determine why their organizations took more of a peripheral role.

### *The Core*

Of the ten groups that have participated in all three contentious episodes, two of them focus primarily on digital rights issues (Fight for the Future and the Electronic Frontier Foundation), while one is a hybrid of an online grassroots mobilization organization who usually focuses on issues of digital rights (Demand Progress). Of the remaining groups, four of them represent platforms used for online communities (Wikia, Tumblr, Imgur, and Reddit), while the other two represent the open software and open internet issue space (Free Software Foundation and Namecheap).

As I mentioned previously, I was surprised to see the lack of participation from groups that are key core members now, e.g. OTI, Access Now, and Free Press. However, as can

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<sup>162</sup> Craig Aaron, April 15, 2016.

be seen from the network visualization, these groups, as well as a handful of others, participated in the last two actions of the movement. This, in essence, proves my overarching research question regarding if the movement has gained in capacity over time. By showing that these groups who did not participate in the first action participated in the last two, it seems that the movement has grown in its capacity. This also shows that these groups have taken on a larger role in the movement over time.

The tenth and last core group member was a bit of a surprise. Greenpeace, an organization who primarily focuses on issues like deforestation and oil companies, has recognized the importance of keeping the Internet free and open. While it makes sense that Greenpeace would want to curtail surveillance to protect their activists around the world, their support of net neutrality and their anti-SOPA stance needed a bit more digging. In a press release regarding net neutrality, Greenpeace lays out a hypothetical scenario in which rich oil companies' content is given greater priority online than poorer activists' content revealing oil company abuses, which is something that would hinder Greenpeace's advocacy work.<sup>163</sup> Regarding SOPA-PIPA, Greenpeace framed the issue as giving power to corporate censorship online, which is something that they have traditionally fought against.<sup>164</sup> Looking at Greenpeace's involvement through that lens, it

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<sup>163</sup> David Pomerantz, "Why Greenpeace Supports Net Neutrality, and You Should Too," Greenpeace, June 9, 2014, <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/greenpeace-supports-net-neutrality/>

<sup>164</sup> Kumi Naidoo, "We're sorry, you're not allowed to read this." Greenpeace, January 17, 2012, <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/were-sorry-youre-not-allowed-to-read-this/blog/38656/>

is almost surprising then that other advocacy organizations are not following their lead as much.

### *The Loose Coalition*

The other participating groups are part of what I call the loose coalition: groups that have shown great commitment in the past but who determine their participation based, perhaps, on what the issue at hand is. A caveat to that statement: participation is a hard marker to judge by because it partially ignores the context in which these groups operate. So while it may be that an organization did not participate because they do not care enough about, for example, net neutrality, it may also be that their business model is reliant upon support from large telecommunications companies. Or it may be that there were other more pressing issues for their resources to be diverted to or some other unknown reason.

With that said, it will still be interesting to take a look at what group types participated in the other actions. Of the groups that participated in both surveillance reform (Day We Fight Back) and anti-censorship (SOPA Strike), two were tech companies (Mozilla and a Canadian Internet services, telecommunications, and domain registrar tech company called Tucows), one was a digital rights group (Center for Democracy and Technology), and the remaining was a tech media company (O'Reilly Media). It is surprising to see that Mozilla did not actively participate in the Battle for the Net net neutrality campaign. While they did support net neutrality and even used the Battle for the Net hashtag

#teaminternet, their name does not appear on the Battle for the Net website of supporters.<sup>165</sup> The why behind this would be an interesting area for future inquiry. Also of note is the support from Canadian company Tucows with regard to the two issues that impact transnational interests: censorship and surveillance.

The groups that participated in both the Day We Fight Back and Battle for the Net campaigns are a bit more varied. As previously stated, this is where certain digital rights groups (Access Now, Open Technology Institute, and Free Press) stepped into the movement in what would eventually become a larger leadership role. The other participating groups are four tech companies (Automattic, Thunderclap, Piwik, and Private Internet Access), a human rights organization (American Civil Liberties Union), a mostly tech media company (BoingBoing), and two grassroots mobilizing organizations (Credo Action and Upworthy). It is actually surprising to see that many of these tech companies participated in the actions surrounding surveillance and net neutrality but not Internet censorship. However, maybe these tech companies did not exist at the time of the SOPA-PIPA strikes, or if they did, maybe they did not yet have the capacity or resources to participate.

The issues of Internet censorship and net neutrality brought out a unique mix of groups. These are the groups that participated in the first iteration of the Internet freedom movement and the last. The unsurprising participants were groups like a digital rights

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<sup>165</sup> Dave Steer, "Join Mozilla for Global Teach-Ins on Net Neutrality." Mozilla Open Policy & Advocacy blog, July 28, 2014. <https://blog.mozilla.org/netpolicy/2014/07/28/join-mozilla-for-global-teach-ins-on-net-neutrality/>

group (Public Knowledge), an online grassroots mobilization group (MoveOn.org), an industry organization (Computer & Communications Industry Association), and a tech company (Vimeo). The oddest participant in this issue space is icanhascheezburger, a blog featuring viral images and funny animal videos. It is unclear why these groups did not participate in the Day We Fight Back surveillance reform campaign.

Overall the network visualization enabled a more detailed look at group participation through the main episodes of the Internet freedom movement. My findings support my research question that a core group of participants exists, surrounded by a loose coalition of organizations that may perhaps, based on their past involvement, continue to support the IFM in future actions.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Through my examination of the Internet freedom movement, I was able to determine how groups are leveraging technological affordances, as well as the more traditional methods of policy activism. By looking at the political structures in which the movement operates, as well as the tactics and actors that come into play, my driving question through all of this relating to movement capacity has been answered. The movement now clearly has political access and elite allies, a set of proven tactics, and a core group of organizations with strong relationships forged through information sharing, resource pooling, and social influence. These factors will continue to make this movement to protect rights online a powerful force.

The Internet freedom movement has expanded the idea of what Internet freedom is and how digital rights should be protected. Groups working on different parts of this issue space have come together to demand action for the broader concept of digital rights. The previously sectoral movement has now become unified. This strengthens both the groups and the larger goals for which they are aiming to achieve.

My analysis has shown this, but it has also shown that diversity is a key part to the movement. A diversity of roles is needed for the core members, so that in every step each area of action is covered by the different resources of these groups. On the periphery, an assortment of groups is also needed, bridging divides across goals and politics. This

includes mobilizing groups, more traditional digital rights and human rights groups, libertarian and progressive groups, and an assortment of tech companies and online communities.

The successes of the Internet freedom movement would not have been so powerful if it were not for the technological affordances made available to it. By groups being able to quickly react to political opportunities and by creating unique and personalized tactics, the movement gained in strength and capacity. Having groups that were backed by the support of the people, who were more easily able to take action and be mobilized online, made the ability to demand goals that much more effective.

Questions remain as to what is next for the movement. As the online tactics of the movement become more commonplace, will tactic fatigue set in? Perhaps the movement needs to turn its gaze outward to continue to create more effective change within the United States. Movements are continuing to grow around the world to protect digital rights and online freedoms. Internet Bills of Rights have been created in Brazil, Italy, and France to protect both the data of users and the Internet. The European Union is currently putting the final touches on its General Data Protection Regulation, meant to enforce the protection of personal data online. Perhaps a comparative analysis of what occurred to have these countries create Internet Bills of Rights and if that were possible in the United States would be an interesting avenue for inquiry, as the Internet freedom movement looks for their next political opportunity.

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