

# A Study on the Dynamics of Technologically Enabled Civic Movements

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## Motivation

This research focuses on the relationship between ICTs and grassroots civic movements, where a research gap has been identified. Indeed, there is a lack of theorizing about “the role of ICTs in enabling or inhibiting social problems and their solutions”<sup>1</sup>. Particularly, there is a limited understanding of how ICTs enable grassroots’ organizing and mobilization for collective action that addresses social problems.

## Objective

The research question guiding this research is: **How and why ICTs support the unfolding of grassroots civic movements aiming at collective goals?**

More specifically, this research aims at explaining the ways in which the use of ICTs affects the structure and operation of grassroots civic movements over time. Hence, the objective of this research is the inductive building of theory, and the expect outputs are propositions on the role of ICTs in grassroots organizing, and a typology of the uses of ICTs throughout the lifespan of a civic movement.

## Research Approach

The overarching research approach of this project is multiple interpretive in-depth case study<sup>2,3</sup>. Two cases were selected for this study: one is *Limpar Portugal*, which translates to English as Let’s Do It Portugal (LDIP), and the other is *Teeme Ara*, which translates to English as Let’s Do It (LDI).

Data collection involved the consideration of both secondary and primary data, and included interviewing 46 participants in LDIP and 19 volunteers of LDI movement. For data analysis purposes, this study leverages grounded theory techniques<sup>4</sup>, namely open, selective, and theoretical coding, constante comparative analysis, and analytical memo-ing.

## Preliminary Results

The results here reported concern LDIP case. Through the ordering of the key events that occurred during the timespan analyzed (from July 2009 till December 2012), it was possible to distinguish four developmental phases for LDIP case (Figure 1), and for each, to outline the primary ICTs used, ICTs different roles, and the dominant logic of the group action (Table 1). Subsequently, I used the technology affordances lens to analyze the quotes related to the uses of ICTs for communication and sharing of information purposes, and identified the different enabling and constraining roles of ICTs in the organization of the collective action subjacent to this civic movement (Figure 2).

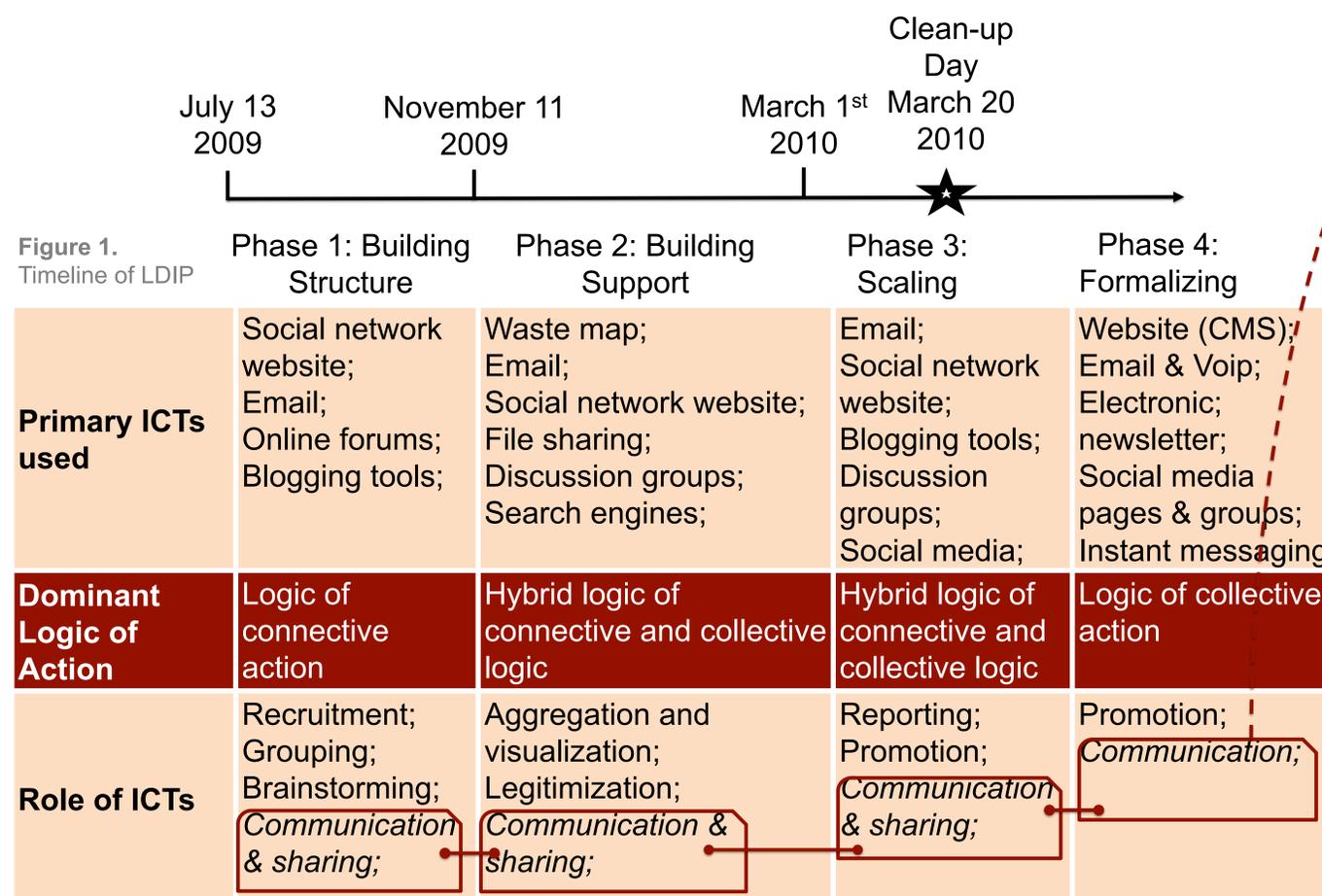


Figure 1. Timeline of LDIP

## Literature Cited

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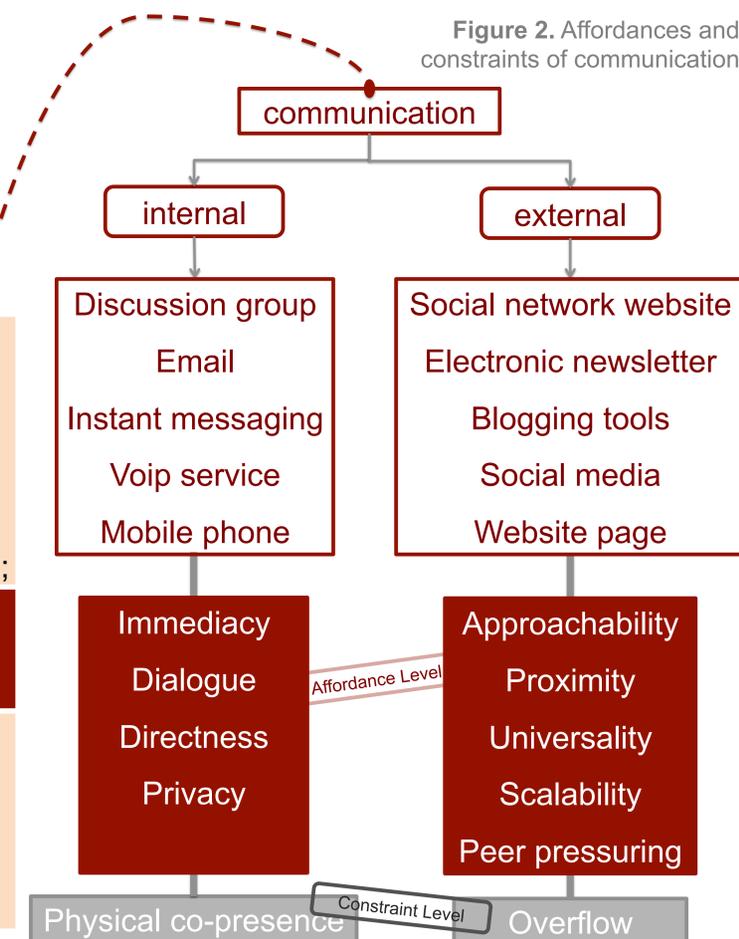


Figure 2. Affordances and constraints of communication

Table 1. Summary of ICTs used, role of ICTs, and logic of action for each developmental phase of LDIP

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