An Introductory Historical Contextualization of Online Creation Communities for the Building of Digital Commons: The Emergence of a Free Culture Movement

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Abstract. Online Creation Communities (OCCs) are a set of individuals that communicate, interact and collaborate; in several forms and degrees of participation which are eco-systemically integrated; mainly via a platform of participation on the Internet, on which they depend; and aiming at knowledge-making and sharing. The paper will first provide an historical contextualization OCCs. Then, it will show how the development of OCCs is fuelled by and contributes to, the rise of a free culture movement defending and advocating the creation of digital commons, and provide an empirically grounded definition of free culture movement. The empirical analyses is based content analysis of 80 interviews to free culture practitioners, promoters and activists with an international background or rooted in Europe, USA and Latino-America and the content analysis of two seminar discussions. The data collection was developed from 2008 to 2010.

1 Introduction

Online Creation Communities (OCCs) are a set of individuals that communicate, interact and collaborate; in several forms and degrees of participation which are eco-systemically integrated; mainly via a platform of participation on the Internet, on which they depend; and aiming at knowledge-making and sharing (Fuster Morell, 2010). OCCs based on certain governance conditions result on the building of a digital commons. Digital commons are defined as an information and knowledge resources that are collectively created and owned or shared between or among a community and that tend to be non-exclusivedible, that is, be (generally freely) available to third parties. Thus, they are oriented to favor use and reuse, rather than to exchange as a commodity. Additionally, the community of people building them can intervene in the governing of their interaction processes and of their shared resources (Fuster Morell, 2010). OCCs early development and cultural roots could be found back in 1950s; continue through the appearance and success of the first OCCs around Free and Open source software development in the 1990s, to the later developments in the first decade of the 21st century, particularly with the explosion of commercial Web

2.0, and the new frontiers of potentiality that are evolving. The paper politically contextualize the OCCs. It will show how the development of OCCs is fuelled by and contributes to, the rise of a free culture movement defending and advocating the creation of digital commons. To then provide an empirically grounded definition of free culture movement. The empirical analyses is based content analysis of 80 interviews to free culture practitioners, promoters and activists with an international background or rooted in Europe, USA and Latino-America and the content analysis of two seminar discussions.[1] The data collection was developed from 2008 to 2010.

2 From the 1950s: Cultural roots of OCCs: pioneer online communities

A first cultural origin of OCCs is the hacker culture. The hacking culture emerged in the 1950s around the Artificial Intelligence Lab of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The hacking culture was based first on a sense of exploration and creative enjoyment with technology, and afterwards on the optimization of technology. The hacker ethic is characterized by a passion to create and share knowledge and to consider collective creation as a humorous and enjoyable action (Himanen, 2001). A hacker is defined as a person interested in experimenting with technology and its social uses, who acts to distribute knowledge in an effective, free and creative way; and for whom the Internet is not only a medium, but also a political space (Raymond, 2000, 2001). In this first period of software coding, most of the software circulated freely between the developer-hackers (Castells, 2002). However, in the 1970s a proprietary sense of the software started to grow, meaning restrictions on the use of software and the incorporation of a commercial sense. Richard Stallman, a programmer from the Artificial Intelligence Lab of the MIT, claimed the risk of the privatization of software to be an attack on the freedom of expression. In the famous words of Stallman: *"Free as in free speech, not necessarily free as in free beer"*.[2] In order to preserve the free character of the software, Stallman founded the GNU project in 1984 to develop an operating system that was to be completely free. Stallman also founded, in Boston in 1985, the Free Software Foundation, and with legal assistance established the General Public License and the Lesser General Public License, which allowed for the legal protection of free software (Stalder, 2010). Another cultural reference of the OCCs is the counter-culture movement of the 1960s. In the book From counterculture to cyberculture Turner presents in detail the roots of cyberculture in the American counterculture of the 1960s (2006). One of the first social sectors to see meaning in the new technologies of information and communication was the North-American counterculture. The

[1] Networked Politics seminar on Networked Politics, Berlin, June 2006 and Networked Politics seminar on commons, Berkeley, 7th December, 2009.

[2] Free software definition by the Free software foundation. Retrieved May 28, 2010 from `http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html` (May 28, 2010).

WELL (Whole Earth Lectronic Link) was a pioneering online community established in 1985. Its participants were mainly composed of members of the back to the land movement based on the Californian coast. A third point of reference for OCCs are previous experiences of participatory knowledge-making. The OCCs are characterized by their participative approach to knowledge-making. However, the OCCs do not represent the first attempt to develop a participatory and collective approach to knowledge-building. Some examples of previous experiences of collective and collaborative methodologies for knowledge-building are: Italian labour co-research; women's groups of self-awareness and feminist epistemology; French institutional analysis; the Latino-American action-participation methodologies and communitarian research in general (Malo, 2004). The academic communities were initially also constituted by highly collaborative environments and communitarian dynamics. OCCs take special advantage of new technologies of information and communication (NTI) to develop ideas already present in these previous experiences.

3 From the 1990s: The appearance of the first online creation communities: Free and Open source software projects

The first OCCs to appear were development communities based around software programming. By the early 1990s, the Internet had become a medium for collaboration among programmers. Linus Torvalds from Helsinki suggested, in 1991, the further development of the Linux kernel (a key component) to a newsgroup on the Internet. This led to the rise of one of the first and largest OCCs on collaborative software development. The work involved Linux joining the previous work of GNU, which led to the first completely free operating system built by a development community (Stalder, 2010). Since the 1990s development communities have proliferated. Free software became very popular and most of the software infrastructure that powers the internet is FLOSS (Weber, 2004). In 2007 Wheeler, drawing on an extensive survey of the rate of FLOSS adoption across various sectors, concluded that in many cases FLOSS is more used than proprietary competitiors productus according to various measures (Wheeler, 2007).[3] From the late 1990s onwards, some alternative terms for free software came into common usage, including open source software (FOSS), software libre, free, libre and open source software (FLOSS). The distinction between free software and open software is not so much a question of the software itself, but of two different ideological approaches. Whereas free software emphasizes the liberty free software gives users, open source instead emphasizes productive efficiency and business models based on open collaboration (Stallman, 1996).

[3] For example, several of the Internets most basic technologies, such as the domain name system, have since its beginnings used FLOSS. Other components such as mail and web servers also run predominantly on FLOSS (Wheeler, 2007). According to web analytics firm Netcraft, in August 2010, 56% of webservers run on Apache based and free software. Retrieved August 15, 2010 from `http://www.netcraft.com`.

4 2001: From free software to free culture: The expansion of OCCs to other immaterial content

At the beginning of the millennium, the spread of the Internet and personal computers lowered barriers, the expansion of education, particularly in the global North, and knowledge-based markets saw larger sections of the population able to communicate and collaborate in online settings and holding the skills for engaging in activities of cultural creativity. Additionally, starting in the 1980s and 1990s a group of USA academics mostly law scholars began to worry about the expansion of Intellectual Property in the neoliberal frame and initiated action in order to protect creativity and the public domain.[4] These academics helped develop the idea of the intellectual commons and invented Creative Commons licenses with the aid of Lawrence Lessig (2004). Creative Commons Licenses enable sharing and develop derivative work from previous materials and were adopted to support online collaboration (Creative Commons, 2009). In this context, OCCs based on content other than software began to grow. New free culture expressions emerged with the aim of collaboratively creating cultural content and generating universal access to knowledge. The most important example of this is Wikipedia. It is an online encyclopedia founded in 2001 which has grown enormously since then. The strategy to build an autonomous infrastructure of communication and coordination within the GJM for the global confluence of the movement after the events of Seattle against the World Trade Organization in 1999 represents another important step in the formation of OCCs around social memory processes (Milan, 2009). The structure of communication of the Global Justice Movement (GJM) was extremely innovative at the time, and Indymedia (an alternative media website) became a reference point for open publishing and content generated by users (Haas, 2007). The distinctive emphasis on the participatory methods characteristic of the GJM, in contrast to the more centralized or hierarchical methods of the past, has also been applied to the role and nature of knowledge generated by the GJM (Fuster Morell, 2004; Santos, 2007; Wainwright, 2005). Furthermore, with the growing importance of NTI in society, access to NTI and its consequences, defined as communication rights, is becoming an area of continuous struggle, and was incorporated into the GJMs agenda (Milan & Hintz, 2004). In 1999, influenced by the impact of Indymedia, journalism produced "by the people" began to flourish, enabled in part by emerging Internet and networking technologies, such as weblogs, chat rooms, message boards, wikis and mobile computing. Furthermore, hundreds of virtual news communities have been created and spread using Free Culture ideals, generating a critical media ecosystem, experimenting with different regimes in terms of intellectual property rights and conceptions, ready to mobilize and diffuse the alarm when a new impediment to free circulation appears (Keren, 2006). Another relevant part of OCCs configuration is the first generation to be born digital. The first "digital generations" were born in the 1980s and 1990s.

[4] Among them Pamela Samuelson, Jessica Litman, James Boyle, Yochai Benkler, Larry Lessig and among others.

In rich countries, most of the younger generations grow up with access to education at different levels, and with access to the Internet and use the Internet in their everyday lives. These generations are known as digital born or digital native generations (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Tapscott, 2008). The normalcy of the online multi-interactive environment for the digital generation has resulted in what Lessig calls the Remix Culture, also known as read/write culture (Lessig, 2008). The Remix Culture of the digital generation is characterized by: easy access to text information and knowledge and audio-visual materials; easy access and the capacity to use programs and tools to create and elaborate new cultural products; proactive or prosumer attitudes, that is a combination of a consumer attitude and a producer attitude, an identity of creators, not of consumers or spectators; and the habit of public exposure and living in public. Alex Kozak from Students for Free Culture Berkeley puts it this way: It is part of the identity of my generation to create and share content on large social networks, organise events online and share with each other our favourite music and movies, sometimes legally and sometimes not, (Buxton, 2009). Finally, the history of OCCs also saw an important moment with the European development of file-sharing and peer-to-peer architectures of information to facilitate access to cultural products. File sharing is the practice of making files available for others to use though the Internet or smaller intranet networks (Bauwens, 2005). A good example is the Swedish Pirate Bay. To defend the values of file-sharing, a political party, called the Pirate Party, has also been formed in Sweden, which won representation in the European elections in 2009. OCCs ideals have also arrived in the scientific world with the building of digital commons with scientific content. Several online mechanisms for scientific collaboration emerged, such as the establishment of poles of empirical data (David, 2004). Furthermore, an important historical moment for the emergence of OCCs guaranteeing access to scientific knowledge were the struggles over access to anti-retroviral drugs to treat HIV/AIDS in South Africa during the 1990s. This impulse led to the wish to reclaim the public character of research through open access to research results. One example of this is the Public Library of Science (PloS). PloS is a non-profit, open access scientific publishing project funded in 2001, aimed at creating a library of open access journals and other scientific literature under an open content license.[5] Finally, another preeminent example of mobilizing for access to knowledge is Students For Free Culture. Students For Free Culture is composed by a network of over 35 chapters in universities. The chapters are mainly in United States universities but are expanding in other countries.

5 2006: The explosion of commercial Web 2.0

While previous developments are key for OCCs following a commons logic, another approach appears in the new economy based on information access and sharing. In the fall of 2001, the technological industry suffered what was called

[5] Website of the Public Library of Science: `http://www.plos.org/`

the dot-com crisis, which marked a turning point for the sector. The companies that had survived the dot-com collapse had some things in common. With the spread of the Internet during the 1990s, a major shift from storing data online and virtually instead of on individual computers took place, known as data cloud. With data cloud more and more commercial providers specializing in services for data storage and exchange online appeared. The new economy of information access and sharing, also known as Web 2.0 or Wikinomics, is an innovative economic trend based on the commercialization of flows and services of information and knowledge by multinational communication (O'Reilly, 2005; Tapscott & Williams, 2007).[6] The most distinctive example of the New economy is Google. Examples can also be found in YouTube, MySpace or Flickr, platforms provided by Multinational Communication Companies.[7] The development of a new economy based on information access and sharing contributed substantially to the popularization of the multi-interactive infrastructure of the web. However, major accessibility (linked to Internet diffusion) instead of functionality is what distinguishes the Web 2.0 from the Web 1.0 (Shirky, 2008). The new economy was inspired by the innovations presented in the previous sections (I.e. FLOSS, Wikipedia, Indymedia, among others) to define a new business model based on the data cloud. However, in the light of this research, the corporation as infrastructure provider also changed the conditions of use of infrastructure in contrast to previous cases based on commons logic. In this period, OCCs based on commons logic and GJM position as protagonists in the use of the technology was taken by the communications companies of the new economy. A media activist from Milan characterized this stage with the expression the market is going beyond us (A, Foti, Notes Networked Politics seminar on Networked Politics, Berlin, June 2006). The expansion of commercial type of infrastructure providers online based on a corporate logic stresses the conflict with OCCs based instead of a commons logic. Previous empirical research sheds light on and explains the difference between a commons logic and a corporate logic in shaping collective action in the digital era (Fuster Morell, 2010). In the light of this research, it can be predicted that in coming years, the possibilities for political mobilization on free culture issues will be likely to increase.

6 A free culture movement in formation?

The development of OCCs is also fuelled by and contributes to the rise of the movement defending and advocating the creation of digital commons. Several

[6] The term Web 2.0 was originally used to represent a shift in the business model, a new way of doing business, after the dot-com crisis (O'Reilly, 2005; Tapscott & Williams, 2007).

[7] YouTube, with the slogan "Broadcast yourself", is a website to archive, share and comment on homemade videos; Myspace is a website for social networking where each person has their own page to present him or herself and interact with others; and Flickr is a website to archive, share and comment on photos.

events, campaigns and international networks led to the formation of a free culture movement. The International networks such as the commons international network of supporters of Creative Commons licenses (Dobusch, 2009), the recent Campaign against the Telecom Pack Reform in the European Union (Breindl, 2010), and the celebration of the first free culture and access to knowledge forum in 2009 constitute some of the key moments of confluence. Additionally, the OCCs for the building of digital commons are instances of participation in this FCM. By producing digital commons, OCCs fulfill the broad political goals of the FCM. OCCs for the building of digital commons, based on a commons logic, are arenas in which the communities clash and contrast with OCCs based instead on corporate logic, challenging the established proprietary production system of information and knowledge and a corporate oriented adoption of NTI. However, free culture activism and builders of OCCs are not necessarily the same people. Plus, a common identity for both profiles does not yet exist. Several political aims are present in the FCM discourse: first, to preserve digital commons and empower OCCs through the availability of infrastructure for sharing and decentralised creativity and collaboration based on conditions which empower communities vis--vis infrastructure providers and guarantee their individual and collective autonomy and independence. Second, the FCM aims to make important information available to the public for discussion and ultimately to increase freedom of expression by guaranteeing the possibility to intervene and the free circulation of information in public life. North American free culture activists frame this goal as inspired by the Free Speech Movement of the 1960s and aim to have a similar impact to the Free Speech Movement. In Alex Kozaks words: Like the Free Speech movement, we are fighting against the top-down control of speech and are motivated by beliefs about basic rights. The differences are in our ability to organise electronically our Mario Savio [one of the leaders of the Free Speech Movement] is more likely to inspire with a blog post than with a speech, (A. Kozak, Presentation at Networked Politics seminar on commons, Berkeley, 7th December, 2009). Third, the FCM aims to improve social justice and solidarity, particularly in the global North/South context, by removing barriers to access to knowledge goods. Fourth, in order to achieve the previous goals, the movement seeks to influence policy making and reform copyright, patent, and trademark law in the public interest, as well as the reform of the management of scientific knowledge at Universities. Interestingly, the term "political remix" illustrates how the above claim is built. According to this research, political remix can be understood as the customization of the political message according to the remix of each individuals preferences, supported by the use of individual media. This means, on the one hand, not only pushing to see the Free Culture message in mainstream old media, but activists themselves spreading the free culture though their own means, contacts and audiences online. On the other hand, an activist does not consume or adopt the political message on free culture as a package, but creates the message and customizes it. Generally, the message combines the private and personal information of the person who spreads it with information of public interest. However, the FCM is not easily

characterized with traditional political categories. It it is better characterized by political ambivalence.[8] The form of collective aggregation of the FCM could be one of the reasons that explain this political ambivalence. It tends to be specific, mission oriented, and pragmatic. The FCM emerged around series of practices and shared conception of knowledge and its politics. Moreover, and, importantly, participants of the FCM do not need to agree on aspects that go beyond this specific area. The aggregation on specific common objectives could be exemplified with the case of Wikipedia. Wikipedia editors contribute on the base of very diverse motivations (Glott, Schmidt, & Ghosh, 2009) additionally, through my participant observation; I observed that Wikipedia editors can be situated across the political spectrum (from right to left). The aggregation around Wikipedia, however, is mission oriented and based on a pragmatic approach to collaboration in the common task of building of an online encyclopedia accessible to as many people as possible. There is no expectation that the editors share a common program or common politics which goes beyond building an encyclopedia. The same can be said about the FLOSS communities. Here too, the motivations to contribute are very diverse, but the communities focus on specific goals of solfware development with a shared politics of knowledge (Ghosh, Ruediger, Bernhard, & Robles, 2002; Weber, 2004). FLOSS can be seen as a rich political expression from the feminist theory approaches to the political, with however, a political agnosticism. Colleman stresses the firm denial by FLOSS developers of having any deliberate political agenda, in a conventional conception of politics. Though as Colleman argues, this political agnosticism has its own complexity. As Coleman puts it:while (among FOSS developers) it is perfectly acceptable and encouraged to have a panel on free software at an anti-globalization conference, FOSS developers would suggest that it is unacceptable to claim that FOSS has as one of its goals anti-globalization, or for that matter any political program a subtle but vital difference (Colleman, 2004, p. 1). Colleman and Hill (2004) points to FLOSS‘s political agnosticism and its resistance to defining FLOSS in traditional political terms as one of the factors which would favor the traveling of the FLOSS and its adoption in diverse terrains. In the words of Colleman and Hill: Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) has been adopted as a political tool by leftist activists. At the same time, it has been embraced by large corporations to extend profits and has been criticized as an integral force in late capitalism. It has been adopted by members of the growing Commons movement as a model for limiting the power of capitalism (2004, p. 1). This political agnosticism could be read as an instrumental approach, a way to create more force around the adoption of FLOSS; however, it cannot be explained simply in terms of instrumentalism. FCM aggregation is built around specific missions with a strong tendency towards performative politics (that is, around building practices), and in the land of politics of knowledge, not involving other dimensions such as those linked to political ideology in a classic sense. As a result, there is around the FCM, a large political spectrum of participants, and the

[8] Benkler suggests that the FCM open an opportunity to approach the left and libertarian agenda (Y. Benkler, personal communication, June 29, 2010).

aggregation is based on their communality around the conditions of access to knowledge and the possibility to share and collaborate around information and knowledge creation. Around these issues of access to knowledge and the digital rights linked to sharing and collaboration, the FCM develops political actions, such as the Pirate Party which aims to give a political representation to the the interests of the FCM, or lobbying and political campaigns in the most traditional sense. In this regard, the FCM represents an emerging source of conflict and a clash in society around several conceptions of knowledge. The FCM grew over a new source of aggregation in society which is able of put together and create collaboration between very diverse forces, and of actors which are part of the whole political spectrum. However, the FCM does not aggregate around conflicts or areas which go beyond the politics of knowledge (which could undermine the possibility of collaboration around the shared terrain). It is worth highlighting that more recently, linked to changes in the regulation of Intellectual Property and the lobbying pressure of the cultural industry, a more conventional political dimension of the FCM is gaining in importance. However, the tendency towards defining specific common goals and targets bringing together a plurality of actors, also applies to the more politically conventional expressions of the FCM, such as protest actions, campaigns, lobbing activities or/ and search of political representation. For example, the agenda of the Pirate Party with political representation at the European Parliament is limited to issues linked to knowledge policy and its voters are part of the diverse political spectrum.[9] Finally, the political support that the FCM gains in institutions tends to be different in the North than in the South. While in the North, particularly in Europe, the traditional left has been reluctant to adopt and support the FCM agenda (perhaps because FCM challenges traditional left visions of culture and knowledge, and its forms of collective aggregation); in the South, where the consequences of the current conditions to access to knowledge (such as in terms of access to medicines, education materials, etc) can be seen to be more dramatic, lefties parties, such as the Workers party in Brazil, has adopted the FCM agenda as one of its priorities.

7 Defining the movement dimension of free culture

According to Tilly social movements are defined as a series of challenges to established authorities, especially national authorities, in the name of an unrepresented constituency (Tilly 1983, p. 466). The FCM fits Tilly definition of a social movement insofar as it aims to challenge authorities in a traditional sense in order to reform the Intellectual Proprietary regime and claim the support of public institutions for free culture expression, in particular by protecting and preserving digital commons. However, a national authority is not its main target, it focuses instead on the European Union and the World Intellectual Property

[9] Sources: Amelia Andersdotter (Member European Parliament for the Swedish Pirate Party) and programe Pirate Party 2009. Retrieved from `http://www.piratpartiet.se/`

Organization (WIPO), a sub-organization of the United Nations. For example, the campaign against the approval of software patents in the European Parliament in 2006 was one of the major victories of the FCM (Breindl, 2010). The same can be said with regard to the achievement of the 2007 lobbying campaign at the WIPO in order to introduce a development agenda, which underlined the need for access to intellectual property to meet development goals, regarding, for example access to medicines (Stalder, 2010). Other authors have pointed out the transnational evolution of social mobilizations, (della Porta & Tarrow 2005; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Rucht, 1999), as is the case for the GJM (della Porta, 2009). Additionally, focusing on state-related outcomes has kept scholars from developing a comprehensive understanding of how social movements effect change in socio-economic and cultural contexts (Amenta & Caren, 2004; Earl, 2000; Melucci, 1996). Social movement scholars have traditionally viewed movement outcomes narrowly, as the ability of a movement to achieve political or policy goals (Amenta & Caren, 2004; Gamson, 1992). Melucci states how a social movement entails a breach of the limits of compatibility of the system within which the action itself takes place (1996, pp. 29-30). The FCM adopted the goal of putting participative knowledge-making into practice. However, in order to make it possible, it engaged in developing legal innovations, protest and lobbying political institutions (Frickel & Gross, 2005; Moore, 1996). Those involved in the Free culture movement are not only interested in policy outcomes, but also contest cultural values and beliefs (Earl, 2000), leading to the construction of OCCs as alternative systems of production (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000; Rao, 1998; Schneiberg, 2002). Very significant examples in this regard are the Free and Open source projects, which transformed the production of software in the NTI industry. Recent research shows that movements engaged in production as a mode of opposition have made significant creative and economic contributions to society (Dahlander & Magnusson, 2005; Shah, 2005; von Hippel, 2005). Furthermore, a focus on protest risks an incomplete understanding of how cycles of contestation evolve. Contestation is not likely to remain constant, mobilization may characterize early stages but then transform. As is typical of New Social Movements, the movement struggles for broad cultural change as opposed to material claims. fitting into the current shift towards the post-material (Appadurai, 1996). Touraine stressed that the social control of the main cultural patterns, that is, of the patterns through which our relationships with the environment are normatively organized (Touraine, 2008, p. 213) or "great cultural orientations (Tourraine, 1981) are at stake in social movements. This could have no better expression than in the Free culture movement, which contests a certain conception of culture and the protocols which guide the possibility to construct culture in a digital environment. According to della Porta and Diani, a social movement dynamic is present when single episodes of collective action are perceived as components of a longer-lasting action, rather than discrete events; and when those who are engaged in them feel linked by ties of solidarity and of ideal communion with protagonists of other analogous mobilization (della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 23). The FCM can be considered as in a stage of emergence and

formation. Additionally, the FCM is less centralized than traditional social movements, made up of loosely connected communities that independently organize or produce digital goods and which occasionally engage in common campaigns. Additionally, the FCM can be defined as a movement of movements. It is the result of the confluence and networking of several experiences and diverse trajectories based on a common set of values and principles, the most important of which are: accessibility and the flow of information and knowledge; creativity; participative formats; network settings; and communal ownership. Although still emerging and loose in character, the celebration of the first international forum on free culture and access to knowledge in October 2009 marks one of the moments in which an umbrella framing of these various collective actions took place. On this occasion, a coalition of 200 organizations from several continents drafted and signed a common Charter for innovation, creativity and access to knowledge. Additionally, alongside the informal exchanges between individuals or organizations engaged in collective projects, Diani identifies other two elements that define a social movement: conflictual orientations to clearly identified opponents and a shared collective identity (Diani, 2003, p. 301). The above mentioned Charter for innovation, creativity and access to knowledge is an example of how the FCM frames its opponents as political institutions regulating against its claims and multinational corporations (and their lobbies) as adopting monopolistic and abusive practices against the principles of the net. In line with the cultural theory approach to the definition of social movements, it also raises a sense of injustice (Ryan & Gamson, 2006). However, shared collective action seems to be the least (or most loosely) developed dimension in the FCM. The FCM is in its very early stages and is still developing its collective identity. There is no single term to refer to it, and although free culture is the most common one, other terms used include the Free knowledge movement and the Universal access to knowledge movement, among others. The term which frames the movement, that is free culture, was originally the title of a 2004 book by law scholar Laurence Lessig. Since then, it has been widely adopted. However, internal confrontations on defining the movements identity are also present. A survey on the use of free culture term of 256 free culture initiatives in Brazil concluded that there is inconsistency between the concept of free culture as held by practitioners and that used by theorists (referring to Lessigs definition of free culture and Stallmans definition of free software) (Reia, 2009). Additionally, the decentralized orientation of the FCM, as well as OCCs, stresses a challenge that already exists within the GJM, that is how intense interaction among members should be, and how homogeneous should a way of thinking be before we may speak of movements or collective identities. The repertoire of action includes a range of strategies. From the building of the digital commons to lobbying for legal and policy changes that affect the free circulation of information and the governance of the Internet. The FCM is composed by OCCs foundations, peer-to-peer infrastructures, international networks, specific campaigns, lobbies, alternative licenses, students and librarian groups, blog rings, meet-ups and lo-

cal collectives, flash mobs, and individuals.[10] The recent history of the FCMs goes hand in hand with the cultural conception, evolution and diffusion of NTI. The FCMs seems to depend on the level of diffusion of NTI because it is more visible in places where accessibility to the Internet is greater. Furthermore, the Free Culture frame seems to be moulded by the context of political opportunity and overall socio-political schemata of each place. FCM in the USA has closer connections with entrepreneurship and with universities (E. Stark, Interview, February 1, 2009; B. Moskowitz, Interview, December 16, 2008; J. Jacob, Interview, December 15, 2008; D. Harris, Interview, December 7, 2008). Additionally, the San Francisco Bay Area hosts the headquarters of a significant proportion of prominent organizations supporting the FCM. In Europe, the FCM has instead developed more connections with the autonomous sector of the GJM.[11] In Latin America, the FCM is linked to popular education and the culture of the periphery as seen from the popular expression of the favelas (P. Ortellado, Informal interview, January 28, 2009). Furthermore, a particular case is Brazil where there is institutional support for Free Culture from the Lula Government. In this regard, the Brazilian government has adopted and promoted Free and Open Source Software and promotes a Free Culture industry, among others. In the Brazilian context, a counter-view of the official discourse around Free Culture has also emerged, reclaiming a vision of Free Culture not seen as a commodity, and the development of mechanisms to restrict State control over the production of culture and expression. As the Brazilian Epidemia collective wrote in their manifesto; Free Culture is not a characteristic of the product alone. (...) Culture is free when those who relate to it are also free (...). Free Culture is a step towards the construction of a new society (Epidemia, 2009). FCM challenges traditional conceptions of social movements. However, similarities with other social movements can be pointed out particularly concerning its contemporary, the GJM. Boyle suggests that free cultural activism is a new form of environmentalism (Boyle, 1997). However, other authors claim that a comparison with music-based subcultures is more appropriate than any similarities with traditional conceptions of social movements (Dafermos, 2009; Dafermos & Soderberg, 2009; Gelder, 2007). In conclusion, the Free culture movement (FCM) is defined as a network of individuals and organizations, linked by more or less dense networks, solidarity ties and moments of confluence, sharing a loose col-

[10] The more visible organizations and expressions of the FCM are the Linux operating system, the Free Software Foundation, Pirate Bay file-sharing architecture, Indymedia an alternative media platform, Wikipedia an online free encyclopedia, Creative Commons Licenses, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Open Knowledge Foundation, the Public Library of Science archive, and the Students for Free Culture network, among others.

[11] The FCM in Southern Europe developed connections with networks formed by the alternative media, the hackmeetings process, movements in defense of free circulation of people and the squatter movement. For example, Copyfight (`http://www.elastico.net/copyfight`) and Fadaiat (`http://www.fadaiat.net`) have a special interest in connecting the free circulation of information with the free circulation of people.

lective identity and a common set of values and principles (most importantly accessibility and the flow of information and knowledge, creativity, participative formats, network settings and communal ownership), whose acting together aims to challenge forms of knowledge-making and accessibility by engaging in the construction of digital commons and mobilizations directed against the media and cultural industries, their lobbies, and political institutions (at the national, regional and global levels).

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