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Resources Shifting Values: Online and Offline Resources in Swedish Civil Society

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Introduction

Resources have always been at the heart of civil society theorizing. While many earlier theories focused on resources in the forms of money, people, ideas, or personnel, recent debates capture the Internet and social media as additional environments for resource mobilization. It is beyond doubt that social media changes the ways in which people interact and enables organizing outside organizations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Scaramuzzino, 2017; Shirky, 2008; Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). It is common for people to connect as individuals on social media in addition to acting as members of formal civil society organizations (Van Stekelenburg, 2012). Occasionally, people also use social media to start protests to achieve social change. Although sometimes criticized as "slacktivism" or "clicktivism" (Glenn, 2015; Karpf, 2010), likes, followers, and members on social media are highly valuable for civil society actors attempting to gain legitimacy.

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Crowdfunding is an important way of raising money (Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Karpf, 2012; Korolczuk, 2014), and online petitions, digitalized campaigns, and social media protests are major avenues for those seeking to influence public opinion and political decision-making (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). The advent of social media has certainly provided civil society actors with access to new types of resources and allowed them to gather and mobilize extensive digital resources.

The development of online resources through social media raises a series of key analytical questions with regard to the availability of offline and online resources for various types of civil society actors, the value of offline resources vis-à-vis online resources, and why some civil society actors are able to mobilize extensive online resources while others seem to fail. Current research on these matters largely sees resources as originating either from offline *or* from online environments and overlooks the fact that, in contemporary society, both offline *and* online resources are important. We argue that to gain a more comprehensive picture of present resource bases for civil society, scholars need to address those resources in combination and to conceptualize the contrasts between them. This chapter seeks to contribute to current research by discussing available offline and online resources in combination. We provide a thematic comparison of three central types of resources for civil society actors: human (e.g. members, followers, and participants), economic, and political (e.g. access to policy-making processes and contacts with politicians).

The analysis draws on public statistics and representative surveys with Swedish civil society organizations. We combine these materials with detailed case studies of three Swedish online actors that exemplify success in the mobilization of resources on social media. *Inte rasist men*,[1] *#jagärhär*,[2] and *#vistårinteut*[3] have, in a relatively short amount of time, mobilized large numbers of people (between approximately 76,000 and 214,000 likes on Facebook) and attracted financial support through crowdfunding. Between November 2016 and February 2017, we conducted a small set of interviews with representatives from *Inte rasist men*, *#jagärhär* and *#vistårinteut* and collected data from these online actors' websites and social media channels. (For ethical reasons, we include no data from closed social media rooms.) The comparison allows us to highlight differences between mobilizing people, raising money, and

gathering political resources both offline and online. We also discuss the value of different resources and consider whether use of the Internet and social media has contributed to a devaluation of the traditional resource base of Swedish civil society.

Mobilizing People Offline and Online

All countries have particular ways of structuring and distributing the resources available to civil society actors. Swedish civil society has its roots in the popular movement (*folkrörelse*) model with its large, membership-based collective action organizations, often with a close connection to the labor movement and the Social Democratic party (Skov Henriksen et al., 2019). This is one of the reasons why Sweden—together with other Nordic countries—stands out in international comparisons as a country with high membership counts, a strong economic foundation based on membership fees, and a legitimacy to act in politics that is linked to the size of the membership base (see Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). The country's high level of organization is also notable internationally: more than 250,000 formal civil society organizations[4] appear in public records (Statistics Sweden, 2018, data for 2016). The relatively large share of organizations (approximately 25 for every 1000 inhabitants) reflects a thick and dense institutionalized landscape of organized civil society.

Human resources are thus linked to associations and constitute a cornerstone of organized civil society manifested in members, professionals, and non-member volunteers. Members constitute something of a gold standard in the Swedish context since they have both the legitimacy to act and the ability to obtain additional resources. However, while the popular movement model still forms a key basis, trends like NGO-ization (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013), bureaucratization, and professionalization (Hwang & Powell, 2009) challenge and add another dimension to the resource base of Swedish organizing. Papakostas (2011a, 2011b) argues that a growing number of organizations exists, yet with lower shares of members. The resource base is thus in flux, moving from members involved in an association towards professional actors employed within an organization (Papakostas, 2011a, 2011b). These earlier studies

suggest that the quality of membership has changed from engaged members taking part in internal decision-making to what might be called "astroturf membership," with passive members who rarely participate in the daily life of an association. This is in line with the arguments of international commentators that participation in membership-based associations has been declining in many countries (Skocpol, 2003; Tranvik & Selle, 2007; see also Einarsson, 2011; Palm, 2017). However, the picture is not simple. Studies also show that a large majority of the Swedish population continues to hold membership in one or more associations (e.g. von Essen et al., 2015) and that the overall numbers of people employed by associations tend to be stable (Statistics Sweden, 2018; see also Sivesind & Saglie, 2017).

While members and professionals constitute two key elements of organizations' human resources, volunteers are of equal importance. In this respect, too, Swedish civil society stands out in international comparisons. Volunteering levels in Sweden are high (similar to those in other Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands), reflecting a dense organizational network (Skov Henriksen et al., 2019). Approximately 50% of the adult population are regularly engaged in volunteering activities, and estimates suggest that the work they perform on an annual basis is equivalent to that of 350,000 full-time workers (von Essen et al., 2015). The thick organizational structure constitutes the platform for people to volunteer, although we find more structured patterns of volunteering linked to particular issues, events, and places outside the organizational frame (Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). Volunteering is largely linked to sports and cultural and recreational activities (e.g. Selle et al., 2019). Also with regard to volunteering, recent studies show very stable or even increasing levels of engagement over the last decades. Within the area of welfare services, there is a clear increase in people's willingness to volunteer (Qvist et al., 2019).

The distribution of human resources differs across different types of organizations. In a previous study (Scaramuzzino & Wennerhag, 2019), we investigated the resource bases for a representative sample of Swedish civil society organizations (see Table 12.1), including national and local organizations.[5] We found that the majority of Swedish civil society organizations have no employed staff and that they have relatively high levels

Table 12.1 Human resources distribution by type of organization (%)

	Organizations representing specific interests						Organizations representing diffuse interests				Total (%)	Cramer's V
	Disability org.	Temperance and drug users' org.	Trade unions	Victim support org.	Women's org.	Other interest org. for social groups	Humanitarian org.	Social service org.	Religious associations and congregations	Political parties		
Membership base												
Meta-organization	4	10	2	0	0	3	6	10	3	1	3	n.s.
1–99 individuals	42	63	26	67	79	24	52	71	49	58	44	0.302***
100–999 individuals	49	19	45	33	10	62	39	19	22	33	38	0.324***
1000+ individuals	5	8	27	0	10	11	3	5	27	7	14	0.272***
Paid staff												
No paid staff	78	73	68	50	54	87	78	50	49	76	70	0.306***
Fewer than 5	19	15	18	33	46	10	15	35	28	22	20	0.198***
5 or more	4	12	14	14	0	3	7	13	23	3	10	0.275***
Volunteers												
No volunteers	89	85	99	50	78	86	68	58	63	93	81	0.336***
Fewer than 10	5	12	0	0	4	6	15	29	11	3	8	0.208***
10 or more	5	3	1	50	19	8	17	13	27	4	12	0.307***
Elected representatives												
Fewer than 10	73	80	34	67	96	54	72	95	53	48	59	0.313***
10 or more	27	20	66	33	4	46	28	5	47	52	41	0.313***
Total (N)	155–167	60–72	99–112	52–56	80–90	134–148	387–450	66–78	481–533	71–82	1595–1786	

Source: Adjusted from Scaramuzzino and Wennerhag (2019, p. 81)
Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5%, ** = 1%, and *** = 0.1% significance. n.s. = not significant

of membership. At the same time, the degree to which they rely on volunteers should not be exaggerated, since the majority of them do not appear to engage volunteers at all.

While members, professionals, and non-member volunteers constitute cornerstones of organized civil society, "people" also form a key resource online as they provide likes and become followers and group members on, for instance, Facebook. Having many likes and followers on social media can be a way to gain public recognition and political influence (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019; Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). Although some critics question whether there is any real engagement behind this form of activism, others claim that it can offer functional equivalency to some offline activist tactics and that it usually complements rather than substitutes for a broad offline repertoire of action (Karpf, 2012). Moreover, personalized content sharing via digital platforms builds communication as a prominent part of organizational structure and can have a real effect, especially in contentious politics (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). A large membership base clearly confers legitimacy and resources to act, but so do likes and followers on social media.

The online actors studied in this chapter are examples of actors that have been successful in mobilizing followers and participants within a relatively short period of time. *Inte rasist men* was started in the spring of 2012 by a young Swedish trade union member for industrial workers who felt that the union did not do enough to deal with the growing number of members who sympathized with the Sweden Democrats, a nationalistic, right-wing party with a socially conservative and anti-immigration agenda. *Inte rasist men* uses political satire to examine the Sweden Democrats, and as of January 18, 2019, it had nearly 214,000 likes on Facebook and more than 40,000 followers on Twitter. *#jagärhär* was established on May 13, 2016, by a Swedish journalist and is now also a formal association. It had a closed Facebook group with approximately 74,000 members who "patrolled" social media in order to try to uphold a minimum standard of "civilized speech" and work for an inclusive society without hatred. By writing comments in threads, sometimes using the hashtag *#jagärhär*, and reporting hateful content on social media, they were fighting hate, trolls, filter bubbles, algorithms, fake news, and

post-truth. Finally, *#vistårinteut—men vi slutar aldrig kämpa* started on September 27, 2016, to protest the treatment of unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Sweden. As of January 18, 2019, its Facebook page had almost 76,000 likes, and, according to its website, its closed Facebook group had 11,000 members. It had 5368 followers on Twitter.

In comparison to some of the largest Swedish civil society organizations, these three online actors had similar numbers of likes and followers. For instance, in January 2019, Amnesty International Sweden had approximately 97,000 likes and the Swedish Red Cross nearly 170,000 likes on Facebook. In this respect, *Inte rasist men*, with 214,000 likes on Facebook, actually had more (digital) human resources than the Swedish Red Cross. Nevertheless, it is misleading to suggest that the value of one member is equal to that of one follower. The actual value of both members in formal associations and online followers and participants is contingent upon such factors as time, context, the actor seeking to make use of these resources, and the intended purpose.

While the question of how different types of resources are valued goes beyond the scope of this chapter, it is apparent that digital human resources are mobilized at a much greater speed than offline human resources by reducing the importance of geographical and temporal constraints. Despite different geographical locations, people are able to "meet" and communicate. Social media has not only reduced the thresholds for human resource mobilization but has also reorganized the spatial and temporal dimensions of human resources (cf. Karpf, 2012; Shirky, 2008). While our three cases have managed to gather large groups and many active participants in a short time, it is extremely difficult, in terms of space, time, money, and coordination, to gather 100,000 people in one geographical location to communicate. By using Facebook, however, *Inte rasist men* was easily able to gather more than 200,000 people as well as analyze and keep track of which audiences were following it. *#jagärhär* described its group members as ordinary people who were "tired of being hated." One interviewee said that it really "comes from below" and "it is people sitting at their computer and thinking 'no, now it is enough'" (Interviewee 2).

The speed and high volumes of digital human resources constitute not only an opportunity for civil society actors, but also a challenge, for

instance, with regard to the coordination of human resources. In fact, the abundance of digital human resources that we found in our three cases pushed *#jagärhär* and *#vistårinteut* to set up rules and reviews for group members. *#vistårinteut* also made its Facebook group secret in order to restrict access. In addition, we observed efforts to encourage people to become more deeply involved as well as sharing and liking posts on Facebook. As stated by Interviewee 1,

> It takes a tremendous amount of time getting people to engage beyond clicktivism, so to speak. Clicktivism is something else. You have not made a difference because you have clicked the "like" button on a post on Facebook. It does not change anything. It is very problematic to think that to click and like will change the world. It is when you get those people who are clicktivists to actually take one step further and do something, and to engage.…

This reflects strategies to go beyond clicktivism and slacktivism and to increase the "real" value of likes and followers, signifying the liquid and potentially disloyal character of digital human resources. People can easily support and join groups by clicking "like" and "follow." However, as easily and quickly as online resources can be mobilized, people may decide to unlike, unfollow, or leave a group. This indicates that digital human resources can quickly be gained but are easy to lose. The actors studied in this chapter developed a series of counterstrategies in order to keep followers and turn them into active participants (cf. Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). In fact, to various degrees, all of the groups studied in this chapter managed to keep and stabilize their numbers; moreover, *#jagärhär* successfully encouraged group members to engage, sometimes on a daily basis, by writing comments in threads, liking posts with the hashtag *#jagärhär*, or reporting hateful content on Facebook.

Mobilizing Money Offline and Online

Economic resources constitute a key resource for most civil society actors. As in many European countries, public funding schemes constitute an important part of the basis for funding Swedish civil society organizations, for example, through core program grants or contracts oriented toward delivery of service based on performance. Voluntary associations and foundations have a particular type of institutional support in that they are exempted from tax as long as they have a public purpose and provided that a large proportion of their income is used for internal activities. New policy tools have opened up possibilities for citizens to provide financial support (donations) with some basic tax exemptions. Many (approximately 95,000) of the 250,000 organizations included in the public records are economically active according to the public definition. Their main sources of income, in order of significance, are public grants, sales of goods and services, membership fees and donations, and other transfers (Statistics Sweden, 2018). This suggests that organizations' major income sources are external, deriving from either public grants or sales.

A change in government funding schemes has yielded an orientation toward more contract-based funding and a concept of civil society as a provider of (public) services through various procurement methods (Johansson et al., 2019; Wijkström, 2011). There has been a growing emphasis (above all by the right-wing-led government in office from 2006 until 2014) on promoting civil society as a sub-contractor of public services (ibid.). As such, Sweden fits well into a European trend of civil society actors that are invited and/or expected to step in when the (welfare) state "fails" to deliver (Brandsen et al., 2014; De Corte & Versheure, 2014). While this is business as usual in many European countries with much greater diversity in service provision, it can be seen as a significant shift in the Swedish context: among social democratic states, in which the state shoulders the main responsibility for citizens' welfare and needs, Sweden has been ascribed the status of a role model.

Our previous studies have demonstrated the complex funding structure for Swedish civil society organizations (see Scaramuzzino &

Meeuwisse, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Wennerhag, 2019). In a major survey of a representative sample of Swedish civil society organizations, we asked how they valued the significance of different sources of income. Responses demonstrated a complex picture of internal and external sources of income across various levels of government (see Table 12.2). Membership fees were considered the most important. The significance of membership fees can, of course, be interpreted in different ways: in terms of proportion of total income or as a means of illustrating that an organization's beneficiaries care and pay their membership fees. With respect to public grants, it was apparent that local governments constituted the major avenue of income, reflecting the fact that a large majority of Swedish civil society organizations are active at the local level. Least important for them appeared to be EU funding. Donations were important for a large proportion of civil society organizations and were almost on par with local government funding. The above discussion of grants as opposed to contracts is also identifiable in Table 12.2, as sales of goods and services were considered to be of great significance—more so, for instance, than grants from the central government.

The Internet and social media have opened up new possibilities for the mobilization of financial support and the diversification of sources. They have lowered transaction costs and made it easier to collect money, for

Table 12.2 Relevance of funding sources

Sources of income		Very or moderately important (%)	CSOs (N)
Internal funding sources	Membership fees	75	1765
	Sales of goods and services	33	1757
	Return on capital	18	1730
Public grants	Grants from local government	45	1749
	Grants from regional government	20	1736
	Grants from central government	19	1722
	EU grants	3	1709
Private funding sources	Financial support from companies	17	1733
	Donations from individuals	39	1745

Source: Scaramuzzino and Meeuwisse (2017, p. 90), authors' translation

instance, through crowdfunding (Renwick & Mossialos, 2017). Research shows that online actors rely on crowdfunding as large numbers of people donate small amounts of money to campaigns, while the cost of starting a crowdfunding campaign on social media is low (cf. Croeser & Highfield, 2014). For instance, Facebook does not charge for donations to charitable organizations, but the charge for personal crowdfunding campaigns in Sweden is at least 1.56% of the total amount.[6]

The Swedish online actors studied asked for donations from their likers, followers, and/or group members on Facebook. Donations were cultivated with the offer of payment options such as Swish (a Swedish mobile payment system) in order to allow people to easily transfer money. However, at the time of our interview study (from November 2016 to February 2017), the online actors did not appear to consider economic resources particularly important. Because social media use is free of charge, they did not seem to need significant economic resources to run their daily operations. In fact, *Inte rasist men* had more economic resources than needed and largely considered such resources easy to mobilize. One of the online actors, which had received extensive funding from followers, expressed a concern with collecting "too much" in donations. Although their followers wanted to make more donations, the online actors occasionally turned down offers of funding.

This reflects, in part, the particular cases under consideration and the low cost of being active on social media; however, it also reflects the classic civil society view that money is mainly a means to an end and that the mission comes first. *#vistårinteut*, for instance, emphasized: "All donations will go to costs and promotion of campaigns" (Vistårinteut, 2018). *Inte rasist men* also rejected greater internal professionalization, stating: "[…] the editorial office will remain based on volunteering" (Interviewee 1). It also made similar careful judgments in order to avoid risking its followers' goodwill and trust, forms of symbolic resources cherished more than actual financial support:

> People were ready. They had asked for it for several years but we said no, because we did not know what we would do with the money. Such facts have probably been important for these people, that people feel that they [*Inte rasist men*] can be trusted. They do not just receive money for fun;

they only receive money when they have something important to spend it on. I will not mention any figures, but we have received a lot of money and we have not even told our followers what we intend to do with it. We have built up that trust. It is absolutely amazing. At this point, we only manage the money and we are very careful with it. We have basically not touched a penny more than a little for paying for research tools. We are saving the money so we can use it in the upcoming election campaign. We will account for every penny we use. (Interviewee 1)

Money is an important online resource, but perhaps not as important as it is for many formal civil society organizations. The emphasis on using funding carefully can also be interpreted differently. Being active only online and not being registered as a formal organization allows online actors extensive leeway to use financial resources at will. Followers have limited possibilities to hold actors to account, and this is also true for public control instruments as the actors are not registered formal associations. Pledges to use money carefully and only for the benefit of the cause can thus be interpreted as a kind of moral contract between online actors and their followers who donate funding, counterbalancing a lack of formal accountability practices and limited transparency.

While social media offers actors opportunities to mobilize economic resources, this should not be understood as full control over such resource flows. Because online actors are not dependent on government contracts, they are not in the hands of public authorities, but they are largely in the hands of their followers. In the Swedish context, public funding can only be received by formal registered organizations meeting certain standards (such as respect for the ideas of democracy and a democratic structure with annual meetings, financial reports, a postal address, etc.). The public authorities thus intend to ensure that public funds go only to civil society organizations and activities that are compatible with the basic values of Swedish society (2018, Dir. 2018:19).

Mobilization of economic resources on social media comes with great uncertainty. Mobilizing large amounts of money in a short time and planning and controlling such resource flows are challenging tasks. One does not know whether followers and likers will donate again next month or in two months. Interestingly, we find that online actors have largely

started to imitate and replicate formal ways of organizing activities. This includes trying to turn occasional donors into monthly donors and encouraging them to sign up for direct debit (*Inte rasist men*). *#jagärhär* has pursued a similar strategy, offering "support membership" based on a small annual fee. These forms of actions can be interpreted as attempts to create more stability and control over financial resources, although some of the online actors also stated that they were in fact not in need of additional funds. *#jagärhär* even decided to set up a formal organization (in the form of an association) as an illustration of its ambition to expand its work, but perhaps also as a way to reduce organizational uncertainty and become eligible for public grants. The two other actors, *Inte rasist men* and *#vistårinteut*, decided to continue to operate without a formal organization. They attempted to create stable organizations based on voluntary work, which requires quite different approaches to both legitimacy and accountability. Irrespective of the path chosen, online mobilization thus follows a different rationale in terms of leadership accountability. While a slow process of holding associational leaders accountable through annual general assemblies allows members to exert influence in formal associations, accountability practices in online mobilizations take place more rapidly in the forms of unliking and unfollowing.

Offline and Online Political Resources

Political resources constitute another fundamental component in the resource portfolio of most civil society actors. They exist in many forms, for instance, as contacts with politicians, access to policy-making procedures, or the public legitimacy to act on particular political issues; the distinctions between types of resources are sometimes fuzzy, as economic and human resources can be mobilized for political purposes. Expressions and manifestations of civil society in the Swedish context fall back on the regulation in the nation's constitution, in which freedom of assembly, freedom to demonstrate, and freedom of association are firmly inscribed. While this presupposes basic conditions for individuals to come together and seek to influence societal development without the interference of the state, the principle of free association does not indicate that the state

has refrained from steering and governing (Micheletti, 1995; Trägårdh et al., 2013).

Political resources in this respect follow Sweden's corporatist legacy, that is, systems of institutionalized contact, negotiation, and joint decision-making between the state and societal actors in the preparation as well as the implementation of public policies (Gavelin, 2018; Lundberg, 2017). Institutionalized forms of cooperation (advisory boards, government committees, steering groups, and the like) at various levels of government invite both social partners and civil society actors to consult and negotiate on common issues. Many observers have, however, pointed out that this system has undergone profound changes in recent decades. Despite patterns of more open competition, the principle of cooperation still seems to guide many state–civil society interactions; this can be illustrated by previous years' implementations of compact models—joint agreements in which both public agencies and civil society actors agree to follow certain guiding principles (Johansson et al., 2019).

While this structure provides opportunities for actors to mobilize, such opportunities are not equally distributed, and the possession of political resources (in terms of political access and contacts) varies across segments and types of actors. Contacts with key decision-makers and access to formal decision-making procedures are mainly in the hands of a few large peak organizations and their high-level representatives. They have been invited based on their representational merits; that is, they represent a significant number of people and/or the issue under consideration (Lundberg, 2017). This implies that a few large civil society organizations have benefitted from a corporatist system that provides them with extensive political resources (Lundberg, 2017; Scaramuzzino, 2012).

Participating in consultation processes provides access to other kinds of resources of great value for civil society actors: a cultural competence that accompanies learning the language and manner of politics, building networks with other key representatives, and getting to know politicians personally. Here we find a spillover effect as access to and control over one type of resources can open up further access as well as the possibility to gather and control other types of resources. Political resources—in terms of access and contacts—can, however, backfire, as actors risk being criticized for partnering or becoming too closely affiliated with the state.

This suggests, once again, the fine balance between gaining one type of resource and managing its potential effects on the actors' more symbolic resources of status, prestige, and legitimacy.

While these corporatist structures promote a particular stability and distribution of political resources, the development of social media has changed political debates and political decision-making processes. Politicians have become easier to follow, contact, and access through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Political resources are intertwined, and online and offline structures can hardly be separated. Civil society actors who engage in political advocacy work are using both online and offline strategies (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). While the corporatist structure and patterns of cooperation largely confine access and potential influence to a few selected actors, the Internet and social media enable a wider set of actors to make their claims and build alliances and contacts with politicians outside of formal decision-making structures, committees, and conferences. Previous investigations suggest that gaining political influence on the Internet and social media takes place less through negotiations on particular issues and is more distinctly linked to showing, claiming, and marking one's political presence on a particular issue (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019).

Defining one's issue seems to be of key importance for online actors as they attempt to build their political resources. They mobilize around a single issue that they carefully define as not party-political, and this effort is to a large extent made to enable the mobilization of as many people as possible (Karpf, 2012). All interviewees stated that they had been able to quickly gather so many resources in the forms of likes, followers, and/or group members on Facebook primarily for this reason; they organized around a single issue, regardless of political affiliation and political views. It thus appears that online activism benefits from building upon "the lowest common denominator" as a general strategy (Interviewee 1). This has allowed the activists to fine-tune and balance party-political position-takings on highly politicized issues—like racism—and attract both left-wing and right-wing sympathizers. Although social media certainly accentuates political and ideological divides, each of our cases sought to operate across such cleavages as a way to attract interest and build legitimacy beyond everyday political discussions.

However, the desire to avoid being marked as party-political or as following traditional political cleavages has not restricted activists' political ambitions. While they certainly had a presence in digital debates and could influence discussions on the Internet and social media, they also sought influence in a more classic sense. Whereas social media offered them opportunities for extensive human resources as well as economic resources, it is evident that they did not have the same recognition and status as organized civil society if they were active solely on the Internet and social media—even if they represented large groups and had expertise on the issues at stake. In short, at the time of the interviews, none of these online actors seemed to have significant access to formal decision-making procedures.

This manifested itself in different ways among the three cases, but interviewees shared ambitions to become more than online actors, acting more offline in "real" politics and having "real" political influence. In an attempt to expand its political strategies, *#jagärhär* started to work on offline civil courage and created a lapel pin displaying its logo so that people could recognize each other offline in the public sphere as well. They also planned to

> […] hold a lot of lectures and advocate and try to influence and also to inform […] and also [try] to get involved in different decision making, by giving advice. (Interviewee 2)

To increase its political influence, *#vistårinteut* aimed to develop contacts with as many different actors as possible, including municipalities, social services, and politicians at the national level:

> We have sent e-mails to ministers and have been mail bombing them and so on. They know who we are and that we exist; they also know that we are professionals. (Interviewee 3)

#vistårinteut also managed to obtain meetings with ministers, exchanging information and—in the views of this online actor—forming a kind of alliance with the politicians:

They gave a lot of information and strategies for how we can continue our work and so on. It is great if they can give us information and we can give them information, so that we can work from two fronts, methodically and together. Then it is even more important that we communicate the right things outwards. (Interviewee 3)

Inte rasist men developed a different strategy for influencing public opinion and started to run its own campaign for the 2018 election. Following classic advocacy and lobbying strategies, *Inte rasist men* saw itself as aiming to assist those in power to create a politics for change:

We believe that we can actually give to those who actually have the power to change and to create politics for change. We can give them some time, and that is what they need right now. (Interviewee 1)

These ambitions to transform followers and likers into political resources show that there is no simple exchange rate—either between types of resources or from online to offline resources.

Conclusion

The growing significance of online resources for civil society actors has been an ongoing trend for some time, and there is little indication that it will lose momentum. Most Swedish civil society organizations use social media, for instance, to communicate with and recruit new members (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020) and to engage in advocacy (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). They also use social media to collect resources (Scaramuzzino, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Meeuwisse, 2019; Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). This suggests a turn toward mobilization of online resources. We argue, however, that this trend is not unidirectional. It is certainly the case that established organizations and associations are shifting their activities to online platforms, yet actors organizing primarily online tend to develop actions outside social media platforms as well. We will most likely see much more of this interactive or integrated style of resource mobilization in the near future, with activities

becoming increasingly integrated and notions of separation between offline and online resources potentially losing significance. This stands in contrast to accounts of civil society and social media that see social media as possibly destructive of social movements, civil society organizations, and civil society. Our study suggests such a position to be analytically misleading, and it is of key importance to move away from a dichotomy perceiving social media as either good or bad and to investigate civil society's use of both online and offline resources.

This chapter shows the benefits of such an integrated approach, as the practices conducted by civil society actors can be interpreted as a complex system of exchange and transaction costs between types of resources (human, financial, and political) and systems of resources (offline and online). We found actors to be engaged in exchanging types of resources. Likes, followers, and group members could potentially be turned into money (crowdfunding) and human resources (likers and followers) into political resources. However, exchanging resources entails costs, and while the organizations we studied managed to mobilize extensive human resources well, we found that these were less easily transformed into political resources in general—and into offline political resources in particular. It thus appears that conversion from online to offline systems is more easily accomplished with some types of resources than others. Highly valued contacts with politicians and decision-makers often seemed to remain out of reach for online actors. In addition, we observed ambitions to improve the value of online resources, turning likes and followers into members or more stable participants. Acting across resources thus appears to put pressure on actors to change not only their methods but also the organization of their work, as exemplified by online actors' increasing efforts to become formal organizations. Acting like an association can be a way to control resources as well as to imitate the classic organizational form of an association.

Online resources' greater speed, volume, and potential fluidity create a divide from offline resources. Moreover, and most importantly, if the timing is right, some actors can quickly mobilize extensive amounts of resources, particularly human resources. We call this a situation of resource abundance (see also Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2021). Having too much thus appears to be a problem, or at least an issue requiring a series of resource control strategies. Previous research has raised concerns that civil

society organizations struggle to engage their members, even if they employ staff and have the capacity to coordinate engagement. On social media, the opposite problem often occurs: namely, too much engagement and not enough coordination. Mobilizing online, in fact, often does not require any major economic resources, but it does require time, and at some point, time also requires money. In other words, making use of the large-scale engagement available on social media requires a great deal of time and coordination. Furthermore, this not only allows for new discussions on how to capture and conceptualize representation and representativeness; it also offers a new perspective on civil society accountability. Leaders can be held accountable online by individuals not liking, not following, or not sharing their posts. Because of the speed of social media interactions, online leaders also appear to be expected to deliver quick results to their followers.

In sum, the thick, dense institutionalized landscape of organized civil society in the Swedish context has long benefitted from close and cordial relations with the state. The advancement of the Internet and social media allows these actors a parallel but also complementary resource base to develop their activities. It is apparent, though, that actors who benefit from various forms of digital resources largely originate from social media mobilizations and, in turn, seek to bridge the gap to traditional organizing by imitating or even setting up formal organizations. Combining and exchanging types of resources is costly, especially when crossing over from online to offline resource bases. These findings suggest a need to go beyond the stylized distinction between offline and online resources, to investigate the much more complex interplay and integration between them, and to determine how such interactions change established conceptualizations of civil society representation and accountability.

Notes

1. "Not racist, but."
2. "I am here."
3. The full title of the Facebook group is longer and reads as "Vi står inte ut men vi slutar aldrig kämpa" ("We cannot stand it, but we will never give up the struggle").

4. Including foundations, religious congregations, associations, and trade unions.
5. The table draws on a large quantitative dataset resulting from a national survey that received responses from 2791 Swedish CSOs. The survey was carried out in 2012–2013 as part of the research program Beyond the Welfare State: Europeanization of Swedish Civil Society Organizations (EUROCIV), financed by the Swedish Research Council. For more details, see Scaramuzzino and Wennerhag (2015).
6. For details, see Facebook (2019).

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