

**Australian youth-led activist organisations and
the everyday shaping of political subjectivities in
the digital age**

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Statement of original authorship

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.



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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between youth-led activist organisations, digital media and youth political participation. Focusing on the Australian context, I ask: what are the contexts and conditions through which young people develop diverse forms of political subjectivity? Recognising that everyday activities and practices are formative for political identity, I find that young people's practices subtly—and sometimes not so subtly—contest what counts as 'legitimate' political participation. Drawing on Bakardjieva's (2009) theory of subactivism to study the relationship between everyday practices and political views and actions, I argue that young people exercise what I call 'quiet power': acts of everyday tactical resistance to established and legitimised modes of formal political action.

In recent years, youth-led activist organisations have actively engaged young people, achieving ostensibly significant influence and reach, but they are under-researched. To understand how these organisations constitute new contexts for youth political participation, I analyse what role two such established organisations—Oaktree and the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)—play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions and how they adapt to young people's changing participation preferences.

As everyday, networked and personalisable forms of political participation are increasingly common among young people, both organisations deploy technology-based engagement strategies. While a burgeoning literature seeks to understand how young people's political practices are embedded in digital contexts, research has yet to focus in depth on how young people come to be interested in and to act on issues of concern. I therefore go beyond the study of practices to analyse young people's motivations: what interests and activities are meaningful to them and what conditions underpin this meaning-making process? I examine how their feelings, thoughts and activities in relation to political issues might manifest in more conventionally recognisable political acts.

To do so, I purposefully critique binaries of organised political action versus individual expression; traditional versus self-expressive practices; and online versus offline connections, to explore the relationships between these domains. This research examines the iterative nature of these contexts, and the way power flows through and around them. To do this, I have used methods (e.g. interviews) and theoretical tools (e.g. subactivism and standby citizenship) that foreground the participatory threads in young people's everyday stories. Drawing on the data generated via these methods, I argue that young people's affective experiences provide important insights into the shaping of their political subjectivities.

The data for this project was generated primarily through semi-structured interviews and a focus group with three different groups of young people. First, there were the *leaders* of Oaktree and AYCC, whose roles were to provide strategic overview and define organisational tactics. Second, there were the *members* of Oaktree and AYCC not involved in strategy or planning, but who participated in organised activities. Third, there were young people with no stated connection to these organisations, but for whom digital technologies facilitated everyday practices, such as information-gathering and networking with peers on issues of mutual interest.

My analysis reveals that these young people's political concerns and practices emerge across contexts—from engagement with politically oriented organisations, through to everyday interests and activities with no immediately obvious connection to the political domain. Oaktree and AYCC shape young people's political concerns and actions by mixing a variety of engagement activities. However, I also find that the organisations are profoundly shaped by their membership, whose everyday acts of tactical participation demand that organisations constantly innovate and implement new repertoires to maintain their relevance. Understanding this reciprocity is important for these organisations, as well as for political parties and other institutions.

In conclusion I argue that it is crucial to rethink the ways young people are remaking politics through their everyday interests and practices across contexts. Failure to do so will challenge the efficacy and legitimacy of existing formal political institutions, organisations and processes by negatively affecting their ability to meaningfully engage young people now and into the future.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This thesis examines the relationship between youth-led activist organisations, digital media and youth political participation. Focusing on the Australian context, I ask: what are the contexts and conditions through which young people develop diverse forms of political subjectivity? Recognising that everyday activities and practices are formative for political identity, I find that young people's practices subtly—and sometimes not so subtly—contest what counts as 'legitimate' political participation. Drawing on Bakardjieva's (2009) theory of subactivism to study the relationship between everyday practices and political views and actions, I argue that young people exercise what I call 'quiet power': acts of everyday tactical resistance to established and legitimised modes of formal political action.

Social, economic and cultural developments, alongside the uptake of digital media in everyday life, are reshaping political participation in the twenty-first century, and I argue that it is crucial to rethink the ways young people are remaking politics through their everyday interests and practices across contexts. I ask what the contexts and conditions are in which young people's political concerns and practices emerge, why young people engage in particular ways, and how this shapes political subjectivities across contexts. Given the increased importance of everyday activities, often mediated by digital technology, I also ask how young people's political subjectivities are formed before they manifest in more traditional forms of engagement, such as voting or public protests. Based on data generated primarily through semi-structured interviews with young people of differing levels of political engagement, this thesis documents and analyses the everyday practices of politically oriented organisations and individuals to understand how they shape the underlying political interests and activities of young people. I argue that young people's affective experiences provide important insights into the shaping of their political subjectivities. I further argue that, through this shaping, young people have the potential and capacity to take part in acts aimed at social change and connect

them with more traditional forms of political practice, from which it is often believed they have turned away.

Young people's political participation in the digital age is the subject of both fascination and bewilderment. Young people are regularly portrayed as apathetic or disengaged citizens. Yet, there is also a suspicion that young people are 'up to something', not least because their ostensible move away from formal, institutional political practices appears to coincide with their increasing access to and use of digital media. Further, young people's online activities sometimes facilitate visible and traditional 'political' actions, such as public protests or engagement with formal political processes, as in the case of the 2017 UK elections where young people voted in significant numbers (YouGov, 2017).

Young people's politically oriented practices are diverse and complex (Bang, 2009; Harris, 2003, 2004, 2008; Loader et al., 2014; Manning, 2006; Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2016). They range from highly engaged activities, such as those characterised by large-scale public mobilisation events, through to small everyday practices such as individual choices about consumer purchases. Political identities—who people are and how they relate to political issues—are now less influenced by family and local communities, but increasingly by and through self-created, digitally mediated online networks (Loader et al., 2014). In online networks, young people operate less as permanent group members and more as interconnected individuals, with varying degrees of relationship strength (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). This 'networked individualism' (Rainie & Wellman, 2012) is characterised by looser, more fragmented networks that often provide important resources and support. Such networks have always existed, but digital media broadens the speed, scope and durability of connection. These changes give rise to questions about how young people's political concerns and actions are shaped and their relationship to more traditional forms of politics.

A study focused on everyday practices and digital media and their relationship to the domain of politics raises the inevitable question of how politics is conceptualised. The task of defining 'what is politics' is inevitably contested. Politics has long been conceptualised as a public activity among free and equal citizens (Arendt, 1958). Such conceptualisations frame political action as visible, intentional, and constituted by recognisable activities such as voting or petition-signing. These conceptualisations rely on an informed citizenry consciously participating in the visible political arena of democratic participation. Bakardjieva (2009) acknowledges this traditional approach, but argues that the internet means it is necessary to think in new ways about activities and interests that are deemed to constitute the domain of politics. Bakardjieva (2009: 91-92) seeks to draw attention to 'the democratic potential of the Internet that casts light on facets of democracy enacted outside of the visible arena of politics, typically occupied by campaigning, voting, assemblies, and organised action in the street or the media' and makes the case for 'divert[ing] attention from the structural, institutional and procedural effects of the internet on democracy and direct it towards changes unfolding at the level of meaning and individual agency' (p. 92). Like Bakardjieva I too conceptualise politics as unfolding beyond the realm of the public domain and increasingly constituted by individuals engaging in meaningful practices in their everyday lives.

My focus on politics is on the everyday ways in which power manifests and moves through the interests and actions of organisations and individuals. My aim here is also to explicitly show how everyday activities may not intend to have a political motivation or dimension, but can develop into more traditionally recognisable forms of agency. Thus I do not argue that 'everything is political'. Instead, I argue that a more nuanced understanding of interests and actions as having, or potentially having, effect in the way power is exercised offers richer understandings of the changing nature of politics today, rather than relying on more conventional conceptualisations of politics.

Digital media now regularly facilitates young people's political concerns and actions. This occurs, for example, with politically oriented organisations, which facilitate events and mobilisations, and/or through individual everyday practices such as using social media to learn about and communicate with others on issues such as sustainability or animal rights. How and why are young people engaging with politics, and how might their practices shape their future political engagements and those of politically oriented organisations? Given perceptions of young people's disengagement, is it that young people are not politically active, or are they engaging in activities and/or with issues in ways that are not always deemed legitimate or clearly visible, but which nonetheless shape their political subjectivities?

Significantly, the current political landscape has seen the emergence of youth-led activist organisations (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Youth-led activist organisations can be read as a response to the limits of offline, traditional political spaces, from which young people are largely excluded, and as a consequence of changing political participation practices. The emergence of such organisations can also be located in relation to the digital inasmuch as digital media's affordances facilitate such organisations' engagement of young constituents. Unlike traditional spaces, such as the polling booth or parliamentary buildings, emerging non-traditional organisations are not physically bound; they are fluid and mobilise digital technologies to maximise their reach and impact. While Chadwick (2007) has focused on the advent of similar organisations in the United States, such as progressive activist group MoveOn, and Vromen (2014, 2016) has studied the Australian activist organisation GetUp!, less is known about the structures and motivations of youth-led activist organisations in Australia. My study examines the activities of leaders and members of the two largest and best-established Australian youth-led activist organisations, Oaktree and the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC). I analyse what roles these organisations play in young people's lives and ask how they might contribute to changes in Australian political life more broadly.

Through their strategic plans, the organisations make clear they are interested in attracting those yet to formally engage with them, seeing them as potential members. I therefore extend my study to young people not directly engaged with Oaktree or AYCC. My purpose is to show the varying contexts and conditions under which young people's political concerns and practices emerge, even if the everyday practices in these spaces have no immediately obvious political orientations. I ask if young people are engaging with politics, through their everyday practices or activities, in ways that are less visible and even underestimated or, worse, dismissed as illegitimate, but which nonetheless shape their political subjectivities in powerful ways.

While I am concerned with the identities and shaping of political subjects, my study differs from those taking a political socialisation approach. Political socialisation is fundamentally about socialising people to established norms and therefore institutions and political practices. To account for this, it emphasises the role of civic education in schools, but also community or service organisations such as Scouts as well as influential adults such as parents. Broadcast media is also seen to contribute to informing and socialising political subjects. The study of political socialisation is largely concerned with understanding whether political socialisation occurs and when it fails or changes. Success is therefore often measured by political knowledge or conventional participatory acts such as voting. While the field has evolved, research on the success or failure of political socialisation practices has been predominantly quantitative in nature and based on surveys of attitudes or stated behaviours (Edwards, 2012). More recently, however, scholars have turned their attention to how young people's political subjectivities are constructed through their own activities (Vromen, 2003; Collin, 2015). These studies focus on everyday practices of young people that shape their identity and see them develop as political subjects, often in the context of powerful structures and systems from which they are excluded. Similarly, my interest is in the small-scale actions and stories of young people and their explanations of how these motivate them to pay attention to or act on particular issues. In the digitally mediated age, these motivations take on greater

importance as young people interact across constantly changing networks and platforms. I analyse what, how and why they engage using digital media and how these behaviours shape their future activities.

Young people are regularly framed as ‘apprentice citizens’ (Collin, 2015: 21) where their acts of participation, such as engaging with politically oriented organisations, are not seen as forms of expression, but rather as a means of socialisation. In this way, political socialisation approaches generally focus on limited or even singular explanations for the ways in which young peoples’ political subjectivities develop. Such explanations focus on settings and contexts such as broadcast media, civics education in schools or family influences (Edwards, 2012) or on the processes by which young people become citizens (Flanagan, 2013). Like Flanagan (2013), my interest lies in examining young people’s experiences and understandings. My research examines questions of the diverse, multiple overlapping and non-linear influences of organisations, lived experience and affect, that I argue all shape young people’s political subjectivities.

To explain the rationale for the key focus of this thesis, in this introduction I critique how young people’s political participation is conceptualised in contemporary society and scholarship. I begin with a discussion of the role of individualisation and the declining influence of traditional norms and political actors, even as many forms of social inequality are reproduced. I then consider the contemporary contexts for youth political participation, including networks and organisations. I then discuss digital media and the role it plays. Finally, I examine the role of power and how it is used in this thesis to explain the new ways young people’s political subjectivities develop in the digital age.

1.1 Young people in late-modern society

A key question for youth studies today is whether and how the lived experiences of young people are markedly different from those of previous generations (Woodman

& Wyn, 2014; Vromen, 2007; Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). The ways in which social, economic and technological developments have resulted in changes for young people, and also the perpetuation of generational continuities and obstacles, explains changes in the ways young people respond to their current circumstances. Scholars have argued that young people now encounter a less structured and predictable environment than previous generations, with significant changes to education, employment, and social and community institutions (Woodman & Wyn, 2014; Beck, 1992). In addition, technological developments have fundamentally changed the ways young people connect with the world around them and build networks and communities (Coleman, 2010; Ito, 2009; boyd, 2010, 2014). Economic and social supports have gradually shifted from the state and institutions to self-reliance and forming of support networks, which are looser and continue to change with structural and technological developments (Bennett, 2008; 2012). Economic changes in global trade, employment changes that liberalise labour laws, the increased emphasis on individual investment in post-secondary education, and changes to technology requiring a more educated form of knowledge-worker able to work in globally linked environments, all act on young people directly. These changes are not limited to young people, but significantly affect them as they navigate education, employment and social and cultural contexts for the first time.

In the Australian context, young people's lived experience is regularly contrasted with that of 'the Baby Boomers', born between 1946 and 1964, who could expect solid employment conditions, a reliable welfare state and clear ideas about government and other social institutions. The Baby Boomer generation also enjoyed relative community and religious stability. In contrast, Loader, Vromen and Xenos (2014) identify the changed context in which young people now live, arguing they understand the world through global information and social networks rather than 'modern welfare capitalism' or a state-centred model of viewing the world (145). For some young people these changes have meant they have done what was expected of them, but have not received the promised benefits. After pursuing years of education, for example, many find previously available employment pathways

significantly altered or blocked (Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Woodman and Wyn argue that such circumstances can lead to 'poorer employment prospects and conditions into middle age and beyond', and that these things 'shape a generation' (2014: 2). These circumstances require young people to adjust their expectations and to manage them both as individuals and collectively.

Woodman and Wyn (2014) usefully highlight how the focus of youth studies is often on change, while the challenge is to understand the 'dynamic between continuity and change' (Woodman & Wyn, 2014: 4). Continuities of inequality, such as class and gender, continue to affect young people, at the same time as they try to manage significant structural and global changes. Furlong and Cartmel's (2007) seminal critique is useful in this context, articulating the paradoxical nature of young people's circumstances today:

The paradox of late modernity is that although the collective foundations of social life have become more obscure, they continue to provide powerful frameworks which constrain young people's experiences and life chances

(Furlong & Cartmel, 2007: 138)

They have argued that too great a focus on young people's agency has failed to account for often invisible or disguised structural forces working against them, calling this an 'epistemological fallacy' (Furlong & Cartmel: 138). Their argument reminds us that young people must navigate the tensions between action and limitations. That is, while young people need to manage changes such as altered educational requirements and a precarious labour market, a great deal of their experience is continuous: structural inequalities connected with gender, class and ethnicity continue (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). While not the focus of my research, these are also crucial factors in understanding the environment young people are required to navigate today (Woodman & Wyn, 2014). These factors continue to shape outcomes for many young people, and while new possibilities for young lives may have been created, it might only be a smaller group of privileged young people who really get to make meaningful choices about their future (MacDonald & Marsh,

2005; Roberts, 2007). A focus on change can also lead to a 'simplified account of the past', over-emphasising the contrast with the present (Woodman & Wyn, 2014: 2). It is therefore necessary to take continuities into account to understand the tensions and pressures young people are required to manage.

It is in this complex economic and social context that individuals are also required to navigate and manage social risks previously mitigated by laws, norms and other relatively stable social mechanisms. This has been called the 'individualisation of social risks' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). When problems arise, the popular first response is often one that identifies the deficiencies of individuals, rather than broader social forces at work (White & Wyn, 2011). When young people can't find stable employment, for example, it is suggested they pursued the wrong career or studied the wrong university course, while failing to recognise the structural difficulties of an increasingly precarious and casualised labour market.

These changes are drawn together by Ulrich Beck (1992), who highlights the role of technology in producing many new challenges at both the global and local levels. He describes this new environment as the 'risk society' (9) These risks, according to Beck (1992), include precarious and altered employment patterns, the declining influence of tradition and custom, changing traditional family patterns and the democratisation of personal relations. These changes also affect traditional political actors and institutions and how they operate and connect. Digital technology, for example, requires changes to communication practices and alters networks and information flows. And while customs and traditional structures such as religion do still play a role in the lives of young people, it is the combined forces of change that young people are required to manage.

Changes forced upon the individual, Beck argues, have given rise to the need to turn to one's own resources and capabilities, and to be better educated and informed. As a result, people place less value, long-term, on corporations and institutions and twentieth-century structures. Individuals therefore use the means they feel able to

employ, such as the technologies available to them, to affect their world at the local level rather than relying on larger structures to do that work. This raises the question about how young people respond to these changes and how they exercise what power they do have available to them, through their associations and networks, to manage risks and advocate for change on issues they care about.

Young people's more individualised and uncertain context now plays out in political participation and citizenship practices (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007; 2010). Perceived crises of disengagement in this environment should be tempered with the understanding that young people's political participation practices are now more 'informal, individualized and everyday' (Harris, Wyn & Younes 2010: 9). Exploring young people's activities and perspectives in this way opens the possibility that young people are neither apathetic about 'politics nor unconventionally engaged' (2010: 9), but continue to be interested in social and political issues and seek ways to connect with the political system where they can. This approach highlights the connections between the consequences of changing life circumstances and less predictable life trajectories and the ways such social and economic changes influence the political sphere. As individuals are expected to be more self-reliant and resourceful, this affects how they perceive the political sphere and live out their political participation. These changes mean rethinking what counts as legitimate political action and learning that young people are politically active—but in ways that require a reframing of political participation and a more nuanced understanding of citizenship today.

1.2 Researching and theorising youth political practices

As the individualisation of risk requires young people to manage their own circumstances, they are increasingly engaging in self-expressive practices in their everyday lives through means directly available to them (Collin, 2009). Digital media, with its affordances of individual presentation and personally curated networks, is a significant element of this capacity. As Harris, Wyn & Younes (2007)

note, it is in the space of digitally mediated and public individual expression, and the managing of social, economic and personal circumstances, that new forms of political participation emerge. Young people increasingly exercise their citizenship identities through online practices that become part of their 'everyday lifeworld[s]' (Bakardjieva, 2010). These new types of citizenship practices depart from earlier notions of duty and obligation, to ones where young people take greater responsibility for defining their own identities (Bennett, 2003). These new forms of political participation are not only more self-expressive, but are often exercised through everyday, informal practices, in contrast to institutionally focused practices of previous generations. But the lack of understanding and even visibility of these changes has, as noted earlier, seen young people regularly portrayed in polarising ways: either as apathetic in their civic engagement, or as being at the forefront of the evolution of political participation practices (Bennett, 2008). This latter portrayal is particularly prevalent in relation to digital practices and highlighted through such terms as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001), which assumes young people are digitally literate based purely on the date of their birth.

The everyday use of digital media for political participation has led to the development of a large body of literature questioning what counts as citizenship for young people today. These approaches argue for a broadening of political participation and often present a binary of more traditional versus newer understandings. Lance Bennett (2008) focuses on the evolving nature of young people's citizenship norms and practices, framing the changes from dutiful forms, such as voting, to more self-expressive or self-actualising forms, such as conscious consumerism and community volunteering. Coleman (2008) introduces the concepts of managed and autonomous citizenship, focusing on organisational approaches to youth participation. Managed approaches are characterised by an interest in establishing 'connections' between young people and institutions and political elites, while autonomous citizenship expresses reservations about having too close a relationship with the state, and is less interested in engaging with powerful institutions than forming communities for action. Bang (2005) highlights a

growing divide between more professional and organised forms of political activity, in contrast to more everyday acts, expressed using the terms “expert citizens” and “everyday makers”. Bang emphasises the professional and sophisticated practices of established political actors, in contrast with everyday activities and expressions (Bang, 2005). These approaches are useful for the way in which they extend conceptualisations of citizenship, but their binary nature limits the possibilities for articulating or thinking about overlapping or multiple and simultaneous forms of participation.

Greater attention and broader consideration are now given to what people actually do in relation to political participation practices that constitute new forms of citizenship (Vromen, 2003). Undertaking a content analysis of both government and community organisation-led websites in Australia, Ariadne Vromen (2011) examined whether youth-oriented websites can create new spaces for civic and political engagement. The organisations studied were online-only or linked to established organisations. Vromen (2011) found that while young people are no longer labelled politically apathetic, they have largely rejected institutionalised politics. She also found, however, that this rejection is accompanied by the creation of new spaces for everyday politics. While young people often feel excluded from institutional structures and processes, they will work with traditional actors if they believe this can have some impact (Collin, 2009; 2015; Edwards, 2007). Vromen later extended this work with Loader and Xenos (2014), drawing on their respective research across Australia, the United States of America and the United Kingdom and developing the concept of the networked young citizen. Together they articulated in detail moves away from formal civic organisations towards more project-oriented and reflexively engaged lifestyle politics. But these studies do not address why young people engage in these ways, or how such forms of participation are meaningful to them, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3.

Recognising concerns about declining citizen participation, Dahlgren (2006) argues that rather than declining, citizenship forms are changing. Dahlgren’s (2006)

approach to reframing definitions of citizenship is one that moves away from formal notions of participation to an understanding that is fundamentally cultural in its approach. Using the term 'civic cultures' (2003), Dahlgren emphasises and foregrounds increasingly important cultural dimensions that now constitute citizenship practices. Specifically, this means giving greater attention and consideration to meanings, practices, communication and identities. My purpose is not to engage in or reiterate lengthy debates about the ways citizenship is conceptualised, but rather to make clear that my approach to citizenship is also cultural. Like Dahlgren, I argue that understanding and studying citizenship requires a cultural approach that recognises and examines the meanings young people place on their actions; the breadth and form of their practices, which for them are active citizenship; communication practices and networks, now largely digitally mediated, that change agency capabilities and information flows; and increased attention to identities and the ways in which identities are shaped through everyday citizenship activities.

While young people's practices are increasingly used as a basis to theorise about their changing political identities and subjectivities, there is less work examining and detailing how young people's political practices and orientations *emerge*. To address this gap, my study builds on the work of Maria Bakardjieva (2009), who examines everyday practices and interests by speaking with people to learn why they engage in particular activities and why they are meaningful to them, and asks how these shape their subjectivities. I extend her work by examining a range of contexts and practices in Australia, from highly engaged and professional approaches through to young people's everyday online practices with no readily visible link to political participation. To more fully understand changing practices, it is necessary to study a variety of spaces where young people's political subjectivities are formed, and the relationships between them. The permeation of digital media and the rise of everyday spaces elevates the need to examine and consider how these features alter young people's actions and connections.

1.3 Sites, networks and organisations for youth political practices

My cross-context approach stems from a growing interest in the interplay between more personalisable forms of political participation and the effect on and role of politically oriented organisations in these new forms of lived citizenship. Attention to more individual forms of political participation and self-expression has grown because of recognised changes to sites and networks of collective political engagement (Vromen, 2016). New kinds of organisations have emerged to capitalise on these changes, including MoveOn and Avaaz in the United States (Chadwick, 2008) and GetUp! in Australia (Vromen, 2014, 2016). The increasing use of digital media to connect young people and mobilise around issues of political interest has only accelerated the nature of these changes (Karpf, 2016). Changes in the uptake and affordances of digital media go beyond the ability to rapidly connect with greater numbers of people, to drive fundamental changes in the dynamics of political connection and practices (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013). These changes are identified by Bennett and Segerberg (2012) as occurring in three main ways. First, changes to traditional forms of collective action see digital media used in ways that reflect distrust in hierarchy and authority and a more inclusive approach to action. Second, there is a desire by individuals to contribute in ways that reflect more personalisable forms of expression. Finally, there is a greater use of communication as an organising tool, as opposed to more hierarchical or top-down professional organising.

These changes have not only generated new organisations but also a constant interplay and tension between individuals and political organisations. As organisations work to attract and engage members by deploying a range of communication strategies, individuals can choose to respond to or disrupt them. In addition, digital-media access and use means individuals now have increased capacities for connection and expression outside of formal political organising, even if they identify as members of such formal groups. There is a need for ongoing

research to better understand the relationship and interplay between organisations and individuals.

There is a significant and growing body of research on the role of digital media in changing political participation practices. Focusing on the use of the internet for organised political activities, Vromen (2007) developed and analysed original survey data and found that the internet facilitates participation in politics and political issues. This is especially the case for young people who are already politically engaged. She found that for young people engaged with activist and community groups, the internet plays an important role in shaping information and organising. But Vromen notes that her survey study (2007) is primarily a quantitative measure of young people's use of the internet for political engagements. She calls for more in-depth, qualitative or case-study research on political participation and internet use and, in particular, an exploration of organisations facilitating political activities with young people via the internet.

My work also builds on that of scholars who call for reframing understandings of young people's political participation. Collin (2009; 2015) argues that disengagement should be understood as a political act, rather than one of apathy, as young people increasingly see political institutions and structures as an unproductive channel for their activities. Focusing on the policy frameworks of organisations working with young people, Collin (2009; 2015) examined political participation practices in Australia and the United Kingdom and the role of the internet, exploring questions of youth citizenship and participation. Collin's research included interview data, participant observation and policy analysis with politically engaged young people, with both non-government and youth-led organisations. This qualitative approach is particularly valuable for the way it foregrounds young people's perspectives and reasons for participation. By listening to their concerns and enabling young people to live out their citizenship in ways that are appropriate for a changed and changing social and political environment, Collin is arguing for young people's empowerment. I draw here on Collin's (2009; 2015) approach that

argues mediated political participation should be theorised in new ways, rather than studied only in terms of whether or not it reinforces or mobilises new actors in traditional forms of political engagement.

One new form of youth political engagement is the manifestation of youth-led activist organisations. The emergence of new youth-led activist organisations is not unique to Australia. Globally, as young people are increasingly informing themselves on issues that matter to them and are seeking to organise through these movements and organisations to create change, they have developed formal groups (Delgado & Staples, 2008). Youth-led activist organisations are framed by educators in the language of ‘action competence’ and defined as ‘the appropriate use of knowledge and action to achieve an outcome’ (Henderson & Tudball, 2016: 7).

In Australia there are two youth-led activist organisations that distinguish themselves from other political organisations by the extent to which they are evidently structured to ensure they are run by young people: Oaktree and the AYCC. Oaktree has been operating for 10 years, has more than 100,000 members and focuses on ‘young people leading a movement to end poverty’ (Oaktree, 2013). AYCC was established in 2006 and has more than 90,000 members; its stated mission is ‘to build a generation-wide movement to solve the climate crisis before it’s too late’ (AYCC, 2013).

Both organisations are in many ways emblematic of changing political participation practices because they have formal organisational structures but also embrace and encourage individual digital expression. Their existence also challenges notions of youth apathy and disinterest in politics. They have positioned themselves in the Australian political and policy landscape, demonstrated through their longevity and stated membership numbers. Oaktree and AYCC are known to many young people, largely through their use of the affordances of social media and strategic connections with school and university networks. These organisations, over time, have also regularly involved themselves in mainstream policy debates and political

events such as the G20 summits and federal elections. They have developed sophisticated ways of operating with formal actors and institutions such as politicians and broadcast media outlets, as well as in partnerships with other organisations like GetUp! (Vromen, 2016). Technology, and specifically social media, enables them to reach audiences not previously accessible and to mobilise actions directed towards institutional political actors and traditional media players.

These organisations appear to be structured to maximise the permeation and affordances of digital media to deepen their presence, to grow and to sustain themselves. This is especially important as members age and move on. These capacities mean the organisations serve as important case studies for studying the evolution of digital media for political action. There is limited research and knowledge on Australia’s leading youth-led activist organisations, Oaktree and AYCC. There is work based on publicly available information (Henderson & Tudball, 2016) but limited research directly involving senior staff or members of these organisations (Collin, 2015). Learning more about young people’s everyday political practices with these organisations and the networks developed within them offers the possibility of developing knowledge of evolving citizenship practices and the conditions under which political identities are cultivated. It enables me to investigate the role Australian youth-led activist organisations—and their use of digital technologies—play in shaping young people’s political concerns and actions.

Digital practices

A central question for this study is: what are digitally mediated political practices? The ubiquity of digital media—email, social media, websites and blogs—means there is a substantial and growing body of work focusing on digital practices. But despite the frequent use of the concept of digital practices to study the relationships between people, data and things, it is often unclear what makes practices digital or what are the specific qualities of digital practices. Digital practices are often hard to define because they are constantly evolving or developing according to new

'affordances and constraints of new cultural tools' (Jones, Chik & Hafner, 2015: 3). Additionally, they are not enacted in isolation, but are mixed with other practices, making the doing and study of such doing complex. Digital practices also vary in meaning, depending on who is part of them, where they are and how they manifest. Digital practices are always 'nestled' or nested with other cultural practices, some new and some old. These acts form what Scollon (2001: 4) has referred to as a 'nexus of practice': a combination of practices and tools with various histories linked to them (Scollon, 2001: 5). These come together and form visible sequences of actions and enable actors to create recognisable social identities (Jones, Chik & Hafner, 2015: 3).

To define digital practices for my research, I draw on Jones, Chik and Hafner (2015), who argue that practices are generally framed as social, and point to the long history of conceptualising practices, including Bourdieu's (1997) focus on habits and Foucault's (1972) attention to regimes of knowledge, which see practices as the sorts of behaviours, identities and relationships considered 'normal' or ordinary. More recently, the centrality of the social is seen in terms of 'concrete, situated actions people perform with particular mediational means (such as written texts, computers, mobile phones) in order to enact membership in particular social groups' (Jones, Chik & Hafner, 2015: 2-3). In this usage, practice is used 'as a countable noun ("practices")' and refers to 'observable, collectable and/or documentable ... events, involving real people, relationships, purposes, actions, places, times, circumstances, feelings, tools, [and] resources' (Tusting, Ivanic & Wilson 2000: 213).

Mine is a study that extends beyond practices to their meanings and how they are situated, enacted or renew forms of the political: that is, what are the meanings young people attach to their practices that occur in, around or about issues of power, justice and scenes of policy debate and decision? These acts are multifaceted, and can include liking a politically oriented post on Facebook or mobilising groups of young people around an issue. It also includes everyday, digitally mediated activities

and interests and why they are meaningful to those young people, particularly those that occur in less visible spaces, but which may inform the user and form networks of similarly interested individuals into potentially larger groups.

1.4 Power in the digitally mediated age

A study of political participation with politically oriented organisations and the practices of individuals must account for power. In the late modern, digitally mediated age, how do young people work within and against power formations, how are power dynamics being reshaped, and how might new and additional conceptualisations provide insights into the ways young people navigate power relations and influence them?

Recent theories have focused on expanding the discourses used to speak about and understand power, by extending thinking about what power is and does (Karlberg, 2005). In Chapter 2 I discuss different theories of power. In contrast with traditional, normative, top-down notions of power, I detail approaches that provide more holistic conceptualisations as these are more useful for understanding how power operates in a digitally mediated, highly networked society. In the context of this thesis, a conceptualisation of power is needed that articulates how power moves and flows in new forms. I argue that the ways actors, through their everyday practices and agency, disrupt and contribute to those flows can reveal how power operates. I further argue that the notion of ‘quiet power’ brings to the fore the ways young people tactically subvert strategies imposed upon them in their everyday lives. I draw specifically on the concepts of ‘tactics’ and ‘strategies’ (de Certeau, 1988) in order to consider the ways in which these shape the everyday. Tactics deployed by young people in response to strategies imposed on them shape both their own political concerns and interests and those they connect with in their dynamic and changing networks.

In this thesis, in relation to power and the contexts in which it operates, I ask if the tactics of members of Oaktree and AYCC are taken up, and to what extent they are recuperated, by these organisations. Here, I draw on Hall's notion of recuperation and the ways in which tactics are recuperated by organisations and become part of them. I discuss how such dynamics of everyday political practices are theorised and studied further in Chapter 2. This raises further questions about how Oaktree and AYCC shape young people's political concerns and actions through recuperation. I also ask how the deployment of tactics beyond the organisations reveals how young people's agency is quietly enacted in their everyday lives.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2 is the first of two chapters discussing the literature underpinning this study. In this chapter I ask what role digital media plays in young people's changing political practices, and how this changes political organising and power dynamics. I examine the role of the digital in mediating young people's networks of relationships and the form and nature of networks in the digital age. I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Castells' (1996) theory of the network society and its explanation of new forms of organisational and individual network power. I consider the usefulness and limitations of the concept of connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). The typology of connective action explains how digital media fundamentally changes the dynamics of political connection, particularly the interplay between individual self-expressive practices and organised digitally mediated mobilisations. I then critique Chadwick's (2007: 283) concept of 'organizational hybridity'. Chadwick (2007) argues that new activist organisations use the affordances of digital media to adeptly mix and blend multiple communication practices. Chadwick provides a useful four-part framework detailing the characteristic repertoires of new political organisations, which is a powerful tool for analysing the repertoires deployed by Oaktree and AYCC. Having discussed the role of digital media for politically oriented organisations, I then focus on individual practices and contexts. In Chapter 2 I also

discuss the concept of power, and why it needs to be reconceptualised in the digital age.

In Chapter 3 I ask how politics is being remade and how political subjectivities are being shaped through everyday activities and interests. I begin with a critique of work that reframes young people's perceived disinterest in politics to demonstrate how new participation practices are shaping political life. I then explain Amnå and Ekman's (2012) concept of standby citizenship, because it argues that everyday information-gathering and dissemination through self-curated digital networks are legitimate and meaningful political acts. I then detail key studies of everyday political participation practices and enumerate key theories and interpretations of 'the everyday' to demonstrate how power circulates and is activated. Building on this focus on the everyday, I then discuss Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism because of its focus on the shaping of political subjects through everyday activities and practices. I employ the concept of subactivism in chapters 6 and 7 to investigate and analyse the everyday practices and interests of young people. I end the chapter with a discussion of the concept of affect. The concepts of standby citizenship and subactivism both reflect that young people engage in a range of everyday political practices, but provide limited explanations as to why they do so. I argue that affect is a useful dimension to add to these theories to explain why young people are moved to engage in certain activities and interests.

Chapter 4 details the research methodology outlining the research design, the data-generation techniques of interviews—incorporating technology walk-throughs—focus-group and social-media analysis, and details of the data analysis. The chapter also provides background on the emergence and growth of Oaktree and AYCC. Difficulties associated with conducting this research are discussed in this chapter: participant recruitment challenges that at first appeared to be a research obstacle in fact provided a path to deepening the project and facilitated an important analytical perspective from which to understand the activities and approaches of youth-led organisations and their members.

Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters presenting the analysis of the research data, and focuses on the question of what role youth-led activist organisations play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions. Using Chadwick's framework of repertoire characteristics, I analyse the data from semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 leaders of Oaktree and AYCC. I examine the multiple repertoires the organisations employ to attract and retain members, and argue that they are carefully structured and focused on maximising member engagement. A question arising from analysis is of how successful the organisations are in engaging young people, and how their members respond to their repertoires.

Chapter 6 presents rich, qualitative interview data from four members of Oaktree and AYCC. Building on the previous chapter, a key question here, from the members' perspectives, is of how the organisations shape young people's political concerns and actions and what the relationship is between youth-led organisations and their members. In this chapter I examine how members perceive and respond to the repertoires the organisations deploy. I argue that there is a powerful interplay here as members, through their interactions, and sometimes their conscious lack of interaction, shape the organisations and their subsequent repertoires. I also present activities by active members of Oaktree and AYCC and their everyday practices beyond the organisations. These everyday practices by members, outside of the organisations, raise the question of why they engage in them and how these practices may have been shaped or relate to their activities with Oaktree and AYCC.

Chapter 7 examines the practices of young people considered by the organisations to be part of the 'crowd'. That is, they are part of the community, and seen by the organisations as potential members, but not formally affiliated with the organisations. In this chapter I ask how young people's everyday practices shape their political subjectivities, even when there may be no immediately obvious political connection. Using the concepts of subactivism and standby citizenship, I analyse the ways everyday digital practices are increasingly powerful embryonic

spaces of political engagement. I argue that this approach reveals new insights into the ways young people's political subjectivities are shaped through everyday activities and interests.

In the concluding chapter I summarise the main findings, explore the limitations of the research and articulate future research directions. I then discuss the question of the contexts and conditions in which young people's political concerns and practices emerge, as well as the role youth-led activist organisations play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions. I end with a discussion of 'quiet power', arguing that young people's acts of everyday tactical resistance to established and legitimised modes are important forms of political action that shape their political subjectivities. Failure to understand these changes has implications for the efficacy and legitimacy of existing formal political institutions, organisations and processes by negatively affecting their ability to meaningfully engage young people now and into the future.

This research developed from the need to understand young people's changing political participation practices and how they shape young people's political subjectivities. Digital media plays a role in these changes, but the extent of its influence is not fully understood. Digital media changes young people's capacities for self-expression and connection. Equally, changing information flows and network capacities affect traditional and existing power dynamics. Young people's digital participation practices occur in a range of contexts and vary in form and function. This project is about understanding who constitutes our democracy, what is important to its members, and what networks of action exist and can be formed and mobilised. A fuller understanding and articulation of the breadth and depth of young people's political participation practices will broaden and inform debates about the structures and spaces young people create and require to nurture their political concerns and interests.

Chapter 2. Digital networks and new political forms

The Internet has not only permeated our social, cultural, and economic lives but also resignified political life by creating an interconnected web of relations among people and things. It has influenced almost every aspect of politics, and its presence in politics is ubiquitous. It has created new kinds of politics where there is ostensibly no previous equivalent.

(Isin & Ruppert, 2015: 3).

This chapter is the first of two setting out the academic research on which my study builds. Its particular focus is on the role of digital media for political organising in a personalised, self-expressive risk society. As discussed in the introductory chapter, significant economic, social and technological changes now require individuals to manage a range of risks. This individual risk management has a number of consequences, not least for political life and political organising. This new context raises questions about how and why practices are changing and the extent to which digital media plays a role in remaking political life. A further question concerns the implications for and interplay between individuals and organisations. What role does digital media play in young people's changing political practices, and how does this change political organising and its power dynamics?

The affordances and permeation of digital media mean young people's capacities to network with others are greatly altered. Digital media changes the possible numbers of connections people have with other people and organisations, and the frequency with which they can interact with one another. Digital media enables rapid communication within networks, as well as facilitating the development and curation of network connections not previously possible. These network changes also mean that political information moves in new and often unpredictable ways.

More everyday and personalisable forms of political participation, facilitated by digital media that alters the ways networks are created and operate, have given rise

to research focused on evolving activities (Burstein & Linton, 2002), the structures and purposes of political parties (Gauja, 2015), and interest groups and new social movements (Buechler, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). A key contribution to recent articulations in the political mobilisation literature is Bennett & Segerberg's (2012) typology of the logic of connective action. I discuss it in this chapter because it helps explain the changed nature of organised political action in the digital age. However, below I also critique 'the logic of connective action' in relation to youth-focused political organisations. The concept is insufficient for my study because of its development from, and focus on, large-scale events—rather than the more nuanced, personal dimensions relating to the meanings and reasons young people engage in political action.

There are, nonetheless, important questions about the relationship between organisations and young people in the digital society. I ask what forms the organisations take, how they seek to engage with their stakeholders, and how they manage the new demands and complexities of communicating and organising in digital society. In this discussion I specifically consider the work of Andrew Chadwick (2007, 2013, 2017) on organisational and media hybridity and attendant digital repertoires for thinking about the relationship between digital media and the political practices of young people.

This chapter is structured by first asking how digital media is thought to be shaping the political participation practices of young people. This is followed by an exploration of the significance of digitally mediated networks and then by asking how changing network structures are affecting political organising. Young people's everyday activities, involving multiple networks, alter traditional information flows and can readily develop into more publicly oriented acts of political engagement that alter capacities for self-expression and influence. I then discuss key theoretical and conceptual contributions that provide useful insights to these changes at the organisational level. I conclude by looking at the question of power and how it flows through organisations and actors in the digitally mediated age.

2.1 Young people, digital media and political engagement

Researchers have approached the question of the permeation and prominence of digital media in young people's lives from various perspectives. Ito (2009) has studied commonalities and diversity in youth digital practices from the perspective of young people's relationships with others and their environment, and the interdependence between themselves and the organisations and institutions with which they are related. Ruddock (2013) has examined the social influence of digital media and how it supports young people's social and cultural experiences. Specific social-network sites—particularly Facebook—and practices are the focus for Robards (2012). boyd (2007) has also studied young people's use of social-network sites and the nature of public networks, as well as emphasising the complexities involved for young people in navigating these spaces (2014). There are also a range of studies on young people's identity formation and performance online (Harris, 2004; Weber & Mitchell, 2008; Jenkins, 2009; Cover, 2012). Work on the interplay between online opportunities and risks shows the challenges and complexities young people are required to manage and navigate (Haddon & Livingstone, 2014). These varied focuses and perspectives demonstrate the diversity and dimensions of young people's digital-media use. In doing so they show the capacities, activities and affordances available to young people to express themselves and engage with others in a range of social and political contexts.

The embedding of digital technology in everyday activities changes relations between individuals and the ways society is organised (Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2016). It is in this context that young people's political practices are the focus of a particular and growing body of work (Beck, 1992; Bennett, 2008; 2016; Coleman, 2008; Collin, 2015; Ito, 2009; Loader et al., 2014; Vromen, 2007). Initial debate focused on concerns over the decline in young people's political participation (Putnam, 2000; Park, 2004). However, critics of this approach argue that political participation is changing rather than declining (Marsh et al, 2007; Norris, 2002;

Dalton, 2004, 2008; Vromen, 2011; Stolle & Hooghe, 2011; Collin, 2015). For example, Manning (2010) found in his in-depth interviews with young Australians that while they may be engaging less with electoral politics, they are doing politics in new and more individual ways. Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2005) developed a 'political consumerism index' (245) showing how attitudes and behaviours can be measured to demonstrate the widespread nature of conscious consumerism as a form of political participation.

Young people's new forms of political participation, along with the role of digital media in these changes, have changed thinking around the practices constituting citizenship. Analysing the online practices of UK youth organisations, Ward (2011) first focuses on what she describes as the two predominant views of youth citizenship—conventional and non-conventional. Conventional citizenship is based on the idea that young people are disengaging from the political process. The aim is to reconnect young people with traditional institutions and in doing so enable those institutions to regain their legitimacy. In contrast, non-conventional citizenship sees young people as dynamic and empowered, and is encouraging of young people creating their own democratic agenda (Ward, 2011). Many scholars have argued that these approaches to citizenship can be seen reflected in the way organisations approach the use of digital media and engagement with young people (Coleman, 2008; Collin, 2009; Ward, 2011; Banaji & Buckingham, 2013). For example, Ward's study of UK youth organisations argues that organisations such as the UN Youth and Student Association of the UK (UNYSA), Youth Information, Young Scot and the UK Youth Parliament take a conventional approach to citizenship, as they continue to use social-media platforms for one-way communication and mainly provide information to their supporters (Ward, 2011: 929). In contrast, Ward (2011) found that organisations, such as the SPEAK Network and two campaigning organisations, Viva! (Vegetarians' International Voice for Animals) and Greenpeace UK took a non-conventional approach to citizenship, using social media for more interactive communication such as allowing supporters to comment on posts (Ward, 2011: 929). Ward (2011) shows the simultaneous operation of old and new organisational

forms and how they variously approach and engage young people. Ward (2011) also shows how organisations conceptualise what constitutes good citizenship in different ways.

Focusing on debates about the binary of conceiving young people's citizenship as either 'active' or 'inactive', Banaji and Buckingham (2013) found that most young people cannot be easily or neatly labelled as either. Drawing mainly from EU multi-country data, sourced through interviews, survey data and group discussions, they consider how different social, cultural, economic and political dynamics shape what young people do online and the meaning and significance of their online practices. They found political participation greatly depends on circumstances, opportunities, gender, class and education. They also found most civic and political participation begins and ends offline, in local communities or within communities of interest or identity (Banaji & Buckingham, 2013). Banaji and Buckingham (2013) also found that politically oriented organisations do not see the internet as a replacement for offline civic and political actions, but rather as a complement to them. They ultimately concluded that the politics and pedagogy of organisations is more influential for young people's participatory or democratic capacities than the affordances of the technology. Indeed, Banaji and Buckingham argue that organisations or communities that understand this can deploy the capabilities of both online and offline actions to do politics in new ways, even within more traditional domains such as political parties.

Similarly, noting that digital-media use mirrors the pattern of face-to-face interaction, Chan and Lee (2006) found young people more inclined to participate in an online activity if the online community was related to a real-life community, or if the activity was built around a topic or activity of specific interest to them. Also important was if the online community included others whom the young person knew and trusted. Banaji and Buckingham (2013) and Chan and Lee (2006) show the often mutually reinforcing relationship between online and offline contexts and practices for political participation.

While to date much of the literature on youth political participation has distinguished between 'formal' political participation (joining a political party, participating in elections) and new or issues-based forms of participation, the use of digital-media strategies to connect with and mobilise citizens in US presidential elections complicates such a neat distinction about the role of digital media for political engagement. For example, Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez (2011) examine the techniques of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign team in using digital media to raise funds and achieve other offline campaign outcomes. Using qualitative data from social-media techniques employed by the Obama 2008 campaign, their analysis shows how a virtual campaign was created. But, by employing multiple and diverse social-media techniques, this campaign went beyond education and fundraising to mobilising participants and increasing political participation, as well as encouraging young people to vote. This analysis shows the role digital media can also play in shaping young people's political participation practices within traditional political contexts. Bennett, Wells and Freelon (2011) caution, however, that events such as the 2008 US election campaign are not necessarily permanent indicators of change in actual citizenship practices (from self-actualising back to more 'dutiful' forms), as they are often context-dependent, and based on the policy issues and personalities involved, and the technologies available. They therefore argue that individual events should be seen as such and are not necessarily evidence of permanent changes to participation practices. Approaches and techniques used by campaign teams provide insights into evolving engagement practices and these go on to guide the thinking about practices for other politically oriented groups such as activist organisations and social movements (Bennett, Wells & Freelon, 2011; Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011).

Hargittai and Shaw (2013) also considered online and offline engagement using a 2009 survey of young people at the time of the 2008 US presidential election, finding that online activities support offline ones. For example, use of social-network sites helps support activities such as volunteering and donating to political candidates

(Hargittai & Shaw, 2012: 130). They also found an indirect relationship linking online political information-gathering practices to traditional forms of political engagement such as voting. Nevertheless, they argue that, on its own, the internet does not overcome longstanding trends towards disengagement from formal institutions and political practices, but use of social networks in particular can lead to increased political activity. This survey, conducted at a crucial point in a traditional election, shows the interplay between online and offline activities to encourage supporters, the areas where social media facilitates engagement, and the limits of digital media for political action.

There is substantial work on the role of digital-media networks in large-scale activist protests. Large-scale protests such as the international Occupy movement, which aims to advance social and economic justice and new democratic forms, and other protest events in Egypt, Spain, Turkey and elsewhere concentrated on seemingly spontaneous mobilisations of young people, facilitated by digital technology. Tufekci & Wilson (2012) examined Egypt's Tahrir Square protests in 2011, showing that social media, and particularly Facebook, provided new sources of information that proved difficult for the regime to control. This information shaped how citizens made decisions about participating in protests, the logistics of organised protests, and their likelihood of success. However, Gerbaudo (2012), in analysing new protest movements, argues that activists' use of Twitter and Facebook does not reflect an image of a "cyberspace" detached from physical reality. Instead, social media is used as part of a project of re-appropriation of physical public space, which involves the assembling of different groups around "occupied" places such as Cairo's Tahrir Square or New York's Zuccotti Park. This highlights the ways shifting communication flows facilitate new forms of collective and spontaneous action and the ways in which online and offline spaces are mutually implicated in the activities of people and networks.

New forms of action facilitated by digital media across networks demonstrate how the capacities and limits of digital media are central to changing political practices

and structures. In 1996 Castells made an early contribution to the increased importance of digitally mediated networks and the ways they alter power and social relations. Using the phrase “the network society”, he argued that society evolved from the industrial age into the information age as a result of the adoption and use of new technologies. Castells’ (1996) work focuses on information flows and the manifestation of changing power structures. As information flows change, he argued, old power structures, such as broadcast media, are disassembled and information is increasingly shared through horizontal, interconnected networks of relations. Because networks change power relations, they therefore change political relations. To explore this argument in relation to young people’s political engagement, I now discuss network structures and their effects on changing engagement practices.

2.2 The network society, political organising and identity

Digital media fundamentally changes the nature of social relations and interactions by opening up vastly more possibilities for connection because of the capacities it gives people to interact with each other. These capacities consequently alter information flows and increase the potential number of actors and their possibilities for engagement and self-expression. While the expansive potential of digitally mediated networks is not a forgone conclusion, they do challenge previous structures and hierarchies by enabling engagement and participation in ways that were not previously possible. These new interactions change social relations as network boundaries become more porous and dynamic.

Another significant characteristic of networks is that they consist of strong and weak ties (Barabasi, 2011). Strong ties are those that form and sustain communities. They are typically measured by factors such as the frequency of interaction and/or time spent on a relationship. Weak ties consist of relationships where there is infrequent interaction, which are only activated intermittently for a particular purpose. Granovetter’s (1973) claims regarding the importance of weak ties for

political engagement is a useful contribution to understanding networks. Weak ties exist for a reason: to transfer and spread information, ideas and knowledge while expanding and deepening influence. Weak ties hold networks together because they can be sources of outside information and resources (Granovetter, 1973; Baller & Richardson, 2009; Levin & Cross, 2004).

Castells' concentration on the way power dynamics are now centred on flows of information matters because it means digital networks change the nature of power, how it flows and in whose interests. He argues that the ways information moves are now more important than the movement of those with power (Castells, 1996). He argues that those previously able to control communication in the public sphere, such as broadcast media, are less successful in their attempts to maintain control by managing those networks (Castells, 2008). While this idea may need some revision in the light of algorithmic manipulation of information on social-media sites, there is nevertheless a new set of contexts shaping the control of information, and therefore power relations. For example, citizens, corporations and governments alike are required to constantly monitor and adapt to new networks and information flows. The network society concept emphasises the movement of information across boundaries, the participatory nature of online action, and changing power dynamics as networks move and evolve. It highlights the need to understand how power operates in an environment where nearly everyone has a voice that can be publicly communicated (if not necessarily heard).

Demonstrating the increased importance of networks in young people's politically oriented engagement practices, Loader, Vromen and Xenos (2014) have developed the concept of 'networked young citizens', who they describe as:

far less likely to become members of political or civic organizations such as parties or trades unions; they are more likely to participate in horizontal or non-hierarchical networks; they are more project orientated; they reflexively engage in lifestyle politics; they are not dutiful but self-actualizing; their

historical reference points are less likely to be those of modern welfare capitalism but rather global information networked capitalism and their social relations are increasingly enacted through a social media networked environment. (145)

The concept brings together a number of norms and practices that, scholars argue, now characterise young people's citizenship. Loader, Vromen and Xenos (2014) construct the concept of the networked young citizen, drawing on Beck's (1992) insights into the need for young people to manage a range of risks on an individual level, and Giddens' (1991) claims that young people are distanced from welfare capitalism but connected with global information networked capitalism. They also draw on Bang's (2005) observation that young people are less likely to join traditional civic organisations, such as political parties or trade unions, and more likely to participate in networks with horizontal or flat structures, such as the Occupy movement. In addition, the networked young citizen concept recognises the now lengthy decline of mainstream political engagement in many countries (Norris, 2002) and emphasises young people's adoption of more self-actualising practices, characterised by a less dutiful orientation to formal political structures and favouring loose networks of community action (Bennett, Wells & Rank, 2009; Bennett, 2008; Dalton, 2008). The networked young citizen concept is useful because it neatly encapsulates many characteristics of political participation and norms now associated with young people. I draw on the concept of the networked young citizen to explore my data, as I look for the meanings and practices young people associate with politics and reflect on how organisations might need to respond to their preferences.

The characteristics and affordances of networks have implications for the flows of information and power, and for how social connections and political identities form. These implications—how information, power and social connections are assembled—also raise questions about the ways political networks and organisations are structured and how they facilitate participation. In the following

section I discuss changes to activist organisations in particular and illustrate two key concepts that show how digitally mediated networks have changed political life. Bennett and Segerberg's (2013) logic of connective action details the ways digital media, through its capacities for personal self-expression and new connections, has changed political organising. Chadwick's (2007) concept of organisational hybridity shows how new organisations are emerging and adapting to simultaneously mix varying elements, and employ old and new media logics to maximise the capabilities digitally mediated networks offer.

2.3 Organising and mobilising networks

The speed and reach that digital media facilitates has had a significant effect on political organising. This raises questions of what the nature of these changes is, what is the extent of the role of digital media in changing political organising, and how these changes can be conceptualised and understood. In this section I discuss prominent theories and concepts that address these questions from very different directions: specifically, Bennett and Segerberg's (2012; 2013) typology of connective action; and, Chadwick's (2007; 2013) focus on organisational and media hybridity.

Connective action: Insights and limitations

Digital media and its affordances enable more personalisable forms of self-expression (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Activist organisations wanting to engage people have learnt to leverage this more personal, digitally mediated landscape, including spreading messages in the form of easily personalisable and meme-like messages and media content (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). In his book *Digital Media and Society* (2017: 187), Simon Lindgren gives examples such as 'We are the 99%' coined and used by the Occupy movement to highlight inequalities in wealth distribution or '*Je suis Charlie*', the free-speech slogan adopted following the attacks on the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015. Lindgren notes that these core messages are then creatively adapted and circulated

online and offline and how these easily personalisable messages provide feelings of inclusiveness and meet the need for individual self-expression (Lindgren, 2017). Bennett and Segerberg (2012: 743) call these *personal action frames*. Personal action frames can be developed by organisations that distribute them with the intention that those in their networks and beyond will adapt them in their own ways. They can also arise spontaneously as new technology provides the ability for individuals to create and distribute content quickly. Personal action frames are important for enabling and facilitating the distribution of self-expressive content, and serve as bridging connections within and across networks. Personal action frames are central to explaining what is different about mobilising and organising in a digitally mediated environment. They underpin key repertoires of social-movement organisations in late modernity.

This distribution of personal action frames means that 'sharing' facilitated by digital media is at the core of connective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). The personalisation of material forms the basis for action as it is then distributed widely across social networks. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argue that this solves the problem found in collective action networks of having to convince people to act. This is costly and challenging for traditional organisations, especially when their memberships decline. Digital media stabilises and grows these networks. This 'sharing' takes place across largely self-curated networks, further disrupting traditional one-to-many message distribution practices. Sharing material of personal interest across networks in multiple forms through digital media is fundamental to changes in political participation, for both political organisations and young people's politically oriented engagements.

Studying a number of political mobilisation network protests and campaigns in the United Kingdom, Germany and Sweden, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) observed new types of organising networks. From this they developed a three-part typology that covers both collective and connective action and highlights the differences between old and new forms of political organising. While noting that no three-type

typology can capture all the forms action networks, their framework shows the diversity of action networks in operation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). The first type is based on the 'brokered organizational networks characterized by the logic of collective action' (755). The other two types represent networks primarily characterised by the logic of connective action.

The first type, collective action, describes large-scale action networks that require organisations to facilitate cooperation and manage differences as needed. These organisations use collective action frames that need bridging if they are to spread, meaning the organisations set the messages and need to distribute them through relatively controlled digital-media images and messages, and/or by using printed material such as posters. Digital media and social technologies are used mainly to mobilise and manage participation and to coordinate organisational goals, rather than for personalised interpretations of problems and self-organising of action. Such organisations use the scale and ease of connection enabled by digital media, but are hierarchical and more traditional in structure and practice.

The first of the two connective action types includes groups that largely self-organise without central or 'lead' organisational actors (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Social media, in particular, are important organising agents because actors depend on the affordances and capacities of the technology to spread their messages. Some formal organisations may be present, but tend to remain at the edges, or exist as much in online as in offline forms. In this model, personal action frames are central to communicating information across trusted social networks.

The second connective action type is a hybrid of connective action and collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Hybrid forms have developed partly because of declining membership in organisations and the need to meet the diverse preferences of participants (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Organisations have adapted to this by employing social technologies that enable loose public networks to form around personalised action themes. This hybrid type can include more informal

organisational participants, who develop some capacities of conventional organisations for resource mobilisation and coalition building but do not insist on strong brands and collective identities. These organisations are able to engage individuals in causes that might not be of such interest if traditional forms of membership or subscribing to collective demands were required. This form is seen in organisations such as the Australian activist group GetUp! (Vromen, 2016). These organisations have emerged in a digitally mediated context, and use its affordances of structure and flexibility to maximise member engagement.

The logic of connective action builds on the concept of collective action—the traditional logic of social movements and groups—as articulated by Olson (1971). Collective action focuses on getting individuals to contribute to a collective purpose, typically one seeking a public good such as democratic reforms. Olson (1971) observed, however, that a common goal or problem does not automatically mean people will act together. In large groups the contributions of individuals are not always evident, meaning individuals sometimes rely on others to make gains on their behalf. This means some enjoy the benefits of advocacy success without having to contribute to activities to achieve that outcome (Wright, 2015). In addition, if insufficient numbers of people participate, others may be discouraged from any action. Olson (1971) therefore suggested organisations either coerce people to participate, or are selective about whom they target, but such coercion and/or selectiveness requires organisations to have substantial resources.

The logic of collective action was developed when movement organisations were characterised by hierarchical structures that required people to adapt to the organisations and engage in ways that served them, rather than enabling more personal forms of self-expression. Collective action organisations also require participants to have levels of education and socialisation that in turn mean the participants demand organisational resources (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These demands include formal offices, publicity capacity and hiring professional staff (McAdam et al. 1996). This places pressure on the organisations to be well funded

and highly structured. It also affects their ability to change direction quickly within and between campaigns. While tools such as social media reduce some of these requirements by enabling organisations to communicate quickly to larger numbers of people across substantial distances at minimal cost, on its own they do not ‘fundamentally change the action dynamics’ (Bennett & Segerberg 2012: 748). That is, the organisations still operate in a top-down fashion, set the agenda, decide the repertoires and communicate to relatively passive participants. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argue that a fundamental change in the way political organising occurs is the way in which organisations that choose to combine the affordances of digital-media networking and personal action frames, and are willing to relax their ‘collective identification requirements in favor of personalized social networking among followers’ (748) fundamental changes to political organising occur.

In developing their typology of *connective action*, Bennett & Segerberg (2012) also draw on Granovetter’s (1973) notion of weak ties and the idea that it is our acquaintances who serve as bridges to other networks. Weak-tie networks enable more individual forms of identity expression and the navigation of complex and changing social and political landscapes. Participants feel less constrained to act in set ways and can express themselves across varying networks. As a consequence of digitally enabled networks, new forms of social movements such as *los Indignados* in Spain and *the Occupy* movement in the United States have emerged, and they place looser demands on members or interested individuals. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) also argue that organisations have developed more entrepreneurial relations with followers, meaning there is an exchange of information through participation facilitated by digital media. Organisations also develop loose ties with other groups, enabling the formation of extensive online networks sharing and bridging various causes (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012: 757). They argue that in this context of looser demands, individual self-expressive practices and the permeation of digital media, organisations have emerged to meet the preferences of those they engage with.

Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) logic of connective action is now a prominent theoretical and empirical contribution to late-modern forms of political engagement (Halupka, 2018). It explains important manifestations of evolving complex practices that now characterise political engagement and the role of digital media in it. Connective action also identifies the new kinds of relationships between activist organisations and individuals and the interplay between the two. The theory of connective action helps to explain the role of networks in the digital age and how the characteristics of networks, such as the nature and strength of ties, affects political participation. However, connective action does not explain all new developments in political activity and activism in recent years. The logic of connective action was derived from research on large data samples and social-network analysis, and Bennett and Segerberg (2013) admit the typology lacks a 'fine ethnographic sense' (76), offering limited understanding of the reasons or motivations for political participation. Trott (2018) also identifies this limitation, noting the reliance on big data sets and analysis of social-media material, rather than a more qualitative approach that investigates how and why people engage with particular issues, and their view of the organising groups and networks behind particular campaigns. Similarly, Mattoni (2015) notes Bennett and Segerberg's heavy reliance on quantitative methods, and suggests that qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing and participant observation would provide more nuanced understandings of what actually happens within connective action networks. Cao (2016) argues that Bennett and Segerberg could do more content and textual analysis or ethnographic work to see how the claims of a movement interact with its form, and how the interaction shapes their public engagement patterns and political efficacy. These critiques raise questions about meanings and motivations and, for the organisations, why they employ particular actions and combinations of actions and how members receive these. The theory of connective action alone is unable to address these questions.

A further and related criticism is that the attention given to the structures of networks fails to account sufficiently for cultural and ideological drivers of action

(Pond & Lewis, 2017). The concentration on network analysis and the functioning of networks serves to abstract connective structures from the meanings and discourse in which they are situated (Pond & Lewis, 2017). As I have argued earlier, while networks and their structures provide useful insights into how people come together for certain causes, they do not tell us why they do so. While there is substantial evidence of changes in what young people do, there is an ongoing need to explain why they engage in particular forms of political participation and how their actions shape their concerns and interests. In this way a more discursive approach is required to understand both what politically oriented organisations do as well as the motivations and meanings of those in their networks.

Additionally, there is little consensus on the success or otherwise of spontaneous or loosely connected actions, pointing to the need for some form or structure for successful and sustainable policy change on selected issues. Therefore, while the logic of connective action provides insights into the operations of networks in the digital age for political mobilisation, and explains how weak links and personalisable sharing of political messages contributes to new forms of political life, it does not address questions about how organisations sustain their memberships or how their multiple and diverse practices shape the political concerns and actions of their members over time. An alternative approach is to closely examine the new activist organisations at the heart of contemporary movements.

Organisational hybridity

Vromen (2014; 2016) has examined the structure and practices of the Australian progressive advocacy organisation, GetUp!. She identifies its key characteristics, including its loose membership structure, which enables members to engage with GetUp! when they wish, and on issues of particular personal concern. Vromen (2016) also examined GetUp!'s repertoires and found it distributes advocacy messages using multiple communication methods that can differ from audience to audience and from campaign to campaign. This mixing of messages using different

communication tools is done to increase connection with members and maximise GetUp!'s impact in chosen policy areas. GetUp!'s adaptations depend on the political context, campaign issue and successful progress of the campaign (Vromen, 2016). Such advocacy techniques highlight the adaptability and flexibility of organisational types such as GetUp! and their understanding of the need to implement diverse communication strategies to maximise individual member engagement. It also demonstrates their connections with and similarities to overseas-based organisations such as MoveOn.

With the emergence and success of the US-based MoveOn (self-described as the largest independent, progressive, digitally-connected organising group in the United States), Chadwick (2007) observed the operations of a new form of activist organisation. It was different from political parties and interest groups, but at times also behaved in the same way as them. He also wanted to understand the role of the internet for enabling organisational change among traditional interest groups and political parties as they increasingly resemble looser network forms, similar to a social movement. Chadwick's approach to his research is a conceptual one where he uses empirical examples he is aware of or has observed, to support his theory. Notably, Chadwick (2007) recognised these practices could not work without the internet, because of the network of relations created between online and offline environments.

MoveOn is an early example of a flexible organisational structure, with its ability to combine new and traditional forms of political activism. Chadwick (2007: 286) notes that MoveOn has quite diverse and simultaneous ways of organising, mixing online and offline messaging and activities, combining targeted actions with more flexible ones, and acting nationally and locally. Karpf (2016) shows how MoveOn uses data to guide such practices. It records the activities of members and this information is used to help shape future activities to maximise connections with members. Information-gathering of this kind is characteristic of large-scale activist organisations such as MoveOn, which has both the scale and resources to undertake

this form of feedback process (Karpf, 2016). Examining the activities of MoveOn by analysing data from its website, news articles and transcripts, emails, annual reports, and press releases, Carty (2011) found that MoveOn is characterised by its embrace of both disruptive and institutional politics and its multiple-issue agendas. Carty (2011) therefore argues that new theories are needed to make sense of its activities.

In 2005 Chadwick stated, 'political parties, interest groups and new social movements' organizational features and policy impacts may be converging' (14). He also argued that the internet makes it particularly easy for organisations like MoveOn to mix their tactics. Chadwick (2005) asked how is it possible to make sense of an organisation like MoveOn and determine whether it is an interest group, a new social movement, or simply the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. He answered this question by arguing that new organisations are *hybrid* political organisations and combine 'the mobilization strategies typically associated with parties, interest groups and new social movements' (Chadwick 2005: 14). This claim about the convergence of various strategies provided a new way of thinking about the evolving political landscape in the digital era. This is an important characteristic of contemporary activism that, helps to 'sidestep [the] dichotomy' (Chadwick, 2007: 297) between optimism and pessimism. Traditional debates focus on whether the internet empowers individuals, decreasing the reliance on civil-society organisations (political parties, trade unions etc.) or whether digital media has had a limited role in influencing existing political structures and power arrangements. By concentrating on the blending of mobilisation strategies, Chadwick moves away from this binary to examine the changing nature of organising and its effects on political practices and structures.

Hybridity—the mixing of varying organising elements—is now a concept widely used to study, explain and conceptualise various dimensions of social, and particularly organisational, change (Chadwick, 2007; Oliver & Montgomery, 2000; Svensson, 2017). In organisational contexts, Thornton & Occasio (2008) have argued

hybridity occurs as organisations become infused with distinctive sets of values, identities, and styles of leadership, which shape and interpret their missions, strategies and logics of investment. Chadwick (2007) considers the new forms of activist organisations that have emerged showing characteristics of organisational hybridity. That is, they employ flexible structures and multiple media logics to communicate advocacy messages and engage with key stakeholders.

Chadwick's organisational hybridity also considers the structural characteristics of these new organisations. They combine hierarchical, bureaucratic structures with horizontal, networked structures (Chadwick, 2007). New organisations such as MoveOn emerge with very little centralised infrastructure or resources, but are also made up of professional activists with skilled staff using the 'nimble', fast response and cheaper mobilisations that digital media enables (Chadwick, 2007). This is in contrast with the highly structured and resource-intensive operations characteristic of collective action organisations.

Hybrid organisations are defined by the way they switch between and blend repertoires (Chadwick, 2007). According to Chadwick, these new organisational forms blur online and offline actions, and tightly control some actions while allowing substantial latitude in others. Repertoires have long been the subject of attention in the social-movement literature of collective action (Tilly, 1978; Traugott, 1995; Tarrow, 1998; Melucci, 1989), and are the form and tactics of organisations, including the ways they make decisions, appeal to supporters, and how the campaigning relates to its broader goals. Repertoires are routines that are 'learned, shared and acted out' (Tilly, 1995: 26). They are not random but deliberate, and usually strategic, in the way they seek to promote an organisation's selected advocacy issues and encourage members and supporters to act in certain ways and not others. Traditional social movements practice a limited number of repertoires, and in this way collective action is constrained and can result in missed opportunities (Tilly, 1995). Those constraints are now changing, and many more options are available and possible. Digital media is central to these changes because

it opens up new connections, new networks and multiple practices such as social-media engagement, online petitions, online fundraising platforms, and direct engagement with participants and decision-makers. Chadwick (2007) argued that the internet provided MoveOn, and others, with greater flexibility to switch repertoires very quickly, either within a campaign or between campaigns.

Drawing on Chadwick's (2013: 284) idea of 'repertoire switching', Vromen's (2016) investigation of GetUp! found that this rapid repertoire switching enables fast mobilisation of participants, especially for young people given their use of technology. This fast repertoire switching by organisations, enabled by maximising the affordances of digital media, was occurring as individual practices became more self-expressive and networked individualism was becoming a key form of politically oriented engagement (Rainie & Wellman, 2012). Chadwick sought to better understand and explain the nature and implications of these changes for organisations in this new context of personal political expression.

The ways things are done reflects the values of the organisations and also shapes the identity of those in an organisational network. Identity is central to repertoires; they are 'learned cultural creations' (Tilly, 1995). Repertoires help sustain collective identity as they are practiced and so the identity of an organisation is reinforced (Chadwick, 2007: 285). Put simply, repertoires are about the ways organisations do things, and this reflects over time what they become. Repertoires 'shape what it means to be a participant in a political organisation' (Chadwick, 2007: 285). By studying what organisations do, their practices and when and how they do them, it is possible to learn who these organisations are, what they stand for, who they are targeting and how they influence participants and political identity. This analytical approach requires attention to the everyday, since studying the micro-level practices of activist organisations and their behaviours improves knowledge of the changed and changing political environment.

Chadwick (2007) places repertoires under four principal conceptual headings: creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action; fostering distributed trust across horizontally linked citizen groups; promoting the fusion of subcultural and political discourses; and creating and building upon sedimentary networks. I expand on these in Chapter 5. These conceptual headings speak to key elements for these organisations to be successful in blending actions: the importance of trust among members, the mix of specific interests and political communications, and the importance of networks for these groups. This framework for studying the structures and repertoires of hybrid organisations has been widely employed to study a range of organisations (Vromen, 2016; Striley & Field-Springer, 2016; Wright, 2015; Mercea, 2013). My research uses this framework to analyse the repertoires of Oaktree and AYCC and their relationship with young people's political practices. Each of these headings and Chadwick's description provides a framework to analyse the everyday practices in the repertoires of Oaktree and AYCC. By using this framework, I can assess the extent of hybridity that characterises these organisations, and detail their practices and strategic approaches as well as their values. This assists in answering the research question of how Australian youth-led activist organisations use digital media in ways that shape young people's concerns and actions. But organisations are not only themselves hybrid; the media environment they operate in is also hybrid. New hybrid media forms are integral to the operation of Australian youth-led activist organisations and their strategies for engaging young people. Understanding the complexities and challenges of hybridity is necessary, as is the continuing development of frameworks for analysis.

Hybrid organisations and the hybrid media system

Chadwick (2013, 2016) extends his application of hybridity to the mixing of new media and old media between people and organisations to explain the rapidly changing media environment and its implications for political communication in Western democracies. Instead of individual organisations, the focus is on the systems of organisations. Chadwick (2013) examines interactions among political

actors, media and publics, and argues that what has developed is a 'hybrid media system'. Chadwick (2013) argues that hybridity is a defining characteristic of the contemporary media system because it is:

built upon interactions along older and newer media logics. Logics are defined as technologies, genres, norms, behaviours, and organization forms. Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever-evolving relationships based upon adaption and interdependence and simultaneous concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals

(Chadwick, 2013, 3–4).

The hybrid media system's central concern is power (Chadwick, 2013). Hybrid networks of interconnected actors gain their agency from their interdependent relationships with others who are also social and technological actors. Conceptualising hybrid media systems in this way is about examining and questioning who is emerging as powerful in this new context (Chadwick, et al., 2016). Power in the hybrid media system is about the 'use of resources of varying kinds, that in any given context of dependence and interdependence enable individuals or collectivities to pursue their value and interests, both with and within different interrelated media' (Chadwick, 2013: 207). It is a conceptual understanding of power, which can be demonstrated empirically by examining groups, individuals and their actions. Through a series of case studies of various political communication events, Chadwick analyses the hybrid media system and argues that to gain the attention necessary to sustain political activism, organisations and individuals must understand how to tap into hybrid media logic(s)—that is, the 'technologies, genres, norms, behaviours, and organization forms' (Chadwick, 2013: 4) that make up political communication and action.

The hybrid media system is ultimately concerned with the different deployments of information to exercise power. Older logics are based around transmission and

reception, while newer logics centre on 'circulation, recirculation, and negotiation' (Chadwick, 2013: 208). This conflict and competition develops because 'the patterns of interaction between older and newer media logics are complex both within and across fields'. In this way, hybridity 'empowers and it disempowers' (Chadwick, 2013: 208). Because of these changes, the distinctions between new and old media logics are dissolving and blurring. Chadwick (2013) argues that those who can successfully 'create, tap or steer' information flows to suit their goals, while also changing or disabling others, are those who gain and manage power. This is like the view of Castells (2000) who argues it is those best able to control and command information flows in a network society that can disrupt existing power structures and develop new ones.

In the hybrid media system there are important elements of interdependence among old and new logics. Intertwined media and political actors generate and shape the hybridity they try to capitalise on. In a hybrid environment, power flows and moves and constantly changes. Activist organisations are hybrid and are operating in a hybrid media environment. These 'systems' are constructed, enacted and re-enacted through changing practices. Political communication actors constantly mobilise but also constantly cross the networks and logics of older and newer media to advance their values and interests. In this way, they access network power via the norms and practices that constitute these networks. The changes at these levels highlight the complex landscape in which Australia's youth-led activist organisations navigate and enact their political-engagement practices to connect with and attract members.

In my work I investigate the broader effects of social, economic and technological change on youth-led activist organisations, but I also analyse the everyday processes and practices at two specific organisations, Oaktree and AYCC. Chadwick's (2007) characteristics of hybrid political organisations provide a useful framework to analyse the data gathered from these organisations. This clear framework draws attention to the different repertoires they employ, in a hybrid media environment,

why the organisations employ them, and how they shape young people's political concerns and actions.

2.4 Power and agency in the digital age

Central to political participation in the digitally mediated age is the concept of power. What is it? Who has it? How is it exercised? And how are power relations changing? In this section, I discuss key conceptualisations of power, how I work with power in this thesis, and the role of agency in relationship to power.

The way power is discussed affects the way power is understood. Karlberg's (2005) focus is on late-modern understandings of power as a binary of 'power to' versus 'power over'. Karlberg argues power is conceived primarily as the ability to act or the ability to control the actions of others. This binary approach to power focuses debates on conflict and thus fails to enumerate how power can be considered in less antagonistic ways. As a result of conceptualising power in terms of 'power over', he argues that the predominant model of power in Western social theory is 'the power as domination model'. He therefore argues for alternative engagement with 'discourses of power' (2005: 1). Like Karlberg, I argue that binary approaches to power are limiting and much current discourse used to think about and discuss power is also limiting. Power is more than control over or being controlled by others: its operation and effects are far more complex and nuanced.

I argue that the complexities and nuances of power in the digital age exist because power is dispersed and ever-changing. Here I am drawing on the work of Michel Foucault (1991), for whom power circulates, forms and re-forms continuously. It is in constant flux and it is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated. Power, for Foucault, is everywhere, shifting and moving and connecting humans in mutually influencing behaviours. Subjects act upon their environment and are acted upon. While distinct, there is resonance here in Castells' ideas about the network society and horizontal information flows that change and alter the way power moves.

That power is an everyday, social and embodied phenomenon is a key concept in Foucault's work. Central to Foucault's argument is the idea that power is so pervasive and its norms are so embedded in everyday lives that they are not always seen or perceived. This embedding of power in practice disciplines and constrains through the demand that subjects self-regulate in accordance with dominant power formations. In this way, Foucault draws attention to the repressive dimensions of everyday practices, how they came to be, why they continue and who benefits from them. In the context of the lives of everyday young people, this raises the question: how and to what extent do young people self-regulate?

Foucault also argues, however, that power is not necessarily a negative or repressive force, but a necessary, productive and positive force. As a consequence:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production

(Foucault 1991: 194).

When power is seen as a productive and positive force, this opens up thinking about what can be done with it, how change occurs, and how it can serve as the source of innovation, creativity and social and political possibilities.

Foucault's key insight is that there are no relations of power without resistances, and these resistances are formed precisely at those junctures where the operations of power are experienced (Foucault, 1991). This resistance to power does not need to come from somewhere global, large or visible; rather it emerges in the micro-operations of the everyday. The focus here is at the level of the everyday and the

practices that are enacted. While power regulates subjects, those same subjects also resist its operations, pushing back on power and changing its nature.

Turning their focus to agency in the digitally mediated age, Isin and Ruppert (2015) argue that in debates about the political subject and the internet there is too great a concern about the internet creating obedient subjects to power, rather than understanding that it also creates subjects who are themselves capable of subversion. Subjects exercise their agency and in doing so change the way power operates and flows. They are not just obedient and submissive but also—and sometimes simultaneously—subversive. Through their acts they can change the ways power moves. There are links here to de Certeau's (1988) articulation of the everyday exercising of tactics in response to strategies of power. In the following chapter I examine this idea in more detail; here it is sufficient to recognise the ways individual agents, in exercising their agency in the form of tactics, create and disrupt power flows. In the digitally mediated age such tactics are available in new and unanticipated ways.

My focus is on the everyday capacities young people and organisations employ to exercise agency in their everyday lives. I am interested in their motivations and the meanings of their activities. Meaning develops through social relations—through the everyday interactions of actors. It is these interactions and their evolution that create the cultural and ideological conditions necessary for shared meanings. To understand what is meaningful to young people in their self-expressive activities, I investigate their everyday practices and why they engage in them. What people think and do is representative of their wider agency. Studying these practices and their underlying meaning shows how people use the resources available to them to pursue their values and interests. I argue that these small, barely visible everyday practices, while often 'quiet', can also be powerful.

My study of the ways Australian youth-led activist organisations exercise agency through their strategies of engagement seeks to understand how they shape their

members' concerns and actions. But as I have discussed, where there are strategies (enforced or embedded routines), there is also the potential for tactics—acts that work against the organising power of a 'strategy' (de Certeau, 1988). Tactics can quietly shape future strategies. They can be 'recuperated' and become part of the organisation (Hebdige, 1979). Hebdige, drawing on Stuart Hall, explains recuperation as the process by which threats are 'returned ... to the place where common sense would have them fit' (Hebdige, 1979: 94). Common sense is, for Hebdige, code for dominant ideology. As I stated in the introduction, in relation to power and the contexts in which it operates, here I ask if the tactics of members of Oaktree and AYCC are recuperated, or taken up, by the organisations and how Oaktree and AYCC shape young people's political concerns and actions through this recuperation. I also ask how the deployment of tactics beyond the organisations reveals how young people's agency is quietly enacted in their everyday lives.

2.5 Conclusion

The central question of this chapter is: what role does digital media play in young people's changing political practices, and how does this change political organising and power dynamics? Changes to young people's political participation practices and their ability to participate in new and expanding networks have effects and are shaped by the kinds of organisations, movements and activities they can tap into. My study seeks to understand how new practices, often digitally mediated, manifest in the structure and practices of politically oriented organisations. This question also raises a number of others, which I have sought to address in this chapter, including the role networks play in the intersection between individuals and organisations and how this interplay alters young people's political participation.

In this discussion, it is apparent that Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) ideas about the structure and operating logics of connective action help explain many of these changes, but lack the qualitative approach necessary to understand the meanings I surface in young people's engagements and practices. Chadwick's (2007; 2013)

theory of organisational and media hybridity, covering organisations (2007), and the changing political communication landscape (2013), usefully shows the evolution of more structured political-engagement activities and the continuing role of organisations for political action in the digitally mediated age. Organisations employ a range of repertoires and also blend old and new media practices. Hybridity highlights the dynamic and evolving media culture in which young people are situated and raises questions of changing actors of influence in this space of fluid power dynamics. In the context of Australian youth-led activist organisations, Chadwick's concept and framework of repertoire characteristics is useful for making sense of Oaktree and AYCC's strategic deployment of engagement repertoires.

The focus in this chapter on the role of digital media in the development of new politically oriented organisations and more personalised, self-expressive practices raises questions about the interplay between young people's everyday practices and the personalisation of politics. If organising and participation is more mediated, more distributed and more personalisable in everyday life, what exactly *is* the everyday? How can we understand, recognise and make sense of activities or practices that are constituted through the everyday, and in what ways can they be thought of as political? In the next chapter I ask how young people's political subjectivities are shaped through everyday activities and how these might lead to future, more visible engagements such as involvement with politically oriented activist organisations. To do this I use concepts and theories that form a growing literature focused on everyday practices (Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2016). This literature investigates everyday activities and interests that might not appear to have a direct political orientation or even potentiality, but which a growing number of theorists argue are increasingly important for analysing the extent and power of the formation of political subjectivities and changing citizenship practices in the digitally mediated age.

Chapter 3. Political subjectivities and the everyday

Scholars aiming to understand young people's political participation practices have argued for the need to study more closely how political subjectivities are formed (Bessant, 2004; Vromen, 2003; Edwards, 2007, 2009; Collin, 2015). This approach emerges in part from debates about whether young people participate in politics, understanding their reasons if they do not, and learning about the ways they engage if they do (Edwards, 2012). Linked to this are debates that directly question framings of young people as politically apathetic, passive and/or disengaged (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2010; Farthing, 2010; Harris, 2012; Manning, 2015; Amnå & Ekman, 2014). These scholars rethink perceptions of politics and participation by studying what young people actually do in their everyday lives and contrasting this with discourse analysis of what 'counts' as participation. They address questions of how we are moving towards a more expansive, situated, relational understanding of politics and how political subjectivities are constituted.

Similarly, my purpose goes beyond studying young people's actions; my interest is in the conditions by which political subjectivities develop through everyday practices, at the level of both the organisation and the individual. My focus in this chapter is on the following research questions. Firstly, in the digital age, what are the contexts and conditions in which young people's political concerns and practices emerge? Secondly, how are young people's political subjectivities—their feelings, motivations thoughts, and identities, in relation to political issues—fashioned before they manifest in more traditional forms of action? To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine how 'everyday political practices' have been conceptualised and studied, and the implications for how political subjectivities form.

While less likely to join a political party or consume legacy news, Australian young people do use social-media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to access news and information on issues they care about (Vromen et al., 2014). As such, I discuss the work of Amnå and Ekman (2014), who posit that seemingly passive

participatory acts, such as gathering and disseminating information, in the digitally mediated age should be understood as important political participation practices. In an age of participatory media (Jenkins, 2009), young people's curation of their own digital networks, in contrast to traditional broadcast media reception, is another aspect for consideration (Mascheroni, 2017). To begin, I first look at the literature that critically engages with the diversification of young people's political practices and identities, specifically those calling for more nuanced explanations of young people's apparent apathy and/or disengagement from politics.

As many personalisable practices such as the gathering and sharing of information are considered to be part of people's 'everyday' activities, I ask what the everyday is and why it is of heightened importance in the digital age. Through a discussion of Bourdieu, de Certeau and Lefebvre, I establish how I treat the idea of 'the everyday' in the remainder of this thesis. This is followed by a close examination of Maria Bakardjieva's (2009: 92) concept of subactivism, which concentrates on mundane, everyday activities with a political or ethical focus. I conclude the chapter by introducing the concept of affect and its role in political participation in the digitally mediated age (Papacharissi, 2014; Massumi, 2017). I first define affect and then articulate how I use it in chapters 5–7 to analyse my data—specifically where young people, even those with no readily visible political connections, are motivated to engage with particular issues or organisations.

3.1 Conceptualising young people's political participation and disengagement

Young people's changing political participation forms are regularly framed as binaries of organised political action versus individual expression, traditional versus self-expressive practices, legitimate versus illegitimate, and active versus passive. But the breadth and varied forms of their practices suggest that more diverse and nuanced understandings of what young people actually do and the meanings and reasons behind them are required. I begin with a discussion of researchers who

critique traditionally accepted approaches to young people's perceived disengagement and who argue for the need to understand young people's actions from their perspective.

Addressing young people's perceived disengagement from politics, Nathan Manning (2010) argues that young people are not disengaged. Rather, they are engaging less with electoral politics and doing politics in new ways that are more individual and less recognisable (Manning, 2010). Critical of narrow models of what counts as political practice, Manning draws on data from a series of interviews with young people not involved in electoral politics or activism. Manning argues that what counts as meaningful political engagement for young people needs to be extended to include everyday choices that are 'enmeshed with politics,' such as food consumption and company boycotts (Manning, 2015: 1). Manning's (2010) study also highlights young people's increased ability to inform themselves and others, about issues of their choosing, often via digital media. Manning identifies political practices as occurring across a wide range of contexts, and needing to be meaningful to young people for them to participate.

Developing a complex approach to perceptions of disaffection with politics, Farthing (2010) argues that young people are simultaneously engaged and disengaged in politically oriented practices. Farthing purports that young people are disengaging from what is normatively understood as the political and need to 'live their agenda elsewhere' (12). She reframes young people as being 'radically unpolitical', but rather than being a fault, she argues that this orientation is a consequence of social, economic and technological changes that have negatively affected young people's everyday lived experiences, alienating them from decision-makers and the political process. Farthing (2010) argues for politics to be remade, rather than for a reshaping of old politics. It is here that she introduces the concept of the 'new politics of fun'. This has three key features: a transformative agenda, a radically revised 'target' for action, and new forms of participation, including active rejection of traditional forms of political engagement. The politics of fun is concerned with

questions about the ability to live out individual freedoms, such as ‘how should I live my life right now?’ and collective concerns such as ‘how should we live together as a world?’ (Farthing, 2010: 12). It needs to address questions for ‘living coherent lives in a fracturing social world’ (12). Farthing argues that this approach could make politics ‘fun’ again and therefore more appealing to young people. This approach recognises many of the changing dimensions of young people’s preferred forms and their meanings of ‘doing politics’ and demonstrates the complexity required to understand and explain them.

Also aiming to explain young people’s new forms of political participation, Vromen, Xenos and Loader (2014) examined how young people across existing political and civic groups use social media to share information and mobilise others and, in doing so, redefine political action and political spheres. They conducted 12 in-person focus groups in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, based on university campus organisations. The groups were designed to form four categories to reflect varying citizenship understandings: party-political groups (dutiful citizenship), issue-based groups (focused on inequality and human rights), identity-based groups (based on publicly expressed identity, such as sexuality or ethnicity/race), and social groups (sport or recreation, not overtly political). The study’s qualitative approach revealed significant group-based differences in young people’s citizenship understandings and practices. There were differences between organisations with dutiful allegiances to formal politics, in contrast to more personalised, self-actualising preferences for online discussions and political engagement and organising. Dutiful citizenship norms—such as voting, party membership and reading newspapers—were held by the political party groups who prioritised mainstream media use, formal political organising and respect for political authority. They valued social media as an organising tool, but considered it problematic for distorting political information and debate. The overtly self-actualising issues and identity groups highlighted the personalised elements of social media use and its capacities to facilitate young people’s everyday political talk and actions. Vromen, Xenos and Loader (2014) also found that these latter communicative forms are

increasingly important for the future of political engagement and connective action. Each of the studies discussed here shows how young people's political participation needs to be examined and conceptualised in ways that extend traditional binary approaches. Young people's political participation can no longer be, if it ever could, framed as either of action versus inaction, legitimate versus illegitimate. My research builds on these studies arguing for an extended and more nuanced approach to participation and young people's agency in their everyday practices.

Nevertheless, as suggested above, some studies of new forms and movements in political participation, raise questions about the passivity or free-riding – of some actors. Broadening conceptualisations of perceived passive participation forms the basis of Ekman and Amnå's (2012) work. They first make a clear distinction between manifest "political participation" (including formal political behaviour as well as protest or extra-parliamentary political action) and less direct or "latent" forms of participation, which they conceptualise as "civic engagement" and "social involvement". They argue that "latent" forms of participation are crucial to understanding new forms of political behaviour and the prospects for political participation in different countries (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). This is because, in the digitally mediated age, individuals have the skills, means and increased connectivity capacity to gather and disseminate politically oriented news across their networks (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). They argue this new capacity needs to be understood as an important form of citizenship that, because of its lack of visibility, can appear passive, but which can develop into more public forms of political action and social change. They subsequently developed a new analytical framework to challenge the simplistic active/passive distinction of political participation (Amnå & Ekman, 2014), with a focus on young people's information-gathering and -sharing practices in the digitally mediated age. Central to this is their concept of standby citizenship. Its basis is in people's interests and activities in relation to those interests (information-gathering) that position people to 'act'. Or, indeed, they may choose not to act; as Manning and Farthing argue, *interest* can also precede conscious or affective disengagement. How, then, can we think about political interest in more

nuanced terms and explain the relationship between the underlying processes through which political interests form and participation?

3.2 Political interest and participation

In developing the concept of 'standby citizenship', Amnå and Ekman (2014) draw on Schudson's (1996, 1998) concept of 'monitorial citizens'. Schudson (1996, 1998) argued that citizens are never politically passive, even if they do not formally participate in politics. Rather, they are politically involved as 'monitorial citizens'. Schudson's (1996, 1998) 'monitorial citizens' stay interested in and informed about politics. They also display sufficiently high levels of political trust, and show a high level of belief in political self-efficacy. Their low level of formal political participation reflects rational decision-making; only when they feel the need to intervene does the 'monitorial citizen' act. Until then, they stay out of politics. Schudson, like Amnå and Ekman, argues that those who are seemingly politically passive do practice an active dimension of political participation. Their citizenship involves information-gathering, being informed and being ready to act. These are active acts, not passive ones, and should be seen as such. Amnå and Ekman (2014) try to identify the presence of different types of citizens, not only those with genuinely passive orientations, but also those disposed to act under certain circumstances. They show the ways standby citizens think, feel and act in relation to politics, and it is these elements that go beyond that of monitorial citizens.

Amnå and Ekman's (2014) standby citizen concept is based on survey research with young people in Sweden. Conducting a multivariate cluster analysis of empirical data on 863 Swedish high-school students (444 females, 419 males), Amnå and Ekman (2014) gave study participants a questionnaire measuring participation (e.g. attended a meeting on political or societal issues) and interest (interest in political and social issues). They also looked at citizen competencies, including perceived political efficacy:

- If they believe they could be ‘an active member of a political organization’).
- Trust in institutions (government, political parties).
- Social trust (‘most people are trustworthy’).
- Feelings about politics (‘people differ in what they feel about politics’).
- Satisfaction with democracy (‘how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Sweden?’).
- Ambitions (goal-setting for engagement in societal issues).
- News consumption (regularity of exposure to news in different media—newspapers/TV/internet).
- Knowledge (general-knowledge questions on the EU and on political leadership in Sweden).

Amnå and Ekman (2014) expected their results to show three kinds of citizens—active, passive and standby. But their results showed *two* distinct kinds of groups in the *passive* category, giving four kinds of citizenship orientations:

- Active (high interest and highest participation).
- Standby (highest interest and average participation).
- Unengaged (low interest and low participation).
- Disillusioned (low participation and lowest interest).

While there are some limitations to this study—including the normative definition of politics used—it shows the necessity of thinking about ‘passivity’ in more nuanced terms than a simple active/passive binary. Importantly, while those in the active group reported the highest levels of participation *and* interest, young people in the standby group *did not differ* from the active group with regard to interest. Young people in the unengaged and disillusioned groups did not differ in level of participation, but young people in the disillusioned group showed lower interest compared with the unengaged. They concluded that the groups differ in meaningful ways on the criteria variables. Amnå and Ekman (2014) note the closeness of the

concept of the standby citizen to Bang and Sørensen's (1999) everyday makers—those who appear to combine life politics with project politics.

Amnå and Ekman (2014) argue that these seemingly 'passive' citizens, rather than being criticised for being disengaged from politics, may be positive for democracy because they combine 'political interest, trust, and [an] inclination to participate' (Amnå & Ekman, 2014: 262). They argue there is an intense focus on understanding political activity in all forms, but this is in contrast to a lack of understanding and focus on the political orientations of those not active in a conventional sense. They argue that those who appear passive towards politics may not actually be so. Studying and understanding young people's motivations and perspectives can offer a more realistic approach to debates about youth political participation and the ways contemporary democracies work.

Amnå and Ekman (2014) also argue that while some young people may appear inactive in more traditional or public political domains, they are not necessarily passive in other areas of their lives. Young people bring up political issues with family members, peers, schoolmates, and with friends online. This is a way for young people to be politically active in private spheres, and this private activity serves as preparation (and others) for future public actions (Amnå & Ekman, 2014: 270). Haß, Hielscher and Klink (2014) also argue that activities that contribute to being informed, such as discussing issues with friends and trying to shape the opinions of others, is a powerful form of participation for young people because while they may not have the time to get involved in further action, these are things they can do. These quiet, unseen actions in the private sphere serve as a form of informal training for young people and develop understanding, knowledge and network-building, and ultimately action in political participation.

Amnå and Ekman (2014) claim that most previous research failed to distinguish these citizens from unengaged citizens, since both standby and unengaged citizens appear, on the surface, to be passive. But there is complexity here. Amnå and Ekman

(2014), Farthing (2010) and Manning (2015) would agree that *interest* comes before action—and inaction. That is, an awareness of an issue and experiences of exclusion or low trust can lead to deliberate disengagement, which should be seen (according to Farthing) as a legitimate form of political expression. Some young people actively disengage from politics because they believe political institutions and actors to be manifestly uninterested or concerned about them or their views or needs. Amnå and Ekman (2014) begin from the position that political *interest* precedes any form of political action. They therefore argue that it is necessary to pay attention to one's curiosity in political matters—not only how individuals act—because in the digitally mediated age the line between a demonstration of 'interest' and 'action' is increasingly blurred. This focus on political interest indicates a need to learn from young people the issues that are important to them.

By distinguishing active citizens from standby citizens and focusing on interest as opposed to participation, Amnå and Ekman (2014) show that focus on young people's interests is important to understanding the conditions for future political action. They also show that young people who can be identified as standby citizens find meaning in their belief that they can make a difference and have some impact in political matters. Focusing on the concept of citizenship vocabularies and the ways young people speak about politics as a resource for civic and political action, and drawing on data from 25 in-depth interviews with young people aged 18–29, Thorson (2012) shows how such vocabularies constrain or enable practices such as political consumption. In studying and analysing young people's individual acts, Thorson also argues for the need to interpret activities from the perspective of those engaged with them. By speaking with young people, understanding the words they use and the meanings they attribute to various behaviours, it is possible to understand the wider context in which they view their individual acts. Practices can seem atomised, but are often felt by their actors as contributing to the whole. These feelings and experiences are 'affective' and therefore meaningful to participants. In a networked society, where information about practices and political preferences is

easily disseminated, qualitative research enables the exploration of young people's own interpretations and meanings.

Showing the importance of studying young people's own interpretations and meanings through a qualitative, mixed-methods approach, Malin Sveningsson (2016), studied young people's use of media to 'orientate themselves, integrate and interact in civic and political matters in their everyday lives' (144). She conducted a thematic analysis of media diaries, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 26 Swedish high-school students aged 17–18. Sveningsson found that 12 participants fit the description of 'standby citizens'. They were 'interested, and, although not at the time affiliated with political or civic organisations, prepared to engage if needed' (Sveningsson, 2016: 146). Interestingly, she also found that despite a strong interest in politics, they were reluctant to describe themselves as 'politically engaged', as their perception of such engagements was of a more traditional, dutiful form of citizenship. Sveningsson concluded that more research examining the complexity evident in young people's relationship to and understanding of the political today is required.

Employing Amnå and Ekman's (2014) concept of standby citizenship, Tiidenberg and Allaste (2016) studied the perspectives of young Estonians (16–26 years) and the role of social-media practices. Their particular aim was to explore young people's own perceptions of the meanings these practices carry to understand whether they constitute new participatory repertoires (Thorson, 2012) of standby citizens (Amnå, 2013). Analysing interviews with 60 young Estonians in a MYPLACE (2011–15) study, they analysed the phrase 'participation and' (Tiidenberg & Allaste 2016). They found young people in Estonia are interested in political issues and public opinion and their social-media use represents a diversification of how citizens take part in civic matters. They found that many respondents put strong emphasis on staying informed, monitoring ongoing discussions and other people's comments without visibly contributing themselves. Indeed, not posting cannot be easily read as 'non-participation'. Much as other studies have found, Tiidenberg and

Allaste (2016) identify that some young people do not participate because they are concerned with impression management (managing how they are perceived and interpreted by others) and fear being isolated by going against the group or contradicting the views of their peers. This reluctance again highlights the need to understand what young people do—or don't do—from the perspective of young people. As the research cited here suggests, many young people may be informed and engaged with issues, but choose carefully how and when to contribute to public discussions.

The diversity of contexts and similarity of findings in these studies shows that standby citizenship is useful for understanding young people's evolving practices in gathering and disseminating information. It also informs the ways in which less visible, seemingly passive, activities are important acts of political participation for young people, even if, at times, they don't speak of or recognise them as such. Standby citizenship, with its focus on young people who are interested in issues and prepared to be active in the future, provides a useful framework for analysing my data and being alert to young people's practices in gathering and disseminating information. In my data, I seek examples of young people who are observant and keep informed about issues, and who share these interests in their everyday lives by speaking with people and/or through online self-curated networks. Standby citizenship also requires young people to be willing to participate more publicly if needed (Amnå & Ekman, 2014) and I therefore seek examples of this, including online participation through their networks to raise attention to matters of interest to them. Standby citizenship can be used to analyse interview data by looking for everyday practices of gathering and sharing information, why these occur in relation to particular areas of interest, and how this interest further shapes political concerns and actions. Examining this everyday digital practice requires an articulation of the everyday and how it is conceptualised.

3.3 What is the everyday?

The embedded nature of technology in the lives of young people has seen an increased focus on 'the everyday' as a concept in recent scholarship, with scholars investigating various dimensions of everyday acts that are aimed at shaping issues, communities or society but not focused on traditional targets, institutions or processes of politics. For example, Third and Collin (2016) have examined young people's everyday digital disruption and contestation of citizenship in an Australian Living Lab experiment. They argue that even acts of research are 'performative', and require deeper thinking of interventions in everyday spaces. Focusing on everyday spaces, Harris (2001) argues that young people are under increased scrutiny and that they are framed as either disengaged or at the vanguard of participation. Consequently, young women in particular, Harris argues, retreat to more 'private' or marginal places such as the dinner table, online, or to youth-led organisations, to listen, learn and express themselves. Tiidenberg and Allaste (2016) investigated daily information-gathering and dissemination practices in Estonia. In these studies, the availability of wi-fi, and the uptake of web-enabled mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets, are associated with clear changes in everyday technological engagement. In addition, the development of social-media platforms has altered everyday networks and ways of connecting. For many it encourages a constant public presentation of self where subjects live out everyday activities 'in view' of networks of people. boyd (2007: 8) uses the term 'networked publics' to highlight changes to communication networks which have the characteristics of persistence (online conversations are permanently recorded), searchability (information or people can be found), replicability (material can be recirculated), and invisible audiences (information can be seen by people unknown or unintended). boyd (2007) argues these characteristics change the scale and nature of the publics young people now navigate. As such, networked publics have become part of young people's everyday lived experiences as they navigate an online environment of persistence, searchability, replicability and audiences they cannot see.

Linked to this is the question of ‘the political potential of the everyday’ (Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2016: 52). This is most evident in the range of studies and particularly concepts aimed at analysing practices to understand this potential for political identity and citizenship. Prominent scholars and concepts in this space include Ekman and Amnå’s (2012) standby citizens, Bakardjieva’s (2009) subactivism, Micheletti’s (2003) conscious consumerism and Loader, Vromen and Xenos’ (2014) networked young citizens. Networked young citizens are unlikely to join organisations such as parties, are more likely to participate in horizontal or non-hierarchical networks, and are project-oriented and self-actualising, and their social relations are increasingly enacted through a social-media-networked environment. Bang and Sørensen’s (1999) everyday makers create a variety of ‘small’ everyday tactics and narratives to make a political difference as ‘ordinary’ political citizens in their communities on issues of interest and concern to them; this focuses on practices of gathering and disseminating information through online networks. They argue that young people’s everyday politically oriented activities do not have the time demands of more traditional forms of political engagement with institutions or political parties, and can be exercised on issues of specific and personal interest when practical or manageable. There is, therefore, an emerging and broad consensus that everyday acts are conscious ways young people deliberately try to influence politics or their communities. For example, consumer-oriented acts, such as politically minded consumption, are a widely studied area of everyday practice. Expressing one’s political preferences through the things one purchases and consumes is considered to be an important way to influence political outcomes (Stolle et al., 2005; Shah, 2007; Neilson, 2010).

Everyday forms of online political expression are another important area of study showing changing political participation practices and skills. Social-media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have opened new forms of online political expression. This is particularly the case for what Thorson (2014) calls ‘social politics curators’ (207)—individuals who ‘post a lot of news or political content on Facebook or

Twitter' (Thorson, 2014). But platforms such as Facebook also mean there are increased risks for users to manage, for example, public criticism associated with these communication forms (Thorson, 2014). Everyday social-media practices are recognised as giving people the perception of the opportunity to participate, which can make people feel more engaged (Dimitrova et al., 2014: 97). Others argue that posting, commenting, tweeting and joining groups has a 'democratic value, since they have the potential to involve people in forms of engagement that conforms to classic definitions of participation' (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014: 820), and that certain uses of social media are an important gateway for enhancing political participation (Östman, 2013). These studies show varying perspectives on what kinds of digital-media practices have political potential, and that everyday digital practices play an important role in shaping new forms of political expression.

'Everyday' and personal forms of self-expression, however, can also be understood by theorists and perceived by young people as contributing to collective action when they have a common change goal. Micheletti (2003) developed her work on political consumerism by recognising changes to political participation. She focused on individual acts with a shared goal of social or political changes (Micheletti, 2003) or: '[a]ctions by people who make choices among producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices' (Micheletti, 2003: 2). Micheletti encapsulated these actions and their intent with the term 'individualised collective action ... citizen engagement that combines self-interest and the general good' (Micheletti, 2003: 25). She emphasised citizen-initiated and -enacted actions, where it is the people who engage in direct actions that they define as important, as opposed to acts where the agenda and the form of participation is decided by others and oriented towards the political system. In this research, Micheletti (2003) examined historical and contemporary examples of such acts, along with case studies from Sweden. The case-study material was sourced from interviews, archives and secondary material showing the acts and impacts of participants practicing political consumerism, such as only buying unbleached paper from paper mills with a positive environmental impact to minimise the use and environmental

impact of chlorine and support sustainable forestry practices. Such practices can be enacted in the everyday lives of individuals and do not require the commitment of joining an organisation, but they do provide a sense of engagement with and contribution to an outcome, while still offering feelings of connection with others on issues of personal interest and importance.

Also researching young people's product and service choices, Thorson (2012) studied young people in the United States who understand and are interested in politics, but who choose not to participate in more traditional ways such as voting. She argues that in their everyday lives, these young people work to create preferred changes in political practices through their interactions with others and by consciously choosing products and services that support their views. Thorson's (2012) key claim however is that while these everyday acts seem to only be implemented at the level of the individual, those participants view their actions as uncoordinated but nevertheless a collective enterprise. Thorson (2012) emphasises the importance of interpreting activities from the perspective of those engaging in them; practices that can appear atomised are often understood by participants as contributions to a greater whole. Individuals engage in everyday participation practices on issues of importance to them because they feel they are meaningfully contributing to something larger than themselves, in conjunction with others.

Building on the idea of community as inherent to everyday political participation, Bang and Sørensen (1999) use the concept of the 'everyday maker' to describe a new political identity. They argue that the everyday maker aims to combine individuality and commonality to create new forms of self- and co-governance. The characteristics of the everyday maker are:

a strong self-relying and capable individuality; a perception of politics as the concrete and direct handling of difference, diversity and dispute in everyday life; a notion of commonality as relating to solving common concerns; an

acceptance of certain democratic values and procedures in the handling not only of centralized government but also of local governance

(Bang & Sørensen, 1999: 326).

Bang and Sørensen (1999) claim everyday makers believe they have the right and ability to manage everyday problems as they choose. They also see democratic political communities as having room for both elites and non-elites, and as accommodating space for ideas about what should happen. This concept centres attention on the way political practices have become deeply connected with everyday engagements, reinforcing the need to recognise everyday activities as important to new forms of political life.

The 'everyday maker' has been employed to study young people's evolving political participation practices. Using UK 2001 Home Office Citizen Survey data, Li and Marsh (2008) sought to understand the formation of everyday makers. They found four types of political participant (political activists, expert citizens, everyday makers and non-participants), and argued that socio-demographic and cultural factors are the basis of these different types. They conclude that Bang's (2005) conceptualisation of new forms of political identity can be added to a broader typology of political identity including more traditional or 'dutiful forms' as a useful tool for empirical research (Li & Marsh, 2008). Collin (2015) undertook a qualitative study of discourse and practices of young people's use of digital media for political participation in the United Kingdom and Australia. She found that the young activists she spoke with have an 'everyday maker' identity. They are 'pragmatic, focused on action, uninterested in official roles or connecting with political elites unless it furthers their cause' (157). She argued that—in contrast to more hierarchical forms of representative democracy—central to the political engagement of young activists is the value of collaboration, not conflict or competition.

These studies reinforce both the practical application of the concept of the everyday and the kinds of everyday activities that constitute young people's political

participation practices. In the digitally mediated age, everyday activities and political life are inextricably linked. These studies conceptualise the everyday as ordinary, as distinct from the traditional or established. They are interested in the mundane, even banal, dimensions of everyday life, and see in them a new kind of political potential absent from structures and established ways of engaging in political life. However, as argued by Third and Collin (2016) ‘the everyday’, in this sense, often lacks definition or theorisation. In the next section, I focus on theories of the everyday. I do this because the everyday is variously conceived and deployed. I discuss key conceptualisations and show the approach to the everyday I take in this thesis.

The theory of the everyday

The everyday is familiar to us but also difficult to articulate. Lived experience gives the everyday a perception of familiarity, but it is an abstract and variously conceived concept. It has been variously explained as consisting of repetitive actions and practices (Bourdieu, 1997), the rules and structures of life (Lefebvre, 1991) and structures and strategies of tactics and resistance (de Certeau, 1988). In this section, I review and critique these different theories of the everyday and examine their significance for studies of youth political participation.

Bourdieu (1997) theorises the everyday as the activities or routines that people enact or carry out as they go about their lives. The everyday is made up of the mundane; it includes repeated and varied activities and routines that ‘shape the form and flow of our individual and social lives in space and time’ (Willson, 2016: 2). In this space, practices become habits and routines that are conducted almost without thought and which become ‘invisible’. Taken together, these often mundane, recurrent practices make up what Bourdieu has termed the *habitus*. Bourdieu defines habitus as ‘[a] structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices’ (1984: 170). It is the norms or tendencies that guide thinking and behaviour. Habitus produces one’s outlook towards society and also

the place where that outlook develops: it seeks to explain how individuals 'become themselves' and how and why they engage in activities. Habitus develops in everyday places and activities including the family and school, and through class and race. It allows for improvisations but also sets cultural understandings to follow, which require responses. Habitus is one way scholars have sought to explain contemporary youth political perspectives, attitudes and practices.

For example, Threadgold and Nilan (2003) employ Bourdieu to study young people's habits and opinions about politics. Using survey data of pre-voting young people at schools of differing socio-economic levels, they found that those with higher cultural and economic capital more readily express the importance of politics in society and demonstrate more direct engagement with the field of political ideas and opinions. Young people lower in socio-economic status seem at first to be more disengaged from politics, but closer examination of the data showed their engagement to be more localised, immediate and pragmatic. Threadgold and Nilan (2003) argue that given this group's lack of economic benefits, their habitus, as dominated agents of the state with minimal benefits, is that they are 'refusing what they are refused' (62). Therefore, while they may be disengaged from state or formal political spheres because of their perceived disadvantage, they are actually shaping their own politics in their everyday lives and community. This everyday politics is not always immediately obvious, but as Lefebvre (1987) argues, the everyday is the place where political concerns and actions emerge.

Lefebvre (1987) defines everyday life as the things people do, but which remain largely unnamed and relatively unstructured. It is 'what is left over after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by the analysis' (97). Lefebvre, however, argues that political life is generally conceptualised as distinct from the everyday, with the state seen as having powers superior to everyday life. Individuals need to operate in certain ways and follow the 'laws of social order' (Third & Collin, 2016: 14). These laws mean individuals are distanced from the formalised, institutionalised notions of the political arena, as they are fully

occupied with their day-to-day existence. He argues that citizens believe they are unable to affect change in the political sphere because of its perceived disconnect from everyday life and they are fully occupied with the requirements and demands of everyday life. The time and energy required in the specialised and 'superior' sphere of state politics is beyond most citizens. But for Lefebvre (1987), the everyday gives a name to previously nameless activities and provides 'the meeting place and common ground of all activities where the sum total of all relations that make the human being a whole takes shape' (97). For Lefebvre, the everyday is also political. His approach to everyday life and politics was specific to his time, bringing together politics and everyday life, rather than treating them as distinct. He argued that political matters are central to everyday lived experience. His focus is on the 'humble everyday base' (6) of politics and concerns connected with needs such as food, housing, and labour conditions. For Lefebvre politics [plural] do not belong to a separate or superior realm that is the concern only of politicians and specialists. Politics, for Lefebvre, start at the location of the individual and the individual's everyday needs. He is occupied with the seemingly insignificant and the familiar, which is hidden away. He argues that the everyday is where politics begins—the demands of everyday life are where political concerns and actions emerge. In Section 3.4 I show how Maria Bakardjieva builds on this understanding of the everyday. The everyday is also the site of powerful interactions (de Certeau, 1988). It is where strategies are imposed and regularly resisted.

The everyday is about ideas, social structures (forces such as gender and class) as well as built environments. In the digitally mediated age, it can also include digital architectures. De Certeau's conceptualisation of the everyday helps to explain how these things are shaped through practice. For de Certeau (1988), everyday activities have the capacity to shape spaces, which he defines as being 'composed of intersections of mobile elements' (117). He gives the example of people walking on the street: as they walk, pedestrians change the street from a place purposefully designed in particular ways to a space that meets their needs. While footpaths may

be intended for walking on, for example, shortcuts across roads can be taken. For this reason he calls everyday activities 'spatial practices'.

These practices of the everyday are shaped in part by powerful systems and actors who employ *strategies* designed to structure how everyday life takes place. For de Certeau, strategies are:

the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers of competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research etc.) can be managed.

(de Certeau, 1988: 35–36)

For de Certeau it is the intersection of strategies and tactics that shapes everyday life (Willson, 2016). While strategies are powerful, those subject to these strategies may in turn employ what de Certeau calls *tactics* to manage or subvert these strategies. The tactics users employ to manage these strategies are enacted passively or without power (de Certeau, 1988). It is this strategic deployment of ways of doing things, met with tactics of resistance, that shapes spaces. De Certeau's articulation of strategies makes clear that power and the ways it is manifest is central to the everyday.

This intersection is of central significance to political participation, power, democracy and social change. The strategically structured ways of behaving, confronted with tactics of resistance, large and small, can result in social change because they alter power dynamics. In this way, de Certeau is concerned with making the invisible activities of the weak visible. Willson argues that de Certeau's theory of the everyday is particularly significant because it emphasises the unseen

or unquestioned daily activities precisely because this forces a critique of power relations and practices (2016: 2). De Certeau's (1988) analysis of the everyday—identifying and critiquing those with the power to create and structure everyday practices (strategies), such as technology companies, in contrast to those who navigate these structures, whether as intended or through subversion (tactics), and sometimes both—is where the everyday and political life meet.

De Certeau's concept of strategies and tactics can also be applied to digital media, conceptualised as a 'space' of the everyday. For example we might study how people employ tactics—such as minor letter changes to a name to avoid the requirement of an identifiable profile on Facebook—through their digital practices to change and subvert the structures and affordances imposed by technology companies. As creators assert particular ways of doing things they simultaneously make possible the conditions and capacities for resistance available to users. The everyday requires people to navigate a series of systems, and devise 'ways of operating or doing' (de Certeau, 1988: xi). As online and offline spaces have become so intertwined, and the boundaries so blurred, for many everyday life, by necessity, requires the seamless navigation of digital spaces (Ruppert et al., 2017): spaces that are generally created and structured by powerful systems with inbuilt and predefined affordances, possibilities and limitations.

Employing de Certeau's construction of the everyday implementation of tactics to study digital practices, De Ridder (2015) used participatory observation of the social-network site Netlog to show a complex struggle between the power of digital-media institutions and everyday appropriations. Netlog is a social-networking site targeted at young people globally. Unlike Facebook, it was originally designed to facilitate connections between people who don't know each other. Users could create their own web pages, meet new people, chat play games, share video and post blogs. De Ridder (2015) found young people in Northern Belgium used Netlog to tell their intimate stories and implemented specific tactics to navigate the website. One such example is the site's design requiring users to provide their sexual

identification, which 86% of users avoided. Over time, the company that created the site responded to the tactics and changed the requirement, showing how tactics are recuperated by a company or organisation to form part of their strategic practices.

Also employing de Certeau's theory of the practice of everyday life, Wood (2012) examined how school children from New Zealand craft their everyday political subjectivities within the limitations and spaces they occupy in society. Focusing on the school and citizenship curricula, Wood (2012) examined young people's everyday forms of political action in school settings. She argued that schools deliver a relatively limited citizenship education, but found students showed both agency and resourcefulness in their spaces. She provided examples of young people standing up for friends as a tactic to counter bullying and/or racism and as a way of raising and addressing the issues in their school. She concluded that such everyday actions show young people's political, critical and tactical selves (de Certeau, 1988).

The implementation of tactics can be seen when applications and devices are used for practices never intended by those who designed them. This occurs, for example, when political communication campaigns are responded to with satire by creating and redistributing memes, or when usual ways of behaving are acknowledged but played upon and altered (Highfield, 2016). In his 2016 book, *Social Media and Everyday Politics*, Tim Highfield also studied the link between the political and personal dimensions of social media.

Studying the coverage of key events such as political campaigns, elections, riots and crises, but also less clearly political events such as the Eurovision Song Contest, Highfield (2016) demonstrates how 'real' political life blends into online life and how online activities can be political acts. Highfield contests the existing focus on major political events at the expense of 'normal, everyday topics' on social media, but also cautions that social media, on its own, does not create new political realities. This requires online and offline interactions and discussions and the intertwining of the two.

Maria Bakardjieva has taken up this question of the link between online and offline, and the everyday and the political, in her study of young people's political attitudes and practices (2009). She conceptualises politics as deeply embedded in everyday life. For Bakardjieva, the simple act of taking sides or choosing positions and taking action in relation to issues or interests is a form of self-identification: it expresses something about who a person thinks they are and what it is that they believe. Such practices can take place in a range of daily spaces, such as the schoolyard or bus stop, as a person reads and interprets news, holds a conversation or refuses to let an elderly person take their seat. Bakardjieva's interest, however, is not in the activities themselves, but in studying everyday activities to understand how they shape political subjectivities. It is in the doing, the activities and the communications and relationships associated with them that political life emerges, develops and is renewed. In the following section I discuss Bakardjieva's concept of subactivism for its contribution to understanding how self-expressive forms of political engagement emerge and how they shape political subjectivities.

3.4 Subactivism: A politics of the everyday

In developing the concept of subactivism, Maria Bakardjieva (2009) draws attention to everyday activities with a political or ethical focus that shape the subject and which may or may not, in the digitally mediated age, become more significant political acts. But while Bakardjieva studies everyday practices, her focus is not on political attitudes or actions, but on the conditions in which political subjectivities emerge. In 2014, Bakardjieva gave an interview explaining the development of the concept from her experiences in communist Bulgaria. She stated that light-hearted conversations didn't always have an immediately visible political connection, but had the potential to become political:

I started with my experience of growing up in a communist reality, where it was exactly that horizontal chatter among us, our friends and relatives that

sustained our sanity and critical thinking, resistance and oppositional ideas vis-à-vis a powerful system which was all inclusive. And yet totalitarianism, no matter how hard it tried, it failed at fully penetrating and taking over these spaces of horizontal, interpersonal communication. And that's where we made jokes about the regime, that's where we questioned the truths that it was pushing with the full power of its media apparatus, and violence sometimes, and sanctions sometimes. *I have always held a belief in the resilience and power of this horizontal interpersonal level of chatter among people. And with digital media, with the internet, it could be consolidated, it could be made more permanent and lasting in a sense of leaving a record, forming a space that was always there.*

(Bakardjieva, & Dahlgren, 2014, emphasis mine)

Bakardjieva speaks of the private, everyday interactions among people that serve to establish and deepen connections with others. These connections may develop into more consequential or visible political actions. She also highlights how everyday networks and connections—which are now largely digitally mediated—while not always aiming to influence the political domain, are formative sites for the individuals who engage in them. Unlike earlier studies of everyday participation that I have discussed, Bakardjieva's is not focused on the individual or group actions per se, but the ways in which everyday practices can build connections between people that can develop into more visible or public actions. While other studies focus on communications and practices that are explicitly designed to have a political impact (e.g. Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Bang, 2005), Bakardjieva's interest is in the activities that precede such practices. These are the formation points before more recognisable political activities, and she argues that they provide insights into how people come to 'be political'—how their political activities are shaped. This shaping provides insights into how young people progress from everyday activities and interests to more publicly recognised and organised forms of political engagement. My question then is: what does a close, thick, account of people's 'grounded' experiences of the everyday help to explain about how political subjectivities

develop in the digital society? These spaces and connections are formative in the development of political knowledge and action. I therefore ask: what is subactivism and what enables it? The literature suggests, and I agree, that beyond Bakardjieva's work, there are two significant elements requiring further investigation and which I later discuss: political information and/or knowledge and the concept of affect. I first explain the concept of subactivism in detail.

In developing the concept of subactivism, Bakardjieva (2009) first draws on Lefebvre's notion that everyday activities, individuals' direct experiences of the world, are inherently linked to the political. That is, politics emerges from the everyday concerns of life, rather than in more distant or abstract spheres. But subactivism also builds on expanding conceptualisations of political life, and specifically Beck's concept of subpolitics. Beck's (1997) interest in society developed when the political realm was understood in mainstream political science in three ways, all concerned with the activities and interactions of collective agents or groups. Firstly, the institutional constitution of the political community into which society organises itself (polity), secondly, the substance of political programs that shape social conditions (policy), and thirdly, the political conflict over power sharing and power positioning (politics) (Beck, 1997). To these Beck adds a further dimension focused on the individual and the processes of individualisation, characteristic of reflexive modernity. He calls this subpolitics. Subpolitics is broadly defined as a form of politics that develops 'outside and beyond the representative institutions of the political system of nation-states' (Beck, 1997: 18). In this way, Beck's subpolitics gives a name to new kinds of politics where participants come from beyond officially recognised political and corporate systems with the aim of playing a role in social change. It is essentially a theory explaining changing power structures and practices. Actors here include different professional organisations, social movements, and individual citizens focused on action on particular issues. These participants also include both political actors connected with organised groups with defined practices and identities, but also groups that are less structured and with less permanent common characteristics and concerns. Isolated individuals

are included in this new kind of politics. For Beck, politics is no longer only characterised by clearly identifiable political institutions, but is now constituted by less visible 'often concealed everyday political practice' (98). Individuals now actively create new kinds of political life, leaving behind more structured and fixed ways of doing things. Political causes and commitments are of participants' own making, and not dictated by a superior or distant class of political actors. In this way actors develop and move to 'new niches of activity and identity' (Beck, 1997: 102), and in doing so create new forms of political life.

This new kind of active politics, however, is where Bakardjieva (2009) departs from Beck, as she distinguished 'three distinct levels at which citizenship can be perceived' (96). The first is the level of formal institutional politics; the second is Beck's subpolitics. While subpolitics does emphasise forms and manifestations of politics that emerge from outside the political system, it still has a strong public and activist element. These are linked to organised and/or public social movements where individuals are still part of the social life of political systems. Bakardjieva adds a third level, deeper under the surface—and this is subactivism:

a kind of politics that unfolds at the level of subjective experience and is submerged in the flow of everyday life. It is constituted by small-scale, often individual, decisions and actions that have either a political or ethical frame of reference (or both) and are difficult to capture using the traditional tools with which political participation is measured. Subactivism is a refraction of the public political arena in the private and personal world

(Bakardjieva, 2009: 92).

These activities do not necessarily transform into more 'overt' or 'formalised' political actions, but nevertheless have some political significance and power. They can also be a stepping stone to more formalised or networked participation. As such, Bakardjieva argued that subactivism offers a way of thinking more deeply about and

studying everyday activities that can be precursors to more visible politically oriented activities.

In developing the concept of subactivism, Bakardjieva was also interested in the potential of the internet to democratise and enhance civic participation. She argued that the focus of research had thus far been on the democratising aspects of the internet and its capacity to inform individuals' political choices. It does this, she suggests, by giving citizens ready access to the exchange of ideas, as well as by transmitting the views of individual citizens to centres of power through opinion polls and online referenda. Her aim was not to contest these goals, but rather to push at the limits of the internet as a space of democratisation. She wanted to look at democracy from outside the visible arenas of politics, and to direct her attention to changes at the levels of individual agency and meaning. Bakardjieva's (2009) main preoccupation was to 'inquire into the capacity of the Internet to enhance democracy through the multiplication and enrichment of the everyday practices of citizenship' (92).

To develop her concept, Bakardjieva (2010) studied the everyday digital practices of Canadians. She first conducted interviews on home internet use, including some questions focusing on civic participation practices, and then a study, using focus groups, on blogs and the social networking of citizenship practices. In the interviews, Bakardjieva (2010) found no evidence of bridges being constructed or crossed between young people's everyday lives and civic or political collectivities. Rather, she found that young people limited themselves to commercial entertainment and interpersonal sociability. However, rather than assuming this meant the young people were not engaged in matters of politics, she adjusted the study to look for 'openings': instances, no matter how small, of connections in everyday life between the civic and the political, particularly where young people use digital technologies. The later study found that, when viewed through the prism of subactivism, engagement on social and political issues in a quasi-public space is a form of political and civic identification. Blogging, for example, becomes a tool of

self-identification, enabling the individual to construct themselves in a constant dialogue with cultural and political discourses as well as with other individuals. In her 2010 book chapter, 'The internet and subactivism: Cultivating young citizenship in everyday life', she writes that for many:

the unobtrusive world of virtual social networking introduces new ways to take a position and state it, to engage and inspire others in a soft and personal way ... [t]he one claim that can be made with certainty is that these online communicative platforms promise to make the workings of subactivism more tangible and shared. Through the tiny gestures of fellow men and women, they help thrust politics into the heart of the everyday lifeworld of their users. They make civic identification easier to perform and harder to avoid in the context of viral position dissemination and peer example

(Bakardjieva, 2010: 143).

By focusing on the mundane, the everyday, on what young people actually do and what interests them, Bakardjieva (2010) highlights how paying attention to what she calls the 'small social world' can deepen understanding of current participation practices as a potential indicator of future and more public activity. Bakardjieva (2010) argues that the internet provides capacities for networking and it is these networking capacities that enhance subactivism and enable people to engage in political acts. In this way she is building on her experiences in communist Bulgaria of 'horizontal chatter' between people. Digital media enables connections not previously possible, and provides opportunities to open up once-private thoughts and conversations to much broader audiences (Fredriksson Almqvist, 2016). Where once connections were constrained by the communication affordances of one-to-one or one-to-many connections, limitations of distance and time are now overcome and many-to-many conversations are possible. Asynchronous communications are also possible, and material can be archived and later distributed. These multiple affordances vastly change the nature of networking and information flows.

While Bakardjieva (2009) is clear that subactivism is not internet-dependent, she argues that it 'bends' the private and public spheres in new and expansive ways. Acts can become public, but are more likely to occur and remain in the 'small social world' of networks of family and friendship (Bakardjieva 2010: 134). At the same time, while these acts might be less visible, this does not mean they are of no consequence. She argues that, at any time, there is the potential for them to be 'mobilized by trigger events and transformed into overt public activism' (Bakardjieva, 2010: 134). That is, there is the potential for acts to become overt:

Subactivism may or may not leak out of the small social world and become politically visible. The potential for it to be mobilized by trigger events and transformed into overt political activism is always in place. It is that essential bedrock against which individual citizens' capacity for participation in subpolitics or in the formal political institutions of the public world is shaped and nurtured

(Bakardjieva, 2009: 96).

In Dahlgren's (2013) discussion of subactivism, he notes that it is not always possible to identify the precise point at which subactivism turns political; the concept helps to provide insights and explanations to more subtle aspects of participation. This offers the possibility of improving understanding of political participation, and expanding definitions of citizenship. It recognises changes to civic cultures and provides scope to address fundamental and underlying changes to enhance political institutions and structures suited to changing forms of engagement.

Significantly, Bakardjieva argues that people are not fixed in one level of citizenship—they may move across subpolitics and subactivism, and indeed may engage in formal or dutiful practices such as voting in elections. They can participate in more than one 'type' of citizenship at a time. Bakardjieva's (2009) concept is

based on *identity* and the subject positions the individual assumes, and the way they are constructed through discourse and action *in relation to others*. Bakardjieva (2009) draws on the work of Stuart Hall (1996) and his explanation of understanding the self and subject formation in order to make this point. For Hall (1996), subject positions come about through diverse social discourses and social relationships and develop in relation to both self and other. From this arises identity as the process of identification by the individual with a set of subject positions. This process is ongoing and never completed. Identification is a 'signifying practice' in that it is showing through doing (Hall, 1996: 3). Identification requires actions of self and actions on self. It is an iterative process of creation and production and is always negotiated in relation to discourses.

The internet has the capacity to massively increase the number of discourses and subject positions to which the individual is exposed. Bakardjieva argues that in this way the internet transforms the process of identification (Bakardjieva, 2009: 94). Digitally mediated networks become important here in the process of identification because of the capacities they provide for individuals to influence others through access to multiple and diverse conversations, both as audiences and participants, and their 'direct experiences of the social world' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 94). The internet vastly expands opportunities to engage with greater numbers of audiences and participants. To make her point about the way the internet greatly expands the number of possible discourses and subject positions, Bakardjieva (2009: 94) argues that a digitally mediated network based on the 'the pulpit, the printed bible, and village word of mouth' provides a 'different set and scope of subject positions' compared with 'a network based on the national newspaper or modern broadcasting technologies'. She further argues that the internet brings discursive agency closer to subjects' everyday experience. This means, because of the affordances of the internet—the ability to readily communicate and network with vast numbers of people—individuals and groups have capacities and access in their everyday lives to actively engage in greater numbers of conversations and create

'new discursive repertoires' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 94). In short, they have greater agency in their everyday lives to communicate with and influence others.

In Chapter 2 I discussed the way I conceptualise power as flowing and through subjects and the ways in which it is changed and creates through the tactics and agency of subjects. Bakardjieva (2009) makes a similar claim in her approach to power and its role in subactivism:

It is not about political power in the strict sense, but about personal empowerment seen as the power of the subject to be the person that they want to be in accordance with his or her reflexively chosen moral and political standards. Its frames of reference are fluid and constantly shifting, responding to the ongoing dialogue between the subject and the cultural discourses permeating his or her social environment. (96)

For Bakardjieva, subactivism is the kind of power that is not conceptualised in traditional terms of power over or overtly political power; it is about the agency of the individual to be themselves in the ways that they choose on the issues that matter to them. She recognises that this is fluid and changing and a constant dialogue between the subject and the social and cultural environment in which they are situated.

The concept of subactivism, therefore, brings to the fore the political potential of less visible everyday activities, and their agency to cultivate and build connections, usually facilitated by digital media. Because of this, subactivism is useful for identifying and understanding the shaping of young people's political subjectivities. Asking young people about their everyday activities outside of politically oriented organisations, their reasons for engaging in them, and the kinds of knowledge and connections they gain through these acts is important for understanding the kinds of practices that are meaningful to young people today, and how the very practicing shapes them and those with whom they engage. It offers insights into how seemingly

mundane, everyday practices can lead to more recognisable political engagements and even to engagement with political organisations.

Applying the concept of subactivism to youth political participation

Scholars have used subactivism to explore unique aspects of civic culture (Shklovski & Valtysson, 2012; Mascheroni, 2013; Bosch, 2017; Fredriksson Almqvist, 2016; Haider, 2012; Lindgren & Linde, 2012). Shklovski and Valtysson (2012) employ the concept of subactivism to study discussion forums on homemade soap in Kazakhstan. They demonstrate the private/public nature of these everyday groups and how the group moves from private discourse and then to shared, public discourses. Shklovski and Valtysson's (2012) study, however, is carried out in an environment of heavy censorship and blocking, very different from the more open environment in which Bakardjieva's (2009) study was conducted. In trying to explore how the internet opens up possibilities for increased networked discourses, this context may impose limitations, making comparison of the shaping of political subjectivities across contexts more challenging. Using subactivism in a very different environment, Bosch (2017) examines the South African student-led campaign Rhodes Must Fall—a protest movement in 2015 calling for the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town. The study sought to explore youth activism and counter-memory via the social-networking site Twitter, using a qualitative content analysis of tweets and NodeXL network analysis. Bosch (2017) found Twitter gave young people an opportunity to participate in political discussions, and discussions of broader sociopolitical issues of relevance in contemporary South African society, reflecting a form of subactivism. Her study illuminated the political opportunities of subactivism, although it spoke less to the ways political subjectivities are shaped through these everyday activities.

Based on interviews with Pirate Party members in Sweden, the United States and Germany, Fredriksson Almqvist (2016) used the concept of subactivism to analyse their responses. He asked why a movement that comes across as the prototype for a

decentred, networked, subpolitical movement ultimately decides to organise as a parliamentary political party, and the consequences for the party of doing so (97). His use of the concept of subactivism helped illuminate what subactivism can look like through Pirate Party members' views on file-sharing. That is, they do not view file-sharing as a political act until politicians try to ban it. Collectively, these studies highlight how subactivism helps illuminate the political potential of subjective and everyday interests and activities, and shows different ways these can develop into civic participation practices. Such studies illustrate the many different ways networks are formed around areas of everyday interest and how these networks can facilitate more overt forms of political participation.

A deeper understanding of subactivism emerges in asking the question: what does subactivism look like? For Bakardjieva the act of an individual simply taking sides in a debate in relation to clashes of values and interests in a larger social world is a form of self-identification and an 'elementary instance of subactivism' (96). This act of self-identification says, this is who I am and this is what I think or believe. It can occur in silence, as in reading and interpreting political news, scrolling through a Facebook newsfeed or in dinner-table conversations (Bakardjieva, 2009). But it can also be activated in what she calls 'frontier situations' (96), which include both private and somewhat-public spaces like sports clubs or school committees. In detailing her concept of subactivism, Bakardjieva discusses how 'trigger events' (96) can be activated to give rise to more recognisable political actions. These openings (2010: 139) occur in the frontier environments of everyday interests and activities. Subactivism can therefore help bring due attention to the role of everyday interests (Bakardjieva, 2009). Bakardjieva provides two examples of where Canadian interviewees recount their online discussions of secular sobriety as well as an online community for people interested in organic farming. When asked if these people thought their involvement was civic participation, they were reluctant or unable to describe it in this way; however, the issues they were engaging with (while personal to them) also had a larger public political and ethical framework: part of the definition of subactivism. Like Bakardjieva's, my analysis is based on interview data.

I ask about connections young people may have with politically oriented organisations, and I also look for ‘openings’: instances, no matter how small, where the everyday world of the civic and the political has connected, especially where it is facilitated by the use of digital technology. In chapters 6 and 7, in my interviews with members and non-members of Oaktree and AYCC, I look for examples of ‘trigger events’ and ‘frontier situations’. Bakardjieva’s interest, however, is not in the activities themselves, but in studying everyday activities to understand how they shape political subjectivities. It is in the doing, the activities, and the communications and relationships associated with them that political life emerges, develops and is renewed.

A limitation of Bakardjieva’s (2009: 92) work is that her focus on ‘everyday practices of citizenship’ doesn’t attend to or explain how actions and interests emerge. Bakardjieva does not discuss why people become more or less interested in any particular things and which communicative practices they might feel most comfortable with. People engage with things that are meaningful to them and this meaning is created because of their environment and experiences. Such experiences can lead to feelings of wanting to learn more about or engage with particular issues. Massumi (1992) describes affect as occurring before feelings or emotions - a prepersonal intensity that is often the impetus for action and engagement. Given this, I contend that the concept of affect—the way experiences shape and influence our responses to certain issues or events—is an important dimension to examine in relation to subactivist practices, and a useful lens through which to understand and explain everyday actions and interests. I argue that affect is useful for studying young people’s political participation because it draws attention to their reasons for their activities and interests. Their experiences and feelings of prepersonal intensity about particular events can show why they engage in some interests and practices and not others. In studying young people’s everyday interests and activities, the concept of affect raises questions about experiences that move them and why they are then moved to affect others. Questions about affect focus attention on stories of where, when and how people are moved and why this mattered to them. For

example, a childhood experience of cruelty to animals may serve to trigger interest on that particular issue. Focusing on the affective in young people's everyday actions and interests (e.g. how they are experienced) helps to investigate the formation of young people's political subjectivities. By understanding the events that move young people, including those that do not at first glance appear to have a political dimension, it is possible to more fully understand the range of contexts in which such subjectivities are shaped. Understanding these motivations and processes is another dimension to subactivism. These experiences and motivations are part of the shaping of young people's political subjectivities.

A number of digital-media theorists now emphasise the importance of affect in understanding changing information flows in the digitally mediated age (Hillis, Paasonen & Petit, 2015; Papacharissi, 2014). For example, in an edited collection of essays, Hillis, Paasonen and Petit (2015) address the question of how to study social networks to explore how agency and affordance play out in the everyday of contemporary capitalism. They argue that affect is a useful perspective to consider digitally mediated social networks because it extends understandings of human agency over technology to highlight how technology can affect or even control us. They argue that theorisations of affect can help explain the challenges and meanings of the current, digitally mediated age.

In her book, *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology and Politics*, Zizi Papacharissi (2014) discusses the role of digital media in changing forms of political engagement. She is concerned with the role of affect and the ways in which online media facilitate political formation of affect. With a focus on the power of stories to connect social-media users, Papacharissi (2014) applies affect as a dimension to understanding online civic engagement. Studying original big data and qualitative analyses of Twitter streams, she explains the role of Twitter in protests and movements, as well as everyday political expression. She developed the concept 'affective publics' to explain how and why people use the affordances of digital media to express themselves on issues that matter to them and to connect with others. She

demonstrates how affective publics manifest and disperse based on communicated sentiment. In doing so, she demonstrates how affective publics connect people, disrupt networks, and develop into new forms of everyday politics.

The following discussion of affect demonstrates the complex nature of the concept and why it is useful for studying young people's everyday practices and engagements in the digitally mediated age.

3.5 The role of affect in everyday activities and interests

What leads different people to develop political interest and their preferences for particular kinds of participatory practices? Affect helps to explain what moves people and why they are moved to act in particular ways, but it does resist easy definitions. Spinoza (1959) distinguishes between *affectus*, the force of an affecting body, and *affectio*, the impact it leaves on the one affected. While *affectio* may happen quickly, it can also leave a lasting effect or impression; such that one can change in many ways but still be left with 'impressions or traces' (Spinoza, 1959: III, Post. 2). Spinoza defined affects as states of mind and body that include emotions and feelings, but also describe driving forces that suggest tendencies to act or not act in certain ways (Spinoza, 1959). Massumi (1987) describes affect as being 'prepersonal'. That is, it occurs before feelings or emotions. It is non-conscious and intense and is always before or outside of consciousness (Massumi, 2002). In relation to politics, such experiences are often presented in contrast to reason and regularly framed as being of secondary importance (Papacharissi, 2014). Papacharissi (2014) argues that conventional political thinking emphasises rationality over feelings, as though feelings should first be organised by the cognitive processes of reason before entering the civic realm. Emotions are seen as getting in the way of rational decision-making and likely to lead people to actions they regret. This distinction and approach, however, is not so clear—cognitive and affective processes are interconnected and overlap. The way we feel about things can shape the way we think about them (Papacharissi, 2014). This is because emotions are not

separate from our 'ideas, identities, and interests'; rather, they permeate them (Jasper, 1998: 399).

More recently, affect debates have been concerned with the distinction between affect and emotion (Frenzel et al, 2014). This is particularly the focus of theorists grouped together under the term the 'affective turn' (Clough & Halley, 2007; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Much of this scholarship draws on Brian Massumi's (2002) distinction between affect and emotion. Massumi (2002) argues that affect is connected to the body—it is pre-discursive or pre-linguistic, whereas emotions are interpreted through existing cultural perspectives. This articulation is important because he is referring to what moves us, rather than how we feel about something. Affect is the 'pre- emotive intensity' experienced through certain life events (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016). It is the movement felt before 'developing an emotion or an opinion (or both) about something' (Papacharissi, 2016). It is only later that a label is given to emotion. At the point of experience, being pre- emotive and pre- cognitive, affect expresses no direction (Papacharissi, 2016). Put another way, 'affect concerns the more embodied, unformed and less conscious dimensions of human feeling, while emotion concerns the feelings which are more conscious since they are more anchored in language and meaning' (Hoggett & Thompson, 2012:3). We need to feel moved bodily before we can put words to the emotions we experience, or as Markussen (2006) puts it, 'When I talk of affect or feeling I mean not just the emotions, but also the less easily categorizable ways in which we, in embodied ways, interact perceptively with that which is beyond us' (293). It is the embodiment aspect of affect that distinguishes it from emotion (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). Embodied experiences are powerful because they are inherently relational—they are possible only in relation to other things or forces.

Massumi argues that affect is relational because it concerns the ways we are affected and how we affect others (Massumi, 2017). Ahmed (2004) articulates this clearly when she writes:

Affect binds subjects together. As affect travels it accumulates value, moving sideways to create attachments, moving backwards to connect us to the past (120).

Affect is a relational force and is central in the formation and maintenance of networks. In the digital age individuals curate and belong to various networks, and move in and out of them as they choose. These networks are a key way individuals are moved and through which they act to move others. In this way digital media is now a key site of affect in the formation of political subjectivities and young people's decisions to act or not act (Papacharissi, 2014). Papacharissi (2014) neatly phrases this when she writes, 'networked digital structures of expression and connection are overwhelmingly characterised by affect' (22). Understanding affect and its role in shaping and linking subjects and their views and actions helps to explain changes to political participation.

Despite the utility of affect, it receives relatively little attention in the literature on everyday political participation. Neither Bakardjieva (2009) nor Amnå and Ekman (2014) consider the role of affect in relation to young people's interests or issues of concern. However, the concept of affect could usefully build on their theories and concepts. To this end, I draw on the concept of affect. I use affect to explain the forces that constitute young people's practices—the way their everyday actions and encounters affect them—why they engage with certain interests, and why and how they then try to influence others.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have asked the question: what counts as political participation today? I argue that in the digitally mediated age of personalised politics, a broad and nuanced approach is necessary. My approach raises questions about the kinds of political practices young people are engaged in in their everyday lives, why they engage in them and how these practices shape young people's subjectivities. This

chapter has analysed a broad and yet specific body of literature concerned with these questions and detailed critical contributions for answering them.

Recent debates about what counts as political participation are regularly framed by binaries of active versus passive. But I, and others, argue that passivity or disengagement is a misreading with moral undertones, mistaking a more cautious or even cynical politics for apathy or inaction. Amnå and Ekman's (2014) concept of standby citizenship aims to encapsulate one form of the new ways young people are engaged in everyday politics. The concept of standby citizenship specifically addresses and argues for rethinking the consumption and distribution of information through individually curated networks as active and meaningful participation. Citizens are now 'standing by' in their everyday lives as they inform themselves of issues of concern to them. In doing so, they develop knowledge and skills to disseminate information on matters important to them with the potential for further action if they choose. This form of everyday political participation can appear passive, but it is real and active for young people and important for understanding changes to political life in the digitally mediated age.

The permeation and use of digital media and the personalisation of politics have seen the development of theories of the everyday highlighting its political dimensions, such as Bang's idea of everyday makers (2005) and Micheletti's (2003) of conscious consumers—politics happens as people go about their everyday lives. These approaches raise the question: what is the everyday? I have detailed varying conceptualisations of the everyday to show the term's various understandings. Each of these conceptualisations—Bourdieu's, Lefebvre's and de Certeau's—elucidates the ways in which political participation increasingly occurs in everyday ways, and builds on arguments for more nuanced understanding of the legitimate political action. Lefebvre's recognition that politics occurs through everyday concerns—employment, housing, food—is where Bakardjieva begins to build her concept of subactivism.

Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism attends to people's everyday interest and activities and the way these help to shape political subjectivities. Her approach stands as a distinctive contribution to understanding evolving political practices because of her focus on everyday activities and interests before they become more publicly oriented acts of political expression, and because of the ways in which they are both a form of individual expression and shaping of the individual subject. Facilitated by the internet, 'horizontal chatter' developed through everyday interests has the potential to contribute to impactful change. This articulation of political life emphasises the connection between everyday concerns and the political domain. Studying and understanding the conditions and actions that precede other forms of subpolitics is important and useful if we are to understand contemporary forms of political participation.

De Certeau's (1988) theory of the everyday is compelling because it articulates the interplay that occurs in everyday life between those with the capacity to impose strategies on others and those who are subject to those strategies but also deploy tactics to subvert them. This interplay can be applied to develop concepts for studying young people's everyday political participation and understanding how power and agency operate. I use this articulation of the everyday in chapters 6 and 7 to highlight and look for examples of strategies imposed and tactics deployed in everyday life.

In chapters 6 and 7 I use Amnå and Ekman's (2014) concept of the standby citizen and Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism to analyse practices of members of Oaktree and AYCC and young people not connected with those organisations. Finally, I have argued that the concepts of both standby citizenship and subactivism are limited because they do not account for *why* young people have some interests and engage in some activities but not others. I argue that affect plays a role here. Listening to and analysing young people's stories and their affective dimensions deepens and informs understandings of everyday forms of political participation

and of the reasons why young people actively engage in particular issues or concerns.

In the following chapter I explain how the theoretical and conceptual frameworks included in this and the previous chapter inform the methods adopted in this study.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Young people's everyday, individual, self-expressive, and often digitally mediated practices, and their relationships to evolving citizenship and democratic norms, are now widely studied (Bennett, Freelon, & Wells 2010; Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti 2005; Thorson, 2012). Research focused on evolving political participation aims to understand and explain how and why they are changing, and the broader institutional and social implications of these changes. My research builds on this work, and seeks to understand the various contexts and conditions in which young people's political concerns and practices emerge. I ask how young people's political actions and subjectivities are formed in relation to particular organisational settings—specifically youth-led activist organisations. As such, I examine the activities of, and the role of digital media and its deployment by, two Australian youth-led activist organisations and by young people associated with, and in some cases with no association to, these organisations.

This chapter is set out in four main sections. Section 4.1 articulates the research design, including the rationale of the approach, an outline of the methodology, and the methods used. I explain how taking a critical-realist perspective (Marsh & Furlong, 2002) shows discursive and dialectical relationships between the organisational structures of youth-led activist organisations and their engagement with young people and their individual expressive practices. Section 4.2 describes the data-generation techniques of semi-structured interview questions, incorporating technology walk-throughs, as well as focus-group, social-media and document analysis. Section 4.3 explains how the data is analysed using the theories of organisational hybridity, subactivism and standby citizenship to guide my thematic analysis. Finally, Section 4.4 describes the challenges experienced in conducting this research, and analyses how those challenges ultimately provided unanticipated insights into young people's political participation practices.

4.1 Research design

Examining the relationship between youth-led activist organisations, digital media and youth political participation, this study's key question is: what are the contexts and conditions through which young people develop diverse forms of political subjectivity? I also ask what role Oaktree and AYCC play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions, and how they adapt to young people's changing participation preferences. Finally, I ask what interests and activities are meaningful to young people and what conditions underpin the meaning-making process. Addressing these questions requires a qualitative exploration of the organisations and their activities to uncover the meanings and motivations of young people in different settings. My approach is informed by a critical-realist perspective—that there is a reality that exists independently of human perceptions, but that our access to this reality is always limited and skewed by those perceptions (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). Perceptions are both physically and ideologically limited: we can't see into the past or future and we are biased by personal experiences. The position is 'realist' in believing in an external reality, but 'critical' of our ability to access and measure it (MacIntosh & O'Gorman, 2015). This perspective is important because, while we can know things about the world, that knowing has limitations and is always dependent upon our perceptions and capacity for understanding that reality.

In this way, I follow those who are wary about trying to measure political engagement and who argue instead that politics can be seen as 'lived experience' (Marsh et al., 2007). This requires the researcher's interpretation of the research subject's interpretation of social reality (the double hermeneutic) and 'real-world' processes shape these interpretations. Using theory, we make sense of how this 'real world' influences our understandings of it, and influences our behaviour. In their study of young people's politics in the United Kingdom, Marsh and his colleagues (2007) argue that age, gender, ethnicity and class do shape 'lived experience' in ways that influence—but do not determine—people's understandings and experiences of politics (Marsh et.al., 2007: 27–29). Their approach does not view these as fixed

categories, and their research aimed, in part, at understanding the meanings young people attach to such concepts (Marsh et.al., 2007: 29). I am similarly interested in both how young people conceptualise politics, and how they feel about their politics, political issues, organisations and practices (Manning, 2015). I use methods enabling me to explore and investigate their conceptualisations and feelings. While I acknowledge that the role of social structures requires particular attention, my study focuses on the modes and meanings of micro-political practices. There is a need for research that considers how young people live, and how their gender, class, and ethnicity influence their opportunities for political participation and recognition.

Digital practices are central to this study, and I am particularly interested in what practices matters to young people, why they engage in particular ways, and why certain forms of engagement are more meaningful than others. In studying digital media, Ito and colleagues (2005) highlight the need to extend research methods beyond questionnaires and structured interviews that make assumptions about what young people do online and what it means. Instead, Ito and colleagues show how a range of novel research techniques can be usefully employed to study digital practices across public and private settings, including diary-based studies, shadowing users, visits and in-depth interviews in domestic spaces, and observations in public spaces to study how people use mobile devices (Ito et al., 2005). Semi-structured interviews are widely used to study digital practices as they allow for greater detail and insight from participants in relation to everyday practices. Richardson and Third (2009) used semi-structured interviews to explore the 'spatial, perceptual, and ontological effects' of mobile phones by asking participants aged 18–24 to show examples of their usage. boyd (2014) draws on a range of qualitative and ethnographic material, including interviews incorporating technology walk-throughs where participants show examples of actual social-media usage. These theorists engage in a form of post-positivist research that advocates methodological pluralism, an approach based on the assumption that the method to

be applied in a particular study should be selected based on the research question being addressed.

I therefore asked leaders of youth-activist organisations, their members, and young people with no affiliation to these organisations, about their activities and interests by using semi-structured interviews that incorporate technology walk-throughs. Semi-structured interviews allow for follow-up questions and for a respondent to speak about a topic in a conversational style likely to elicit personal stories and detail. Incorporating technology walk-throughs in the interviews (where participants show examples of actual digital-media usage and engagement) I can capture young people's self-described interests and practices and investigate the ways technology provides particular affordances. Technology walk-throughs help to draw out detailed acts and the meanings behind them through the visual and descriptive capacities that ready availability of a device affords. These methods empower young people to lead the direction of the interview and focus on what really matters to them.

I also undertake contextual examination of organisational materials that enables me to compare their spheres of activity and their actors.

To examine the everyday digital practices of Australian youth-led activist organisations, their members, and young people more broadly, the research design has three main areas of focus. The first is to fully understand the context of Oaktree and AYCC: including why they exist, how they work, and what they do. Learning about the organisations' purposes, structures and strategies through interviews and documentation provides information that can be analysed to understand how they shape young people's concerns and actions. The second is to learn about the lived experiences of young people engaged with these organisations and to identify the practices, strategies and tactics they engage in as they encounter Oaktree and AYCC, as well as their everyday practices outside them. The third is to study the breadth of everyday practices and affiliations of young people not connected with Oaktree and

AYCC to identify ways these shape their political subjectivities. This research was conducted according to the guidelines of the National Ethics Application Form (NEAF), approved by the Western Sydney University Ethics Committee procedures (H10708).

This qualitative investigation therefore first focuses on sites of organisational practice. I study, specifically, two Australian youth-led activist organisations—Oaktree and AYCC. Examining the practices of these organisations, I contribute to research on new forms of activist organisations, such as MoveOn in the United States (Chadwick, 2007) and GetUp! in Australia (Vromen, 2014). For example, in her analysis of Australian activist organisation GetUp!, Vromen (2016) gathered data from GetUp! annual reports, Australian Electoral Commission political expenditure annual reports, member emails, interviews with GetUp! campaigners conducted between 2006 and 2015, and media content analysis using the Factiva database. These methods allowed her to study the strategies of engagement deployed by the organisations, compare experiences of organisation leaders and members, and understand the wider political and media culture in which the organisation operates. While Collin (2015) studied ‘youth-serving’ organisations, conducting organisational document analysis, participant observation and in-depth interviews. This enabled her to study the strategies implemented by the organisations and analyse the perspectives and experiences of participants.

In his study of new activist organisations, Andrew Chadwick (2007) looks at the approach and activities of different case studies in the United States, such as MoveOn. His approach is a conceptual one, illustrated through empirical examples (284). Chadwick developed his concept of organisational hybridity by observing the activities of political parties, interest groups and new social movements. Like Vromen, Collin and others who have studied the role of organisations for new forms of political participation, I go a step further and speak directly with the leaders and members of two recognised activist organisations that combine structure, flexibility, and the deployment of diverse communication techniques including social media,

emails, face-to face events, broadcast media and phone calls. My study is designed to elicit practical examples of the activities Oaktree and AYCC promote and conduct to engage with members and advocacy targets, to understand how they shape member concerns and actions and to illuminate their hybridity.

Looking beyond organisations and formal settings for participation, Bakardjieva includes digital media as an important element in the everyday communicative practices that facilitate the important link between ‘the closely personal and the anonymous and abstract’ (Bakardjieva, 2009: 99). For Bakardjieva, the internet facilitates the connection between concerns shared with one’s private networks and the public sphere, where significant change can occur. Subactivism therefore links to questions of power, networks, the connectivity of individuals and groups, and the ability of individuals to connect their everyday concerns and activities in more visible ways.

In developing her concept of subactivism, Bakardjieva (2009) first conducted in-depth interviews with 192 individuals from 74 households between 2002 and 2004 in Calgary, Canada. Of these households, 38 families were interviewed, with young people aged between 10 and 24 interviewed (Bakardjieva, 2010). She recruited participants through local media advertisements and websites, deliberately seeking participants from a diverse range of socio-economic and demographic backgrounds. Bakardjieva (2009) informed participants that the study’s focus was home internet use, and interviews were conducted in front of the home’s internet-connected computer. Questions focused on the history of the home internet connection, children’s use of it, and roles and rules relating to the internet. Details were sought on activities and groups engaged with through the internet, as well as of information sources and social networking. Participants were also asked to respond generally to the role and significance of the internet in their lives. Bakardjieva (2009) further broke these themes into more detailed questions. Scope was also given for interviewees to tell their own “stories” in response to these question in a relatively free-flowing form.

The questions included use of the internet for political and civic use, but these were only discussed as participants felt comfortable. A question was asked if participants had used the internet for civic participation, while other questions were included on interviewees' overall perceptions about whether the internet extended their 'possibilities for action in the world' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 98) and its capacities to made them feel 'empowered' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 98). Some interviewees required an explanation of the idea of "civic participation", with Bakardjieva treating this as a finding. She sought to understand what it can explain about participants' own understanding of the concept. In analysing and presenting her results, Bakardjieva (2009) did not seek to quantify the number of civic uses on the internet through her research. Rather, the goal of Bakardjieva's analysis was to 'identify and categorize the various empirical manifestations of subactivism involving the Internet as they presented themselves in respondents' accounts' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 98). Bakardjieva later further developed her concept through a 2007–2008 study of practices associated with Web 2.0 applications: blogs and social networking (Bakardjieva, 2010). She collected data from 18 bloggers and 21 Facebook users aged 18 to 35 through focus groups of three to eight people.

For my study, I primarily employ Bakardjieva's method of interviews, and ask young people about their everyday digital practices—not only those with an overt civic or political purpose. I ask interviewees a series of questions under broad themes, while allowing scope, through the semi-structured nature of the interviews, for participants to share or tell extended stories. I also ensure they have ready access to online digital media, in the form of laptops or tablets, to show examples of their everyday practices. I do this to find examples of Bakardjieva's frontier situations and 'openings' to further action—the connections between everyday life and the civic or political.

Finally, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the concept of affect may help understanding of what motivates young people to engage in and with particular activities and/or

interests. Because affect is an embodied, prepersonal intensity that can serve to move people in particular ways (Massumi, 2002; Papacharissi, 2014) in-depth interviews that explore why young people engage in some activities and not others, and how past experiences affected them, can help reveal the role of affect for their actions and interests.

4.1.1 Youth-led activist organisations

Australian's youth-led activist organisations are not well understood given the limited research on them (Henderson & Tudball, 2016; Collin, 2015). Oaktree and AYCC were selected based on their substantial size, relative longevity and reputation. While these organisations have international affiliates and run some projects with overseas groups, they are primarily organisations based and run in Australia: i.e., they are not local sub-branches of global organisations whose norms and rules are set elsewhere. However, it should be noted that after the AYCC formed, a 'sister' organisation was established in the United Kingdom. This locally focused character of the organisations offers the opportunity to look at practices that reflect local cultural practices and activities. Here I provide a brief summary of the organisations and their approach to membership. I then describe the recruitment process and the participants for my study and reflect on some of the limitations and challenges encountered in recruitment.

Oaktree

Oaktree was formed in 2003 and identifies itself as Australia's largest youth-led organisation, with over 200,000 members (Oaktree, 2013). Its stated purpose is to reduce global poverty. Oaktree is run by young people aged 16 to 26, and overseen by an advisory board. Oaktree aims to build a movement to create change on global poverty by working to change public perspectives and generate action on global poverty (social change), influence policy change to create a just world without poverty (systemic change) and directly alleviate poverty through education in the Asia-Pacific (overseas partnerships) (Oaktree, 2013). Oaktree connects with young

people through a range of online and offline practices including social-media communication, leadership and communication training, a major fundraising campaign called Live Below the Line, and partnering with local communities in the Asia-Pacific to work on collaborative projects and build international relationships.

Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)

AYCC was co-founded in 2006 by a group of environmental and political activists and focuses on climate change and associated environmental issues (Henderson & Tudball, 2016). Its website states a membership of approximately 110,000 young people (AYCC, 2013). AYCC's stated mission is to create a generation-wide movement to solve the climate crisis (AYCC, 2013). AYCC engages young people through a range of activities including centrally run campaigns, advocacy, communicating online and offline, annual national or state summits ('Power Shift'), an annual national campaign, summer training camp, and an annual road trip to start new AYCC groups and bring new people to the movement (AYCC Strategic Plan 2012, 2015; AYCC website).

Oaktree and AYCC have views towards membership that are explicitly different from traditional civic and political organisations. They have loose membership structures and broad definitions of membership. Vromen identifies this as also true for GetUp! (2014; 2016), where members can 'pick and choose which campaigns they are active on' (Vromen, 2014: 2). While this loose structure was originally, and to some extent remains, a distinguishing feature of these organisations (Norris & Lovenduski, 2004), more recently other organisations such as political parties have been adopting similar approaches to their definitions of members in both name and practices (Gauja, 2015). To attract and retain members, Australian political parties have moved towards 'looser, more individualised, and amorphous networks of affiliation' (Gauja, 2015: 232).

The organising structures of Oaktree and AYCC describe this new approach to membership. They articulate and define broad member categories, under slightly different names, but essentially have a common approach to defining their constituents (Table 1). These layers have defined boundaries, based on the organisations' focus on levels of engagement, and point to the strategic way they aim move participants from one level of engagement to the next through increasing involvement with their activities. Oaktree and AYCC's 'layers of engagement' categories are:

Table 1. Oaktree and AYCC member categories.

Category		Description
Oaktree	Core	500 young people who volunteer weekly with the organisation and 'mobilise the Committed'.
	Committed	10,000 young people who mobilise their social networks and communities, such as Roadtrip Ambassadors, Live Below the Line (LBL) participants and others active Oaktree campaigners in schools, universities and online.
	Community	200,000 supporters on the database who support the movement, such as LBL sponsors and those who sign petitions, donate, attend events and receive emails.
	Connected	2 million members of the public that the organisation connects with each year through public speaking, peer-to-peer outreach and educational media.
AYCC	Core	Those who volunteer more than two days a week, are trained in organising and campaigning, and have some significant responsibility.
	Committed	Organisers who are volunteering more than three hours a week on average and will organise other people.
	Crowd	People who know about AYCC, receive emails and take

		occasional action.
	Community	The rest of the Australian community, who do not participate in the AYCC.

(Oaktree Strategic Plan, 2013–2015; AYCC Strategic Plan, 2013–2015)

These member categories provide the organisations with a way of understanding their members and targeting their communications. They constantly strive to move participants to deeper levels of engagement. In this study I analyse the strategies Oaktree and AYCC employ to do this, to understand how these shape young people’s political concerns and actions. In my research, I interviewed ‘Core’ and ‘Committed’ members as well as non-members. In my thesis I adapt the organisations’ terminology and use the term “Crowd” to refer to young people who are not connected to these organisations.

One of the challenges of this broader approach to membership constitution and practices is that it makes it far more challenging to conduct a study of these groups. Given the loose connections members have to the organisations, and the way in which members are at times in close contact with and regular attendance at the organisations, while at other times they are classified as members on the basis of providing an email address, it is difficult to connect with members who are interested in participating in such research.

4.1.2 Study participants

Members of Oaktree and AYCC

To understand the role of the organisation’s representatives, I interviewed a total of 17 members of Oaktree and AYCC—13 Core members or leaders and 4 Committed members. I wanted to understand how members engage with the organisations and how they perceive these interactions. I also wanted to know about member activities and interests beyond the organisations, to understand the range of contexts in which young people’s political concerns and interests are shaped. I also sought to

understand how young people's preferred engagement practices affect the organisations' practices and repertoires. For these interviews, I targeted members from the Committed engagement level, based on the organisations' own structures, as I wanted to speak with young people less engaged than senior staff. These are those members who, in the case of Oaktree, are described as '10,000 young people who mobilise their social networks and communities, such as Roadtrip Ambassadors, Live Below the Line (LBL) participants and other active Oaktree campaigners in schools, universities and online, and in AYCC's case as 'organisers who volunteer more than three hours a week on average and will organise other people' (AYCC, 2015; Oaktree, 2013).

However, as I discuss in Section 4.5, getting access to members was more challenging than anticipated. The project design involved the organisations sending a pre-drafted email to selected members, but there were significant delays in this approach on the part of the organisations. When these emails were sent, the response rate was extremely low. As a result, I had to identify and approach members directly. This approach meant that I had less control over which category of membership interviewees came from, and resulted in all four members coming from the Committed categories set out by the organisations.

Non-members

To understand the further contexts in which young people's political concerns and interests are shaped, I chose to study a group of young people, mainly from Western Sydney, who are not members of Oaktree or AYCC, in both semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Speaking with these young people enabled me to consider the similarities and differences between members and non-members of both Oaktree and AYCC, and to contrast them with the practices of organisation leaders and members. It enabled me to seek examples where everyday self-expressive acts and intent occur beyond political organisations, and consider if and how these shape young people. This approach provided a way to apply Bakardjieva's

and Amnå and Ekman's concepts to a new setting. I wanted to explore the small private spheres of young people's everyday worlds and look for examples where this might also move into more public spaces. The inclusion of non-members makes possible an expanded and extended understanding of the possible practices and processes that contribute to subactivism and political participation. This is not intended to provide conclusive or generalizable evidence, but to determine the potential of this approach.

4.2 Methods

4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Core: Organisation leaders

Thirteen interviews were held with leaders of Oaktree and AYCC (seven Oaktree staff, six AYCC staff). Four men and nine women were interviewed, aged between 18 and 27. The leaders were located through publicly available website information and discussion with key contacts established at each organisation. Interviews were arranged by emailing and phoning the CEO or national director of each organisation. These were briefed on the project, and then sent introductory emails to staff selected as being key interview targets by the researcher. The criteria used here was mainly seniority; those involved with strategic direction of the organisation or with communication or IT skills were of special interest. Availability and/or willingness to speak to the researcher was also a factor. Senior staff from both organisations gave in-principle agreement at the commencement of the study to participate in the research, including interviewing of leaders and organisation members.

Interviews were conducted via Skype, FaceTime or phone, and ranged from 40 minutes to an hour and a half, depending on interviewees' availability and the length of their answers. The first wave of interviews conducted with Oaktree occurred between July 2014 and November 2014. The second wave with Oaktree occurred in March and April 2015. All interviews conducted with AYCC staff occurred between

March and May 2015. Interview questions with organisation leaders were structured around four themes: organisational membership and engagement, the role of the internet, organisational practice, and general questions on young people's role in society. The purpose of these themes was to explore views from the perspective of the organisations about membership-engagement preferences, the ways digital technology is used to engage members and communicate more broadly, and the way the organisations function, and to gain insights into current perceptions of young people's practices and preferences. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the main method of data gathering and analysis because they offered insights into young people's motivations and detail on their organisational and individual interests. Conducting semi-structured interviews with similar themes and questions across each of the interview groups provided a mechanism for comparison and analysis and allowed me to explore diversity of participant experiences and settings. The semi-structured nature of the interview questions and themes allowed questions to be asked in the context of the theme, enabling scope for some nuanced interviewing and responses. The questions are set out in Appendix 1.

Crowd: Members

Four interviews were held with young people who identified themselves as members of Oaktree or AYCC. Three interviewees were members of AYCC and one from Oaktree, including one male and three females. They ranged in age from 17 to 24. Two respondents were recruited via emails sent to members in Western Sydney. One was recruited via a WSU Oaktree Facebook page and one through the WSU AYCC Facebook page. Interviews were conducted between May 2015 and August 2015, face-to-face in public libraries and on a university campus library. They ranged from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the length of answers by interviewees and the time they had available to speak.

Interview questions were again structured around four main themes, with some variation from those used with key members of organisations. These variations

focused on the different roles of leaders and members, such as those relating to how organisational decisions are made. Themes were: use of the internet, organisation membership and engagement, organisational practice, and issues and interests. The purpose of those themes was to explore young people's actual digital practices, their views of their interactions with Oaktree and AYCC, their preferred interests and issues of importance to them. The semi-structured nature of the interview questions and themes allowed questions to be asked in the context of the theme, enabling some more detailed exploration of everyday issues and interests. As noted, these semi-structured interviews also incorporated a technology walk-through where young people were asked to show the researcher some examples of what they do online, as relevant to the discussion and prompted by the researcher. This technique served to place young people's activities as central and offer new insights. The questions are set out in Appendix 2.

Community: non-members

A series of six interviews were held with young people from Western Sydney. I interviewed three females and five males aged between 19 and 22. One participant was recruited via the Young and Well CRC Youth Brains Trust, while the remainder were recruited via lecturers at Western Sydney University who issued a general invitation to students to participate. At the request of the participants, two interviews included two other interviewees, making a total of eight interviewees. Interviewees in the joint interviews were asked for their demographic information individually and then in turn during the interview; at times there was a three-way discussion of answers. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, via Skype or by phone, and ranged from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the length of answers by interviewees and time they had available to speak. Interviews were conducted between July and September 2015.

The interview questions for non-members focused on the same four main themes as those for Oaktree and AYCC members: use of the internet, organisation membership

and engagement, organisational practice, and issues and interests. The purpose of these themes was to explore young people's actual digital practices, their views of their interactions with organisations broadly, and their preferred interests and issues. Again, the semi-structured nature of the interview questions and themes provided scope for some nuanced interviewing and responses. This group was asked if they had any involvement with Oaktree and AYCC or with any other organisations. If either were mentioned, further questions were asked about the nature of that engagement, its regularity and its purpose. These semi-structured interviews also incorporated a technology walk-through where interviewees were asked to show me some examples of what they do online, the devices on which they do it and how often they are online.

4.2.2 Focus group

One focus group was conducted with a group of eight Year 12 students at an independent school in inner-Western Sydney. The session was held in the school library meeting room and ran for 30 minutes. The focus group consisted of four females and four males aged 17 to 18 years. None of the focus-group members belonged to either AYCC or Oaktree. I am known to the school administration outside my capacity as a researcher, but did not know the participating students. The school's assistant principal selected students to participate in the focus group based on their willingness and availability. The students were given an overview of the project and then asked a series of questions as set out in Appendix 3. This was a researcher-led, single focus group with semi-structured open-ended questions. The focus-group questions were similar to the semi-structured interview questions and were organised around use of the internet (time and devices), apps used and sites visited, and involvement and engagement practices with community or activist organisations. The purpose of the focus group was to explore the experiences and views of young people with no immediate association with the case study organisations. A focus group enabled a broader cross-section of young people's

responses to be analysed as well as providing an environment in which it was possible for young people to consider their activities in the context of others’.

4.2.3 Social-media analysis

There is now a substantial body of research that focuses on the use of social-media analysis to study youth participation and civic engagement (Boulianne, 2015; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Xenos et al., 2014). Others have examined the role of youth-oriented websites and whether they can create new spaces for civic and political engagement (Coleman, 2007, 2008, 2010). Social media analysis was used to provide contextual research for the project. This is evident in Chapter 5 and the discussion of organisational social media interactions with members. Other studies of organisational influence on young people, including Collin’s (2015) study of youth-led non-government organisations in the Australia and the UK, or Banaji and Buckingham’s (2013) study of European youth-oriented civic websites, have not looked at social media as an increasingly important site for political conversation. Social media increasingly forms an important part of the organisational context in which young people’s political subjectivities develop.

Using the online social-network analysis platforms Twitonomy, Netlytic and SocioViz, an analysis of the Facebook and Twitter posts of Oaktree and AYCC was undertaken between June 2014 and August 2015. These tools were used for their availability and their capacity to capture data, particularly during significant events for the organisations such as protests, annual campaigns such as Oaktree’s Live Below the Line, and the organisations’ responses to the G20 meetings held in Australia in 2015. This context included the different styles of engagement the organisations use for their target audience, which includes members, policymakers and the broadcast media.

4.2.4 Document content and analysis

The 2013–2015 annual reports and strategic plans were provided by Oaktree and AYCC's senior staff and are available from their websites. They detail the organisations' structure and strategic approach to engage members and reach goals. The membership structures and strategic approaches of the organisations are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 on the ways the organisations target members in each of their layers of engagement, and to move them from outer levels of engagement to more engaged practices. Other contextualising documentation included material gathered from fieldwork, such as attendance at protest events held by the organisations, and in some cases material given to the researcher by interviewees. This material was used in Chapter 6 to discuss members' experiences of attending such events. Further material analysed included photographs and screenshots taken during technology walk-throughs with interviewees. These images were drawn upon in Chapters 6 and 7 to detail the applications members and non-members used in their everyday participation practices.

4.2.5 Observation activities

Observation of research participants at various events provided important context for this project. The researcher attended two leadership camps as an observer, one for each organisation. The first event was the leadership 'Bootcamp' held in Melbourne by Oaktree in February 2014. The researcher observed the weekend-long event and developed an understanding of the kinds of activities run by the organisation. The second event was the 'AYCC National Summit 2015' held in Sydney in February. The researcher attended lectures and presentations, and developed an understanding of the information presented to attendees. The researcher also joined a protest march to a major Australian bank as part of AYCC's 'For the Love Of...' campaign, which sought to draw attention to financing of projects that may threaten the Great Barrier Reef. Attendance at this event provided important contextual understanding when speaking to interviewees of their participation in this and similar events.

4.2.6 Research protocol

All participants were provided with a detailed participant information sheet outlining the purpose and aims of the project and participants' rights relating to the research and interviews. Before each interview, participants were required to sign a consent form. Where a participant was aged under 18 a parent/guardian was also required to sign the form. Organisation members, non-members and focus-group participants were compensated for their time with a \$30 iTunes voucher. Interviews were recorded on CallNote Skype Recorder (visual and audio) for Skype calls, while those conducted face-to-face, via FaceTime, or by phone were recorded using QuickTime (audio only). During the interviews, I took written notes. Post-interview, these notes were typed up as a preliminary analysis phase to deepen familiarity with the data. I transcribed the interviews using the application InqScribe, which facilitates loading of digitally recorded interviews and has the ability to alter speech speed to assist manual transcribing. This data was then entered into NVivo. As noted in the subsequent section on data analysis, manual transcription was undertaken to closely examine the data from the beginning of the formal analysis phase. The focus group was recorded using QuickTime player and also transcribed with the assistance of InqScribe and then uploaded to NVivo for analysis.

All participants have been given pseudonyms.

4.2.7 Challenges, limitations and insights from the field

Conducting this research presented access challenges, requiring adjustments to the research design which resulted in a more interesting and insightful project. This project was initially intended as an exploration of the engagement practices of organisations and their members. However, over time it developed into a study of the challenges facing the organisations and their members and the shaping of young people's political participation practices more broadly. Lack of access to the organisations and their members was the catalyst for broadening the scope, and

served to catalyse thinking about youth political participation beyond this spectrum. The changes led to deeper questions about everyday forms of activities and interests and how these, in the digital age, shape political subjectivities. The following section explores the challenges of recruiting participants for this project and consequent adjustments.

Writing about the emotional labour of gaining and maintaining access to the field in their research within the Swedish judicial system, Bergman Blix and Wettergren (2014), break the research process into three distinct phases. While my purpose here is not to focus directly on the researcher's emotions, Bergman Blix and Wettergren's (2014) three-part phasing provides a useful way to order and articulate some of the challenges encountered in this project. In phase one (initial access), they discuss their feelings of uncertainty and how growing familiarity with the Swedish judicial system resulted in self-confident performance of competence and trustworthiness. In phase two (building trust and securing access), Bergman Blix and Wettergren (2014) highlight the process of adaptation, in which their strategic emotion work included 'quick adaptive deep acting' (10), meaning they needed to respond quickly and thoughtfully when opportunities arose. This personal engagement in the field led to experiences of emotive dissonance that the researchers had to manage, particularly when there was a break in access (Bergman Blix & Wettergren, 2014). In phase three (breakthrough), they discussed how official recognition of the project gained them organisationally embedded trust that made them more confident and less vulnerable to difficult participants (Kleinman & Copp, 1993). In the following section, I detail my own research experience, following this three-part framing.

Initial access

The first stage of this research required access to the leaders of Oaktree and AYCC to conduct semi-structured interviews, followed by their facilitation of access to members to conduct further interviews. Access to organisation leaders required

significantly more time and persistence than originally anticipated. The initial approach was through a letter to the heads of the organisations. Both organisations responded positively to the research request and follow-up Skype conversations were held with designated senior staff who provided in-principle support for the project. However, there was also a change in leadership of both Oaktree and AYCC following the initial support agreements. These changes required reinstating and rebuilding relationships with the senior leaders of the organisations to secure participation from the new leadership teams.

Building trust and securing access

Following ethics approval, the organisations were contacted to schedule interviews with leaders. I repeatedly contacted the organisations by email and phone and awaited responses. These organisations are mainly staffed by part-time workers, including volunteers and/or those on a small stipend. This meant their available time was limited. In addition, Oaktree and AYCC have upper age limits on leaders (usually age 26), meaning constant turnover of staff at the organisations. During the fieldwork, relationships were established and built, then some leaders left the organisation. While all were professional in providing details to their colleagues about my research requests, it meant I needed to establish and develop new relationships repeatedly throughout the data collection. These new relationships had to be made when the organisation itself was adjusting to the changes. This also required repeatedly articulating the project's purpose and requirements to new staff.

Breakthrough

The first breakthrough in the research came by emailing the head of one organisation that these delays were causing substantial problems in progressing my research. The individual responded positively to this, served as a gatekeeper for the organisation and immediately facilitated access to senior staff. This accords with Bergman Blix and Wettergren's (2014) finding that permission from a senior person

immediately facilitates access to others in the organisation. The second breakthrough occurred by gaining permission to attend one of the organisation's leadership events. At this event I met the head of the organisation and introduced myself and my research; I then followed up with emails post-event. This immediately resulted in the CEO agreeing to be interviewed and facilitating access to the rest of the senior team.

Despite these breakthroughs at the organisational level, it still proved difficult to recruit members. The first challenge was delays experienced in the organisations' introduction of the research to members as agreed. Emails were eventually sent to approximately 600 members in Western Sydney postcodes at both organisations. These emails resulted in only two member responses expressing interest in being interviewed. In both cases, it was discovered that I was known to the interviewees—one had remembered me as a tutor from a university class two years prior, and the other saw me at a leadership camp as an observer hosted by one of the youth-led organisations. This is a form of official recognition of the research and relates to Bergman Blix and Wettergren's (2014) understanding of the importance of trust for participants and researchers.

4.3 Data analysis

The task of data analysis is to make sense of the raw data under examination by seeking relationships between and within categories of data. It is about bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data. It is the search for general statements about relationships among categories of data...

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016: 205).

To bring order, structure and context to interpret my data, I have undertaken a thematic analysis of the material. However, because I am looking for practices, meanings, and new civic and political norms, the data does not necessarily fit neatly

into neat themes or concepts. My data analysis involved an iterative process of gradually refining recurring patterns into a series of broad themes, informed by the key concepts of organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2007), subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009) and standby citizenship (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Throughout the analysis I also identified examples of the role of affect in the ways young people spoke about events that moved them and the role of this in their actions to try and move others (Massumi, 2011). My aim in analysing this data is not in seeking to generate new theories that may emerge from the data. Rather, my approach is deductive where I aim to test the theories discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, in particular organisational hybridity, subactivism and standby citizenship, and how they might apply to the data.

I used these three concepts to analyse different aspects of the data. The following table provides a visual representation of key concepts and their data applications:

Table 2. Concepts and applications.

	Leaders	Members	Non-members
Organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2007)			
Subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009)			
Standby citizenship (Amnå & Ekman, 2014)			
Affect (Massumi, 2002, 2011; Papacharissi, 2014)			

Using these conceptual tools, I further categorised the data as follows:

Table 3. Conceptual categorisations.

	Organisations	Organisation members	Non-members
Organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action. • Fostering distributed trust across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repertoires employed to activate interest. • Repertoires to collectively mobilise members. 	

	<p>horizontally linked citizen groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusing subcultural and political discourses. • Creating and building upon sedimentary networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repertoires used to communicate with members. • Responses to organisation structures. 	
Subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of subactivism— individual acts with a political and/or ethical frame of reference to manifest activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of subactivism— individual acts with a political and/or ethical frame of reference to manifest activities.
Standby citizenship (Amnå & Ekman, 2014)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing oneself/news-sharing activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing oneself/news-sharing practices.
Affect (Massumi, 2011; Papacharissi, 2014)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples that clearly show young people moved to action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples that clearly show young people moved to action.

Analysis of the data was conducted in stages from initial familiarity with the material through to detailed categorisation. During interviews I took notes highlighting points broadly related to the concepts above. I transcribed the interviews myself as part of the process of actively looking for key themes. I then printed the interviews and read them, looking for practices and themes relating to organisational repertoires, subactivism and standby citizenship, but also developing broad thematic categories as they occurred. I then undertook a further search for broad themes using NVivo, which enabled me to search the data using keywords related to broad themes such as communication practices, organisational practices, affect, and online and offline activities.

To conduct the analysis of Oaktree and AYCC data, I used a combination of NVivo and manual review. To organise the interview data, transcripts of the interviews were entered into NVivo and separated by question so that answers to like questions could be compared and emerging themes relating to the theories identified. NVivo

can manage a large amount of data and enables comparisons between groups. It also assists in systematically identifying patterns of codes, links between codes, and co-occurrences, because of the ability to retrieve data grouped by codes. Using NVivo I searched keyword areas relating to each theory. For example, I looked for a range of possible organisational repertoires such as social-media use, communication practices, boot camps, and protests; I then extracted quotes from these searches. Given the limitations of finding all such examples using keywords, I also examined each interview and categorised the various repertoires according to key topics. These topics are set out in Chapter 5. It is worth noting that software is only an aid to thematic analysis and allows a highly systematic approach that is faithful to the data (Marks & Yardley, 2004). It is essential to understand the meaning of texts, and regardless of the tool used, this requires interpretation of the material.

Chadwick (2007) categorises the repertoires of new activist organisations under four principal conceptual headings:

- Creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action (email, blogs, CRM, fundraising).
- Fostering distributed trust across horizontally linked citizen groups (organised spontaneity, distributed trust).
- Fusing subcultural and political discourses (satirical graphics, audio and video, cartoons).
- Creating and building upon sedimentary networks (Zapatistas and MoveOn—small acts that build networks that are drawn upon to mobilise for action when needed).

Under each of these headings Chadwick (2007) details empirical examples of the diverse repertoires organisations deploy. I use these broad categories to analyse and categorise my data and to identify empirical examples in line with those of Chadwick (2007). In this way I build on his work, using conceptual exploration to cite evidence

of practices. This analytical framework allows me to compare, contrast and explore the broad range of practices of both individual agents and the structures with which they engage. In this way I examine the discursive process that occurs between organisations and members and draw attention to the evolving nature of political engagement and its increasingly fluid and multidimensional nature.

I have also selected concepts that form an important body of work articulating changes to citizenship practices, but which have received less attention: subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009) and standby citizenship (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). In exploring practices, meanings, and new civic and political norms, the concepts of subactivism and standby citizenship have drawn attention to young people's everyday, seemingly mundane practices as important. The ways connections are formed and self-expressive practices are engaged in provide examples of seemingly private activities that can turn into forms of more public engagement.

Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism draws attention to young people's involvement in issues and interests that may take place in everyday, private spaces but have the potential to develop into more public forms of political action. The digital allows for connections that had not been possible. It also emphasises the role of everyday online practices in young people's lives and foregrounds self-expressive practices as important activities that can create and develop networks that serve as spaces of connection and potential bases of mobilisation. The data analysis seeks to identify examples where young people are engaging online and offline in seemingly casual practices, and asking if any of these are examples of subactivism (i.e. small-scale, mostly private acts that are submerged in everyday life but have a political or ethical frame of reference [Bakardjieva, 2009: 96]). Examples of what young people are doing online with these and other organisations can appear playful or trivial but could be indicators of something more significant. Subactivism might seem inconsequential, but Bakardjieva (2009: 96) states there is always the potential for it to be 'mobilized by trigger events and transformed into overt public activism'. I use this concept to analyse the data to look for such examples, where online discussion

manifests as public acts. I show events, issues or interests that begin in the small private sphere but emerge in more public forms.

Like Bakardjieva's (2009), my analysis does not try to quantify particular terms or themes of analysis. The goal of my analysis is to identify 'the various empirical manifestations of subactivism involving the Internet as they presented themselves in respondents' accounts (Bakardjieva, 2009: 98). Bakardjieva articulates a number of dimensions in analysing her data that detail the elements of subactivism at work. I use these dimensions to guide the analysis of my data and identify examples of subactivism. The first characteristic is that the practice is 'very close to home'. That is, the object of the activity is of personal significance to those involved. Second, there is a directly accessible local organisation that becomes the centre of the activity. Third, a remote and anonymous dimension is also present, such as municipal and/or governmental actors as the target of an action, or, for example, a 'dispersed population of potential donors has to be reached and convinced to contribute' (Bakardjieva, 2009: 99). Finally, a strong interpersonal component is also evident. The participants know each other and become involved in a practice or activity.

I also use Amnå and Ekman's (2014) concept of standby citizenship. Standby citizens 'stay alert and keep themselves informed about politics by bringing up political issues in everyday life contexts, and are willing to participate if needed' (Amnå & Ekman, 2014: 262). I use this concept to identify examples of where young people from Western Sydney, not linked to the organisations, inform themselves and share issues of important to themselves with others. Young people increasingly use digital media to inform themselves of issues and share one's thoughts about these issues through largely self-curated networks.

To conduct the analysis of members, I also used NVivo to search for keywords relating to repertoires, as discussed by Chadwick (2007). Chadwick (2007) does not study members' engagement with repertoires, but I see this as an important

extension of the application of his theory. I examine ways in which members' 'engagement with repertoires also shapes and directs the organisations' practices. I approached these interviews from the perspective of exploring how members relate to, respond to and engage with the repertoires employed by the organisations. I analysed the data in the same way for each organisation in terms of exploring the same processes, but developed different key topics.

To conduct the analysis using concepts of standby citizenship and subactivism, I used NVivo to search the data for concepts such as 'news' and 'news-sharing' or 'talk to' or 'talk to my friends'. These are concepts that do not neatly fit into a word search and required detailed examination of the data and then development into categories or examples within categories.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the research design, data-collection methods and analysis, and challenges to the project. In examining young people's participation practices at an organisational and member level, and also those not connected with these organisations, this project design needed to provide direct connection with young people and enable them to articulate what they do and why their practices are meaningful to them. This research employed semi-structured interviews, incorporating technology walk-throughs, to examine organisational engagement, digital practices, and issues and interests. A focus group was conducted to further explore the practices and views of 'community' members. Qualitative social-media analysis, observation and document analysis provided important contextual information. Key concepts of organisational repertoires, affect, subactivism and standby citizenship were used to frame thematic analysis of the data. This research design enables focus on young people's self-expressive practices while also allowing scope for them to express why those engagement practices are meaningful to them.

The central purpose of locating this study within two specific organisational settings has been to study the relationship between the participation strategies of these organisations and the emergent political subjectivities of young people. It has also served to facilitate a deep understanding of current and evolving structures and priorities for activist practices, and provides focus on organisational communication practices with members, decision-makers and the broadcast media. Further, it offers the potential to provide current examples of evolving repertoires of activist organisations from within, the way their practices are affected by and affect the digital environment, and in turn how this plays out in a democratic polity. Finally, while not a central focus of this study, it also offers the opportunity to consider the social entrepreneurial nature of such organisations, and their drivers, impediments and opportunities. In addition, my research design incorporated a layered analysis of organisations, processes and practices of everyday politics and affect by extending the study to members of these organisations and young people not affiliated with them.

The following three chapters present the analysis of the research. In Chapter 5, I examine the official documents and present the data drawn from interviews with leaders of Oaktree and AYCC. In Chapter 6 I analyse the practices and views of Committed members of the organisations, and everyday politically oriented practices outside of these organisations that help to show the breadth of contexts and conditions in which young people's political concerns and interests are shaped. In Chapter 7 I present the analysis of the digital practices of young people in the 'community'—those with no stated affiliation to Oaktree and AYCC—and analyse their activities using frameworks that focus on everyday, less obvious practices that contribute to network formations with the potential to develop into more public acts. Together, these chapters provide insights into the preferred interests and practices of young people and the variety of spaces in which political actions and interests develop.

Chapter 5. Organisations shaping political concerns and actions

Since the early 2000s, youth-led organisations have emerged in Australia that focus on engaging and mobilising young people around issues the organisations see as meaningful to them, including addressing mental health, social justice, global poverty and climate change (Vromen, 2007; Henderson & Tudball, 2016). In the past decade, social media has played a particular role in enabling these organisations to connect with young people across Australia with unprecedented scale and speed, and to develop large memberships and significant resources (Oaktree, 2013; AYCC, 2013). Oaktree and the AYCC are the largest youth-focused advocacy organisations in the Australian political landscape, and have sustained and renewed themselves for more than 10 years, giving them growing legitimacy and recognition. This chapter is concerned with the question of the role these organisations play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions.

Drawing primarily on semi-structured interviews conducted with leaders of Oaktree and AYCC, this chapter examines how they are structured and their engagement strategies directed at young people. Examined in detail are online and offline engagement strategies that are designed to engage and mobilise young people around specific issues. The first of three analytical chapters of this thesis, this chapter draws on Chadwick's (2007) concept of organisational hybridity, detailed in Chapter 2, and his articulation of repertoires—'the organizational form and tactics of an organization' (Chadwick, 2007: 285)—employed by these new organisational types in the digital age.

This chapter begins by laying out key elements of Chadwick's concept to foreground and contextualise the analysis of the repertoires practiced by Oaktree and AYCC. The data is then presented using Chadwick's (2007) articulation of the four principal forms repertoires take. The first section explores the way Oaktree and AYCC combine online/offline practices, the rationales for different repertoires, and the challenges the organisations face to engage with and attract members in an era

where ‘membership’ really means ‘supporters’ (Gauja, 2015). The second section studies how Oaktree and AYCC foster distributed trust within the organisations and across their memberships. The way organisations connect with and leverage youth subcultures and political themes is then discussed, followed by a section on ‘sedimentary networks’. Chadwick (2007) describes sedimentary networks as political organisations with an ‘elaborate, decentralized but influential global network’ (293). While both organisations do this, my interest here is how organisations build influential networks through small, regular acts of engagement and connection with members.

The final section draws on and extends Chadwick’s work, exploring the limitations of web-facilitated engagement. I argue that limitations of digital media are a largely overlooked aspect of organisational practices. Many studies focus on the affordances of information and communication technologies and the nature of organisations and their shape and use, but fail to examine, in turn, how technological constraints shape organisations and their activities.

5.1 Organisational hybridity

some political organizations now simultaneously exhibit quite diverse ways of organizing and mobilizing, mashing together online and offline efforts, combining narrowly channelled actions with looser ones, and crossing national boundaries while organizing town square fundraisers. This renders them “hybrid organizational types”

(Chadwick, 2005: 8).

In developing the concept of organisational hybridity, Chadwick (2007) aims to show the simultaneous and diverse range of organising and communicating, and the both controlled and flexible approaches of many political organisations. Chadwick argues that digitally mediated communications, and the ways these organisations adapt and deploy their affordances, are an increasingly important element of their

practices. He focuses on the new ways digital technology is used for online political action to show how organisations are now hybrid through the adoption of innovative digital-network repertoires. Examples of such innovation include organisations trying to create a 'participatory ethos', in contrast to more top-down styles of traditional media and organisational structures; the blending and blurring of online activities and meeting in physical locations; fundraising through small, numerous online donations; and fostering trust across networks of groups and social movements (Chadwick, 2007). Chadwick argues, through the concept of organisational hybridity, that digital media is making a considerable contribution to the evolution of political engagement. In the context of arguments that collective action is increasingly shaped by digital networks, Chadwick also shows the ongoing role of organisations. Despite the affordances of digital media that enable more spontaneous forms of collective action, there remains a significant ongoing role for organisations, particularly those that combine top-down and distributed forms of organising.

In developing the concept of organisational hybridity, Chadwick (2007) identifies two key trends of politically oriented organisations in the digital age. The first is how established groups are adopting new ways of operating; the second is the development of new organisational types in the digital age. To the first, Chadwick (2007) argues that established interest groups and parties are experiencing processes of hybridisation through selective transplantation and adaptation of digital-network repertoires typical of social-movement mobilisations in the 1990s and early 2000s. Chadwick (2007: 287) categorises these repertoires as:

- Creating, appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action.
- Fostering distributed trust across horizontally linked citizen groups.
- Promoting the fusion of subcultural and political discourses.
- Creating and building upon sedimentary networks.

Here I detail the main elements of these repertoire categories, which I use to analyse the way leaders describe the approaches of Oaktree and AYCC.

Creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action

Organisations use a range of digital practices, and mix online and offline activities, with the aim of engaging their members and articulating their advocacy messages. Social media, email, blogs, instant messaging, tracking software and fundraising applications are all part of their repertoires for maximising reach and engagement. Chadwick notes that convergence also includes the changing nature of membership, reflected in looser membership structures and individuals selecting issues and choosing the ways they want to be involved. Linked to this is the use of customer relationship management (CRM) software to track individuals and their levels of involvement with an organisation or issue. This tracking data is used to target participants to increase engagement and assist organisations to fundraise through a mix of targeted online and offline practices. The implications of these forms and practices of citizen action is that they provide the organisations with useful information about young people's likely preferred engagements, but they also contain inherent limitations in the way activities are based primarily on past practices.

Fostering distributed trust across horizontally linked citizen groups

Hybrid organisations use digital media to draw on the networks they build and nurture to mobilise quickly and effectively on specific issues. These acts appear to be spontaneous, but they are planned and coordinated. Organisations also use the internet to work with other groups on particular issues or campaigns. Distributed trust is practiced in these groups, meaning that the organisations are often less hierarchical than traditional social-movement organisations or political parties, and decision-making is spread across them. The organisations also recognise, however, that 'losing control' is not as problematic as it might seem, allowing debates and discussions to occur in sites beyond the organisation. Campaign politics has used

this tactic effectively, allowing debates to happen online, enabling a candidate, for example, to be strategically distanced from challenging issues, while allowing open debate to flow, and enabling supporters to develop trust and engage with others. The implication of this is that supporters become accustomed to involvement in such debates and organisations need to develop and maintain spaces for this to occur.

Fusing subcultural and political discourses

The mixing of subcultural and political discourses is also practiced by hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). Organisations draw on topical and often humorous events, develop related digital material, and circulate it to draw attention to their campaign and lift their profile. Chadwick notes that these activities are often quickly developed into widely distributed viral campaigns because of the speed and ease with which visual forms such as memes and GIFs can be adapted and disseminated through mobile and online environments. Such digitally mediated expression has evolved with developments in digital media, particularly social media, and this is the focus of considerable current research. For example, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) have studied the increasing personalisation of political mobilisation and digital practices through what they call personal action frames. Shifman (2014) writes about memes as an important aspect of political participation, and Highfield has (2016) argued that memes and selfies are now an integral part of everyday political expression. Relatedly, Papacharissi (2014) attends to the ways subcultural, emotive digital expressions are an important force in political action.

Creating and building upon sedimentary online networks

Chadwick (2007) uses the term 'sedimentary online networks' (293) to illuminate the long-term importance of 'traces of high-profile events'. He is referring here to loose but integrated communication infrastructures that persist over time. This concept derives from his analysis of Mexico's Zapatista uprising and the US-based MoveOn. Using an 'elaborate, decentralized but influential global network' (293)

developed through email and the internet, movements and organisations are able to draw on their 'sedimentary networks' to mobilise and plan events on selected issues. These networks are developed by small acts or repertoires that build up—creating layers of trust—over time, forming a bedrock, or 'sediment' to the networks. When they choose, these organisations tap into and reactivate connections and direct them to selected issues and advocate accordingly. Characteristically, these organisations have no centralised control, but rather independent, interconnected branches. There is no overarching body directing these activated connections; they are called upon as needed. When not needed these connections are there but inactive.

Beyond these four principles, Chadwick (2007) argues that new types of organisation, such as MoveOn, have emerged because the internet offers new capacities for scale and reach. Chadwick argues that organisations such as these are only possible because of the internet:

because the technologies set up complex interactions between the online and offline environment and the organizational flexibility required for fast "repertoire switching" within a single campaign or from one campaign to the next

(Chadwick, 2007: 284).

He describes such groups as hybrid mobilisation movements. He argues that MoveOn at times resembles an interest group, at others a social movement, and sometimes a traditional political party during an election campaign. Such organisational types would be far less effective without the internet, because the communication technologies set up complex interactions between the online and offline environment and this requires rapid "repertoire switching" within a single campaign or from one campaign to the next.

Discussing the analytical challenges of defining organisations as hybrid, Chadwick (2013) later refines his concept by distinguishing between ‘diluted’ and ‘particulate’ hybrid forms. He argues that hybrids can simply be diluted versions of that which came before. This means that political parties and interest groups simply blend their own pre-existing campaign styles with mobilisation repertoires that are usually associated with social-movement organisations. In contrast, particulate hybrids such as MoveOn selectively recombine ‘mobilization repertoires typically associated with political parties, interest groups, and social movement’ (Chadwick, 2013: 18). In this way, Chadwick (2013) argues that particulate hybrids, can be recognised ‘from their lineages’ (14), in that elements of their histories are ‘recombined in new ways’ (14), but they are also genuinely new because of the way they recombine previous practices. This refining of the concepts of organisational hybridity and political organisation helps to assess whether such organisations largely reflect previous political organisations or whether they constitute new organisational forms.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a further concept critical to understanding organisational hybridity is what Chadwick (2013) calls the ‘hybrid media system’. The hybrid media system is:

built upon interactions among older and newer media logics—where logics are defined as technologies, genres, norms, behaviors, and organizational forms ... Actors in this system are articulated by complex and ever-evolving relationships based upon adaption and interdependence and simultaneous concentrations and diffusions of power. Actors create, tap, or steer information flows in ways that suit their goals.

(Chadwick 2013: 4)

This integration of the media system into the concept of hybridity is important, because it highlights the parallel and interactive evolution of political organisations and the media environments (extending beyond the internet) with which they work. This context includes a complex array of actors including media companies, political

parties and organisations, as well as the public, all now able to use the affordances of digital media to steer information across multiple networks. In more recent work, Chadwick (2017) conducts empirical analysis in the context of US election campaigns and examines the role of hybrid media systems. The hybrid media system aims to encompass new trends in political communication and the interplay between old and new media logics. It is fundamentally a theory that examines how power now flows in, through and around government, organisations and broadcast and participatory media (Chadwick, 2013). In this way, he is moving beyond organisations to studying events relating to multiple political actors. The concept of the hybrid media system is significant for my study to the extent that it foregrounds changing power dynamics, but my study remains centred on two youth-led activist organisations, and I therefore focus on Chadwick's concept of hybrid organisations and its framework of repertoire characteristics for my analysis.

Organisational hybridity is presented by Chadwick as a conceptual exploration of new organisational forms that can be made clearer through the illustration of empirical examples (Chadwick, 2007), providing a useful framework for analysing and making sense of the repertoires employed to engage members and promote their advocacy agendas. I now use the concept of organisational hybridity to analyse the approach and practices of Oaktree and AYCC to explain the roles they play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions. I organise the discussion according to the four effect categories of digital repertoires that contribute to organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2007): creating and appealing to increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action, fostering distributed trust across horizontally linked citizen groups; fusing subcultural and political discourses, and creating and building upon sedimentary online networks.

5.2 Repertoires of Australian youth-led activist organisations

Using the concept of hybrid organisations, I now analyse and present data from semi-structured interviews with 13 leaders of two Australian youth-led activist

organisations. These interviews are contextualised by information found in the organisations' respective web presence and social-media activities, their online and offline practices and, specifically, the ways they engage with their members. The interview questions were designed to explore each organisation's development and deployment of diverse repertoires to engage with members and to promote their causes. The material is discussed in relation to Chadwick's four principal categories of hybrid organisation repertoires summarised in Section 5.1. I end by extending Chadwick's discussion, presenting data on the limitations of digital media in relation to member engagement.

5.2.1 Creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action

Oaktree and AYCC both communicate extensively with young people through websites, social media, email and phone calls, and in a multitude of face-to-face meetings, protests, training workshops and conferences. Oaktree, for example, developed and employs a web platform for its annual Live Below the Line fundraising campaign to facilitate 'offline' and community-based actions, while AYCC developed a website to support its 'Fortheloveof' (the Reef) campaign to inform members and encourage them to participate in events such as protests. Their deployment of these multiple strategies responds to the increasing personalisation of political engagement and the relationship between online and offline actions—rather than the differences between them. These strategies reflect Chadwick's description of organisations engaged in 'creating, appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action' (284). In this chapter, I break these strategies down in four identifiable ways, based on key themes that arose in the data analysis: social-media mixing, and leveraging Facebook, do-it-yourself (DIY) organisational platforms and supporter tracking.

Social-media mixing

While social media is a distinct strategy, it has different levels of importance depending on what an organisation is trying to achieve. Evan articulated its

deployment across campaigning, community organising and leadership structures at Oaktree:

in campaigns it [social media] plays a very important role. If you look at community organising, it's essential to build power in local communities, to hold their decision-makers accountable. But to build the leadership structures and communities and relationships, etc. it's very time-intensive, very resource-intensive, it's people-intensive. It's like the opposite of what the debate around clicktivism is, to deepen your engagement but very hard to scale whereas digital campaigning is scalable, very, very easy to scale, but hard to do deep engagement with. The role digital plays is trying to scale our deep engagement, trying to add scalability to deep engagement.

Evan, 20 years, male—Oaktree

Evan made clear that social media is very important in campaigns and for community organising, but less so for building leadership structures and communities and relationships. Evan was particularly interested in the power of social media to scale the deep engagement that he described as so critical to building commitment in local communities. He also referred to the role of social media for strengthening the relationships and accountability between members of their network and their representatives. However, Evan did not see this as straightforward or simple. He acknowledged that it takes time and effort to build and mobilise communities around an issue to be effective.

Social media was presented by Charlotte as a tool to support other activities at AYCC:

for me social media is kind of the addition to what we do on the ground. I think it provides an opportunity for people who aren't yet as engaged as our core volunteers to get involved in what we're doing. So I think it's really powerful for those kind of things. For those volunteering one to three days a week, it's more an addition to what they're already doing on the ground and face-to-face.

Charlotte, 26 years, female—AYCC

In this example, Charlotte spoke of social media as complementary to the ‘on-the-ground’ activities: a means by which to encourage and engage less involved participants. She indicated that the mix of online and offline tools is a critical element of AYCC’s operational logic. They use social media because they understand the way it enables reach and scale. But they see this as the means to engagement with members, not an end in itself. The organisation aims to achieve deep local engagement, supported by broad, loose ties.

Social media is also used to move members and non-members across Oaktree’s levels of engagement, and this is augmented with offline activities:

In terms of what it’s good for: fundraising, building a base of repeat online donors, recruiting, firing our supporters up and arming them with promotion messaging and imagery and getting them to spread campaign for us. There are really great virality and word-of-mouth opportunities with digital and social media specifically, and a really good way of telling the campaign. It’s a great way of building buzz, building a story around who we are and who we’re trying to be, what we’re trying to achieve. That plays a really important role in on-the-ground recruitment. Mobilisation is another one, grassroots organising.

Evan, 20 years, male—Oaktree

Evan spoke about creating a sense of activity and excitement with social media to build interest in face-to-face activities and recruit members. Social media is employed to make initial connections with people and then gradually build those meaningful connections towards deeper engagement. This means involving individual members in more activities and getting them to commit more of their time to the organisation. Potentially, they may take on an official role such as community leader in their local area. Evan also points to the way social media can help tell the ‘story’ of the organisation and the particular strategies they’re using. Significantly, this doesn’t pertain only to the ‘online environment’, but rather is

described by Evan as a key means by which to generate the interest of people in particular places and encourage them to 'act'.

In addition to the use of social media, 'traditional platforms' such as broadcast media are important. Yvette described the way 'legacy media' is also considered in relation to social media and offline strategies:

We still can't discount more traditional platforms; you know, real media. Whenever we want to make a really big splash what we're still pushing for is coverage in traditional media like the Sydney Morning Herald or The Australian, because that still has a huge reach. In campaigning, often having an impact is about the appearance of having an impact. Whoever your target is, and often you're working with people like politicians or banks, or you're trying to have an impact on groups of people who aren't young people, it's still really important to engage with traditional mediums because that's still mainstream media. So getting an article printed in the newspaper definitely is scarier still to banks and people like that than getting a lot of views on a Facebook video. I think a combination of a lot of different things is still necessary.

Yvette, 24 years, female—AYCC

As Yvette's comment demonstrates, the organisations know they need to message in many different ways, to many different audiences, and this is intrinsic to how they operate. Interestingly, Yvette used the term 'real media' when describing legacy media, indicating that these young people believe the media system retains a degree of hierarchy in relation to newer media forms and outlets. This links with Chadwick's (2007) reference to the potency of legacy media in framing issues, such as transnational groups mobilising face-to-face and targeting their actions to 'frame the meaning of the events for the mainstream media' (284). There is recognition here of the huge reach and impact of traditional media, specifically in terms of directing one's message to target groups such as policymakers or banks. They see social media as a soft mobilisation tool. The mixing of media strategies is designed

to influence decision-makers rather than to mobilise and connect with their supporters.

Training in leadership, communication and advocacy skills is central to each organisation's purpose:

It's not that online campaigning isn't really important; it definitely plays a role, but we're all about empowerment and training. There's very limited empowerment and training that can come from online involvement, so we try to shift people quickly from when they get involved online to face-to-face, on-the-ground kind of action, for their benefit and for ours. We try not to encourage a culture of just online engagement, but it's very important for diversity and outreach reasons; it's just not too much of a barrier.

Abigail, 24 years, female—AYCC

Abigail asserted the view that while social media is useful to organise people, on its own it does not serve as an empowerment or training tool. Reflecting the AYCC commitment to fostering leadership, communication and advocacy skills via additional, offline repertoires, part of AYCC's culture is stated here as actively not encouraging online-only engagement. The internet allows AYCC wider reach and to connect with young people directly ('it's just not too much of a barrier'). But Abigail articulates the limits of online connection, particularly in relation to AYCC's goals of empowering and training young people. Abigail recognises that these require face-to-face engagement opportunities and therefore AYCC develops them.

In this way, social media is mixed with other strategies to scale, complement or add value to other activities, but is viewed by these young people as an insufficient engagement tool on its own. Notably, deep engagement is referred to as 'on-the ground' or 'real life':

Fundamentally it's all about driving on-the-ground goals. Change happens in real life, there's no doubt about that. So the goal of digital, whenever we're doing online campaigning, is not for the sake of online campaigning, it's always with the perspective of driving on-the-ground goals and getting people offline. You know, finding online activists, building them up and turning them into offline doers is the perspective we take to the internet.

Evan, 20 years, male—Oaktree

The purpose of online activities, as described by Evan, was to promote offline activities that enable face-to-face connections with young people. Oaktree's efforts are highly coordinated and deliberately targeted to increase offline activity. This suggests that young people leading these organisations see the importance of political organising and strategic actions at a time when digital media is thought to reduce or minimise the need for formal political action.

A leader within the AYCC, Bridget, acknowledged that for some members this online engagement is suitable:

the web in fact it is complementary to our real-world programs. In school and universities and local groups all across the country with major events, we bring people together a lot. We recognise that it is hard to take meaningful participation just through online. There will be some people who are already engaged, you know, they might have a job in this area and it makes sense for them to just engage online with us and not participate more fully.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

But here, Bridget referred to members already part of the activist or environmental space—who would have had a form of deeper, offline engagement elsewhere. Recognising the limits of online engagement, face-to-face events are carefully curated and customised for specific audiences. AYCC runs activities in schools, universities and local groups to connect with members and bring them together to foster and support meaningful participation.

Bridget discussed the limitations of trying to foster meaningful participation through only online spaces. To foster meaningful, transformative engagement AYCC recognises something more is needed:

But the transformational element of being part of AYCC is feeling empowered and being part of something bigger. This comes from working together with your peers and community, so we facilitate that through local groups, we facilitate that through national and state-based events, training camps, specific programs for schools, indigenous young people, etc. It is much easier to organise online and it's much easier to connect with people, because then you have trust and you have a knowledge of who you're talking to. That's where the vibrancy and really using online communications to complement offline relationships comes in.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

The internet does facilitate easier organising. It can be used to quickly connect with large numbers of members. But for these young people, deeper connections that provide meaningful engagement opportunities require face-to-face connection opportunities in their local communities. For Bridget there is a clear distinction between online and offline participation. She seems to suggest a hierarchy of participation with online not being as meaningful or valuable—that being empowered, feeling a part of something, 'being' with your peers is *better*. For Bridget face-to-face connections are how you build trust, and that facilitates easier online organising.

Bridget's firm view is that digital media facilitates organising but is inherently limited to create feelings of connection or belonging. Insofar as it may reflect the broader position of the organisations, it suggests that AYCC recognises the limitations of this aspect of digital media. There is a wider implication here: young people engaged with AYCC grow to expect offline engagement, and to feel empowered and part of something bigger. Bridget believed that offline engagement

enhances trust, conversely making it is easier for AYCC to facilitate connections using digital media. There is a dance of sorts going on here—the mixing of multiple online and offline repertoires that are the central element of the new kinds of political life organisations such as AYCC are creating.

My research shows that digital media assists Oaktree and AYCC to combine both centralised and distributed forms of organising. This is achieved because it makes members feel they have a sense of ownership or are able to make valuable contributions to the organisations. The members interviewed here—leaders of the organisations, who set the culture and expectations—feel a greater sense of belonging and connection and the organisations have greater scope and reach. This connects with Chadwick’s (2007) description of hybrid organisations as those that are able to network widely across different media environments to connect with and mobilise young people across an increasingly broad base.

Leveraging Facebook

Facebook is a powerful and efficient piece of online-organising software, enabling organisations to connect with members, and its extensive use by Oaktree and AYCC warrants specific attention. As Christine put it:

Facebook’s really great for reaching huge numbers of people with lots of different content, so videos, photos, written posts. Young people are on there all the time; basically every Gen Y and Gen X is addicted to social media; they’re on Facebook all the time, so we can get our message out that way.

Christine, 26 years, female—AYCC

The perception of the ‘always-on’ nature of the Facebook audience that Christine refers to is used to effect by AYCC for regular communication with members and potential members. It provides the capacity to reach more people than face-to-face, email or phone communication. According to Christine, AYCC uses Facebook’s ‘addictive’ nature to its advantage, as well as its affordances enabling multiple

content forms—videos, photos, written posts—to connect with as many members as possible and maximise their message effectiveness.

Facebook posts are followed by email messages targeted to those the organisations wish to participate in particular activities:

To get a message [out] then I would say Facebook. Mostly because you can get more content into a post and then following that probably communication email blasts to people on the database who we want to take hard actions.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

Activities by members that are face-to-face or involve fundraising are described by Oliver as ‘hard actions’. Facebook is used as part of a repertoire of tools to engage young people online first, and then to deepen this engagement from digital spaces to attending events and participating in campaigns and fundraising initiatives. Oaktree uses the affordance of Facebook—the ability to write long content—as compared to Twitter, for example—and this is followed up by emails to targeted people that really want to participate in their hard actions. The approach is strategic and carefully planned using affordances of specific platforms, database information and the direct or personal capacities of email. This combining of layers of digital communications—Facebook and email—with ‘hard’ offline actions is an example of the complex online strategies Oaktree employs to engage members and supports.

Fundraising campaigns are central to the work of the organisations and Facebook media is used strategically to connect with members and other key targets as described by Anthony:

For us, social media, take Facebook for example, the role of Facebook in a campaign like Live Below the Line, even some of our petitioning campaigns, is not only to attract people to whatever it is that we’re doing, but also to add legitimacy. ... In very practical terms, for example, our Live Below the Line page has 30,000 likes, someone sees that,

and they realise this isn't just some idea of my friend at school or my friend at university. This has actually got momentum. This is a movement and I want to be part of that. Critical mass if you like. That enforcement, social validation, whatever you want to call it, social media does very well.

Anthony, 25 years, male—Oaktree

Anthony describes how Oaktree's *Live Below the Line* (see: livebelowtheline.com) annual fundraising campaign requires participants to sign up and live on less than \$2 a day for a week and raise funds through sponsors. His view is that Facebook is central to running the campaign and publicising it, but the organisation also knows it is essential to call people, run offline events and provide spaces for participants to meet. Offline action adds legitimacy and meaningful connectedness. This discussion of the role of Facebook in the Live Below the Line campaign, this everyday online media practice, therefore has a role beyond fundraising. The ability to create legitimacy through interest and visible support serve as a way for Oaktree to mobilise and connect with potential new members. Oaktree is purposefully creating appealing forms of online actions using the weight of numbers to add legitimacy and encourage more young people to fundraise.

AYCC leader Abigail emphasises the power of Facebook over email:

[Facebook is] definitely a much more efficient way to communicate with young people than certainly email I think. Calling people is always the best thing, but about halfway through last year when X and I were state coordinating, we just gave up on email because no one ever reads their emails and if they do they don't respond for some reason. There's nothing immediate about emails for young people.

Abigail, 24 years, female—AYCC

Abigail acknowledged the efficiency of Facebook to communicate with young people. It's easier for organisations to reach people. But she also stated that calling people personally is the thing they respond best to. However, it is more time- and resource-

intensive. Her observation about young people not reading emails, or not responding to them, is a useful finding for other organisations wanting to engage young people. Facebook is always on and efficient, while email can sit—but phone calls get members' immediate attention and personal interest.

A key Facebook affordance is the ability to create public and private groups. While the organisations have public Facebook pages, they also have many private groups created according to regions, universities and schools:

We have a lot of private Facebook groups for New South Wales [NSW], and then for each individual group. If we post things in there we get immediate responses and people actually turn up to things. We create all of our events through Facebook events and then we do some extra phone outreach to people. It's our main organising tool. There are a couple of people who don't have Facebook, or don't use it very often, so we do other things as well to make sure those people don't miss out, but it's definitely an effective way to engage with young people.

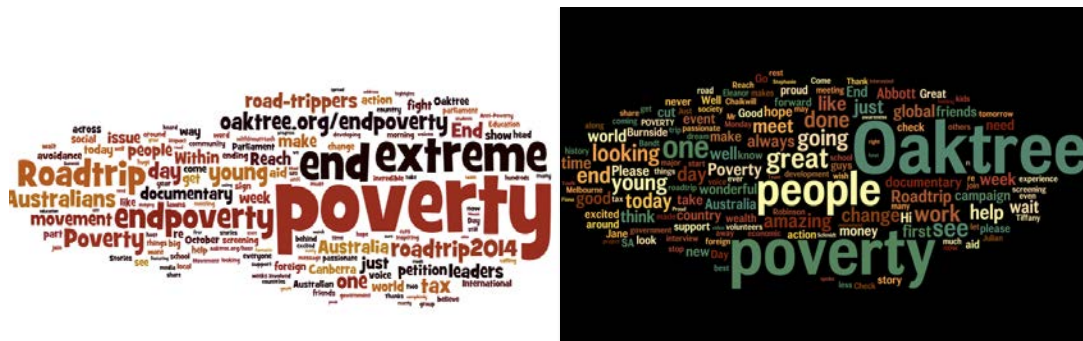
Yvette, 24 years, female—AYCC

AYCC recognises that an important form of connection is with small groups, and so they have created these small groups to give members privacy in their connections and communications and a sense of belonging. Yvette noted the immediacy of response when material is posted on private Facebook groups. She also noted the affordances of Facebook events and AYCC taps into that to create and inform members of their events. But while AYCC uses social media as a tool to reach members, phone outreach is still its main organising tool. Targeting specific audiences in this way results in increased engagement through rapid responses and participation in events.

In trying to understand the differences and interplay between the organisations and individuals, I conducted a preliminary social-media analysis to investigate the different ways in which Oaktree and AYCC use social media, in contrast with

responses and usage by those engaging with their social-media pages—these are presumably and most likely active members of these organisations.

Specifically looking at posts on each organisation’s publicly accessible Facebook page, I examined the language used by the organisations. I contrasted this with the language in response by the members. I used Netlytic (www.netlytic.org) to extract recent posts and then imported the text from those posts into Wordle (www.wordle.com) to highlight the most-used words and phrases for each group. The following (left) presents the text of a small number of Oaktree posts with the comments excluded. This means the text is only that created internally by the organisation. The second image (right) presents the text only from comments in response to the same posts (presumably members):



This example shows that Oaktree used words that are very focused on the cause—with the most prominent words being *poverty*, *extreme poverty*, *end poverty*, *Roadtrip*, and *movement*. The organisation’s language is focused on its *purpose*, expressed in relatively formal and controlled terminology. Its emphasis is on what the organisation does, on its advocacy message about ending poverty, and the activities it runs to promote that message and to engage members—the organisation’s language is a repertoire.

While some member comments are reflective of this, also using words such as *poverty* and *Roadtrip*, and most often the organisation’s name, the member

comments included words such as *friends, dream, wonderful, hope, Hi, amazing*, and people's names. This suggests that while on Facebook and relating to political and ethical issues, they are framing their thoughts and actions in relational, emotional and everyday terms. The focus on people and their relationships, as well as the values and feelings expressed, is in stark contrast to the issue and outcome focus of official posts. Committed and Community members therefore may use platforms like Facebook primarily in order to connect with networks of young people and speak in terms with powerful peer-to-peer qualities that increase affinities that build capacities for further action when they choose.

While Facebook appeared in my fieldwork to be an important platform, there are questions of sustainability of use here. Reports that young people are leaving Facebook (eMarketer, 2017) could mean these organisations will need to find new platforms and reinvest in changes to their bespoke platforms, which are currently designed to integrate with Facebook. Alternatively, if such reports prove incorrect and future generations do take up Facebook, this will provide the organisations with multigenerational reach and wider, potentially more powerful networks.

Bespoke organisational platforms

Oaktree developed its own social-media platforms to maximise engagement with members and supporters, particularly for fundraising. Leveraging the affordances of social-media platforms for their specific purposes is one way Oaktree creates appealing online spaces for young people:

So I think like Live Below the Line is probably the website most people know about in the sense we have over 10,000 [inaudible]. All of the donors that go through that website really connect with and experience the transformational aspect of that campaign. But Facebook is your grassroots peer-to-peer connection hub, especially for our alumni and previous supporters. It's how we ensure that they stay connected through Oaktree Connect and other things we're doing on a more social basis, rather

than formal emails. ... It depends for what purpose we use the different pages and different spaces for different purposes.

Rachel, 24 years, female—Oaktree

As suggested by Rachel, the Live Below the Line platform, used in conjunction with existing platforms such as Facebook, is designed to meet specific organisational objectives. These include functionality that for fundraising events, for example, enables updates on individual or group progress. In the case of Oaktree, this forms part of the organisation's culture of 'taking individuals on a journey'. Rachel described how this platform has practical functions that are entwined with aims of individual transformation across the event. This has multiple purposes: to heighten engagement with members and supporters, giving young people a sense of achievement and development. As Rachel says, this particular strategy for fostering online action is tied up with broader efforts to provide information and build community.

This comment is in contrast with the earlier AYCC statement about digital media not enabling transformative experiences. But Oaktree has specifically designed the LBL campaign and website as a staged process to incorporate an intended transformative element. Using the affordances of digital media in a deliberate strategy, Oaktree is able to craft a fundraising campaign that has the effect of taking young people on a transformative journey.

Anthony also described how Oaktree combines the strategies of bespoke platforms they have developed with established applications such as Facebook:

We do our own social-media platforms. So Live Below the Line itself could meet the definition of a social-media platform. To give you an example, everyone has their own profiles; all the photos and data is pulled from Facebook. You can then create teams—think of it like Facebook groups—and those teams can then raise money together and write blogs together and all those blogs push out to Facebook. So for example, my

partner, she's a [edited] so she's got a team going in her [edited] group at work and they're all checking it constantly, blogging about it through the platform that we've created through Live Below the Line. We've intentionally developed that concept because it all works in with Facebook, but it is probably its own social network.

Anthony, 25 years, male—Oaktree

Developing a purpose-designed website for Live Below the Line, they use data from member Facebook profiles, but with Oaktree's branding and the capacity to group members into teams. Participants can publish these actions and achievements back onto Facebook. Team communications then serve to build connection between members and with Oaktree and with donors to Live Below the Line. This shows how Oaktree is extending use of the internet beyond advocacy to fundraising, using the affordances offered by Facebook. These organisations use digital platforms for fundraising, which is not traditionally associated with social movements. At the same time, they use the platforms to build community—not usually a practice associated with lobby groups.

AYCC also developed a specific website for schools, enabling students to create their own campaigns linked with a school project:

in the school space we've just developed a new website for students to develop their own campaigns and petitions linked with their in-school project or campaign. That's incredibly useful for us to track how they're going in their school and also for them to use as a tool to move decision-makers for whatever they're campaigning on. Our website is pretty important, and not just our national website but our 'Fortheloveof website, as well as the campaign website, is [an] incredibly important space for our fundraising strategy. We are developing a school-centric version of that for our schools website as well, which is going to be really, really important in engaging students with what we're trying to do in the fundraising space and give them an easy platform to fundraise from.

Abigail, 24 years, female—AYCC

Fortheloveof is a campaign focused on protecting the Great Barrier Reef. In Abigail's words, this website enables AYCC to track activity and students to target decision-makers. This initiative is linked to fundraising and tapping into schools for fundraising activities. This school website serves to introduce large groups of potential new members to the organisation. This school-focused approach serves to empower students to campaign and petition on things that matter to them, while enabling AYCC to track and monitor those activities. This provides the organisation with information on likely future actions and interests as well as data on how to engage those students. They are also tapping into schools as a source of fundraising. By developing a website for fundraising in schools, AYCC demonstrates its willingness to maximise the affordances of digital media to maximise engagement and strengthen the organisation.

Supporter tracking

A central element of creating and converging online action is tracking supporters using customer relationship management (CRM) software (Chadwick, 2007: 288). By tracking supporters and knowing their preferences and interests, organisations are informed of the multiple forms of action they need to employ, and the kinds of creating and mixing they need to do to engage supporters. Oaktree and AYCC employ comprehensive tracking tools to record member activity and to target further communication accordingly to increase levels of engagement. Evan succinctly articulated the role of data in member outreach:

Sophisticated data analysis helps us target our grassroots outreach and optimise it. There's advertising and messaging, trying to influence online conversations, build relationships with people online to take them offline. The internet allows us to test things very, very easily.

Evan, 20 years, male—Oaktree

Evan described how data is used to reach members and optimise communications. And the strategy is multidimensional, including advertising, messaging, online

conversions and building relationships to encourage people to participate in offline events. Importantly, messaging can be tested and changed to maximise effects. These affordances, however, also show the complexity and the sophistication required by the organisations to implement these tools and reach members. For example, Bridget discussed how membership databases are used extensively to target messaging and information:

So we have an email CRM basically, which gives us the opportunity to email lots of people and to house our website. It means we can be really tailored, we can modify the sorts of information/action that people can take through our website and then we can also track that. We find social media, particularly Facebook, young people of all ages are on Facebook. There's a whole range of actions that you can take on Facebook. You can share news articles, you can share updates, you can encourage people to take actions and they can in real time comment and connect with their peers. We have event pages, group pages and our organisation profile page as well.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

While these organisations boast memberships in the tens of thousands, Bridget emphasised the importance of targeting members and messages at the individual level on platforms such as Facebook, drawing on the aggregated information they gather over time. This individual targeting aims to move members from the organisations' defined outer layers of engagement to inner ones. Central here is the ability of the organisations to share information with members and enable them to connect with each other. They enable members to participate in online actions 'in real time', facilitated by the affordances of digital media.

The CRM software NationBuilder is a key part of Oaktree and AYCC's tracking and engagement practices. NationBuilder is used to store details of all members and track any actions. These include attending rallies, attendance at induction nights, signing of petitions, and fundraising contributions. This information is then used to target communications to these members with the aim of furthering their

engagement with the organisation. This tracking aligns with Dave Karpf's (2016) description of analytic activism and the relatively recent use of digital data by political campaigners to target their supporters and promote their advocacy message. This strategic activism is facilitated by the affordances of digital technology and possible across organisations with large memberships that produce sufficient data that provides a reliable guide to member preferences.

In addition to tracking member activities, NationBuilder can also manage a website, coordinate social media, and send emails. First used in the 2008 Barack Obama presidential election campaign, it was then commercialised, made publicly available in 2010 and adopted widely by not-for-profit groups, primarily as a fundraising tool (McKelvey & Piebiak, 2016). With costs on a sliding fee scale determined by the size of an entity's database and number of email addresses, (as of 23 August 2016) starting from US\$29 monthly for a database of 5,000 people and 1,000 contactable email addresses (NationBuilder, 2018).

By knowing what their members' interests are, the organisations can also develop further engagement opportunities:

[W]e use a database called NationBuilder, which is where all of our 120,000 members sit: everyone who's ever taken action on an AYCC campaign. Through that and their engagement with AYCC, we make sure we closely track people who want to volunteer, people who go to actions, people who come to volunteer induction nights for example, what petitions they've signed, if they donate and track them on a pathway to being a volunteer.

Christine, 26 years, female—AYCC

Christine makes clear that all members are recorded on NationBuilder and that each action they engage in with the organisation is recorded. She spoke of a visual image: a pathway of engagement, of moving members further and further along the path through each action of engagement—petition-signing, meeting attendance,

donating—with AYCC. NationBuilder enables AYCC to record this path, study its patterns and target communications to specific members. NationBuilder also provides the back-end data that runs Oaktree’s front-end website:

We use NationBuilder. Everything is consolidated into NationBuilder. Our back end, our front end. ... So it runs all of the front-end website that we have all of our back-end data and CRM functions as well as communications, and so we brought NationBuilder in as part of the rebrand with the original intent that it integrates nicely with communications and Facebook. But what I’ve sort of pushed over the last six months is really utilising those CRM functions which are actually designed for community organising and building the right infrastructure ... so having those functions can be very good at supporting outreach in terms of what digital is successful at doing—outreach. You know, I think just about anything can be successful as long as the content is compelling and that it can get out there well enough.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

While Oaktree promotes face-to-face engagement as their central member-relationship practice, they are also heavily reliant on the support of deep digital tracking and analysis of member preferences and engagement. The original intention was simply to use NationBuilder to improve communication tools such as email and Facebook connectivity, because of its data-connection affordances. But Oliver acknowledges going further and using the CRM capabilities to improve and increase Oaktree’s community-organising capacities and maximising reach to members.

The organisations, however, appear to give limited attention to the fact that future messaging and practices are based so heavily on past behaviours, as it is only past behaviours that are recorded. There is limited discussion or scope of member response beyond that which the organisation wants. In this way, the organisation’s use highlights McKelvie and Piebiak’s (2016) concerns regarding the focus on data as a form of political surveillance with consequences for the ways it affects political

participation and engagement. It appears to be taken for granted that this tailoring is implicitly good, and with little recognition of the inherent limitations of such tracking.

NationBuilder is designed as a non-partisan platform, but includes ‘repertoires that influence a campaign’s (and in this case organisation’s) communication’ (McKelvey & Piebiak, 2016: 12). Because NationBuilder tracks a limited number of actions in specified, predetermined areas, it cannot track all participation practices of members, for example, offline discussions between members. In this way, these inbuilt platform affordances are themselves repertoires. Using them is a repertoire and they shape the practices of the organisations. This use of data has been described as a form of ‘thin citizenship’, where a certain kind of political capital effectively takes the place of other forms of feedback by voters or members (Howard, 2006). Campaigns or organisations can ignore but never disable the inbuilt political capital of platforms such as NationBuilder (McKelvey & Piebiak, 2016) meaning understanding such platforms is increasingly important to campaigns and activist organisations, and to those wanting to know how they operate.

Part of tracking activity is to understand the information members open or read:

So NationBuilder and MailChimp can track if you open it, and they’ll track if you click on any of the links. ... [W]e can also measure when you click onto the website, what you click on our website, and how long you stay on that page for, anything until you leave that page, essentially. Opening email—that’s where we get our detail and our segmenting. You didn’t open the email, so we can continue to email you until you open it, or we can count you off as not a participant, because if you’re not opening emails and you haven’t fundraised anything, then you’re not actually a participant.

Erik, 24 years, male—Oaktree

Using the web application MailChimp, Oaktree determines if recipients open emails and/or click on inserted links, providing data on the take-up of the information they send. This information then shapes future emails Oaktree sends. This data is used to determine the success of email as a communication tool, and future messages are shaped in response to this information. It also informs the organisations of who they count as participating, in this case opening emails and/or fundraising, in what could be seen as a fairly thin form of participation. Erik acknowledged that Oaktree will continue to send members email until they have opened it. But the tools also serve to inform their engagement structures—if a member no longer opens material or fundraises, they are categorised as not participating and communications can be discontinued. This data-driven approach highlights the extent to which digital tools shape the organisation's view of members, and can miss the nuances of varying forms of participation. These software tools are blunt in this way; they do allow large-scale analysis, but they are also limited.

Oaktree and AYCC create a diverse range of appealing online actions and astutely and strategically combine these with offline actions, leveraging the two to maximise engagement. Social-media use, development of DIY organisational platforms, and supporter tracking by Oaktree and AYCC shows the complex mix of practices they employ in efforts to maximise member engagement. These also carry with them the labour of constant monitoring of behaviours and actions that guide the organisations' next communications and/or events with members. This continuous and sophisticated deployment and feedback loop requires elaborate organisational structures, and substantial strategic capabilities and resourcing.

5.2.2 Fostering trust

Fostering trust is a key characteristic of hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). For Chadwick, this involves multiple small actions by organisations in the form of constantly positing information about selected issues and regular tracking of members ready to mobilise for their organisation and potentially others. It involves

constantly building relationships of trust between organisational hierarchies and supporters through small actions that can be tapped into when needed. While Chadwick is focused on mobilisations across networks, the importance of trusted and trusting relationships and the constant work required to develop them is evident in Oaktree and AYCC's communication practices and emphasis on meaningful engagement. In these ways they build trust with their members, even those relatively loosely connected, to mobilise on key issues.

An important dimension of developing trust is enabling debate to occur among supporters. This approach gives communities a sense of ownership and genuine involvement on important or contentious issues. Chadwick (2007) discusses open debates in the context of John Kerry's 2004 presidential campaign. The Kerry campaign used digital technologies to manage issues at a centrally controlled, public level and allowed debates to occur organically, with minimal management, in private online forums.

Similarly, Bridget described how AYCC centrally manages social media, while also allowing conversations to take place organically among members:

Each state has their own platform that they manage all of the content through. And local groups, actually, so we have hundreds of local groups that also have their own social media ... Because we're a grassroots movement we want young people to engage their peers. Someone in Byron Bay knows how to do that better than someone in Perth. It's going to be different how they engage. It's going to be different to a group of young professionals or high-school students. We trust that young people will be the best ones to know their peers and to give them pretty free rein over social media and using the AYCC voice.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

There is an emphasis here on young people engaging with their peers. This helps to foster trust among members. The organisation also recognises that there are

important geographic or community dimensions to be leveraged and these can increase trust. So AYCC is increasing trust among members by enabling them to engage with each other as well as fostering its own trust with members. In providing a space of open debate, it is also building and showing trust in members and facilitating the building of trust between members. By enabling members to engage relatively freely in these online spaces, AYCC is also helping to shape members' political concerns and actions.

However, these debates are held in safe, relatively private online space, while more public communications are highly managed and controlled:

But just keep in mind that our central AYCC communications platform and Twitter accounts are managed, essentially, so we're not allowing anything that's discriminatory or anything like that on our social media.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

This shows the ways in which the communications of AYCC are both managed and loose—a key characteristic of hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). While allowing free debate in private community groups, they are also ensuring their public profile is safe and free of inappropriate or potentially damaging material. This too is an element of trust—where members can trust the platform as a safe space of engagement.

Oaktree builds trust with members by providing an organisational space and culture of trial, error and experimentation for young people, especially core members:

I could barely Google when I started this job. Two years ago I was a massive technophobe. I was always kind of curious about the internet and that sort of thing and the beauty of an organisation like Oaktree is it lets people try things. I think you can have a will towards something but not really get an opportunity to really execute on it, but when you're all of a sudden responsible for it, it becomes very sink-or-swim. I

had to do a bunch of upskilling very quickly to be barely able to get my way through it. I think the benefit for the organisation that comes from that is that I come at things from a very different perspective. A lot of the work I've done has been about making it simple and making it really relatable to people and doing it in a way that will actually drive efficiency, rather than designing something because you read the principles on how to design something.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

In this example Oaktree enabled Oliver to both engage in a politically oriented organisation and to shape his political concerns and capacity building actions by enabling him to learn about digital media in a safe and supportive space. In turn, Oliver supported Oaktree by driving efficient connections with members to enhance engagement. By providing this space of experimentation and learning, the organisations are showing their influence and capacity to empower others. Chadwick (2007) does not specifically mention this skill-building for individuals and the organisations, but I argue that it is an important element of hybrid organisations and a good example for other politically oriented organisations wanting to engage better with young people.

5.2.3 Fusing subcultural and political discourses

Oaktree and AYCC tap into cultural and subcultural discourses to promote their advocacy messages. This is characteristic of new organisation types that monitor topical cultural events and personalities and then develop innovative and creative messaging based on these understandings (Chadwick, 2007). For example, AYCC ran a campaign that aligned with Valentine's Day. Titled *Fortheloveof* (the Reef), a series of posters, postcards and social-media material was designed to link with the cultural occasion—Valentine's Day—and young people's perceived affection for the Great Barrier Reef.

Another method of fusing subcultural and political discourses used by these organisations is through access to popular personalities and media to appeal to

members to spread the organisation's message. For example, Anthony told me about how Oaktree tags its campaigns to (social) media influencers popular with young people:

[T]he Doctor from Triple J. ... for many years he was Triple J's radio presenter during the drive hour. ... he's a famous radio personality, got a big following in our target market and a bit of a comedian. So we tweeted him about Live Below the Line and he tweeted back and said he'd do it [publicise the event on his show] now. You wouldn't have that access to someone like him unless it was through Twitter. For us Twitter is not about reaching the masses, it's about reaching very specific individuals or contributing to conversations ... it's not the way to reach out to mass audiences in the same way that Facebook does.

Anthony, 25 years, male—Oaktree

Anthony is referring to Lindsay McAllister M. McDougall—aka 'the Doctor'—who was a DJ on the Australian national youth radio station, Triple J. Prior to joining the station, the Doctor was the lead guitarist with the Australian punk band Frenzal Rhomb. This role meant that while he had a broader reach via the Triple J audience, McDougall also has more than 50,000 followers on Twitter, who most likely have a specific interest in punk rock and alternative music. By contacting the Doctor, and aligning their campaign with a particular subcultural appeal, Oaktree was targeting a very specific audience, with limited time and/or costs incurred.

While Facebook is used broadly to facilitate engagement with members, in this example Oaktree used Twitter to directly contact the Doctor, and therefore connect with a particular subset of young people. Being able to reach the Doctor via Twitter meant Oaktree had access to a popular personality and leveraged it, with the Doctor agreeing to speak further about LBL on radio. This spread the campaign to the organisation's following on Twitter, and members then had the opportunity to personalise this message and share it with their networks. This leveraging and mixing of old and new mediums—radio and social media—with the involvement of a

particularly appealing cultural personality, demonstrated why Oaktree could be considered a new organisational form: adapting digital-network repertoires characteristic of social movements alongside fundraising, advocacy and lobbying characteristic of more traditional organisational forms. AYCC's *Fortheloveof* campaign is designed to tap into similar culturally significant understandings.

Leaders of both Oaktree and AYCC described how their organisations combined humour and popular culture, and leveraged the affordances of specific technologies, to engage members and the wider public. The following innovative approach to Oaktree's annual LBL fundraising campaign used a complex combination of visual and written digital media, linked with a traditional cultural event:

we're constantly putting out things that ... we hope would have some sort of viral element to them with varying degrees of success ... that creates action in other forums. An example of what that looks like: if you type in LBL into Google, the first hit is 'Light Bladder Leakage'. For April Fool's Day we created a graphic that said for the next 40 people who fundraise today we're going to give them a nappy liner, and so they were called Live Below the Liners. ... Junkee wrote an article on some of the best April Fools and we were on it. We did that through Facebook, and that campaign got picked up by someone else and away we went. We weren't at the top, but we were there. So that's one of the ways Facebook is such a powerful platform. ... and of course then we shared that article on Facebook.

Anthony, 25 years, male—Oaktree

Here Anthony described how Oaktree used Google's algorithmic affordances; Facebook's reach, and new-media publisher *Junkee*, all based around a traditional annual event—April Fool's Day. By combining these repertoires the organisation is aiming to maximise its impact and reach and engaging in a form of 'Silly Citizenship' where 'creativity is expended in the cause of political agency' (Hartley, 2010: 241). Oaktree shows a sophisticated understanding of the power of being silly through drawing attention to serious issues. Oaktree identifies the expressed intention of creating a viral element and aiming for widespread sharing of this idea, though

Oaktree is dependent here on the actions of other organisations, in this case the online news outlet, *Junkee*, whose listing of Oaktree's April Fool's Day action as noteworthy is crucial to the success of the idea. It is then that Oaktree is able to leverage its Facebook networks and create maximum coverage of a relatively simple and low-resource idea. Also acknowledged is that such actions have 'varying degrees of success'. There is an element of serendipity here, meaning sometimes subcultural resources are employed resulting in minimal impact, while at other times a small idea can gain significant traction.

These campaign stunts and engagement experiments also contrast with the limitations discussed in relation to data-tracking of members. These examples suggest that AYCC and Oaktree are also willing to experiment and trial things—a risk not usually taken by more traditional advocacy or political organisations. However, by creating new actions such as this, Oaktree and AYCC are expanding the range of possible member engagements and interaction with the broader *community* and therefore expanding the actions tracked by CRM software. This serves to somewhat mitigate the limitations of tracking the same small number of events and interaction forms.

5.2.4 Creating and building upon sedimentary online networks

When Chadwick describes 'sedimentary networks', he is referring to the way networks can be reinforced and also layered upon one another to bolster the range of members who associate and act in alignment with the aims and efforts of the organisation. These exist as loose but integrated communication infrastructures and often, despite the absence of obvious leadership, continue over time (Chadwick, 2007).

Oaktree and AYCC also exhibit aspects of sedimentary networks (Chadwick, 2007). Oaktree and AYCC both create and build sedimentary networks with other organisations. This can take the form of sharing knowledge and resources, including

expertise from organisations such as GetUp!, on how to build and use CRM databases. It can also take the form of partnerships. For example, Oaktree works with community and religious organisations in Cambodia, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea. But I focus here on the way organisations build sedimentary networks—the actions they engage in that build up support among members and supporters.

The following example shows the organisations building support among members and supporters through a number of repertoires—a Roadtrip, an online petition, a documentary film, and hosting screening events. In his interview, Anthony told me about the ‘Roadtrip’:

In our context we ran a petition last year accompanied by the Roadtrip offline. It was an online petition and from that we circulated a short documentary to all those people that had signed it and encouraged them to host viewings of that documentary offline. Those viewings saw tens of thousands of people watch that documentary. The advantage of online is it can give you a lot of scale and a way to communicate with people, but the disadvantage is it doesn't do everything we need. Part of working out how you work those things in together is a key part of forming strategy.

Anthony, 25 years, male—Oaktree

Anthony described how the online petition and circulation of a short film served to build awareness and connection to the organisation and its cause. The online petition, in conjunction with an offline Roadtrip, created a type of sedimentary network as people who previously didn't know one another became connected via the combination of activities. The petition served as a focus point of action, while the Roadtrip aimed to build face-to-face relationships and visibility of participants to the ‘outside world’, creating a solid network for the organisation. The organisation was then able to leverage the networks (via the petition), using them for yet further action (host a documentary viewing), whereby members hosted a viewing and invited people they knew who were not already members of Oaktree. This combination of activities and repertoires (petitioning, informing, sharing, travelling

and meeting) cements Oaktree's networks and strengthens ties between the organisation and its members and between members.

Through these repertoires the organisation recorded tens of thousands of people watching a documentary. This shared viewing built support for the organisation and the issue, but the organisations are also drawing on their existing relationships of trust by being able to call on members to host film screenings. Each act of building trust develops the networks (if done well) and exhibits the trust already present among the organisations' networks. While it is difficult to test or measure the level of trust developed through small, regular actions, activities such as this create the opportunity for more people to screen a film in their home if requested. This acts as a kind of litmus test for the organisation to understand the level of trust developed, while also building future trusted relationships. These campaigns and activities tap into, and forge and sustain, local-level and distributed networks. These networks are evident at times of large-scale mobilisations and gatherings such as their Bootcamps and Roadtrips. These are multi-day, face-to-face events that bring together hundreds of young people at a time and are designed to enhance connections with and between members as well as serving as educational advocacy spaces. While large-scale mobilisations and events are important to these organisations, they are relatively sporadic—which suggests that the micro activities (petitions, sharing quality online content and information) play a particular and important role in how these networks 'sediment' and persist.

Yvette revealed how digital media enables AYCC to develop trust and feelings of belonging with young people, despite geographic challenges:

I think one of the big extra benefits of doing things over the web is it obviously gives you a lot of power to decentralise things, and we have a really decentralised model where you know we try to have young people all over the country and you know the great thing about the internet is you can get all of the information you want online. It also really creates that feeling of solidarity and 'you're not alone'. Maybe you feel like

you're the only person in like, you know, Dubbo doing something on this but then you can see there's people all over the country doing it. When I was at Climate Leaders I was talking to a girl who's grown up in Port Macquarie. She was saying that ... being from country towns they'd never been involved in things like marches because when they were growing up it wasn't a part of their lives. They were separated from what was going on in the big cities. But she'd always felt very connected to social movements because you know even though she might be in a small town where only 10 people turn up to anything, you look online and you'd say, 'well there's 10,000 people in Sydney and 2,000 people in Melbourne'. So it helps people feel like something's happening and [they] stay involved 'cause they don't feel like 'what's the point, I'm on my own'.

Yvette, 24 years, female—AYCC

Yvette suggests in this quote that the decentralised forms of organising and action are enabled by the technology in a practical sense. But more meaningful, perhaps, is that, as Yvette describes it, seeing the sites and people who took part around the country contributes to a strong sense of belonging and connection among members—some of whom live in vastly different geographical and cultural contexts. It also provides the organisations with scope and reach not previously attainable. Interestingly, while 'scale or reach' are often pointed to as the most significant factors in social movements, Yvette suggests it may be a sense of intimacy, as well as a feeling of belonging to part of something bigger—a feeling of solidarity—that contributes to the maintenance of these networks. This reach is geographic, enabling the organisations to connect with young people in regional areas and for those young people to feel connection to others. They build trust with supporters through regular, small actions and leverage that trust to mobilise them for specific events. Through digital media, supporters can see the size and scope of the action that provides a sense of belonging to something bigger than their regional perceptions. The organisations are then able to draw and build on that support to mobilise young people for future actions.

5.3 Hybrid organisations?

Using Chadwick's framework to surface and explain the ways in which Oaktree and AYCC adopt, adapt and work to manage the affordances and challenges of digital media in the context of their overall approach, I argue that they are hybrid organisations. Oaktree and AYCC utilise a broad and expanding range of more-or-less mediated strategies including social media, email, phone calls and face-to-face events. In doing so they adopt approaches associated with more traditional community-building, fundraising and training organisations, while deploying a mix of strategies and tools that reflect Chadwick's concept of hybrid organisations. It is in this way they reflect Chadwick's concept of *hybrid organisations*.

In the context of this digitally mediated environment, leaders of these organisations identified limitations and concerns the organisations have and manage as they work to connect with members, which I detail below. The social and technical limitations of digital media and online organising do not feature in Chadwick's (2007) study. However, my research shows that such limitations significantly affect the organisations. Oaktree and AYCC leaders spoke about the limitations they encounter and innovate around, shaping the ways they implement various strategies. For example, Bridget described how the use of digital media ran against the limits of what she considered to be 'meaningful connectedness' when using online-only engagement:

It has its limitations. You can't have a meaningful interaction with someone physically online; you might be able to watch a video and feel sad or happy, but you can't have a chat with that person unless you meet them. There are limitations to how meaningfully you can be connected to others without some offline extension.

Bridget, 27 years, female—AYCC

Bridget was reflecting on the different dynamics of offline engagement. She implied that meaningful engagement requires physicality—that embodied and shared responses mean something more than digitally mediated engagement. While Bridget

did not specifically define meaningful connection, it is implicit that it is characterised by face-to-face communication. For the organisations, meaningful engagement requires the facilitation of offline interactions. This process takes time and needs to be well-planned, with clear pathways of action and connectedness. She believed that physicality also allows the greater possibility for unplanned interactions and spontaneity. But the organisations also manage their online spaces. Spontaneous and meaningful engagement does happen online, but this might also be limited by their management of the space.

Highlighting the organisations' employment of multiple strategies and the power of personalised connection is an example from Oaktree about a handwritten postcard:

With Live Below the Line ... we had a couple of different tactics, and one was robocall. It's a pre-recorded telephone call, and we got Viv Benjamin [Oaktree CEO] to do it. We also had bulk text messages. We also sent out postcards with handwritten notes on them, essentially with the same message but they were handwritten. We just wrote them out. We paid the most for the robocalls and the least for the postcards, but the postcards were the most effective. The text was the second most (effective) and the second most we paid as well. The less we paid, the better it was.

Erik, 24 years, male—Oaktree

A handwritten postcard to targeted members from the CEO received a better response than more expensive robocalls. In speaking about effectiveness, Erik was referring to responses to participate in the annual Live Below the Line fundraising campaign. Erik argued that the postcard received a better response because it was handwritten by members, meaning young people received a personal, tangible item to which they positively responded by signing up to Live Below the Line. This is a creative and appealing engagement strategy (Chadwick, 2007) for connecting with members and increasing their engagement. Erik is also clear that financial investment does not always result in optimal member engagement.

Building and maintaining membership was seen as an important but key challenge:

when I started this role we really wanted to build a thriving online community. Much of my original mandate of what this role was [was] to do that and to like enable conversations between particularly regional volunteers who want to get involved but they just can't because of geographic differences, because we've always operated in major cities. So that was something I was really keen and passionate to do, but ultimately unless you've got a really naturalistic environment to enable that, so something like Facebook or a really well-populated forum, it's very difficult to start from scratch to build this online community.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

Oliver stated that to build a thriving online community, it is actually necessary to already have access to a sizable offline community. These organisations that invest significant resources into online practices are acutely aware that it is their capabilities and capacities to develop offline networks that is key to their success. In trying to create a thriving online community, Oaktree discovered that they needed to draw on their core strength—their capacity to build strong communities offline. This comment provides further context to the earlier discussion about developing purpose-built platforms to attract members and raise funds. While Oaktree's Live Below the Line site now underpins a highly effective fundraising campaign with significant momentum, it clearly was not activated simply by creating the website, but rather via a sustained and elaborate combination of online and offline repertoires to help generate and then grow the online strength of the campaign.

Oliver was well aware of the challenges involved in building community among supporters, and that online platforms played a key role but were not easy to generate:

The [other] thing is that Oaktree is actually excellent at building offline community. That's what we've always done and the experiences from that don't necessarily translate straight across to an online community. We've slowly realised that we should

be using the technology that's available to us to enable those offline communities to flourish and hopefully start bringing those conversations online. I think initially I somewhat naively came with the approach of 'build it and they will come', but that's not it at all. You actually need roads and pathways there. You need to build relationships with people before you can expect them to be part of something.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

Oliver emphasised there was not a simple online formula for mobilising people and that building relationships: addressing barriers and challenges to engagement offline was also needed. He also described how Oaktree was constantly learning which interactions resonate with members and employing new repertoires in response. The organisations are seeking a commitment from and a relationship with their members. For them, this is meaningful engagement. To maximise meaningful engagement opportunities, they understand the need to blend both online and offline tactics. In this example, the initial task was to 'build a thriving online community' driven by a desire to use the digital to extend the organisation's geographic reach to regional areas, that is, beyond both organisations' traditional metropolitan focus. It was soon discovered, however, that initiating and developing an online forum is very difficult in terms of engaging members and potential members. While the organisation's capacity to build strong offline communities is recognised, the learning is that this doesn't directly—or simply—translate into the ability to build strong online communities.

There is awareness of the technical limitations of digital media and the need for back-up plans in the event the technology fails. This requires the organisations to draw on the strength of their peer-to-peer interactions to implement strategies such as phone trees to mitigate such technical risks:

[I]f a website crashes, not good. So just making sure that you don't rely too heavily on those sites as the only touchpoint. I think what we know time and time again with peer education is that the face-to-face is critical. It's about relationships and it's really

important that it doesn't completely overshadow what it means to be talking with people. We see that with typical campaign tactics of phone trees, that are so much more successful in really engaging people to come along to events. I think it's just another way people can choose to engage. When phone trees are not an option, that's when you point towards the website, but you always want that person-to-person contact to be the first point of call if possible.

Rachel, 24 years, female—Oaktree

Unsurprisingly, leaders of Oaktree, like Rachel, are concerned with the need to manage technology in the event of failure, but this is secondary for them compared to the importance of one-on-one connection, such as phone calls, to build and reinforce relationships to maximise opportunities for meaningful engagement. Highlighted here is the understanding of the importance of person-to-person contact.

Linked to the issues of technical limitations, the organisations are also concerned about privacy and data errors:

Oaktree YL 5: I think the disadvantage is there's a sense of a big risk in lots of ways. One is like having errors in what you're doing, whether it's spelling errors or copy errors or that kind of stuff. With NationBuilder, when we're giving out lists that's mainly volunteers, we're trying to get community leaders and the idea is eventually just community leaders to be able to do that and then you're essentially just giving them complete access to one individual so giving them access to our broader community is...

Interviewer: *Is that a privacy risk?*

Oaktree YL 5: Yeah, privacy risk and a reputation risk, giving them a lot of trust. You balance trust and responsibility. At the moment, it's a very controlled environment, they'll come in, they'll do like a 20-minute training of how to like run through it, and then they'll implement it for half an hour and they won't have access when they leave.

It's just the computers at the office ... One disadvantage is false positives. We had 500 people signed up for community leaders, but 300 of them weren't [actually community leaders]. And that happens all the time.

Rachel, 24 years, female—Oaktree

Database errors have the potential to damage the organisation's reputation as trusted holders of information. Data errors also give the organisation false information, resulting in wasted time and resources. This quote elucidates a number of complex and high-stakes considerations Oaktree grapples with. Firstly, while the organisations are dependent on data to create meaningful engagement opportunities with their members, this also has implications for members in the form of privacy concerns. Secondly, substantial labour is required to maintain databases, and there can be significant complications for organisations when employing data-tracking. For example, errors can result in false positives or members not being contacted. So, while these organisations appear to seamlessly create and mix old and new repertoires—such as personal phone calls supported by sophisticated data tools—this involves significant work with substantial risks for the organisations and their members. Whether or not young people who are 'Committed' or in the 'Crowd' of these organisations are aware of these risks and the extent to which the strategies and limitations of digital repertoires shape their actions will be examined in Chapter 6.

Similarly, the organisations need to invest significant resources to maximise their use of technology:

To be honest we just haven't had the infrastructure for it. So, prior to that we had kind of an antique website, used MailChimp for all of our email blasts—all of that sort of stuff. So when Oaktree underwent a rebrand late last year, we finally had a functioning website that enabled us to capture data and consolidate it. So for us that was really crucial. A lot of the work I've been doing is how do we strengthen that: how do we make sure that back end and the front end integrate really strongly? How can we

collate that data to actually effectively engage young people more than we have historically? Whether that's with our campaigns or our social-media targeting or our communications targeting, that's really where it's coming into its own in the last year or so, having that all sort of consolidated and I guess much more of a focus on it and being a more data-driven organisation. It's been a pretty interesting challenge.

Oliver, 26 years, male—Oaktree

Oliver spoke about the strategic way in which Oaktree used a branding opportunity to also ensure updating of their database and website tools. Oliver understands that smooth, publicly visible communications require seamless, unseen technical support and resourcing. The challenges here are multifaceted in terms of time, organisational literacy, and the ability to manage and use data. These challenges show the complex environment Australian youth-led activist organisations operate in. To employ multiple communication repertoires in a digitally mediated environment, often simultaneously, sophisticated tools and significant training are required.

By understanding the limitations and challenges of digital-media engagement, the organisations diversify and adapt their practices to mobilise members and publicise their policy positions. As this research with both Oaktree and AYCC has demonstrated, both organisations need to exhibit the characteristics of hybrid organisations to grow and survive. They need to have central structures combined with flexible local organising, and they need to build relationships with young people using both online and offline tactics. They need significant labour and resources to do this and manage this work astutely. Applying Chadwick's (2013) later refinement of organisations into diluted and particulate hybrid forms, Oaktree and AYCC, like MoveOn, resemble particulate hybrids. They do not simply blend pre-existing campaign styles, but selectively recombine 'mobilization repertoires typically associated with political parties, interest groups, and social movements' (Chadwick, 2013: 18). That is, while they adapt strategies from political parties, interest groups and social movements, as I have shown, they recombine these in new ways, combining innovative approaches to the deployment of digital media, to

facilitate face-to-face interactions. In this way, they constitute new organisational forms. In Chapter 6 I focus on how the strategies and practices of these hybrid organisations are perceived and experienced by their members.

5.4 Conclusion

The online communication strategies deployed by Oaktree and AYCC are viewed by the leaders I have interviewed as being in service of more traditional, top-down and community-based organising. These leaders describe how the organisations guide and manage online repertoires in what I would call an 'adaptive mode' (so they remain strategic and top-down). This adaptation to the 'everyday' of young people's lives is designed to reach into everyday routines and spaces (Facebook, local settings) and embed particular modes of action in the lives of their members. The use of digital media by Oaktree and AYCC facilitates engagement but does not appear to fundamentally change political organising. Consequently, Oaktree and AYCC therefore blend online and offline practices to build powerful networks of engaged supporters. The organisations demonstrate an instrumental approach to the technological tools and techniques they deploy. This is seen in the ways they discuss social and digital media as enabling the organisations to rapidly reach broader audiences, and to create organisational and fundraising platforms and manage official social-media messaging. But they are clear that meaningful engagement with their members is through face-to-face or personal interactions.

While digital media is now a crucial engagement tool for Oaktree and AYCC, Core members also describe significant limitations. Despite the speed and scope digital media, and specifically social media, offers the organisations, they need to connect with members personally, to introduce and maintain their presence in the everyday lives of young people. In a time of personalised political expression and engagement, the organisations are aware they cannot rely on digital media alone to build or maintain their memberships. Additionally, central to the organisations' purposes are offers to build skills and leadership capacities, and these cannot be facilitated

through online interaction alone. To build skills among their members and provide them with authentic leadership experiences, meaningful and direct participation opportunities are required, and this requires face-to-face connection. Digital media can facilitate this, but it cannot replace it. Oaktree and AYCC leaders also spoke repeatedly about, as central to their purpose, taking young people ‘on a journey’ to provide them with a transformational experience. The organisations aim to make young people feel empowered and ‘part of something bigger’ and this too requires regular face-to-face connection opportunities. Again, digital media is seen as facilitative, but limited in its capacity to foster deepening relationships. In this way, digital media is only part of the way these organisations shape how young people’s political concerns and actions manifest in material ways (in activities and events as well as digital artefacts and code).

The core members of AYCC and Oaktree described how they use the affordances of specific applications to maximise the effect of their messages, depending on whether they are campaigning, fundraising or targeting specific decision-makers. They understand the value and role of different mediums and know how to use particular media capabilities for different tasks—such as using Twitter to connect with key personalities and reaching out to newspapers for coverage when appropriate. This matching of platform capabilities to messaging targets requires sophisticated communication knowledge and skills and the flexibility and capability to rapidly switch and/or combine communication repertoires as characteristic of hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). These skills and strategic deployments not only shape members and their targets, but are a significant learning space for the organisational leaders who manage and implement them.

Chadwick’s (2007) definition of organisational hybridity includes organisations that employ flexible structures and multiple media logics to communicate advocacy messages and engage with key stakeholders. Oaktree and AYCC have sophisticated and highly managed leadership structures, while also employing flexible, community-based opportunities for members. The central leadership teams are top-

down in their approach for many activities, but they also ensure they have processes in place that include significant feedback opportunities and involvement from members. Oaktree and AYCC mix and bend their structures to maximise engagement with members while also using face-to-face opportunities to ensure leaders make personal contact and connections with members. They also employ multiple media logics, blending old and new techniques—broadcast media and social media—to extend their messaging reach and effectiveness. As I have shown, Oaktree and AYCC adapt and recombine advocacy strategies in new ways, combining innovative applications for digital media to facilitate face-to-face interactions. They are particulate hybrids and constitute new organisational forms.

The astute blending of structures and media logics raises question about the ways power flows through and around these organisations. These organisations evidently understand the power of member input, as well as the power of structured and strategic centres to create and control key messages. Oaktree and AYCC understand the power embedded in the capabilities of different media forms, for example in their ability to target particular people. They also demonstrate an astute understanding of political advocacy and finance, for example when they target financial institutions to limit funding for projects with the potential to damage environmentally sensitive areas like the Great Barrier Reef.

Oaktree's and AYCC's use of sophisticated member-tracking software reflects the ways young people's political participation is now measured, assessed and conceptualised. However, tracking software data is shaped by the activities the platform deems important, and practices that are more meaningful for young people may be missed or underestimated. By treating participation as a ladder of always-increasing engagement that can be targeted through a series of collected data or feedback points, the nuances of young people's activity, and why they participate (or don't), are missed. It is therefore necessary to speak with members and participants and ask why they engage in the activities and interests they do and consider how these might shape their future concerns and practices.

The organisations also have to manage a number of technical challenges posed by digital media. The leaders discussed how digital-media platforms and interactions are time-intensive and require significant resources and labour, much of it unseen by members, to be effective engagement tools. Oaktree and AYCC use the affordances of third-party offerings such as Facebook, but they also create their own platforms to work in conjunction with them to maximise their brand reach and connection with members and potential members. The design and implementation of these platforms requires expertise, money and time, and strategic and technical capabilities, to maximise their effectiveness.

These findings raise questions for how these organisations are experienced by their Committed and Community members who are some 'distance' from the decision-making power at the core of these organisations. In Chapter 6 I analyse data drawn from semi-structured interviews with 'crowd' level members of Oaktree and AYCC. I examine how the strategies and practices of these organisations are perceived and experienced by their members. I employ Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism to understand the role Oaktree and AYCC play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions. I also draw on the concept of the networked young citizen (Loader et al., 2014), because it neatly encapsulates a number of evident trends in young people's changing political participation practices. I want to learn why young people engage with these organisations and the affective dimensions of their participation.

Chapter 6. Repertoires and responses: Shaping members and organisations

Ongoing concerns about young people's civic engagements tend to be based on a perceived decline in organised political participation. While research shows that young people are generally less interested in organised political activities (Loader et al., 2014), significant numbers of young people do engage with politically focused organisations. The emergence of youth-led organisations over the past 10 years has seen steady growth in membership of organisations such as Oaktree and AYCC. This chapter is concerned with the question of how young people engage with these organisations and the role these organisations play in shaping young people's political concerns and actions. It examines how members perceive and respond to the engagement strategies the organisations employ, and how they manage the organisations' approaches to engage them.

In Chapter 5 I examined how Oaktree and AYCC deploy a mix of digitally mediated and face-to-face engagement strategies through centrally controlled organising, combined with flexible local groups, to engage and attract members and promote their advocacy initiatives. The organisations have a specific goal to move young people along ever-increasing levels of participation to be regular and active participants with the organisations. These regular and active participants are the organisations' Committed members. In this chapter I focus on the experiences of Committed members of Oaktree and AYCC to address the questions of how the organisations shape young people's political concerns and actions and to examine the relationship and interplay between youth-led organisations and their Committed members.

Using interview data, I examine how these young people came to be members—what activated their interest in these organisations to be engaged with them in the first place? What are the openings that led them to engage with Oaktree and AYCC? What attracted them to the organisations, what actions were meaningful to them

and, where evident, what is the role of affect in their engagements? I build on previous studies that describe and analyse what young people do and why (Vromen, 2003; Harris et al., 2007; Collin, 2008, 2009; Vromen et al., 2016), but focus on *the meanings behind* why these young people came to be involved with these organisations.

I first examine how members experience the communication techniques employed by the organisations and how they respond to them. I ask how the members interpret and understand the organisations' engagement strategies, how they shape the members, and if member responses also play a role in shaping the organisations. Examining members' relationships with these organisations, I consider the range of factors contributing to their different modes of alliance.

Because I am interested in the shaping of young people's political subjectivities, I also look for evidence of Bakardjieva's (2009) subactivism:

a kind of politics that unfolds at the level of subjective experience and is submerged in the flow of everyday life. It is constituted by small-scale, often individual, decisions and actions that have either a political or ethical frame of reference (or both) and are difficult to capture using the traditional tools with which political participation is measured. (92)

In my analysis I specifically look for what Bakardjieva has termed 'frontier situations' and 'trigger events' and how these are mediated by digital media and situated in the 'routines' or everyday lives of these young people. I then reflect on the ways Oaktree and AYCC nurture and shape young people's political concerns and actions.

I also employ the concept of the networked young citizen (Loader et al., 2014) because it neatly encapsulates key dimensions of young people's civic perspectives and practices today. These include being less likely to join political or civic

organisations, a preference for non-hierarchical networks and lifestyle politics and social relations increasingly conducted through social media (see p. 40 for the full quote).

Incorporating young people's diminished interest in political or civic organisations, their attraction to horizontal or non-hierarchical organisations or networks; a focus on individual projects or issues, and the growing use of social media and its affordances for self-curated networks and relationships, the concept of the networked young citizen is a useful analytical device to foreground practical examples where it is evident that these elements are meaningful to young people. Starting from the position that the young people I interview are networked young citizens, I assess if they do meet these criteria and determine and highlight examples where they deviate from this definition.

In studying the role of digital media, I analyse members' responses to Oaktree's and AYCC's communication repertoires. I examine how these contribute to the structuring of the organisations and effectively force the organisations to deploy multiple engagement strategies—social media, email, phone calls, events—to meet the individual preferences of members. These practices raise questions about the power young people have to shape the organisations. The final section of the chapter ends with examples of everyday practices by members outside of their relationships with Oaktree and AYCC. This examination shows the broad range of contexts across which member concerns and actions are shaped.

This chapter presents a complex picture of engagement from just a few members. Young people are strategic as well as tactical and their practices need to be understood from their perspective and the meanings they associate with them. This kind of analysis reveals how these young people are sophisticated in their thinking about political participation and exercise the power they do have astutely and thoughtfully.

6.1 Committed members: Practices and perspectives

In this section I analyse the data taken from interviews with the four members of Oaktree and AYCC. I examine the activities and motivations of these members and particularly the 'backstories' of how their interests and motivations form. In these backstories, I look for the frontier situations and trigger events that are characteristic of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009). Using the concept of the networked young citizen (Loader et al., 2014), I also examine how these young people respond to flexible hierarchies and the role digital media plays in their everyday interactions with the organisations. Finally, throughout I consider the role of affect and how these Committed members *feel* in relation to the networks and groups to which they belong.

I begin by analysing how these members' interest in Oaktree and AYCC was activated.

Activating interest

I met 21-year-old Christopher at his university campus library in May 2015. Christopher's focus was on his third-year business and environment studies and activities with AYCC. Christopher lived in a rural area in central Europe until the age of 14, and this upbringing continued to inspire his environmental activism in Australia. Coming to university, he was actively looking to join a group and explored the activities of organisations such as GetUp! He became part of AYCC through their presence at O-week at his university campus and, compared to other organisations he had briefly engaged with, liked the less hierarchical structure and younger age dynamics of AYCC. He felt very much part of the organisation, and enjoyed the opportunity to participate in protests, fundraising campaigns and activist meetings. Christopher stated he knew around 20–30 people connected with AYCC and was in contact with them approximately once a week.

Christopher went online 'three of four times a day usually', using his phone. He also used his laptop. He had been using an iPad but said it 'hurts my eyes now'. He used Twitter a lot for sharing links and reading blogs on architecture, solar panels, renewable energy and news on climate change. At the time of the interview, Christopher regularly checked the Sustainable Collective blog. The Sustainable Collective blog was a site for bloggers interested in the environment, which hosted blogposts from a variety of bloggers on topics related to sustainability. He liked Twitter for ease of access to material. Related to his studies, he also accessed material on national financial markets. He used Facebook for connecting with AYCC, through a private NSW group page, to keep up with organisation news, participate in online events and keep in touch with others. He also watched funny videos on YouTube.

It depends. Sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less. It's usually three or four times a week just checking links and things ... I still check during essay time—you get tired of doing the same thing—just go on Twitter, read some blogs and things.

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

In an insightful discussion, Christopher explained that his concerns about the environment stem from watching the movie *Forest Warrior* (1996) when he was in his early teens:

They came to our uni. I started talking to them and I was looking for a group before—a group like AYCC to join. I couldn't find any. I always try to protect the environment, but people want to ruin it. I used to watch movies. ... I used to live in the forest ... I love to learn about nature and stuff and spend time in the forest with my dog and I like movies about the environment. ... Texas Ranger. [Googles] ... Chuck Norris. Forest Warrior. It's one of the best movies for kids, for environmentalism. It's really inspirational, saving nature. It teaches you about what you can do to save the forest. You can form a group of friends and do something about it. My interest starts from there. ... There should be more movies like this. Someone's got to finance them as well.

*More environmentalists, rich people, should put their money into these kinds of movies.
Inspire more people to join.*

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

Starring Chuck Norris, *Forest Warrior* tells the story of the main character leading a group of young boys to save a forest being cleared by logging. This is where Christopher's interest in the environment began and how he learnt working with others could protect it. His retelling shows how AYCC catalysed Christopher's personal interest in the environment into political action by coming to his university. In this way, AYCC's presence served as a trigger point for Christopher's interest in the environment and that initiated a form of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009). By presenting in Christopher's environment at a time when he was seeking ways to meaningfully engage with environmental issues, AYCC was able to tap into a deeply held conviction to environmental service and responsibility. AYCC's practices and persistence resulted in a positive response as Christopher joined to exercise his personal commitment to the environment.

I met 17-year-old AYCC member and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) student Eliza at her local council library in May 2015. Born in Australia to parents from the Middle East and Latin America, she lived most of her life in Sydney, and spent two years between the ages of 5 and 7 living in Palestine. She worked part-time at a fast-food restaurant, completing a customer-service traineeship. Eliza joined AYCC when she attended a multi-school workshop on renewable energy that triggered her interest in environmental advocacy. She provided her email to AYCC on its website and the organisation contacted her.

Eliza went online a lot, accessing the internet using a laptop and an iPad, but mostly school computers. She only used her phone to call and text people. Eliza's most-used sites were Google and YouTube. She didn't use social media but had a Gmail account. Her reason for not having social media was that she didn't 'want to be part of slacktivism'. She believed the screen creates a barrier between people and that real

connection occurs offline. She mainly used the internet for researching assignments, and viewing music videos and things people send her.

Highlighting the importance of personal connections, Eliza said she knew a lot of AYCC people, but had a particularly deep connection with one member because they attended the same school and had a shared passion for the environment:

I know a lot personally, but I think one that I really talk with because we go to the same school and we're quite close friends. We're both really passionate about the environment.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

AYCC involvement for Eliza came about through a schools workshop on renewable energy. Following the workshop Eliza submitted her email address to the AYCC website who then contacted her directly:

So we went on an excursion. I had no idea what it was about, and it just ended up being a schools workshop at one school. There were many schools that went. I think it was about renewable energy. ... Ever since then I really felt invigorated about the environment. So I put my email on their website and they came back to me.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza spoke of feeling invigorated by the event. These positive feelings contributed to her joining the organisation. AYCC understands the need to go to a range of sites where young people study, live, socialise and play. In these sites they encourage membership by sharing knowledge about their concerns for their environment and tapping into or triggering interests. AYCC's physical presence is then followed by facilitating access to young people through their website, social media, and phone and email contact. In each of the four members' contexts, both organisations rapidly and personally responded to any interest expressed by young people. A strong and

consistent presence in spaces where young people are present is needed, as well as following up connections for future relationship-building.

I met 21-year-old AYCC member Georgie, in a study room at her university in September 2015. She was on a scholarship and was focused on cultural and social-analysis studies. She was born in Sydney and her parents in Ireland and Australia. She did some part-time work for her university. Beyond her studies, skateboarding was her main interest, and she facilitated gatherings and competitions in her local council area, successfully seeking financial assistance for competition prizes through her university. Georgie joined AYCC during O-week at university and was strongly involved initially, but less so at the time of the interview. Georgie knew a lot of members but had a limited number as Facebook friends. She estimated she was in contact with members monthly:

I know lots personally. I guess the amount I have on Facebook is probably 14 or 15. I haven't been in contact with any of them much, really. I maybe [am in] contact with them once a month on average this year with an AYCC person.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie went online at public wi-fi spots, such as those at university libraries, and at home, to access readings for university, check email, contact friends and teachers, and watch videos. She estimated she did this three to four hours per day. Access was mainly on her iPad for the university blackboard site, university mail, YouTube and Facebook. Aiming to go to Japan the following year, she read a lot of Japanese news articles and watched videos about skateboarding in Japan. She used the AYCC university Facebook page she helped establish to communicate with other university students and the broader AYCC network.

By the time I interviewed her, Georgie's involvement with AYCC had changed, from a strong involvement (around two hours a week) in the previous year to a few minutes a week. She said the change was due to her personal dislike of the current campaign,

which she perceived as ineffective and lacking fun. A key AYCC leader had also changed roles and another was overseas, reducing her motivation to be involved.

Georgie discussed the ways AYCC intervenes in young people's personal networks to open engagement opportunities:

My friend set up the group. She was the first person who I found out about it through. She was really encouraging me to join and it was my first year at uni and so I wanted to meet new people. Climate change especially is interesting to me because I was involved in an environment group back in high school. I thought it'd be a good follow-on. Once I told [my friend] I was put on their mailing list and started getting more calls about different events. I would first only really go to stuff that [my friend] was going to but then as I started to make more friends in the group I started going to things.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie became involved with her university AYCC group in her first year because a university friend introduced her to the organisation. It is AYCC's presence that opened up engagement or frontier opportunities. Georgie then met new people through the organisation and further developed her interest in climate change, which had started in secondary school. As Georgie's networks expanded, she attended more events, further extending her networks, and broadened and deepened her connection to the organisation. Georgie's experience exemplifies the importance of multiple engagement tools used by AYCC. After she expressed her interest to a friend, she was put on a mailing list, received phone calls and was invited to events. AYCC local groups serve as a strategic way to create and build sedimentary networks (Chadwick, 2007) that successfully enable young people to connect with the organisation and build relationships over time. From an individual's perspective, AYCC's multiple communication techniques—emails, calls, invitations—work together to encourage people to join the organisation and deepen their engagement.

Georgie's comment on the power of personal connections shows their importance in motivating members to engage:

X, she was a strong push in my involvement last year, but she's not working in that same role anymore and so I'm not as motivated, and also Y's overseas at the moment, well just came back, and so I lost a bit of motivation there.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie's comment is an example of how small changes to personal networks can quickly result in declining member engagement and motivation. AYCC has minimal control over these changes and it is difficult to track the reasons for such behaviours through CRM tools. Such examples mean the organisations need to constantly develop broad networks among members to maintain engagement.

I met 20-year-old Oaktree member Amy in her university library in September 2015. Amy was born in Liverpool, Sydney, although both her parents were born in Laos. Amy's main focus was on her physiotherapy studies. She also worked part-time at the university's Contact Service Centre and as a promoter for World Vision on weekends. Amy became involved with Oaktree when she saw a Roadtrip advertised a year prior to our discussion. Describing herself as a 'conference junkie', she felt the need to be part of something and to meet people. She had a sense of wanting to 'make a difference' and believes that to be effective, this is best done with others. Notably active with large events run by the organisation, Amy stated she knew 40 or 50 Oaktree members from across Australia by name.

Speaking of her internet use she said, 'I pretty much go on the internet at every point of my life'. This was mainly via her phone, and she therefore had access anywhere, though predominantly she said she used the internet at university and home.

Amy spoke about how she became involved with Oaktree through the annual Roadtrip, which in 2014 was designed to bring young people together to raise awareness of global poverty to coincide with the Australian-hosted G20 summit:

The first time I was actually involved with Oaktree was the Roadtrip last year [2014]. Fairly recently. I have this passion for conferences because they make you feel. I feel like the best of me comes out in conferences. You get this conference high. I wish I could be that person all the time.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Information about the Roadtrip was communicated to members through the Oaktree website, social media, emails and phone calls. Young people from around Australia took buses to Canberra, stopping at communities along the way and speaking with people about the issue of extreme poverty. Amy attended because she loves conferences, and by this she means large group events; she had also attended Oaktree's Bootcamp event. For Amy, it is about a feeling: 'a conference high'. Participating in these group events is a form of identity expression and creation and wanting to 'be that person all the time'. Her reflections show the importance of the face-to-face engagement opportunities Oaktree provides for young people, which serve to trigger their interest and participation. Events such as a Roadtrip enable Amy to participate in something that satisfies her need to connect with others in a group environment. This is driven by the way she feels about face-to-face connection. Oaktree is tapping into her feeling of the need for personal connection and providing a space for it. Providing Amy with a space to express and develop her identity shapes her political concerns and actions. As was similarly highlighted by organisation staff in Chapter 5, members I spoke with also emphasise that face-to-face events are important. Young people need spaces to network with peers and exercise self-expression.

Engagement and action

The previous section shows how diverse engagement tools, including website material, social media, emails, phone calls and face-to-face events were deployed in a co-ordinated manner to trigger personal interest and engagement for the members I spoke with. As discussed in Chapter 5, Oaktree and AYCC engagement strategies also include fundraising activities, protests, leadership summits, campus events, school events and meetings with local MPs. Interviewees themselves described the strategies employed by Oaktree and AYCC that connect with and attract young people, providing insight into how these Committed members experience them. In this section, I analyse forms of member engagement with Oaktree and AYCC and ask how these are meaningful to members.

For instance, Georgie spoke of the opportunities available to members to expand networks through AYCC's meetings and social activities:

[W]e had one small event at the X campus, end of last semester and there might be a schools summit in August that they've mentioned, but I haven't heard much about that. That will be like a two- or three-day event at a school, and I might be able to help out for one of those days, so that's working with high-school students. I did that last year as well.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Here Georgie is involved with university-based events and helping with school activities. Participating in these ways means she is building her own networks as well as assisting AYCC to build its networks. By working with others and supporting AYCC, she is also developing her political concerns and actions and strengthening her organising skills.

Further events show the diversity of her participation and involvement:

All the things that I mentioned to you before... leadership summit, the City to Surf and various petitioning events in the city—on campus also we'd have meetings on campus maybe once or twice a month. We met with the local MP and also I spoke about my AYCC experiences at various things at uni.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie reinforces discussion in Chapter 5 about the breadth and number of face-to-face opportunities available to members, and mentions others such as meeting local members of parliament. These events serve as frontier opportunities, or openings, for further involvement for both Georgie and other members. Events such as attending the City to Surf are social gatherings, but they also trigger public political engagement.

Georgie also spoke about mixed forms of public and more private activities:

On [current-affairs program] I was asked to be interviewed there, so I spoke about it [her involvement with AYCC] on there. And so I have [also] met up with AYCC members more informally. We've had a few different things, they've been kind of social and kind of AYCC-related, like we watched climate-change movies at one person's house last year and that was meant to happen again this year but it didn't.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

These diverse activities—university and school events, leadership summits and activism at a local fun run, gathering petition signatures, direct connections with politicians, and television appearances—provide Georgie with multiple engagement and skill-building opportunities. These include networking with peers, leadership formation, knowledge of political tactics such as petitioning, direct access to decision-makers and public communication openings. These are sophisticated and educational experiences Georgie is able to participate in and learn from. Ultimately they build an engaged and highly capable citizenry.

Similarly, the annual Oaktree Bootcamp aims to provide members with campaign knowledge through exposure to experienced advocates from Oaktree and other advocacy organisations. It is a face-to-face event with hundreds of members planning actions in local communities. The camp includes workshops on community organising, communications and one-on-one conversations. The July 2015 event encouraged participants to take ‘powerful action’ on global poverty. Oaktree led people to make hundreds of calls, tweets, Facebook posts, emails and letters, as well as incorporating fun acts such as lip-sync battles. Oaktree asked leaders to ‘believe in something bold’, expressing the idea that everyday people, when working together, have the capacity to change their communities. This event aimed to provide members with a sense of community. Members then used the internet to maintain the networks created from this event. This mix of actions is important as both organisations leverage digital media to maximise engagement.

Amy spoke enthusiastically of her Bootcamp experience:

It was fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. I had such a good time. I always learn something new from these things. It's really great. You know the environments campaign that's on right now. Just making posts as well. There's power in numbers. If one person posts about it doesn't really matter, but if a thousand, a million people engage with that post, then I feel like I'm one small stepping stone with this collective that's making this difference, so it's quite empowering in that way.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Bootcamp provides Amy with learning opportunities as well as supporting her understanding of group action and subsequent social-media engagement. Attending large events gives her a sense of belonging to something bigger than herself, and she feels empowered to make a difference on issues she cares about with others. There are frontier (Bakardjieva, 2009) opportunities here for Amy as an individual, such as attending the Bootcamp, and collectively, insofar as collective action further encourages her participation.

Beyond Bootcamp, Amy is able to maintain her networks, largely through social media:

Otherwise I engage just communicating, keeping connected with the actual community as well and keeping connected with networks that I've made when I've gone to these events, so it's not like I've met you and you're gone. You're still there and even though I may not talk to some of these people regularly, if I need to contact the person in the future, for any sort of business, or just if we want to catch up because you're a great person, it's really easy to do.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Evident here is the importance and power of networks for Amy (Loader et al., 2014). She speaks of meeting other people from across the network and being able to maintain these new connections. She understands the importance of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) and by keeping in touch with other young people she meets at Bootcamp she can tap into the broader networks of members at a time of her choosing through digital networks that facilitate ease of connection. Through Bootcamp and its smaller multiple built-in activities and opportunities—leadership education, advocacy education, knowledge of community organising—Oaktree provides a space of network formation and knowledge that empowers her as an informed and connected political subject.

Oaktree's action groups in each state enable members to contribute to the development of new concepts and actively participate in decision-making aspects of the organisation, such as how the organisation is structured in local communities. For instance, Amy spoke positively of the way her feedback and input in focus groups had been taken on-board by Oaktree:

they were developing the new concept of a community leader. ... I went to a few focus groups that actually helped the old team sort of restructure and get more feedback on

what would help engage people more. It was like I was engaging by giving them my perspective on what would help people engage more with Oaktree, and so we developed this community leader idea. I kind of dropped back from Oaktree for a few months and then went back to Bootcamp and went 'wow they've really taken all this info on board'. I think the whole concept of community leaders is really great because it empowers people and I think that's really important. If you want to keep people in an organisation you want them to feel like they are part of it and it's not just about the people at the top, every single person counts.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy spoke with enthusiasm about the way her perspective served as a legitimate means of participation with the organisation. This was clearly meaningful to her. Her perspective was not only listened to, but later implemented. The concept of community leaders—of enabling young people in their local communities to have an Oaktree leadership role—is further meaningful for Amy because she recognised that such forms of engagement provide members with a feeling of empowerment. The role also enables members to learn about leadership and develop skills. This structuring shows that Oaktree understands the need to foster structures that are appealing to young people, in line with Loader, Vromen and Xenos' (2014) understanding of networked young citizens and young people's expressed preference for non-hierarchical organisations.

In Chapter 5 I discussed how Oaktree and AYCC use CRM software to track member activity. My interviews with members show they are aware that organisations track their activities and also of how they use this data to directly target communications:

Everyone who has ever volunteered with Oaktree or been to one of the events or supported our campaigns, they all go into this database and this data. ... it's really great because this is the people most likely to engage again. So they're targeting. It's really cool they're targeting the people, like I said, the most likely to attend one of their events.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy is enthusiastic about Oaktree's data-gathering practices and the proactive approach the organisation takes to knowing their members. She argued that it builds membership and heightens engagement. The visibility of these practices to the members I spoke with also serves to educate young people about how to engage others in advocacy and leadership organisations and to develop skillsets that enable them to use and maximise the affordances offered by platforms such as NationBuilder. Amy also recognises that engagement builds upon engagement as the organisations deliberately target those most likely to participate in future. This form of targeting opens important trigger opportunities for members as the organisations facilitate movement from one level of engagement to the next. It can be viewed a form of 'curation'; trigger events are often deliberately 'staged' by the organisations who intend to tap into the latent or simmering interests of young people.

Members engage in a range of fundraising activities organised by Oaktree and AYCC. Evident in Christopher's response is the effect of fundraising activities that have been strategically developed to have individual and group engagement opportunities:

I'm cutting out wheat, sweets, alcohol and ... I forget. Meat, that's the other one.... I haven't raised any money yet, but I'm mostly doing this for myself because I'm trying to get healthier. We've got a profile here, then people give you money. Six thousand raised in three or four weeks since it started. The challenge started just two days ago and \$6,000 already. We've got a group photo for our challenge for our diet. We've got a diet. A group called Gaia Force. One of the leaders called me on the phone to join it..

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

Christopher spoke about a fundraising challenge diet requiring participants to source sponsors and stop eating sugar, alcohol, wheat and/or meat. The group organised via a website and participants tracked their progress in adhering to the diet and fundraising. Christopher said that this activity helped him to meet a

personal goal of trying get healthier as he participated in the challenge. Christopher said an AYCC leader phoned to ask him to participate in the challenge. Evident in this example are the different ways AYCC encourages young people to engage with them—the activity itself, the direct invitation to participate by phone, and a website that helps participants keep track of their progress and contributions. This activity also taps into personal interest through a fun challenge and activates a form of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009), where participants engage in an everyday practice that, in this case, has both a political and ethical dimension—raising money for a politically oriented organisation while cutting out unhealthy foods. These activities serve to shape political subjectivities through group connection and engagement with AYCC, as well as focusing on issues of health and wellbeing. And it is digital media, through AYCC websites and connections, that is used to facilitate these engagements.

Protests are an important part of member engagement. Christopher attended his first AYCC protest in 2013, before joining the group as a member. He described protests as fun and a good time:

The first protest that I went to before was in 2013 when I joined. ... That's the first protest I went to ... It was pretty fun. There was a live band playing there and we were just mucking around ... [A protest is] heaps of fun. People playing rock music and singing. Meet new people and stuff. We were doing some things across the city like chalking and putting stickers up. Actually I do it a couple of times a week now. I've got a few placards in my bag. I can give you some.

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

Christopher spoke of live music and creating and distributing AYCC's advocacy message through his physical presence, chalking and distribution of stickers and placards. These activities are both organised and structured, but also allow for individual expression in the form of musical performance and art. This mix of structure and personalised expression provide engagement opportunities that

shape political concerns and actions. The sociality with others provides networking opportunities that deepen engagement with both the organisation and peers. Digital media can later be used to facilitate ongoing connections.

In another protest example, Christopher describes an interaction with a security guard in relation to drawing murals as part of a protest:

They were doing like murals in the city. The bank security guards came and they said, you can't draw on the street. We just told them it's public property, you can't move us away from it. They guy called a bunch of other security guards and they talked on the phone and he just moved away from me ... You can just tell them. He called the council about this and he talked to the council about 30 minutes about this mural and the council said, that's okay, you've got a licence for drawing things on the path. So we've got a busking licence. You can draw stuff and no one can do anything about it.

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

Protests both engage members and teach skills such as how to interact with authority figures about citizens' rights and responsibilities. The group informed the security guard they were acting on public property and had permission to do so (in front of a targeted bank). This example provides members with direct engagement in political protest while showing young people how a creative tool such as a busking licence can be extended to enable a form of fun and peaceful civic action. AYCC demonstrated its astute knowledge of civic rules and possible practices, in turn shaping Christopher's knowledge of such permissions and giving him a sense of empowerment in the face of authority.

Door-knocking in targeted electorates is not something Amy has been directly involved with, but she described it as fun and clearly enjoys the 'game' and strategy aspects of this approach:

I haven't been personally involved myself, but I know that this year, after Bootcamp, they've been door-knocking as well so every week. There's weekly meetings. They plan which areas, electorates. They plan which electorates they are going to target, who they are going to target. It feels like a huge game really. It's a huge like game of strategy and it's really fun.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy's knowledge of and enthusiasm for door-knocking in electorates illuminates the importance of fun activities in encouraging meaningful political engagement, but also the educational aspects of such tactics for members. These include planning where to knock, which means learning to understand different electorates and their relative importance in the political terrain and, therefore, why to target some electorates over others. Weekly organising meetings serve as a space of sophisticated and strategic political education for participants. They also build networks of relationship between members and organisation leaders.

Making a difference and belonging

Interviews also revealed how some activities, however, are unsuccessful:

I think it's simply time. The reason people come to like things like Bootcamp is they feel there's a great sense of purpose in that, whereas social events [are] sort of a lot less of a priority. It's funny because we try and engage in social events so that people come more to the events that I guess are really making an impact, but it's like people don't really don't care about social events that much. If you market it as a 'hey come and volunteer', people are more than happy to come, which I find really interesting.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy stated that if an event is advertised as an opportunity to come and help then people attend, while social events haven't been very successful in attracting people. When questioned about this, her response is related to having a sense of purpose. The 'social' and 'fun' elements of these forms of action are not a means to get people

to engage, they are what makes it enjoyable—but it is the doing or change-making that is meaningful to young people. Amy’s comment emphasises the way her participation with Oaktree is reinforced through the actions of those she connects with. The acts of others who attend events where there is an opportunity to help make a difference serve to support Amy’s involvement.

Christopher is very clear about wanting to actively make a difference through his participation in protests:

Joined the protests. First there’s supposed to be six ports and we protested in Hyde Park, you saw the picture, then the minister said there’s gonna be four ports after that, so we’re like: okay, we did something. I was like ‘we’re making some changes’.

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

Christopher spoke about his participation in protests having a tangible impact on the ‘Fortheloveof’ campaign that sought to reduce licenses being issued for a number of ports in Queensland that had the potential to damage the Great Barrier Reef. The successful outcome of reducing the number of port licenses is deeply meaningful to Christopher because he feels he made a tangible change through his participation. This visible result is an important motivator for him. For Christopher, success in one protest can be seen as a trigger event for his involvement in future protests and ongoing engagement with AYCC. His sense of affect (Papacharissi, 2014)—his positive feelings about his actions—fuel his involvement and participation. Trigger events are designed to ‘affect’ members: their sense of excitement, importance, and belonging to the organisations. They move young people to get involved and/or increase their involvement.

Recognition that her participation with AYCC made a difference clearly mattered to Georgie:

Last year there was a campaign that was about getting Westpac to say they wouldn't support coal ports on the Great Barrier Reef. I was involved in that campaign through the City to Surf. We had a meeting at the end of that campaign where they revealed it was really, really successful. ... It was revealed in that meeting that when we did the City to Surf thing to target Westpac and get them scared that they're doing something wrong against the environment. [AYCC leader] said she met a friend at a party and she was wearing the Nemo hat and someone recognised her and said, 'you were one of the people at City to Surf, well, I work at Westpac and you were a real media pain in the butt for us'. We found out at that meeting that AYCC was currently the leading youth climate movement in Australia and recognised internationally and they'd somehow found out that we were the organisation that other people were looking to.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie attended a meeting where AYCC leaders discussed the success of targeting a bank as part of the campaign to protect the Great Barrier Reef. The bank's response to the actions of AYCC and its members was a significant achievement for Georgie and evidence of her ability to make an individual difference through joint effort. It was meaningful to her. It is also significant that a subcultural reference (Chadwick, 2007)—the Nemo hat—was the catalyst for the discussion regarding Westpac's response to the campaign. The hat worn by an AYCC leader served as a trigger to open a conversation. This recognisable symbol of the movie character Nemo—as a representation of ocean life—served as a strategic communication tool and network connector.

Others felt they made a difference through their presence at Roadtrip and Bootcamp events:

Just attending those events, so Roadtrip and Bootcamp ... for example, Roadtrip we did get quite a few responses from MPs and that's very empowering and we're kind of like YES and all just screaming at the camp, getting one step closer, even though they still can't fix the Budget. But you know, it is one step, one push putting more pressure on

the government to eventually make those changes in the future, even if it does take years.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Contact made with politicians, and their responses, during events such as the Roadtrip made Amy feel she was making a positive contribution to Oaktree's campaign to fight global poverty. Amy was also realistic about the political process. She spoke about it in terms of small steps, of incremental change. She understood that change takes time, but that her part in it is important and meaningful.

Amy also spoke about her engagement with Oaktree as making a difference at both a formal policy level and at an individual level:

On an individual level, just supporting people emotionally as well, because these camps, you get so close and it does become quite turbulent in a way, like emotional, and just supporting people on an individual basis as well, not just in the grand scheme of things. I guess I can spot not just Oaktree members, but I feel like ... I know it sounds weird, but a lot of younger people have actually told me about us really inspiring them to go on and ... I think that's really touching for me to hear from younger people and, wow, that's crazy, I actually made an impact on someone's life.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy said that by attending Oaktree events, other participants, particularly those younger than her, are affected, and this gave her a sense of making a difference in someone's life. This is a valued and valuable contribution in itself, beyond that of any political or policy outcome. Amy's comments also showed the sense of embodied practice by members at events, which she expressed when she said, 'we're all kind of like YES and all just screaming at the camp'. This is an emotional, supportive and affective experience where young people are moved to action through action (Massumi, 2002). And while there is a sense of larger political activity there is also a sense of affecting those around you, at the level of the immediate individual. Notably

absent in her description is any discussion of or reference to digital media. While digital media may have been used as an organising tool, this is face-to-face engagement where the facilitation of events such as Bootcamps and Roadtrips creates meaningful and direct connections. An environment of intensity emerges that moves young people and in so doing shapes their political concerns and actions.

Eliza also spoke of making a difference, but believed this could not be done alone:

It's important. You want to do something. You want to make a difference, but you can't do it alone. You need others to help you. I think it's important to be part of groups and get involved with them, because we need teamwork to get things done. That's important to me. I am an environmentalist, that's what people call me (laughs) so yeah, I do find those issues important, definitely. There's a lot of things at the moment. There's the conservation of a lot of Aboriginal art in a lot of the parks in Western Australia that's happening. We don't know about it. Some people are fighting really, really hard and they can't continue to fight without us joining them, because that's their paid employment, but they need volunteers like us. So I think it all works out. We're all one group.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza was clear that change occurs by working with others. Eliza expressed that part of her identity develops through this group belonging: 'I am an environmentalist ... that's what people call me (laughs)'. As a member of AYCC, being connected with others in the shared concern for the environment, Eliza has a sense of belonging. It helps shape and define her identity, but she also develops her sense of identity by being part of something greater in connection with others—belonging to the group is part of her identity and helps to shape it.

Eliza makes a similar point again about wanting to be part of something and having a desire to be informed and able to educate others:

That's a very difficult question because ... a lot of people do a lot of things, but I just want to be part of it. You know what I mean? Like there's a lot of things that are happening right now that would never have happened before. I feel right now everything's coming to the fore and you've got to be educated about these things. I want to be educated. I want to be able to speak to people about these things. I want to be able to educate people. That's what I want to achieve.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

It is important for Eliza to be part of a cause to change things that matter to her. Part of the way in which she feels part of AYCC and the changes it seeks is by learning about environmental issues and sharing information, particularly information not usually in the public domain. This is a form of Amnå and Ekman's (2014) standby citizenship—being actively engaged with politically oriented issues by being alert and informed, sharing this information with others through self-curated networks and being ready to act. It is through such gathering and sharing of information that political concerns and actions are further shaped.

Amy spoke of Oaktree's powerful connections with other organisations, including Oxfam and World Vision:

There's a lot of power in how we work with other organisations as well, to get them on-board, so we work with organisations like Oxfam and World Vision and all those sort of organisations to basically support their campaigns and also get them to support us. I think those connections are quite effective.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy discussed the strengths of Oaktree working with other organisations such as Oxfam, World Vision and Australian Aid, describing these affiliations as 'quite effective' (Amy). This relates to Chadwick's (2007) idea of sedimentary networks and the building, over time, of connections that can be mobilised when needed. Mobilisation moments or events may appear spontaneous, but they are often highly structured and well organised, and built on longstanding practices and activities.

As an Oaktree member, Amy also wants to be part of a movement with others:

Just being part of that collective action and collective movement. Because you see movements in history and how they've changed the world, they've revolutionised. So society, I feel like it's really amazing to be part of that. You know, the minority that hopefully will be eventually be the majority one day.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy expressed an understanding of the history of political movements. For Amy it feels 'really amazing to be part of that [social change]'. She also recognises that she is acting from a point of difference—as the minority—and through her actions hopes to see those with her belief and ideals become the norm—the majority. Her perspective is optimistic, but she has a realistic sense of her role and capacities for social change as part of the organisation.

There is a sense of managing one's life through learning from this organisation:

For me it's also about being a leader in my community and being able to make a change, really make a change in the world, in my own small way. A lot of people say you should finish your uni first and become successful in your own work before you go out and help people, but my mentality has always been, if we can do something now, why not. That's why I do it, and why I keep involved with Oaktree. It's also just interesting just learning about the world and how it operates, and I don't just want to be another pawn in society.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy wants to be part of something because she believes that joint action can change things. The details of that change or what it means are not explicit, but Oaktree helps to shape Amy's political concerns and actions by providing opportunities to learn about the world and 'how it operates'. It gives her a sense of not being completely subject to the world's forces and in this way she feels empowered. Beck's (1992)

idea of the risk society resonates here, with its emphasis on the need for the individual to manage an increasing range of risks. This greater need to manage risks means young people are often constrained through time or access to decision-makers and consequently limited to making changes in their own community in order to not be ‘another pawn in society’ (Amy). Oaktree provides Amy with a way of managing her sense of contributing to something larger than herself, and belonging to a group that helps her express and shape her identity. It also provides her with leadership and communication skills, and an understanding of political advocacy strategies and tactics.

Evident in these interviews is the role of affect—how these young members feel about particular issues is an important motivation for their engagement, and so too is the way they feel about the participatory experiences the organisations provide. Eliza noted the importance of the recognisability of the Great Barrier Reef:

When you go to their conferences they want to get to know you personally. You get to know them, you get to make a connection. This is an issue that we can see in our society. The Great Barrier Reef is what I learnt about in primary school; it's what most people learnt about in primary school. That's one of Australia's biggest tourist sites ... it gets people to empathise more because we actually see it. Other organisations such as, you know, VGen who advertise poverty, and I'm not belittling it at all, but because homelessness and a lot of poverty issues in Australia are kept out of the media, we just think that it's an overseas issue. We don't think it's that bad. But with the AYCC, because it's environmental issues, people get a bit more invigorated, so that's always important. Empathy is the big reason people get involved in social advocacy. It's important.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza noted that Australian-educated children connect with the Great Barrier Reef because of their knowledge and education about it. She cited empathy as an important reason young people get involved in social advocacy. This speaks to the

importance of affect and to how young people's feelings about issues can serve as a catalyst for political participation (Papacharissi, 2014). Eliza used the word *empathy* because it immediately suggests a connection with and feeling for others. This connection plays a role in the shaping of political concerns and actions and in the development of networks.

The role of digital media

As already noted, both Oaktree and AYCC use multiple communication tools, including social media (particularly Facebook), emails, phone calls and texts. They are proactive and persistent in contacting people by phone immediately before events, such as meetings or protests.

Christopher spoke of AYCC's friendly approach:

They contact you on Facebook and you get invited to events and sometimes they call your phone. It's a good reminder, too. They leave you messages the day before the meetup and everyone's pretty friendly.

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

This friendly, personalised approach speaks to young people's preference for non-hierarchical structures, as identified in the networked young citizen concept (Loader et al., 2014). This personal approach required a mix of communication tools. In this case it included an initial approach by social media, invitations to events, and follow-up phone calls and reminders. For Christopher, this multiple communication approach is positive and emblematic of a friendly and approachable organisation. AYCC is making clear to him through their communications that they appreciate his involvement, and he is receptive to this.

Members I spoke with are aware when the organisations are more active in the way they try to engage young people:

I think this year and last year they've been more persistent. I think they've really stepped it up. There's a lot of people calling me—once a month, sometimes once every two weeks. I've had about three calls since the conference. I've had about three texts since the conference. I've had so many more emails...

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Here Eliza spoke of AYCC's recent persistence, calling at least monthly, and sometimes more often, and also sending texts and emails. Eliza indicates that the regularity and volume of people calling her is less appealing than for Christopher. Her mention of the multiple communication attempts is evident of this. In relation to subactivism, AYCC is trying to reach into her everyday life and find a trigger point or opening to continue or increase her engagement with the organisation.

The issue of persistence in communicating was more prominent in the comments of members I spoke with than was articulated by Oaktree and AYCC leaders. The organisations' strategies of multiple and repeated attempts to connect affects members, and does so with varying degrees of success. Members are aware of multiple attempts by both organisations to stay in touch. Sometimes this impact is positive, and can result in drawing young people in or bringing them back, but it can also be negative, serving as a source of frustration or even annoyance. Members employ a number of strategies to manage the multiple communication repertoires used by the groups. These include not answering an unknown number to unsubscribing from mailing lists and delaying responses to emails and texts. Similar to examples in Chapter 5, Oaktree and AYCC are taking risks with these strategies and do not always know which communication approaches will result in positive rewards. The organisations need to persist in engaging young people, but it is difficult to know or measure how resources should best be managed.

Eliza indicated she preferred emails from AYCC because it allowed her to control the pace of communication and respond to the organisation when she wanted to, enabling her to balance commitments such as school and work:

I prefer Gmail because usually they can send links and stuff and you can go at it at your own pace, whereas if someone calls me I'm probably at work, I'm probably half asleep. I'm just like: what do you want? I like that with email I can get back to it if I'm busy or—you know, that's good. It's a good tool ... I usually get notifications by Gmail or someone will call me or something and definitely it keeps me updated for volunteer jobs stuff like that. There's lot of websites where you can just type in your email and they can get back to you. ... There's a lot of things that come through email; it's really good. It's a good device if you check your email a lot.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

In Chapter 5 I discussed how both organisations spoke about young people not reading emails, but this response suggests some young people do read them and respond at their own discretion. This is a powerful tactical response to manage the organisations' communication strategies. Young people exercise a selective and individualised approach to membership, in line with the concept of the networked young citizen (Loader et al., 2014). Eliza noted it is common practice for young people to submit contact details to organisation websites, and AYCC then responds. Both organisations collect and use the information provided, but members are thoughtful and strategic in the ways that information is used. This is also a tactic of the standby citizen (Amnå & Ekman, 2014). This member is using email to be informed about issues of interest—but she is doing so on her terms.

Eliza spoke about her communication practices with the organisations as a mix of email, websites and phone calls that weaves through her daily life:

I usually read their emails. They come about once a week, once every two weeks. And sometimes I go on their website and watch some videos on YouTube. There's like an AYCC channel thing. Other than that, we were supposed to have a meeting for starting

groups in schools, but I didn't go to that and I'm just waiting for the next one to happen so I can go to it, so I'm keeping my eye out for that.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

There is a blending and blurring of online and offline practices for Eliza that is interwoven and interconnected, and evident in her discussion of AYCC's multiple communication approaches. Eliza spoke about time spent connecting with digital media including email, visiting the organisation website and watching YouTube videos, as practices with the same level of engagement as face-to-face meetings. There was little or no differentiation, from Eliza's perspective, in the way she connects with AYCC in terms of whether her engagement is online or offline. Ruppert and her colleagues (2017) argue that 'the Internet has not only blurred the boundaries between online and offline worlds but it also rendered the distinction between the two spurious and untenable' (5). The blending of online and offline practices is an important change in evolving engagement practices, and again highlights the need for both organisations to employ multiple repertoires. It also speaks to the concept of the networked young citizen (Loader et al., 2014) and some young people's preference for social media to mediate broader social relations.

In the following example visible engagement through Facebook includes multiple activities within a single platform:

Through AYCC there's a Facebook page we've set up for [my university]. X set it up and then I've become one of their admins for it. ... That's X there and Y, and she sort of works for AYCC, not works, but does a lot more hours than we do. So, X set this up last year and then about halfway through the year I started to become a lot more involved with AYCC, so I asked could I also be admin so I can put up photos of what I've been doing, and so, that was this year but everything else is sort of earlier than that.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

There is the main, public, AYCC Facebook page, but Georgie is focused on a university Facebook page set up by AYCC university student members, with limited administrators (Georgie, X and Y), to communicate with '[o]ther UWS [University of Western Sydney] students and the broader AYCC network to say hey, this is what we've been up to at UWS' (Georgie). This is done in conjunction with organisation leaders. This example shows the both structured and unstructured nature of the way organisations manage member engagement. Members have control of some communication aspects, but there is an overarching organisational view in place. These members, as administrators of a campus based AYCC Facebook page, are able to play an active role in the public presentation of AYCC, but within the boundaries of their university-based group. This active role shapes Georgie's engagement with AYCC and empowers her. She is learning how to run and facilitate one aspect of a larger organisation. In doing so, she builds her networks and those of AYCC, and it shapes her political concerns and actions.

Members also use AYCC communications in their personal social-media practice:

for me it's for my friends as well. I'm not a fan of putting up too many photos on my personal profile, so if I link it to AYCC ... it doesn't make me look like I'm focusing on myself so much.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie stated that she shares AYCC-related content on her personal Facebook page as a way of appearing active and engaged in interesting activities while not having to share too much personal information with her Facebook friends. She is strategically curating her personal networks while limiting details of her everyday life. This deflective strategy circulates AYCC's organisational material beyond its existing members to Georgie's Facebook friends. It offers potential openings for the organisation in untapped networks, extending its reach. While both organisations intend for material to be distributed, in this example it is the member's motivation for sharing that is insightful. The act of sharing AYCC material is a way for Georgie to

express her identity and connect to the organisation in a way that does not draw too much personal attention, while also enabling her to have an active Facebook presence.

Amy uses Facebook as an information source and for event notifications and reminders:

it becomes like a news source—reminders that events are coming up. That's how I find out about events that people wouldn't necessarily invite me to. For example, the Bootcamp: I found out about that through just seeing it on my Facebook newsfeed and I was signed up and ended up going.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy spoke about event reminders as a form of news—Facebook informs her of Oaktree's activities. This is particularly the case for large events when she doesn't receive a personal invitation. The affordances of Facebook enable Oaktree to distribute information widely for members like Amy to act on. Young people prefer social relations mediated using social media, and this practice works in Oaktree's favour (Loader et al., 2014). This reinforces Facebook's position as an important tool of connection and engagement and shows, as discussed in Chapter 5, why both organisations are so focused on this application.

The affordances of social media can present difficulties for young people who are members of the organisations. Georgie identified a challenge she faces in remaining friends on Facebook with individuals linked to AYCC, but not wanting to be involved with the group's activities:

I still have friends from AYCC on Facebook and so it's really hard to disconnect in that way, because they're both friends and I don't like being invited to the events, but I can't do much about it because I don't want to unfriend these people.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

This unwanted communication has the potential to draw people back into the organisation's engagement practices, but it distorts the size and meaningfulness of their networks. Over time, however, Georgie's friends may distance themselves from AYCC, which may diminish her feelings of discomfort or obligation in maintaining contact with the organisation. This is a change from previous forms of membership where once a decision was made to distance oneself from an organisation, one could do so. This requires rethinking the opportunities and challenges of organisational membership for young people and its evolving nature and the role of digital media in that evolution.

Because Eliza doesn't use social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, the ability to engage with AYCC is limited, increasing her motivation for face-to-face communication:

Well maybe if we had a meeting where everyone can come so they can tell us what's going on. I think that would be really nice. Just to see a face. Emails, you read the same names all over again but I actually didn't know who that X leader was until I actually saw her, and I'd been getting emails from her for years, and I like putting names to faces. I'm that kind of person. Because I don't have Facebook or Twitter, I don't really know how they communicate with people on those sites.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

For Eliza, being able to recognise and connect with people she communicates with via email provides an added dimension of engagement. Because she doesn't use social media, she lacks experience of the rapid temporal dimensions of the medium and the visual affordances of these applications. Face-to-face events allow her to meet and recognise people.

In each of the interviews there was an expressed desire for personal connection in a mass-media environment, including personal Facebook messages, text messages and emails:

Maybe more actual personal communication. I think if I started getting personal inbox messages on Facebook or personal text messages inviting me to these events I might start paying more attention and personal emails. Yeah.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie indicated that a broad communications approach does not get her attention and she ignores current communications not directed specifically to her. While young people may largely mediate their relationships using social media (Loader et al., 2014) there also needs to be a personalised dimension to maintain attention and engagement with members. Personal Facebook messages, text messages and emails are important tools for encouraging participation.

When asked about Oaktree's communication practices and preferred forms of communication, Amy said Facebook and emails dominated, with phone calls described as a 'nice personal touch':

Mainly they do Facebook and emails. They also do phone calls—that is a really nice personal touch when you sign up.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Again, despite the broad networking affordances of Facebook and the ease and speed of connection for organisations, personal phone calls are still important ways of connecting with members.

It was an individual phone call that cemented Amy's decision to attend Bootcamp:

If they need to recruit people to come to Bootcamp—I actually got a phone call even though I'd already decided I was going to go, or if you've done something I think they have expression of interest and stuff, and also if you do that they will give you a personalised phone call and they're really friendly.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

While Amy's decision to attend Bootcamp was already made, she spoke about the personal call with a sense of appreciation and remembered the caller being 'really friendly'. Personal connections matter to members. They make for meaningful engagement experiences for them. The speed and reach of social media cannot fully replace the importance of personal connections.

This direct connection is also evident in a discussion about phone calls with Christopher:

We talk, it's probably the best it gets. We always talk with each other. Like, form groups and we've got each other's phone numbers, and if you know somebody, you just call them

Christopher, 21 years, male—AYCC

For Christopher 'the best it gets' is talking with fellow members. In this way he is building networks and relationships with other members. The regular and personal contact is important to him and plays a role in his continued involvement with AYCC.

The power of direct interpersonal engagement is evident in the following example. Eliza said that she feels included in the organisation because the leaders interact directly with members:

what I really liked about the conference, and what makes me want to go back and do activities with AYCC, is while we were there the leaders really interacted with us and that's what I really liked. They actually cared about what I thought and what my friends thought. I've been to other conferences like UN Youth, and it's always kind of

like they want to speak at us, so it's really us and them at those conferences. You know, young people, older people. But at AYCC I really liked how they actually got to know us on a personal level and they really combined us. Even though I was in the under 18s group and we had to go in that for safety reasons, I understand that there's so many difficulties with minors and stuff, but at least they made the effort to get us involved. That's what I really liked.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

This approach is a central reason for Eliza's ongoing engagement with AYCC. The personal touch and practice of inclusion matters to her. This stands in contrast to other organisations, in this case UN Youth, which she described as being more 'us and them'. For Eliza the personal approach makes her 'want to go back'. Despite young people's preference for less-hierarchical organisations (Loader et al., 2014), Eliza noted that it is important to her when leaders acknowledge and speak with her. In doing so she is implicitly recognising hierarchy and its importance to her engagement with AYCC. Furthermore, because she is also able to mix with other members, she is able to expand her networks of connections.

The attraction of flexible hierarchies

The way Oaktree and AYCC structure themselves is important to young people, who have a preference for non-hierarchical structures (Loader et al., 2014). One member spoke about the snowflake model of leadership at Oaktree. The snowflake leadership model is based on a centrally organised structure, rather than a hierarchical structure. It is credited to Marshall Ganz (2009) who worked with social movements and on Barack Obama's 2008 presidential election campaign. It is based on a feedback system providing a sense of contributing to decision-making 'so that you don't feel like you're being told what to do all the time this is how you have to do it' (Amy).

Amy spoke about how the snowflake model of leadership allows for feedback and input from all levels in the organisation.

the snowflake model looks like a snowflake. ... In a traditional model of leadership everyone is sort of below, so you've got people at the top and people at the bottom, but how this sort of works is the national team coordinates the main campaigns and the states then have smaller leadership teams. The smaller leadership teams with the members, they sort of feed back into each other, so you've got a team leader, but you work as a collective and there's a huge feedback system so you don't feel like you're being told what to do all the time.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy acknowledged traditional leadership models here and their top-down nature. Different, in her view, is Oaktree's structure that provides members with the ability to input into decision-making. They can give feedback. Significantly, the snowflake structure not only provides Amy with a sense of making a significant contribution to the organisation, but it is personally empowering. Amy wants to contribute to the organisation and work with others. She appreciates being able to work in an environment where the structure of the organisation values her contribution and, by the ways it is arranged, tells Amy her perspective is valued.

Amy appreciates the sense of freedom in being able to design each state's own campaigns, and describes the snowflake model as 'the new world leadership structure, I think' (Amy):

We have, like, a lot of freedom, creativity in how we deliver our campaigns. It's like a general umbrella, okay, this is our campaign and each state understands the culture. The national team wouldn't necessarily understand the culture of how Sydney works or Melbourne works, so it's up to Sydney and Melbourne to design their own campaigns based around their culture and how they know people will react. You can have even smaller teams within those teams, as well, so it sort of looks like a snowflake. This is the new world leadership structure, I think.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Oaktree's consultative and inclusive approach, enabled by the snowflake structure, engages members and makes them feel part of something bigger. Oaktree strategically harnesses members' cultural knowledge and creativity to further engagement. Member input allows for personalisation and tailoring of campaigns to different groups and places to ensure cultural connections and understandings across the country. This is a form of cultural citizenship, designed to maximise participation.

Amy focused on the strength and structure of Oaktree when discussing capability and campaigning:

They're the best campaigners I know. I've been involved with other organisations as well, but it's the most politically based organisation that I'm involved with. They're not really afraid of attacking, you know. I wouldn't say attacking, but getting really straight to the point. This is what we want, are we going to get it or not, and if we're not gonna get it, we're gonna keep pushing for it. They're very strong and will-powered.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy argued that Oaktree are the best campaigners she knows and is 'the most politically based organisation that I'm involved with' (Amy). She views Oaktree as strong, empowered and direct. This strength is appealing to her. While these organisations work hard to be inclusive and provide member feedback, as well as to be friendly and reasonable, they also need to demonstrate determination, almost to the point of aggressiveness, to appeal to some members. For Amy, this serves to encourage her engagement with Oaktree.

Amy also appreciated the efficient running of Oaktree in terms of campaigning:

But, overall, as an organisation, it is the most efficiently run campaigning organisation I know, because they've got a good hierarchy. Not hierarchy, my bad, not hierarchy,

structure to their leadership team, so they've got their national team, who basically coordinate. A lot of them are paid, so they know that we assume that if they're paid they know what they're doing (laughs).

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy referred to the 'hierarchy' of the organisation, but immediately corrected this terminology using the word 'structure' (Amy). There is a tension here in the way Amy sees Oaktree's structure as effective, because it is in contrast with the view that young people reject hierarchical structures in favour of flat structures. Amy sees the experience and structure of Oaktree as delivering political results and being an efficient advocate of the chosen causes. This position poses a challenge for organisations, as it indicates they need to be both flat *and* inclusive and structured, giving them the authority and dependability they need to be hybrid (Chadwick, 2007). Amy's comments also reflect the ongoing importance of organisations for political mobilisation. Mobilising young people requires organisations who can coordinate and manage activities. Oaktree's ability to effectively connect people and mobilise remains a core capability and reason for existence.

Amy is conscious, however, of the ways in which Oaktree's strength and direct approach doesn't appeal to all young people:

I can actually see why people are uncomfortable with Oaktree as an organisation as well, because I can definitely see that, because like sometimes it looks like, some of my friends think it's really cultish. There's like a cult sort of feel to it, because you go to these massive events and you rally and I can definitely see that. ... there is like mob mentality as well. A lot of the debates are quite one-sided, so there are criticisms of Oaktree.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

She spoke about some people's discomfort with Oaktree's direct, assertive approach and how they may see Oaktree as 'cultish' (Amy). She noted this cult aspect when

she discussed the large events she attended, stating that it's somewhat like participating in a 'rally' with a 'mob mentality' (Amy). Amy's understanding of the organisation she supports and engages with is thoughtful and nuanced—the structure, the flexibility, the strength and the inclusiveness. She demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of political organising that shows the shape of her political concerns and actions.

6.2 Political concerns and actions beyond youth-led organisations

In this section I briefly examine members' activity outside of their connections with Oaktree or AYCC. Looking closely at examples of the political practices of these interviewees, I show how member engagements extend far beyond the organisations. Moreover, these examples of everyday practices and interests are meaningful to these members and play a role in the shaping of their political concerns and actions.

Georgie's everyday interests strongly connect with her concerns for the environment, and specifically the need to lower carbon emissions to reduce global warming:

I care about the issue of needing to lower carbon emissions and stop global warming, or human-induced global warming ... skateboarding stops me from driving places. There's still the train and the bus, but skateboarding makes transport very easy. I don't believe in car dependency. Instead of driving, I skateboard to places. I know it doesn't get me as far as a car, but I've found the more I've skated, the less I've needed to go to faraway places.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Skateboarding is a regular, everyday activity for Georgie that enables her to practically address her environmental concerns. It limits her need to drive and connects her with her community. Her reduced travel means she has not had to

drive a car and she has been able to build a local community network of other skateboarders. Georgie has also learnt that skateboarding, over time, has reinforced itself—the longer she has skateboarded, the more she does so. It has become an increasingly substantial dimension of her everyday activities.

Georgie also incorporates recycling into her everyday practices and focuses on reducing her dairy and meat consumption as a way to live a healthy life consistent with her environmental values:

and recycling on a day-to-day basis. I've tried to cut down on the amount of meat and dairy I eat. I think going to skatepark is a much more environmentally friendly way of getting exercise than going to a gym. I generally try and focus on my health and community. Those are important values to me, and family.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Skateboarding, recycling, conscious healthy consumption, community and family—these are all core values for Georgie and she practices them every day. Her environmental focus goes well beyond her active involvement with AYCC. It is threaded through her daily life, and is thoughtful and multifaceted. Georgie is a highly engaged and active citizen.

Georgie prefers face-to-face skateboard time over communicating long-distance, and this poses challenges for her involvement with AYCC:

The skatepark has been a really important thing for me because it's a huge way I can interact with people. There are always different young people at the skatepark I can talk to. A lot of them are a bit younger than me, but there are quite a few that are around my age, and so they've become good, close friends of mine. So that's been a big thing that has distanced me from AYCC. Everyone in that thing is all spread out and you have to use a screen to interact. I'm not fond of that.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie spoke of using social media to organise her skateboarding events. But she also spoke of the way her new friends distance her from AYCC. She connects the screen requirements of her involvement with AYCC members with her lack of interest in wanting to mediate communications through screens. The environmentally driven practice of local skateboarding has served as a disincentive to participate in AYCC because skateboarding is more local than the activities of the organisation. When young people find or develop alternate interests that connect with their values they may gravitate away from an organisation. This reinforces the constant need for organisations to deploy a mix of innovative communication practices to attract new members and try to maintain the involvement of existing ones.

And any screen time that is related to her skateboarding is carefully managed:

So skateboarding has been important to me because I don't need a screen to be interacting. Even using the screen for skateboarding I have it very systemised: I'll only do the Facebook stuff for [X ORG] on like between nine thirty and midday on a Monday morning, and minimise the amount of time I'm actually doing it.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Part of the reason skateboarding is important to Georgie is that it requires minimal screen time for her to interact with others. Georgie organises skateboarding events using digital media, but she consciously manages and limits the screen time involved. She has a strict system for when she uses digital media to facilitate necessary connections and, as an organiser of this activity, she has control over that.

Part of Georgie's practice includes running a skateboarding club linked to the university she attends, and this had led to a new kind of political action, a more visible one. This detailed example illustrates the actions involved:

I also run a skateboarding club here at uni. On Monday, we had an event. This was our ad for the event, and then I saw that a page had shared it and I was really interested, because normally I'll tell people, I'll be like 'oh, can you share this link on your page' to all the university things, but this one I didn't know about. They shared it: 'Skatepark for X'. I was actually 'oh my gosh', yeah, I really think they need a skatepark in this area. That's the area that I live in and it's true, it's a big area with no skatepark facility. So when I saw that, I immediately liked the page, liked what they put up, and then someone said something like, 'I don't think this is a good idea, skateparks are bad for youth, they get vandalised', but their reply was really good, really well researched. They referred to some article about how skateparks are good, so I liked that as well ... They even had a survey to send through to council, so I filled that in as well.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

Georgie's everyday skateboarding interest contains both political and ethical dimensions, which are key elements of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009)—her love of skateboarding is motivated by her political and ethical views on the environment. While Georgie stated that skateboarding enables greater face-to-face engagement, this aspect of her practice is, in part, mediated by digital media, in line with Bakardjieva's (2009) concept. This example refers to a Facebook advertisement, posted by Georgie, inviting people to a skateboarding event at her local skatepark. A local skateboard group shared the advertisement on their Facebook page. Georgie then 'liked' their page because she supported the group's efforts to get a new skateboard facility in the local area. This exchange led to a series of interactions concerning the benefits of, and the need for, a new skatepark. Georgie also completed a survey created by the group to send to the local council. Such stories provide important insights into evolving political-engagement practices and the depth of young people's thinking about issues.

Georgie's everyday interest is rooted in her concerns for the environment, evolved from a political and ethical everyday interest to a more visible, publicly oriented action, enabled and facilitated by her curated digital-media networks. Actions that may appear to be simply having fun or 'hanging out' can have detailed and

thoughtful origins and directions. Georgie's development of the skateboarding groups and activism here can also be seen as evidence of AYCC's successful teaching of skills to members, such as organising events and digital-media engagement. Georgie is exhibiting her capacities as both an expert citizen and an everyday maker (Bang, 2005). She is an engaged member of AYCC and adept at employing a range of sophisticated practices in relation to her environmental concerns and skateboarding interests. As Collin (2015:125) argues, '[p]ersonal goals as well as 'political' goals feature in [these] young people's conceptualisation of 'participation'. In this way, young people move between subject positions, highlighting the difficulties in categorising practices as either expert or everyday. Young people may be motivated by multiple goals that are framed, or achieved, by focusing on taking action around particular issues: meeting new people, generating networks, and doing something to provide them with experience 'for the future'.

Georgie demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the public-policy issues associated with her concerns for the environment:

Definitely cutting down on cars and roads. Building more roads is not the way forward. I think we need better, more condensed cities where people are not as spread out as they are across big suburbs. It's hard, condensing. I think the population's gonna grow, and I don't think that has to mean that we expand, but rather that we build up more and with that it becomes easier to build better transport links, with people living in more condensed cities. That's what I really want to see. I want to be part of that movement of making the most of what's actually around you.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

In this discussion, Georgie quickly and coherently articulated complicated higher-order public-policy issues including population growth and transport challenges, and linked those to her concerns, actions and desired outcomes in relation to the environment. Georgie made clear her ability to address high-level public-policy issues in her everyday life.

Georgie is so committed to her values that she makes choices on where to live based on the environment:

I think that I'd like to move out of home very soon. But I only want to move to Parramatta, because everything that I do is in this area. I live in [X] so [X] is so close and that fits in really well with my values. I'd like to see a society where the goal isn't about getting a car as much as it is. Everyone seems to think you need a car or, if you don't need a car, at least you need your licence. My parents have been telling me that because I haven't gone for it. I don't actually feel I need it. Not having a licence is a good barrier for me. I think that's a strong way we can help lower carbon emissions.

Georgie, 21 years, female—AYCC

For Georgie, the feeling of being able to live her values in her everyday life is a crucial aspect of her politically oriented activities. Georgie has to feel she is making a difference each and every day for it to count. Georgie's discussion about her environmental values is deeply considered and she meets public-policy challenges with her own everyday practice with ease and enviable clarity.

For Eliza, being informed is core to her sense of purpose:

Definitely. Always going on about it. Always. I mean in this media-saturated world, you know, it's so easy to forget issues. So easy to succumb to what everyone wants you to be. ... I like to just tell my friends this is what's happening. You've got to be on-board. If you're not, then really, what are you even for? I believe everyone's problems are everyone's problems. We're all living in this world together; we're all contributing together. My problems are your problems and your problems are my problems. I think that's the attitude you have to have if you want to get somewhere and achieve things.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza's perspective of shared problems guides her thinking about social justice. She views shared knowledge of social challenges as a critical element of actively playing

a role in positive social change. Sharing information about issues of importance to her is an essential, almost obligatory, form of engagement. Eliza's approach supports Amnå and Ekman's (2014) standby citizenship concept through its emphasis on knowledge-sharing as a now crucial form of citizenship.

Eliza explained the role of affect in describing the motivation behind her standby-citizenship behaviours:

I think I've experienced a lot of them, you know, living back in Palestine. There's a lot of bad things that I've seen and I think just being educated about it—you've got to read the news, you've got to also read the mainstream news, because that's important as well. You need to know how to talk to people when they come up with arguments from mainstream news.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza stated that mainstream news is not her main source of information: her networks are largely her own creation. But she argued that it is important to be informed about mainstream news to be able to relate to and debate with others. Eliza's comments show a sophisticated conception that is about understanding public discourse to be prepared for action. It goes beyond knowing what's happening, to understanding how the media frames and talks about events.

And Eliza is clear that she, and each person, has an everyday personal responsibility in pursuing positive social change:

You've got to get out there and do things, and I feel like it really starts from yourself. It really has to start within yourself. Start smiling to the people on the street; you'll find it really makes a difference in your day. That's an important thing on a personal level that you've really got to believe. You can't just be involved, and that's where the whole thing with empathy comes in. Things aren't gonna happen. I believe that the root of all evil is the lack of empathy. People who just don't care about other people. That's why bad things happen.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

She spoke about having empathy for others, developed from her own personal experiences, and the need to be informed about the circumstances of others. Individual feelings of empathy and responsibility for others are central to her information-sharing engagement practices and rooted in personal experience. Citizenship is not just about voting or signing a petition, for Eliza: it is an everyday practice.

In contrast to Eliza's active understanding of news-gathering, Amy spoke of her information-engagement practices as 'just reading about it':

Personally, I guess just reading about—not so much reading, I read a little bit, but a lot of YouTube videos. A lot of TED Talks. I pretty much watch at least a TED Talk a day just because it's like really interesting and it's a good way to procrastinate (laughs). ... Just talking to people and asking them what they think about issues and how they want to change the world and what they think the meaning of life is. I just love quirky questions.

Amy, 20 years, female—Oaktree

Amy didn't specify the kind of TED Talks she watches, but like Eliza, she wants to know what people care about and why. Amy's openness and curiosity is a kind of attitude that keeps her open to political engagements. What's different from Eliza is that she uses news and current affairs to stay informed and motivated, but less so to understand mainstream public discourse. Amy spoke about '[j]ust talking to people and asking then what they think about issues and how they want to change the world'. She also informs herself using YouTube videos, and specifically TED Talks, noting that she watches a TED Talk at least daily. TED Talks are an information source. Affect plays a role in this knowledge-gathering, as platforms such as TED use emotion to maximise engagement. TED Talks are about telling stories in a way that engage large audiences, and, over time, consuming them serves as a kind of political-

engagement training. This is an example of the expanded digital-media environment young people now access.

While she gathers news online, Eliza does not necessarily see digital media alone as having the potential to create lasting social change:

Lack of empathy. I think that there's ... okay, one of the reasons why I don't have Facebook and Twitter [is] because I don't want to be part of slacktivism, if you know what that is... A lot of people think that by liking things and sharing things, they're really making a difference, while it is, it's paradoxical—while it is, it isn't. I believe it creates a barrier. They really become objectified just on the screen. It just creates that barrier between us and them. They become the other. I don't want to be a part of that. I want to do things on a more personal level. I want to connect with people first and have that empathy.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza is critical of what she perceives as inadequate engagement practices as a result of online activities. She doesn't engage with Facebook and Twitter because she sees those platforms as places of 'slacktivism'. She is cynical about liking and sharing things through social media, and questions whether that is true engagement, or whether one is able to make a difference in that way. For Eliza, speaking with people has the capacity to create change because, for her, a screen is a barrier and she feels the need to 'do things...on a more personal level'. She describes face-to-face connection as that which enables people to develop feelings of empathy; only then is true engagement, and making a real difference, possible. In this way, engagement is about balance and a spectrum of practices.

Eliza argues that young people don't engage in politically oriented activities because of a lack of empathy. For her, lack of feeling for others is at the heart of young people's disengagement.

A lot of young people don't do that because they're so numbed. They're so numbed by seeing things. There's so much advertising around us that when we see one ad for World Vision or something they just think it's another ad. They're so numbed to this media-saturated world. That's a really big reason, cause we're just used to seeing it. That's it. It doesn't really shock them, but I think what would shock them is when they find out it's happening in their communities. I think that's really important.

Eliza, 17 years, female—AYCC

Eliza is critical of the role of media in her perceptions of young people's disengagement. She argues that too much information, specifically advertising, even for positive causes such as famine relief, numbs young people as they manage too much information and too many messages. Her solution is an everyday local practice. Starting with one's own communications, she suggests such media saturation and numbing can be countered.

6.3 Conclusions

The member perspectives analysed and presented in this chapter build on the insights into Oaktree and AYCC's strategies and practices detailed in Chapter 5. My analysis shows the effects, both intended and unintended, of the organisations' engagement strategies on members, and the ways members tactically respond to those strategies. Speaking with four Committed members of Oaktree and AYCC about their involvement and experiences with the organisations reveals how both organisations shape their political concerns and actions. Oaktree and AYCC shape members' political concerns and actions, first by being open and available to them. Because young people's reasons for getting involved with the organisations are diverse and somewhat serendipitous, this means the organisations need to offer a number of interests and experiences to tap into these stories and motivations.

The organisations also provide a forum for members to express and shape themselves, by their existence and their ability to reach into everyday lives through

both face-to-face and digital communications. Engagement through events such as protests provides meaningful and educational engagement experiences for members. But, as I have detailed in this chapter, young people do not want the organisations to be invasive or annoying. The organisations must strategically maintain a balance of engagement or risk losing or not attracting members.

In this chapter I have detailed how the young people I interviewed spoke about their range of reasons for wanting to engage with these organisations. These reasons developed in some cases in quite unexpected ways, and through long-time personal interests such as seeing a movie as a child. There is an affective dimension here, where young people participate in the activities of these organisations because of the ways past experiences touched them. Motivation for involvement also came through friends and as a way to meet and spend time with other young people. But understood as 'affect', a sense of belonging is temporal. It is not an absolute thing, but time-dependent and contingent—it ebbs and flows depending on what the organisations do and what is going on in the lives of these young people. This is demonstrated by the way young people respond to different organisational strategies, such as 'tracking' and 'curating' activities based on what the organisations think members want or will respond well to. It is also evident in examples of members being contacted via different channels.

Evident in this chapter are the ways members shape the organisations. While I only spoke with four committed members, they spoke of a range of communication preferences. This diversity of preferences and tactical responses to them illuminates how members play a role in shaping Oaktree and AYCC. As I have detailed, both organisations employ a mix of communications—website material, email, Facebook and Twitter, and phone calls—to engage members and increase participation. But members actively ignore these approaches if the medium is not their preferred channel. Members tactically employ sophisticated responses to manage or delay unwanted approaches. This means the organisations need to effectively 'recuperate' members' preferences, which then become strategies for engaging members.

Therefore, while the organisations are thoughtfully structured and strategic in the ways they approach and connect with young people, the organisations' future renewal and existence depends upon their ability to learn about and innovate around member preferences.

Tactics such as not responding to emails or phone calls also place resource demands on the organisations. They require them to innovate and deploy personalised ways to contact members to engage them. These findings serve to build on Chadwick's (2007) discussion of organisations employing a multitude of repertoires by indicating some member-driven reasons for simultaneous and diverse practices. These demands also require both hierarchical organisational structures to main their position, while also needing to be flexible and inclusive of young people's direct input and involvement. The preferences and political participation styles of their members means they need to be hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 5, Oaktree and AYCC deftly combine organisational hierarchy with a membership structure that provides a sense of inclusiveness and connection. In this chapter, some members spoke about why this mix is appealing to them. It serves to make them feel part of the decision-making of the organisation, while also seeing the hierarchical arrangements as giving the organisations authority and legitimacy. These young people seem to accept a degree of hierarchy, but also prefer and are responsive to newer forms of more 'distributed' hierarchy. This raises the question of whether this is a form of recuperation on the part of the organisations and their senior staff. A mix of hierarchy and structure that incorporates direct participation is an important finding for organisations seeking to attract and mobilise participants.

Chapter 5 also emphasised the importance Oaktree and AYCC place on creating spaces for members to meet face-to-face. The organisations repeatedly stated that meaningful connection occurs through co-presence and facilitating personal connections. In his chapter I have detailed members' recounting of the embodied,

physical elements these spaces enable and the value they place on sharing these experiences with others. Digital media also has a role here; it enables the organisations to quickly reach large number of members, and is a critical part of network creation and maintenance following events. Digital media strengthens ties between members and the organisations and between members themselves.

Also evident in this data are the ways Oaktree and AYCC catalyse personal interests into overt political actions. By providing everyday spaces of activity and interests that are focused on issues of concern to young people, and spaces for learning and acting on these interests, the organisations develop young people's knowledge and skills as political agents. This subactivist (Bakardjieva, 2009) practice is an important dimension of the organisations and their members' political engagement.

Subactivism is also evident beyond the organisations when young people's everyday interests develop into more publicly oriented actions, such as an interest in skateboarding catalysing into action towards supporting public skateboard facilities. This involvement, and these politically oriented actions, are mediated by the everyday use of digital technologies. Activities such as these build on subactivism by revealing the ways young people employ tactics as active agents of change. While there are traces of quiet power here in the ways in which these young people, disrupt and contribute to the way power flows through their everyday practices and agency, their actions also reveal their capacities as 'expert citizens' (Bang, 2005) in their everyday lives, and, as argued earlier, it also reveals the inherent messiness involved in such categorisations.

In Chapter 7 I analyse the everyday activities and interests of eight young people, predominantly from Western Sydney, with no stated links or knowledge of Oaktree and AYCC. Studying their practices and analysing their motivations, I look for 'openings' and ask how subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009) manifests and how young people engage in activities that are meaningful to them in ways that extend definitions of youth participation and citizenship beyond current conceptualisations.

Chapter 7. Everyday practices and the political subject

Concerns about young people's political participation are largely based on traditional conceptualisations of what constitutes political activity, such as voting, petition-signing or belonging to a political party. These forms of participation maintain their status and legitimacy in part because they give legitimacy to the institutions and actors that constitute them. However, as I have argued in previous chapters, young people engage in a much wider range of everyday practices in the digitally mediated age, beyond those currently recognised, that need to be understood as legitimate forms of political engagement that shape both citizens and political life, if only for the simple reason that such practices must inform, in some way, political subjectivities, even when there may be no immediately obvious political connection. What is of particular interest to me is *how*. To answer this question, my research studies young people not connected to political organisations, but who engage in a range of everyday activities and concerns.

My work builds on research that argues that everyday citizenship and participation practices need to be studied and understood as significant (Bakardjieva, 2009; Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Activities currently deemed illegitimate, or at least less-recognised forms of participation, are not only common elements of young people's everyday lives, but are important to them. I employ Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism, with its focus on everyday activities, with a political and/or ethical dimension, to show how such practices are significant forms of participation. I examine how subactivism manifests and ask what this tells us about how political subjectivities are emerging in late-modern society.

This chapter analyses interview data with young people who would be categorised by Oaktree and AYCC as their 'outside' layers—their 'crowd' member targets. These are young people who are not formally connected to the organisations, but whom Oaktree and AYCC recognise through their stated engagement categories as constituents, particularly because they seek to connect with and learn about what

resonates with or would mobilise this broader 'crowd'. In this chapter, I examine the everyday activities and experiences of young people in this 'layer', to identify and explain how young people's everyday practices can be understood as political participation, even when there may be no immediately obvious political connection. Through these interviews, I present material where young people described and discussed their everyday activities and interests and why they were meaningful to them. I study the interests and experiences of these young people because, as research by Vromen (2003) and Bakardjieva (2009) has shown, measures of engagement focused on organised politically oriented activities do not fully explain how and why young people come to care about particular issues or are motivated to take action. In addition to interviews, my research also included a focus group with eight young people at a Western Sydney school. I conducted a focus group to learn more about young people's everyday activities and interests beyond Oaktree and AYCC.

I focus especially on how these young people narrate their digitally mediated practices because their lived experiences are embedded in new forms of connection, learning and expression in the digital society. The accessibility and permeation of digital media in young people's everyday lives means it is increasingly necessary to study these practices to understand the role of digital media for new forms of political participation. This raises the question of what the political potential of the (digital) everyday is (Third & Collin, 2016; see also Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2016). In her study of the everyday online practices of young Canadians, Bakardjieva (2009) argues that individuals' interests and actions are important for the development of the political subject. In detailing her concept of subactivism, Bakardjieva (2009) discusses 'openings' to describe the interests, activities and frontier situations that can be activated by 'trigger events' to give rise to more recognisable political actions. Subactivism can therefore help bring due attention to the role of everyday interests (Bakardjieva, 2009) before they become more visible. This approach also foregrounds the role of digital media and capacities for new social practices and networks, because it increases the number of 'subject positions' (Bakardjieva, 2009:

94), and the exchange of information and ideas, in ways previously not available. In this chapter, I therefore seek examples of subactivism and the openings through which it emerges.

My interest, therefore, centres in particular on the ‘tactical’ aspects of young people’s everyday practices. Here I draw on de Certeau’s (1988) definition of tactics as momentary, fleeting, and opportunistic and embedded in daily routines (36–37). In this way tactics are similar to Bakardjieva’s ‘openings’. In identifying ‘openings’ I identify where the tactical operates and affects change, where young people use the means available to them, and the ways everyday activities give rise to political interests and concerns.

In asking how young people’s everyday practices shape political subjectivities, even when there may be no immediately obvious political connection, I also ask what are the kinds of practices they engage in that are meaningful to them? Amnå and Ekman (2014) argue the practices young people engage in that foster political interests—such as everyday information-gathering through online social networks—constitute a form of ‘standby citizenship’. These prepare and position young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to take further action if and when opportunities arise. Standby citizenship makes explicit that these activities are meaningful forms of political participation for young people and are important dimensions of their everyday lives.

While Bakardjieva’s (2009) ‘subactivism’ and Amnå and Ekman’s (2014) ‘standby citizenship’ differ in emphasis with respective focuses on everyday actions with a political or ethical dimension, and being informed, each attempts to recognise and make sense of a wider range of political practices, and to explain the nature and influence of new forms of political agency and their significance in the digital society. In this chapter I therefore present my analysis, firstly, of the everyday activities and interests of young people and ask if they can be characterised as frontier situations or trigger events and therefore as ‘openings’ for political subjects. I then draw on

Amnå and Ekman (2014) and ask how these young people inform themselves, stay alert to opportunities and position themselves for possible action.

In building on the concepts of subactivism and standby citizenship and making the case for a renewed focus on the agency of young people, I also argue that neither of these concepts sufficiently explains *why* young people engage in particular activities or inform themselves about particular interests. These concepts are useful for foregrounding everyday, less visible practices, and analysing young people's interests and actions, but they do not address questions of their genesis or development. To further understand the nuances and complexities of young people's citizenship practices, and why they engage with some issues and not others, it is necessary to know *their* experiences and explanations and how these catalyse into a focus on particular issues or concerns. As such, I argue that the concept of affect, with its emphasis on experiences that develop into feelings of action and connection, builds on these approaches. I draw on Papacharissi (2014) who argues that affect plays an increasingly important role in political engagement in digitally mediated environments. I examine how meanings and feelings present in young people's stories, explore the affective dimensions of young people's interests and activities, and ask 'why' they have come to be of significance to them.

7.1 *Everyday activities and interests*

Scholars have investigated various forms of everyday political participation including conscious consumerism (Micheletti, 2003) and, increasingly, online practices (Bennett, 2003). Bakardjieva's concept of subactivism also focuses on the everyday, and aims to show how everyday activities, through frontier situations and the emergence of trigger points, can develop into further forms of political action. I build on both these ideas by examining the everyday interests and practices of a small group of young people, with no immediately obvious connection to organised political life, through interviews and a focus group. I ask what the activities and interests are that can be recognised or understood as political, through examining

people's actions and motivations and the meanings actors associate with them. In a digitally mediated environment, how do everyday activities or interests become more public and take on the characteristics of more overt or even traditionally recognisable forms of political engagement? As young people engage in everyday activities and interests, how do practices shape political subjectivities, and how do young people experience and think of themselves in relation to political issues?

In this section I first present data that reveals the breadth and depth of the digitally mediated everyday activities and interests of the group of young people I interviewed. The backgrounds of the young people I interviewed are culturally diverse, and while this is not the focus of my study, it highlights the richness of the context in which this research developed, and offers possibilities for future attention. Using Bakardjieva's (2009) concept of subactivism, I look for everyday acts, with a political or ethical dimension, that develop into further action through frontier situations with identifiable trigger points. I then provide detailed examples from two young people that show 'frontier' engagements in their lives and illustrate how openings or trigger points emerge. While this interview sample consisted of a small group of eight young people, it revealed a diverse range of everyday interests and practices. These young people were recruited through requests from university tutors asking if they use the internet regularly. Consequently, not all of these young people spoke of active political participation. Here I briefly discuss the breadth of digitally mediated practices these young people engage with.

7.1.1 Routines in the digital everyday

The young people I interviewed used a range of devices to access the internet, including laptops, iPads and mobile phones. They access the internet at home, at university, at school, where wi-fi is publicly available and when at the homes of friends. They access a diverse range of applications and platforms, including social media, games and video sites. They use the internet for study and entertainment and to connect with organisations or groups they belong to. They also spoke about the

different modes of digital participation in which they engage, including observing what others are doing online, one-to-one personal interactions, group play, and consuming information and videos as well as producing content themselves, often in the form of posts to social media. Members of the focus group, for example, unsurprisingly revealed they regularly use a range of applications including Snapchat, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Vine. The following provides details and examples of the kinds of sites interviewees access, and the purposes for which they use the internet.

I spoke with 20-year-old Natalie via Skype at her home in Western Sydney. She was born in Sydney, her mother in Thailand and her father in Cambodia. She is focused on her third-year marketing studies. She uses the internet at home and university and at the homes of friends. She says she is online most of the day, mostly using her mobile or laptop. She says she mostly uses the internet for browsing, or researching assignments. Her most-used apps and sites are Facebook, YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp, the gaming app Angry Birds Pop, and Kim Kardashian: Hollywood. On her phone, she also has an email app, Instagram, a period tracker, TripView for public transport, a note-taking app, Bible by Olive Tree, Seek – Jobs, CommBank and Tumblr.

Natalie uses the application Tumblr, which is an important form of connection for her:

[W]hen I follow people they send me images that I feel like they reblogged and it just connects to me, it's kind of like what I'm subconsciously thinking about...

Natalie, 20 years, female

For Natalie, Tumblr images invoke feelings of connection with those in her digitally mediated networks. They let her know that others are moved or touched by the same images. Her digital network reassures her that others have the same feelings or are touched by the same things.

As suggested in her quote, Natalie claimed to be more of a social-media observer. Occasionally she posts on Instagram, but never on Facebook:

I don't feel like everyone on my friends list needs to know everything, and I don't really have anything I need to say, because everything I need to say, it's more personal, and these personal things, I'd rather tell someone face-to-face.

Natalie, 20 years, female

For Natalie, Facebook was only used for direct messages. Facebook feels 'really outdated' to her and she is careful about how much she reveals to others in online environments. Evident in her comment here is that personal matters are discussed face-to-face, rather than through digital media. Natalie carefully and thoughtfully reveals herself to others. She engages with friends online, but does so in a way that distinguishes between public sharing and more personal information.

I spoke with 19-year-old Jane via Skype at her home in Western Sydney. She was born in Western Sydney, as were her parents. She is focused on her bachelor of arts in teaching studies and works part-time as a team leader in a restaurant. Jane said she uses the internet a lot at home on her phone for accessing platforms such as Facebook, Gmail and Snapchat. She also uses the internet to research her university assessments and to access a site called 'the Hub' for posting work-related matters to team members.

At the request of several interviewees, I conducted two paired interviews. Their common digitally mediated activities immediately became evident and were clearly important forms of connection for them. I met 19-year-old Hannah at her university library in an interview with her friend Sarah. Hannah was born in Sydney to parents from Pakistan. She spends a great deal of her time studying history. She accesses the internet at university or at home at least once a day, mostly on an iPad for university

work, research and social media. At the time of the interview Hannah and her friend Sarah were enthusiastically using an app called Covet Fashion. Hannah said:

You earn cash in the game and can win, like, certain clothing items from different brands. Sometimes you dress for a cocktail party and sometimes a wedding. As you purchase clothes your closet value goes up and you can unlock more make-up styles and hairstyles. It's really addictive. I enjoy it. You can't wear these clothes in real life, as they are too expensive.

Hannah, 19 years, female

Sarah, also 19 years old, was born in Pakistan, as were her parents, and came to Australia as a baby. She is also focused on her university history studies. Sarah accesses the internet at home and university multiple times a day, mostly on an iPad or laptop. She says she is addicted to YouTube and watches a lot of movies and catches up on TV episodes. Sarah also uses Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber. She follows a lot of celebrities, explores food websites and visits history sites. Sarah also looks at a lot of humour and meme-driven material. She also accesses Covet Fashion and describes it as addictive. She says she really enjoys dressing-up games, and that when she got the iPad she spent a number of months trying to find make-up and dressing-up games. She came across Covet Fashion on the App Store and shared it with Hannah.

Also sharing an interest in online gaming were Connor and Adrian. I spoke with 22-year-old Connor and his friend Adrian, aged 20, in their university library. Connor was born in Malaysia, as were his parents, while Adrian and his parents were from the Philippines. Both were focused on second-year computing studies; Connor worked as a waiter at a restaurant, while Adrian was a fast-food restaurant cook. Both accessed the internet every day at home and university using a laptop and mobile phone. Favoured sites were Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube. They also use the dating app, Tinder, saying it's hard to talk to girls face-to-face, but Tinder means they can talk to them when they want. Connor says he also uses the

internet for games such as Dota 2 and Counter-Strike. Together they play the computer game Clash of Clans.

While much of their game-playing is about having fun, they also revealed some important insights into the reasons they play games such as Clash of Clans:

Connor: It's a social game. You view troops and they attack other people around the world. You join a clan and then you guys help each other. Like you're in a group, basically, a clan, like a tribe, you know. Teamwork.

Adrian: Yeah, teamwork. For me that game is about leadership. Yeah. Sometimes I want to lead the team to victory. I tell them to attack this, you know how you fight someone with a specific number like attack number 7, attack 18, so leadership.

Interviewer: Does it sometimes go wrong?

Connor: Yeah.

Adrian: Always you need strategy. Teamwork. It can be like a real-life situation

While there is no overt connection to the political domain here, Connor and Adrian are learning leadership, strategy and teamwork through these games, and they understand that these can have real-world applications.

I spoke with 18-year-old Alex via audio Skype at his home in Adelaide, SA. His mother was born in Adelaide and he has no knowledge of his father. Alex has a disability. At the time of our interview he was focused on his Year 12 studies, volunteered for an online research organisation, and captained a golf club for people with disabilities. He also played soccer. Alex accesses the internet anywhere he can, usually through PlayStation for games for approximately four hours a day. Otherwise he uses an iPad or laptop to visit sites such as ATBAT (for major league baseball), and the AFL app. Alex shops online for clothes and items related to his US sporting

interests. He also uses the internet for news and soccer information such as team transfers. He shares his soccer interest with a friend. His team is Manchester City.

But other young people interviewed do have clear politically oriented dimensions to their lives, even if these may not always be recognised as traditionally legitimate forms of political participation. The early life experiences of Yvonne, aged 19, significantly affect her everyday practices, and Alex, aged 18, lives with a disability, which drives many of his everyday interests and practices, such as involvement with a disabled golf club and educating others about technology for young people with disabilities. I now detail their activities.

I met 19-year-old Yvonne in her university library. She was born in Afghanistan, but lived in Pakistan with her family from the age of two until she was 10. Her father migrated to Australia as a refugee and brought his family five years later in 2005. Both her parents were born in Afghanistan. She is focused on her primary-teaching studies at university. She volunteers part-time at the Sydney high school she attended to help students with ancient history and to 'make the HSC less stressful for students'. She gets online at home and university and in public libraries for studying and everyday things such as checking the weather. If she goes to someone's house she sometimes asks for the wi-fi password. She uses her laptop, but says the mobile is much easier. She notes that for assignments, her world is converging since she came to university because:

Facebook used to just be occasional, like seeing people that I know, saying something about their life, but now I've joined UWS textbooks and UWS official sites, I get notifications about when the semester's finishing...

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne uses Facebook for 'major life achievements or if I'm ranting on about something like savethebird' (a campaign opposed to a rebranding of the university

where she studies). Yvonne uses a separate application for Facebook messenger and recently joined some Facebook groups.

Yvonne uses Instagram a lot. She thinks it's safest because if you post a picture and don't like it, later you can delete it. She also uses Instagram to keep up with Korean (K-pop) and Japanese (J-pop) pop music, and follows Instagram accounts focused on nature. Yvonne also uses Snapchat infrequently to post mundane things such as what she had for breakfast. She likes Snapchat because it has multiple functions and is ephemeral. She likes that you can send direct Snapchat messages, and choose whom you send things to and how long they see it. Yvonne's other major app is Line, which she uses to communicate with friends and family overseas (because there's no charge for overseas messaging), particularly for significant events like school graduation photos. She also watches funny videos on YouTube. She recently made a YouTube account for herself so she can subscribe to science, music or comedy she likes.

7.1.2 Tactics in the digital everyday

While there were a range of ways in which the digital everyday was revealed through tactical interruptions by study participants, tactics in the digital everyday are exemplified by two interviewees in particular, Alex and Yvonne. For this reason, in this chapter, I focus on their activities and interests in this section. Data excerpts are unique, rather than reflective of other participants, except where noted.

Yvonne spoke about her early life experiences and their effect on her:

I grew up in Pakistan for the first eight to nine years of my life. I didn't live in poverty, but we didn't have running water. We'd run out. We had an underground tank in the yard, and a tank would come and bring us water because of the drought, and there would always be shootings and bombings, and it was dangerous to even go out to the shops alone. You couldn't do anything that I take for granted now.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Understandably, Yvonne's experiences have had a profound effect on her. She was born in war-affected Afghanistan and lived in a refugee camp in Pakistan for nine years with her family. She vacillates between saying they were not poor (in Pakistan), and that she has experienced poverty, suggesting a complicated association between her childhood experiences and the lens she applies to what she sees in her current context.

Yvonne then connected her experience with the ways she thinks about poverty and others' actions in relation to waste and privilege:

So I have experienced real poverty, not personally, but I see them with my eyes, so I know that when people take something for granted, I just think you shouldn't, because you should appreciate it. When people throw away food I feel really upset, because there's definitely someone out there who would even eat it from the garbage.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Hardship, poverty, uncertainty and fear all operate as 'openings' through which she relates to more general issues like food waste and inequality. Yvonne is making connections here to her childhood experiences and the way she sees the world as a young adult. These early experiences are important for understanding the practices and interests she engages with in her everyday life and also to understanding particular trigger points for her. As I will discuss, she builds on this story by speaking about how her childhood refugee experiences left her with an understanding of those who find themselves in circumstances of unspoken powerlessness. Her childhood experiences have helped to shape her desire now to speak out for 'living things' (Yvonne) on their behalf.

In the following quote, Yvonne's reference to 'savethebird' arose because, at the time of the interview, her university was engaged in a branding change, around which a

small online campaign started among university students, aimed at saving the logo. The logo included a symbol of a bird, hence the name ‘save the bird’:

I really care about general injustice, when I know there's something that's really unfair. I don't like inequality. When there's a huge gap in something and I think that's just not fair, and also when something like a baby, or animals, or anything that can't speak for itself, but still has life, even like trees, living things, they're still living, breathing. Just because they don't communicate with you by speech doesn't mean they don't have feelings and emotions: 'savethebird!!' (laughs). I try to do as much as I can, but I try to keep it in perspective that no one is gonna take me seriously, like the higher levels of bureaucracy and government. I try to stay within my range: I'm still a uni student and I don't know much about the real world and stuff.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne felt it was unlikely she—and other students—would be ‘taken seriously’ by ‘the higher levels of bureaucracy and government’. She seems to have internalised popular notions about the place of young people and their lack of voice or agency in relation to formal or institutional structures. In this case, students were arguing that the rebranding money should be spent in ways that would benefit them. They expressed their frustration at their lack of input or voice on the issue. Yvonne’s connection between the university logo bird and her love of animals or ‘living things that can’t speak for themselves’ here was humorous, but there was a serious side to her affection for the bird in the logo. It served as part of her motivation to speak out about the lack of student voice. Yvonne tries to ‘stay within her range’, feeling somewhat limited in her capacity to create change, but still resolving to do what she can, to paraphrase her: to speak out for living things without a voice.

For example, Yvonne recounted a public Facebook post she made about student concerns about the branding changes at the university:

UWS Confessions is run by a student and no one knows who. They keep updating about daily life. Last night I realised they want to change the logo, the name. I was infuriated.

I even made a post. I usually don't post anything on Facebook but I just wrote this really long two-paragraph post in relation to that.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne spoke here about a student-run Facebook page that posts about university life. Much of the content is mundane and inconsequential, but posts by some students about the expensive logo change, framed as a waste of resources that could be spent on other student-focused needs, opened up a frontier situation for Yvonne. Driven by anger and the need to speak out with and for other students, she felt compelled to make a public post and engage in the online debate. Her everyday practice of following the university page as part of her engagement with and concern for her student community developed into a form of subactivism:

It was just a rant; I didn't even think of what I was writing... I am so infuriated that I have to voice my opinion. But it was also because the logo is so unappealing. The new one. It's gross.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

In posting her opposition to the logo change on Facebook, Yvonne used the affordances available to voice her opinion and to connect with others in her network. There is an affective dimension to her post—she understands feelings of powerlessness. The rebranding and lack of student engagement in the process could be read as a 'trigger event'. By relating in this way to the event and her positioning on Facebook as a frontier situation, a sort of stage where she felt she could be heard, Yvonne also felt—even if subconsciously—the need to influence others. Political subjectivities are constructed through such actions. The need to influence others is meaningful to Yvonne and part of the way she expresses herself.

Yvonne's connection to the student community via Facebook provided another example of everyday, politically oriented practices in a discussion about the provision (or lack thereof) of car parks and for student needs:

My friend comes here too [to the same university]. She does law... so I asked if she knew what was going on and we had a little rant about how it [the rebrand] was stupid and nobody was listening to us... and then I started because it was real concerns like we don't have enough car parking on campus. Why don't they build a multistorey car park? Some students have to come two hours before their uni starts just to find parking. It's insane.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

In this example, Yvonne spoke about talking with a friend, and posting material on the student-run Facebook page, about student concerns including lack of car parking on campus. She mentioned that no one was listening to them—referencing again those whose voice is not heard. The Facebook page and discussion with her friend about the logo changes served as a trigger event for Yvonne's own more public engagement with the issue on Facebook and in discussions with her friend. A thread can be drawn here from her personal experiences as a child refugee and witnessing and experiencing injustice and the development of an everyday need to fight injustice, particularly for 'living things that cannot speak for themselves' (Yvonne), to a debate about a symbolic bird in a university logo and then to larger university-wide issues. These feelings and motivations are all expressed and disseminated via social media, specifically Facebook. This thread of affect and subactivism demonstrates the complex series of events that constitutes political participation for young people like Yvonne.

7.1.3 Openings in the digital everyday

I spoke with 18-year-old Alex via Skype audio at his home in Adelaide. His mother was born in Adelaide and he has no knowledge of his father. Alex has a disability. At the time of our interview he was focused on his Year 12 studies, volunteered for an online research organisation, and captained a golf club for people with disabilities. He also played soccer. Alex accesses the internet anywhere he can, often through a PlayStation console, on which he plays games for approximately four hours a day.

Otherwise he uses his iPad or laptop to get information about sport: his favourite apps include MLB At Bat (for major league baseball), and the AFL Live Official App. Alex shops online for clothes and items related to his US sporting interests. He also uses the internet for news and soccer information such as team transfers. He shares his soccer interest with a friend. His team is Manchester City.

Alex described his role with a golf club for disabled players:

I'm captain of a golf club for people with disabilities. My week is usually—Monday is private lessons, Tuesday is homework, Wednesday is starting to organise what I need to do for golf, Thursday is table tennis, Friday is finish what I need to do for golf, Saturday or Sunday is golf or soccer. That's what I do outside of school.

Alex, 18 years, male

Alex is evidently committed to his role as captain of the golf club for people with disabilities. His motivation was in part to play and enjoy the game himself—a small, private, everyday action—but developed into a responsibility to ensure that those with a disability have a club where they can play golf. This interest-based activity required substantial planning each week and sharing of information to organise each event.

When asked how he communicates with members, Alex spoke about text messages:

I send text messages to every number, including mine. We have to text everyone to get numbers so we know how many people are coming, because we've got to book spots and stuff. The group contact has also got my number in it, so when I send a text it also comes to my phone.

Alex, 18 years, male

Alex uses the affordances of text messaging to connect with members. Alex includes himself in the group text messages he sends. Including himself in this way means he

knows messages are delivered and he can check the information contained is correct. Text messages are not mediated by the internet, but they do provide Alex with a direct and immediate way to organise a number of people at little or no cost.

Alex discussed the series of challenging circumstances leading to his running of the golf club:

I started in 2008 because when I was young I used to do horse-riding. That closed down because the site got bought out by one of the new housing developments. For some reason the sport I always wanted to play was golf, so I got in contact with our Novita agency here and they had a program called the ConnectABILITY program, which connects Novita clients to sport and recreation programs throughout their local area. They sort of act like a middleman. A few weeks later they came back with a group called the South Australian Amputee Golf Association, run by a guy called [X]. He then created the Australian Disabled Golfing Federation in 2012, and then he died in February in 2012. Then the delay was with the secretary, who was supposed to take over but didn't do anything. From about then on, I found myself usually doing most of the work.

Alex, 18 years, male

Evident in Alex's discussion is his desire to be involved in sport. He actively pursued sporting interests and now plays golf, with a disability. While Alex initially became involved in playing golf for his own personal interest, to ensure others living with a disability had access, he took on an organising role when his chosen sport was at risk of not being available due to a series of challenging circumstances. His sporting interest therefore served as a frontier situation and the threat of closure of the club served as a trigger point for Alex's leadership of the club. For Alex organising the club is about more than sport, it is about his motivation to ensure sporting opportunities for others living with a disability. This is an ethical dimension to his actions. Alex is revealing his tactical response to the strategic impulses of the everyday. Into an adult-run and 'ableist' sport, Alex is inserting himself into the routine of the golf club. In doing so, he shifts from being a 'client' of a disability

service to being the coordinator of a disability sport federation. His tactical (de Certeau, 1988) response to the strategies and structures he encounters reveals how Alex exerts his agency and influence.

Alex continued by describing his role in and motivation for advocating more widely for the rights of people with disabilities to play sport—golf in particular:

Well, not just myself, but all the disabled golf corporations throughout the world want to see golf in the Paralympics, because that's one thing where it would be beneficial, because golf is the sort of sport you can play even if you have a disability, and it's good for rehab and stuff. That would be the main aim for disabled golf around the world: to get it into the Paralympics.

Alex, 18 years, male

Alex is involved with the disabled golf club because of his own disability and his desire to address the barriers to access that others experience. Golf is one way of actively doing that. Alex's interest also has a political dimension. His interest in seeing golf as a sport in the Paralympics has a clear civic goal, and he is now setting about pursuing it. The activities highlighted in this example of subactivism also shape Alex's political concerns and capabilities as he engages in everyday practices that deepen his knowledge of golf for the disabled and ways to advocate for the sport to become part of the Paralympics. His aim (getting golf into the Paralympics) is reflective of a broader politics of inclusion, arising from his experiences of living with a disability.

Alex also expressed the necessity of his practice to ensuring the continuation of the golf club:

I have to be a member: if I wasn't there then no one would be able to run it properly. ... I basically am the activities.

Alex, 18 years, male

Alex's engagement is purposeful—if not for his participation, the club might not continue. Alex sees himself as critical to the club and the other participants' ability to play golf. In this context an opening has developed, and Alex's agency demonstrates his learned expertise as a citizen (Bang, 2005). In this way, openings are not external to the subject, but are produced in relation to the circumstances they encounter. Alex has a personal, issues-based approach and takes on a position of responsibility within an organisation partly because he's worried it won't exist without him, but also because he knows that it provides a position from which to influence others.

Alex also spoke of the technology he uses that helps him with his everyday activities as a person living with a disability:

There's a lot of programs. One called Dragon Speak I use to do a lot of my schoolwork. Talk-to-text programs. You set up a profile and it gets to know your voice and you say what you want to write down for an assignment, just the same as keying or writing in a notebook.

Alex, 18 years, male

Through this knowledge and practical application, drawing again on his own challenges as a disabled young person, he has directed that understanding to benefiting others in his community. He spoke about his knowledge of the software programs and information they need to improve their lives and maximise their potential. Alex transfers his knowledge of digital tools in speaking to doctors and influencers in the disability sector:

People with disabilities often don't use the internet to find what they need to be able to benefit their life and maximise their potential. A lot of organisations that do disability stuff, a lot of extra information's online and a lot of programs online ... I speak in front of audiences, whether they are doctors and high-profile medical professionals or

people with disabilities themselves. I talk about why it's important for people with disabilities to look for programs and stuff that [will] help them.

Alex, 18 years, male

Alex spoke about advocating for support for organisations to raise awareness about benefits of technology for those with disabilities. His everyday practices have an ethical and civic dimension, and he is responsive to triggers such as opportunities to speak to those who can influence and improve the lives of other young people living with a disability. This is demonstrated through his examples of captaining the golf club for the disabled and teaching others about technical information that assists them to maximise their capabilities.

These examples illustrate that Alex's various engagements with disability issues range from individual, subactivist (Bakardjieva, 2009) actions, through to group-oriented, subpolitical acts (Beck, 1997). They are evidence of the ways people can occupy different positions at the same time and to varying degrees. Alex's everyday practices, regularly organised and promoted by digital media, are consequential to the ways in which he affects his community. These actions occur in spaces that are not always identified as places of political action, but nonetheless Alex is able to make a tangible difference in his community through his knowledge-sharing.

Yvonne and Alex's background and life experiences are very different, but they have both been deeply affected by them. Their experiences help to explain their reasons for engaging in particular activities and interests. Both have used their individual challenges of displacement and disability as motivation for informing others. While the frontier situations and triggers are different for each of them, these examples of subactivism show how everyday interests can develop into more public acts.

While Yvonne appears to have internalised some messages about the limitations of young people's scope for action, she also makes tactical breaks in the everyday, such as posting her concerns about the university rebranding on Facebook. Alex has

taken his individual circumstances and ensured that by participating and running a group activity, he can give others with similar challenges the chance to be active participants. Alex understands the meaning and importance of his role in empowering others and extends this to knowledge of technology available for the disabled. He exercises his agency tactically and addresses those who can further empower others. This can have powerful consequences for his community.

Common to both Yvonne and Alex's interviews was the theme of accessing and sharing information on issues of interest and concern via digital platforms. Examples included keeping informed about issues of consequence to one's community and learning about technology available to assist people with disabilities. This raises questions about why these young people engage with these particular issues, and how these practices shape political subjectivities. In the following section, I focus on examples of the information-gathering and -sharing practices of other young people, and explore their meanings and implications to show how these practices are increasingly important forms of political participation.

7.2 Informed and ready

Being informed about public issues is considered to be a particularly important element of dutiful citizenship (Bennett, Wells & Rank, 2009). Bennett (1998) distinguishes between dutiful citizens who feel an obligation to participate in politics in traditional ways, such as voting, following news debates through broadcast media, and joining political organisations, with actualising citizens who feel less duty to participate in government, focus on lifestyle politics (political consumerism, volunteering, social activism), mistrust media and politicians, and join loose networks for social action such as online activism. But in the digitally mediated age, traditional, top-down modes of communication such as broadcast media, which aimed to promote civic engagement, are being replaced by more self-expressive ways of seeking and disseminating information (Bennett, Wells and Freelon, 2011; Mascheroni, 2017). These everyday digital practices are increasingly mediated

through platforms such as Facebook, where issues of interest are individually chosen (Vromen et al., 2016). Informing oneself as part of self-actualising citizenship consists of actively constructing 'personally and socially created information networks' (Wells, 2014: 625). This is a critical change in citizen norms and media and news'consumption practices.

This self-actualising form of citizenship is neatly captured in Amnå & Ekman's (2014) concept of the standby citizen, where young people are politically informed, stay alert, and are equipped and willing to take further action should they choose to do so. Amnå and Ekman (2014) argue that in the digital age, practices of gathering and disseminating information should not be understood as acts of passivity; rather, they should be reconceptualised as significant and meaningful forms of engagement. Digital media enables young people to be informed on matters of interest and to initiate further action quickly. Moreover, I argue that standby citizenship informs subactivism, because being informed can mean being in proximity to frontier situations and these can lead to trigger events for further action. I argue that standby citizenship is also a form of empowerment for young people. As they gather and disseminate information on issues they are invested in and care about, they develop their knowledge and deepen their networks. They are also able to exercise their agency as they prepare for action and engage with issues beyond those disseminated through traditional top-down communication platforms. They are exercising their capacity to choose their interests and curate and negotiate their networks. Young people negotiate the readily accessible affordances of digital media, and specifically social media, to engage in issues they care about, and as an everyday tactic that takes advantage of possibilities for readiness for further action. In the following section I present analysis of standby citizenship among the young people I interviewed.

7.2.1 Seeking and sharing information

While Sarah wasn't explicitly active around the issue of human rights, she spoke about sharing information on human rights through her digital networks *as* active engagement.

I have other friends who are also quite passionate about issues like human rights. A lot of stuff we share with each other, and I will email them a link I found. I ask them to read it, tell me what they think. Just discussion in that sense.

Sarah, 19 years, female

Sarah's sharing of information on human rights with friends is an important way of connecting with others and engaging actively with issues she cares about. She sees being informed and sharing and discussing information with others in her network as engagement. She doesn't passively consume content; she asks her friends for their opinions and emails them links. She connects with and seeks further insight on issues from those around her. Sarah's comments suggest she wants change, but also sees value in the process—the meaning and interactions that engagement with an issue provides. Everyday ways of engaging with issues matter to her, not just outcomes. This expression of standby citizenship—being informed and informing others, and being able and ready to act, deepens her knowledge of human rights and actively develops her networks.

When asked about issues she cares about, Jane's response was an immediate concern about education—the way the university spends money. She provided the example of the recent university rebranding:

I guess like the rebranding of it. I guess that money could be better spent in other areas like scholarships and kids that live out this way sort of thing.

Jane, 19 years, female

Jane's comment reflects an ethical frame. She considers the ways in which resources can be spent to benefit those in her community who need it. She is mindful of others in the way she thinks about her peers.

When asked if she engages personally or publicly with the issue or issues like it, she said:

I don't really do much with them. I kind of say it when talking to people. Whenever it comes up in conversation. Yeah.

Jane, 19 years, female

Jane doesn't speak here about gathering information, but she does speak with those in her networks about matters of concern when they come to her attention. For Jane, speaking with others is a form of participation. She does what she can, where she can, when she is aware of issues as they arise in her everyday life.

Members of the focus group I spoke with stated that they use a range of digital applications to connect with others and engage in a lot of 'lurking'. That is, they don't necessarily share material—reporting that they are conscious of boring people with trivial details or concerned about intrusions from others—but they do gather information. This reflects the everyday ways young people are connected with others, use the affordances of the applications available to them to stay informed, and are ready to act further if needed. Additionally, the affordances of some applications, such as YouTube, where users watch one video and are automatically directed to further material based on the platforms' algorithms, means information-gathering leads young people from one video to another. One focus-group member said, 'when I'm on the couch and watching six-second videos, I just look at a new category and I'm there for another hour.' This means young people's initial interest can lead to further interest and knowledge on additional topics.

For Yvonne, following Ricky Gervais—a popular animal-rights activist, comedian and actor—on Facebook is a key strategy for being informed on an issue she is interested in and cares about:

I try to make good choices myself whenever I can. I also I try to follow people who share my interests, like Ricky Gervais. He's a strong animal-rights advocate, so I follow him on Facebook. I try to keep up-to-date with the world and what's happening. Recently, in China, they were killing and torturing dogs for some sort of ceremony. It was a huge deal, and then somewhere in Asia, a small country, Myanmar I think, they had a full celebration for a day worshipping dogs because they were man's best friends. They help the blind and stuff. Ricky Gervais was updating and saying China should learn from this country. You should treat animals with dignity and the respect they deserve. Just because they can't speak your language doesn't mean you should be ignorant and make bad choices, so I do that.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne spoke about following people on Facebook who share her interest in animal rights, and specifically Ricky Gervais. Yvonne views Gervais as an expert in the area of animal rights, but he is first publicly recognised and acknowledged for his roles as a comedian and actor. Yvonne, and presumably others like her, play a role in extending Gervais' influence as an authority in this space. His popularity here is facilitated by social media. Through her agency as an informed and interested citizen, she influences how Gervais is seen by others, and his standing in relation to animal-rights issues. Facebook enables Yvonne to learn about current animal-rights news and debates—in this case regarding China and Myanmar. In this way, Facebook is a platform that enables access to detailed information that may not be readily accessible through traditional broadcast media.

Yvonne demonstrates qualities of standby citizenship, informing herself about animal rights and being prepared to engage with others. This example shows how digital media expands the opportunities and details available to her. She also shows

how standby citizenship, in her view, is not optional. She argues that she *should* be informed. For her, standby citizenship is an obligation, not just something she does, and ignorance is a form of bad citizenship, with the potential to lead to poor decisions in everyday life. Yvonne's standby citizenship also has affective dimensions, as seen in her reference to feelings of positive engagement with animal rights and a sense of active participation on an issue that has great meaning for her ('it's good to know I tried to do something about it' [Yvonne]).

For Yvonne, 'making informed decisions' in everyday life is both important and mundane. They are everyday things:

I do have friends I can connect with if I feel really strongly about something. We can try and discuss it, or try to think of ways to help, even if it's in a small way and even if we think we can't help. At least we can try and make informed decisions about what we buy or what we wear. Just everyday things.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne's actions do not involve formal organising or on-the-ground action, but rather it is the act of being informed and sharing that knowledge with others that matters to her. Yvonne described this *as* political engagement. This is an example of standby citizenship, as Yvonne is interested in specific issues, is politically informed, and is alert and willing to take further political action under the right circumstances. There is a connection here between sharing and gathering information and the everyday micro-actions that are a form of Bakardjieva's (2009) subactivism. Yvonne's information practices—learning about and sharing information on animal rights—have a political and ethical focus. These actions are mediated using digital technologies. Affect plays a role here, too. It is Yvonne's past experiences that have helped develop her interest in animal rights, and led to her giving up time and energy to be informed about living things that she feels need her voice.

Hannah, who studies and is passionate about Islamic history, discussed sharing information of personal and political interest and her efforts to get others to pay more attention to things she is interested in:

I have passed on information to parents, friends I know. Through Facebook you share pages and links, so I guess in that way we try to promote it a lot. In terms of Islamic history, I sometimes do have rants with my friends and family about it, and I guess they get some knowledge out of it as well. The stuff I tell them might be something new they learn, and they also get interested in what I am doing. So something that I pay attention to, they might start paying more attention to.

Hannah, 19 years, female

Through Facebook, Hannah shares links of interest about Islamic history with family and friends to inform herself and those in her networks. She wants to encourage others to develop their knowledge and interest in Islamic history, but through encouraging them to make connections with concepts, stories, and ideas. She is actively engaged in Islamic history debates, and is prepared and preparing for future informed action, leadership or mobilisation. During our discussion, Hannah used the phrase 'spreading awareness on issues' (Hannah). She recognises that informing herself on issues of interest and then spreading awareness by informing and actively engaging with others in her network, is an important part of everyday life. This practice gives her a feeling of empowering herself and others, and playing a role in social change. It is her ability to share awareness on issues through digital media, specifically Facebook, with its affordances of network-building, multifaceted communication capacities (text, image and video), permeation and accessibility, and ease of access, that facilitates her standby citizenship.

7.2.2 Challenges and implications

Ready access to news and informing oneself also carries challenges. Natalie identified the ability to be informed as a risk she needs to manage (Beck, 1992):

I guess sometimes what's happening around the world. Sometimes you hear people talk about it before you read it, and I just hear it, so I guess it's so tragic that I don't want to read it. Some of the apps that I use have links to world news. Sometimes I open it and read it and decide 'oh no I don't want to know about this', because it's just heartbreaking. I think that's a good way of showing awareness in the sense of people like me who don't really watch TV or read newspapers.

Natalie, 20 years, female

Natalie described negative feelings associated with learning about some tragic news events, prompting her to stop reading about them. There is a form of 'emotional labour' here (Hochschild, 2012:19). Natalie feels she has to stay informed, but this can mean having to deal with the feelings that come with this knowledge. However, knowledge of tragedy also has the potential to support further action—as young people learn about unjust events for example, they may try to help others or change the situation if they perceive their actions can make a difference. Natalie ultimately recognises the need to stay informed and engaged with events, even if this is uncomfortable at times. Given her stated lack of engagement with television or newspapers, digital media enables Natalie to learn about the world, however uncomfortable that may be. While not saying so explicitly, she appears to believe that this awareness is a form of connection with others and part of good citizenship.

Woodman and Wyn (2014) discuss the lack of attention given to time pressures young people are subject to in a precarious risk society. Young people need to manage study, work and other activities, and this affects the time available to connect with family and friends. Their standby-citizenship practices are one way to manage these constraints:

It depends on my uni workload, because I try to prioritise uni as the number one. The second one is my family and whatever issues they want help with. The third is all my household duties. After that, I try to fit in some sort of social-media time, even if it's 10 minutes before I go to bed, I just like to update myself on what's happening. If I feel really strongly about animal advocacy or whatever, I tend to click on it, and if they say

you should go to this website and petition or whatever or sign something, then I do it because I think even if it's insignificant, and even if it does fail, or doesn't change the mainstream ideas, it's good to know I tried to do something about it.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Yvonne's comment about her time constraints highlights the importance of standby citizenship. It emphasises its importance as a form of participation readily available to young people; young people may not have time to join a political party or meet the demands of some member organisations, but here is evidence that they find small amounts of time to be informed and ready to act. While Yvonne reported difficulties finding time to access social media to 'keep up' with the issues and interests of concern to her, she deploys strategies ('even if it's only 10 minutes') to support her need to know what's going on in the world. Notably, her comment was about information-gathering, not socialising, contradicting popular assumptions about young people's time online as trivial. The time she is able to spend provides her with feelings of contributing to making a difference to animal-rights debates and issues, even if it is in a small way.

This stands in contrast with debates about clicktivism or slacktivism as being of little consequence (Gladwell, 2010; White, 2010) or as a lazy form of participation (Morozov, 2011). Indeed, Halupka (2018: 130) argues for the legitimacy of clicktivism as a political act. Developing a series of lenses to explore the legitimacy of clicktivism (the adherence of the action to traditional paradigms; the acceptance of, belief in, and intentionality of the action; and the context in which it is situated) he argues that that legitimacy can be understood as multifaceted. Applying this to Yvonne's everyday practices of staying informed about animal rights, we might argue that this is in line with Halupka's approach. Her feeling of 'at least I did something' indicates her belief in that action and its intentionality as being part of something to create change.

Yvonne's comment that she just likes to update herself on what is happening reflects Ekman and Amnå's (2012) notion of informing oneself as active engagement. She stated that 'if I feel really strongly about it' (animal advocacy) further action includes signing an online petition for example ('if they say you should go to this website and petition or whatever or sign something, then I do it' [Yvonne]). Yvonne expressed how even if this doesn't result in actual social change or policy change, there is a feeling of positive reinforcement: that it's 'good to know' that I 'tried to do something about it' (Yvonne). Affect underpins these actions—online participation and engagement are affective experiences that are meaningful to Yvonne. Being informed in this way also suggests there is the possibility of further action if she chooses. These acts are not always widely visible, but they play a role in informing Yvonne, educating those in her networks, and allowing her to build new connections related to her concerns or actions to address issues she cares about.

A number of young people I interviewed used the tools and time available to them to be informed and to inform others as a form of tactical engagement to build their knowledge and networks. Informing others through digital media and conversation, they serve as agents of change. Evident in Yvonne's comments on sourcing information on animal rights from Ricky Gervais was the way in which experts emerge on a particular issue based on commitment to and shared sense of caring about something—not necessarily from more traditional notions of who is an expert or what constitutes expertise. This kind of agency serves to change who is recognised as powerful in a given field. Their practices of gathering and disseminating information about a range of social issues are everyday events—not just at election time or when someone tries to engage them in a campaign, for example. They all seem to suggest that their informal sharing of information and views influences those around them—that is, their agency is effective. These young people are politically active, and it could be argued more so than more recognised or legitimate forms of political participation, such as elections, could facilitate.

I argue that standby citizenship is an increasingly important form of political participation for three reasons. First, my research shows, even from a small sample, that young people exercise their citizenship in this way. By asking young people about their concerns and actions, I have been able to develop a picture of active and engaged standby citizens. Second, knowing that the young people I interviewed are informed and ready to act informs understandings of why and how issues and concerns appear to emerge rapidly but in fact have long lead times and indicators for action. Third, these practices and interests are meaningful to these young people and a practical and accessible way for them to exercise their agency. These reasons heighten the importance of broadening definitions of what counts as legitimate forms of political participation.

The interests of these young people are individual and personal, but they also find ways to connect with and move others in their shared interests. But this raises the question of how these interests develop. Why do young people gather and disseminate information on specific issues? What motivates them to do this? Affect is increasingly recognised as playing an important role in politically oriented practices in the digitally mediated age (Papacharissi, 2014). I argue that this is an important element in the development of interests in particular areas and in the personalised and self-expressive sharing of information. In the next section I discuss and give further examples of the role of affect to illustrate its role in young people's everyday activities.

7.3 The role of affect

In the theories I have drawn upon in this study, specifically subactivism and standby citizenship, the role of affect is not discussed. However, a growing body of work identifies affect as increasingly important in motivating political participation, especially in a digitally mediated context (Papacharissi, 2014). Affect helps explain why people develop particular interests and act on them. The pre-emptive intensity experienced through some life events can lead to further action or interest because

of that event (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016). Affect is the sense of movement felt before developing an emotion or view (or both) about an issue (Papacharissi, 2016). When people care about something they spend time and effort and feel motivated to take further action.

My interviews with young people suggest affective experiences can stem from childhood and develop in unexpected but deeply considered and meaningful political engagements that prompt connections and affinities with other people and issues. For example, Yvonne, who spent nine years in a refugee camp, spoke about her feelings for Aboriginal Australians, and her desire for them to experience greater understanding:

I really want Australian society to have equality with Aborigines. I want us to understand their culture, in depth. To have that in the curriculum and just to have Aboriginal languages as well as part of primary school or high school as an option.

Yvonne spoke about wanting improved education about and knowledge of Australian indigenous cultures. She sees value in cultural knowledge and understanding as a way of improving relations, and as a way of speaking up for those in need of a voice.

She relates the challenges of others to her own circumstances:

I want people to stop stereotyping everybody in general. I'm a Muslim, so when people say 'oh you are a terrorist', it upsets me. I don't show it, but internally I think, why would you even say that? It's one of the major reasons why I really want to wear the hijab; I think what happens in the future if someone does make a stupid comment and that really scares me, so I try not to. I just try to be a good person, because that's what the major part of Islam is.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

She spoke about addressing and contributing to re-education against racist and religious stereotypes, immediately linking this to the issue of terrorism and her own Muslim identity. Running through Yvonne's comments are references to the affective dimensions of her experiences. She spoke about being 'upset' when links are made between terrorists and Islam, but also that she does her best to not show a response. She expressed her fear of being (emotionally) scarred if others were to make a 'stupid' comment in relation to wearing a hijab.

But Yvonne finishes with a practical and pragmatic approach to her role in creating change:

So I'm like, it's ok, even I don't cover my head, I can do it when I'm like 40. It's fine, just live your life as best as you can.

Yvonne, 19 years, female

Her final comment about 'living your life the best you can' demonstrates her efforts to exercise her agency to manage these challenges in her everyday life. Yvonne's response to stereotyping at a group level is made at the level of the individual: to try to be a good person and to try to live one's faith, in this case Islam, and in doing so really live the heart of Islam—that is, to be a good person. While Yvonne is of course affected negatively by racist stereotypes, she applies this in positive ways to encourage change for others and to propel her to live life as best she can—every day.

Also discussing feelings of needing to do what one can to help others, Alex, who lives with a disability, spoke about those in his golf club who feel threatened when they compare their skills to those of the top players. He suggested that a sense of inadequacy plays a role in teammates not competing or participating:

They just don't think they'd be good at doing it, and then the negative consequence of trying something and not being able to achieve to the top-player level. You don't have to be the top player to be good on your level. With my golf club, there's definitely some

players who are very good and above everyone else, but there are some who are learning, but I think people sort of freak out when they see how good the top players are and don't actually remember or realise they're still learning and these top players in the team had to do the same at one stage.

Alex, 18 years, male

While this example is about sporting participation, the affective dimension helps explain some young people's reasons for not getting involved in certain activities. This thinking can be extended to young people's experience of popular discourses of youth political apathy and disengagement (Manning, 2015). Given popular notions about young people's lack of knowledge about politics and/or their qualifications to even participate in politics, such as the right to vote under the age of 18 in Australia, many may have internalised these discourses and feelings about more legitimate or recognised forms of participation (Edwards, 2007, 2009). Young people are subject to powerful, often negative, messages from political institutions and society more broadly about their capacity to engage politically. This may help to explain why they adopt more cultural, informal and networked forms of participation. They deploy the tactics available to them—such as gathering and disseminating information—to engage in politics in ways they feel they can make a difference. Feelings of inadequacy can result in a reluctance to participate—be it in sport or political action. This comment relates to discussions in Chapter 5 on Oaktree and AYCC and the emphasis the organisations place on skill-building. The organisations understand young people need to feel that they are able and have the skills to participate in political activism with confidence. In interviews, research participants' feelings of political inadequacy as identified by Alex and Yvonne were not raised among study participants. Their articulations, however, do reflect the ways in which some young people internalise discourses about young people's political capacities and positions (Manning, 2015). This is evidence of the effects of current power arrangements, including the increased economic precarity of many young people and its role in shaping understandings about the political environment (Farthing, Bessant & Watts, 2017). Some young people are now embodying the exclusion that

discourses about them prescribe. These arrangements now permeate some young people's everyday practices and how they situate themselves in the broader political context. Even the 'everyday politics' or 'project-based' approach (Bang, 2005) that these young people reflect are subject to the strategic impulses of the everyday which legitimise *some* forms of political action for young people, and the extent of political power, while maintaining their exclusion from others. Such discourses powerfully undermine the aims of political socialisation while also failing to recognise the complex nature of young people's political subjectivities, as they develop through their everyday practices.

Natalie also identified how feeling intimidated by others' capabilities can lead to reluctance to participate, but acknowledged that that this shouldn't necessarily preclude participation:

I'm kind of intimidated by it [getting more involved in issues] in a way, because to do something so well, you feel that pressure. But I think, for me, it's that pressure I put on myself and for others—I know that they're actually probably just ignorant about it, but I don't know that this is happening or that they can actually do something. They're just like, 'oh well, someone else will do something better than I can'. If someone is better, you can still do something about it.

Natalie, 20 years, female

Natalie showed here how affect does not always lead to action. Feelings of inadequacy can be just as powerful as feelings of competency or capacity. Natalie is reluctant to engage with issues and ideas and the prospect of taking action, and admits to feelings of intimidation and that others can act more competently. Feelings therefore shape both action and inaction. But they shape it rather than determine it. Young people may or may not act according to feelings of inadequacy. At the same time, however, apparent 'inaction' in more visible acts or places actually belies underlying action such as information-gathering, political interest or private conversations. This shows one of the ways young people's subjectivities as political

beings are constituted. Thus, even in moments when young people feel disinclined to act, there is the possibility that this inaction is both political and generative of alternatives. Therefore, it can be multidirectional and can help to explain why young people may be reluctant to participate—again because they don't feel sufficiently capable or worthy. Natalie, however, acknowledges that the pressure of others' capabilities should not preclude young people from making some contribution where needed. She suggests that young people can still engage in change-making practices despite their feelings. Small, everyday practices still matter.

Feelings of inadequacy in relation to political participation are not unique to young people. In Germany, Haß and co-authors (2014) identified in their research on citizen groups and infrastructure projects that feelings fellow citizens were better at political actions can develop into the belief that political action should be left to others. While not focused on young people, Haß and co-authors (2014) interviewed citizens affected by three large infrastructure projects about their views on the planned projects. They found that some in Germany feel that organised and more professional groups can better address issues, and therefore leave it to them to advocate on their behalf, feeling they lack the knowledge to do so themselves. They note that this is particularly the case for the old and the young, calling their theory the delegation hypothesis. That is, there is a tendency for people to delegate concerns or actions about social issues to existing civic actors, especially when they are at the beginning or the end of their adult life (Haß et al., 2014). It may also mean that rather than disengaging, young people who do not see themselves as professional enough prefer everyday, cultural approaches to participation.

Affect presses the boundaries of acceptable or recognised political identities to reveal how young people may feel about the limits of political life. This could serve as a cautionary example for Oaktree and AYCC that their professionalism could turn some young people away. If young people feel intimidated by the organisations' structures or approaches, they may turn to more individual, everyday ways of engaging politically. This emphasises the important role the organisations can play

in helping young people to develop a range of skills and the confidence to act: the belief that what they do matters, whether in the sporting, cultural or political fields.

7.4 Conclusions

While the young people interviewed here did not identify themselves as politically 'active' or involved in activist organisations, many are engaging in everyday practices with a political or ethical focus in their communities. Subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009) is evident through the frontier situations and trigger points encountered by even this small sample of young people. Yvonne's example of following a student Facebook page, informing herself about student issues and posting material in response to students' concerns about resources is a form of Bakardjieva's (2009) subactivism and frontier situations. Yvonne's practices demonstrate how quiet, everyday acts can become more visible through digital media and are significant examples of the lived citizenship practices young people are engaging in.

The analysis also demonstrates the range of ways this sample of young people engage in standby-citizenship practices (Amnå & Ekman, 2014) in their everyday lives, facilitated by digital media. These young people are informed, share their knowledge with others on issues they care about, and are ready to act further. Hannah, for example, spoke about the ways she learns about and circulates information on Islamic history, building her networks and knowledge on her interest, which she can act further upon if she chooses. My research shows how standby citizenship is a common, everyday practice for many young people and one that matters to them, even if they don't recognise the concept. The accessibility of digital media equips young people to be informed and to rapidly disseminate their information to others. This is why I argue that in the digitally mediated age, the political power and potential of standby citizenship needs to be more widely recognised and studied.

My analysis also indicates the ways subactivism and standby citizenship are shaped through affect. The activities and interests young people engage with are often based in early experiences that moved them. This shows the need to listen to young people's stories and experiences to understand the complexity and depth of their political participation. These young people care deeply about their chosen interests and are motivated to participate in further actions under the right circumstances or at the right trigger points. This is clear in the way they articulate their feelings and motivations, and tells us something important about potential future actions. Affect reinforces the need to pay attention to everyday practices that are not always readily visible but have the potential to bubble up into acts of significant social change (Kaldor & Selchow, 2013). These everyday acts contrast with the many highly organised and formal repertoires of Oaktree and AYCC, and demonstrate the ways young people 'in the crowd' might be engaging in important activities of their own initiatives, often with tangible outcomes. This is significant because it shows the diversity of forms of political participation people engage with and reinforces the need to reconceptualise young people's political participation beyond formal structures and practices.

Everyday actions and interests matter to young people, and they are areas in which young people exercise the agency available to them. These need to be recognised and valued as increasingly important and legitimate forms of political participation. Organisations play a role in the shaping of young people's political subjectivities, but they are not the only domain where this occurs. These insights offer Oaktree and AYCC additional detail of ways to connect with non-members, or 'the crowd', and potentially move them and Committed members further along their defined categories of engagement through increasing activity levels with the organisations.

In the final chapter I discuss how youth-led organisations' engagement strategies and the activities and interests of individuals are important for understanding the political potential of the everyday as an ever-expanding public space (Papacharissi, 2009). Political participation practices currently deemed less important or even

illegitimate must be taken seriously by traditional political institutions and actors as well as youth-led activist organisations, if they are to maintain their legitimacy. My analysis suggests that if they are to remain relevant in the lives of young people, they must find meaningful ways to recognise, connect with and respond to the subactivism of 'the crowd'.

Chapter 8. Conclusions

Major political events occurred during this research that were considered unexpected: Britain voted to leave the European Union, Donald Trump became president of the United States and, more recently, Australia, and particularly young people, voted to legislate for same-sex marriage. The public discourse around these events was largely one of surprise, even astonishment, at both the outcomes and the extent of young people's participation in them. Over time, however, signs and precursors were recognised, and these events were subsequently framed as articulations of people's precarious economic circumstances, and their dissatisfaction and frustration with existing political decision-making structures and perceived elitism. Before these events occurred, this study was designed to build on the evidence that political interest and identity had become much more issues-based and everyday, but with the specific aim of understanding the ways in which young people are interested, engaged and informed citizens, and how their often unnoticed or unstudied everyday practices are actually the formative places of political action.

It is in this context that I have drawn on the theories and perspectives of those who argue there are important learnings in everyday, even subterranean spaces, from which concerns can 'bubble up' (Kaldor & Selchow, 2013) and readily become politically consequential. Like Bakardjieva (Bakardjieva & Dahlgren, 2014), I see power operating in the 'horizontal chatter' of the everyday. Today's digitally mediated environment enables organisations, their members and others to engage in multiple forms of networked communication. It enables strategic, centrally managed and dispersed communication techniques, and the ability to be highly informed on specific issues and follow's one's everyday interests in ways that can suddenly become more public through curated and unpredictable networks.

In this changing and unpredictable context this research has sought to understand and explain the related roles of organisations, the everyday and affect for shaping young people's political subjectivities.

I have first asked: what are the contexts and conditions through which young people develop diverse forms of political subjectivity? To answer this question, I have examined young people's activities and interests in different everyday settings, including highly engaged youth-led activist organisation leaders, their members, and young people with no connection to politically oriented organisations. I have found that young Australians develop political subjectivity through different encounters in a constellation of engagement events and practices that can be more—or less—mediated by digital technologies. These include politically oriented organisations and everyday contexts with no immediately apparent connection to recognised political life. Moreover, digital media significantly mediates their activities and interests, and plays an important role in the relationships between organisations and individuals.

My research was also carried out in the context of debates about young people's political participation primarily framed as binaries: organised political action versus individual expression, traditional versus self-expressive practices, and online versus offline connections. However, I have argued that such framing does not sufficiently attend to contemporary forms of political participation that are deeply meaningful to young people and often unseen or deemed illegitimate or ineffective by established political institutions and actors. I therefore asked the question: what interests and activities are meaningful to young people and what conditions underpin this meaning-making process? By speaking with young people and tracing the participatory threads in their everyday stories, I learnt more about their everyday practices in the digitally mediated age and how these inform our understanding and conceptualisation of citizenship today.

To explore these activities, interests and settings I have brought together a diverse literature positing theoretical concepts and empirical work that addresses evolving, often digitally mediated, citizenship practices. These include organisational hybridity (Chadwick, 2007), subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009), standby citizenship

(Amnå & Ekman, 2014) and affect (Papacharissi, 2014; Massumi, 2002). These theories range from relatively straightforward explanations of changing organisational forms and practices, through to complex articulations of subject formation that bring to the fore ways young people exercise their agency in everyday environments and are therefore crucial to understanding new forms of political participation. I argue that synthesised here, they provide a comprehensive approach to understanding young people's political participation in the digital age that captures the nuances and complexities of the current context.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the everyday is produced through ideas, social structures and built environments. In the digital society, the everyday is also produced through digital architectures and the practices and routines they affect. De Certeau's (1988) conceptualisation of the everyday explains how practices, in the form of tactics, in turn shape ideas, structure, environments and architectures. That is, de Certeau posits that everyday practices are shaped in part by systems and actors that employ strategies aimed at structuring how everyday life takes place, but while strategies are powerful, those subject to these strategies can deploy tactics to manage or subvert these strategies. It is this strategic deployment of ways of doing things, met with tactics of resistance, that shapes ideas, social structures and spaces. De Certeau's articulation of strategies elucidates how power and the ways it manifests is central to the everyday. In drawing together the various literatures concerned with everyday political practices and analysing young people's everyday activities and interests across contexts, I suggest that what is at play is a form of 'quiet power'. Quiet power is at play when young people tactically subvert something in their everyday lives on issues they care about, through action or inaction, or in response to approaches or strategies imposed on them. These tactics shape both their own political concerns and interests and those they connect with in their dynamic and changing networks, including organisations.

In Chapter 5 I showed how in engaging with youth-led activist organisations, young people exercise a form of agency in ways that shape the organisations. They express

their preferred forms of engagement either explicitly or implicitly (by not responding) to approaches and in this way effectively require organisations to change their strategies and approaches. To maintain their relevance, the organisations need to exercise what Hebdige (drawing on Hall) describes as recuperation (1998). To recuperate young people's responses, organisations absorb their preferences into organisations' plans and practices. These then become part of the organisations' strategies. In this way, young people exercise quiet power in shaping politically oriented organisations and their practices.

In this final chapter I first focus on the ways everyday settings serve to address the research question of the contexts and conditions through which young people develop diverse forms of political subjectivity. This discussion focuses on the everyday and how it reveals new or different understandings of the acquisition of political subjectivity. I then consider the research question concerning the interests and activities that are meaningful to young people and the conditions that underpin this meaning-making process. I draw on the findings of my research across the organisations, members and non-members I spoke with. I also discuss the implications of these findings for other settings. I then consider the limitations of my research before turning to possible future directions. I end with some thoughts on the significance of this research for political life more broadly.

8.1 Settings of the everyday

In this section I discuss key insights from my thesis under the themes of reciprocity and the everyday, quiet power and subactivism. I do this in the context of the various settings of everyday life in which this research was conducted, to draw out the interweaving of strategies and practices that emerged. I begin by detailing *the reciprocal relationship that was revealed between the youth-led activist organisations and their members*, and the ways in which organisations and individuals shape each other through their everyday practices. I then examine the constellation of activities, interests and agency that young people are engaged in to foreground less visible or

recognised practices that are formative settings for further actions. I conclude the section with a discussion of the implications of these findings for other settings.

Reciprocity in everyday life

Oaktree and AYCC play an important role in shaping young people's political concerns and actions through their diverse engagement strategies. In Chapter 5 I detailed how their strategic deployment of face-to-face and digitally mediated activities creates an environment of constant engagement and interest for their members. These organisations target communications to large numbers of young people, for example through social-media posts, while also directly targeting individuals—phoning or emailing—and inviting them to events and participating in fundraising activities based on individual preferences and interests. It became evident, however, that there is a tension between the size and scope of these substantial organisations and the need to address individuals personally. Youth-led organisations need size and scale to have the resources to connect with their large memberships while also ensuring they do so in personalised ways.

The organisations understand that face-to-face engagement opportunities are crucial to developing and maintaining strong relationships with young people. The emphasis Oaktree and AYCC placed on this was unexpected and explains their focus on targeted communication strategies and structures that enable numerous events, as explained by Chadwick (2007). The digital has a role to play in the organisations' shaping of young people's political concerns and actions, and as a critical part of network facilitation and maintenance following events, but personal, face-to-face engagement strengthens and maintains connections. For members, face-to-face events create feelings of belonging and being part of something bigger than oneself. Members spoke about the embodied, physical experiences these engagements enable and the value they place on sharing these events with others. Also evident in this data are the ways both Oaktree and AYCC catalyse personal interests into overt political action. By providing everyday spaces of activity and interests that are

focused on issues of concern to young people, and spaces for learning and acting on these interests, the organisations develop young people's knowledge and skills as political agents.

Leaders of Oaktree and AYCC I interviewed see online communication as serving more traditional, top-down and community-based organising. Leaders described how the organisations guide and manage online strategies to adapt to their needs so they remain strategic and top-down. This adaptation to the 'everyday' of young people's lives aims to connect with the routines and spaces of young people and construct particular forms of action in the everyday of their members. The use of digital media in this way by Oaktree and AYCC facilitates engagement, but does not appear to fundamentally change political organising. The organisations largely demonstrate an instrumental approach to the technological tools and techniques they deploy. This is seen in the ways they discuss social and digital media as enabling the organisations to rapidly reach broader audiences, and to create organisational and fundraising platforms and manage official social-media messaging.

But this traditional approach to digital-media use is also mixed with innovative deployments of technology. Leaders of AYCC and Oaktree described how they use the affordances of specific applications to maximise the effect of their messages, depending on whether they are campaigning, fundraising or targeting specific decision-makers. They understand the value and role of different mediums and know how to use particular media capabilities for different tasks—such as using Twitter to connect with key personalities, and reaching out to newspapers for coverage when a wider audience is deemed of strategic benefit. This matching of platform capabilities to messaging targets requires sophisticated communication knowledge and skills, and the flexibility and capability to rapidly switch and/or combine communication repertoires characteristic of hybrid organisations (Chadwick, 2007). Chadwick's (2007) definition of organisational hybridity, which I detailed in chapters 2 and 5, includes organisations that employ multiple media

logics to communicate advocacy messages and engage with key stakeholders. Oaktree and AYCC employ multiple media logics, blending old and new techniques—broadcast media and social media—to extend their messaging reach and effectiveness. Oaktree and AYCC adapt and recombine advocacy strategies in new ways, combining innovative applications for digital media to facilitate face-to-face interactions. I therefore argue they are particulate hybrids and constitute new organisational forms.

In what may be another form of recuperation on the part of the organisations, Oaktree and AYCC deftly combine organisational hierarchy with a membership structure that provides a sense of inclusiveness and connection. They value input from members on strategies and campaign tactics, and the organisations' practice of consultation is valued by members and central to their sense of belonging. But they also have processes for decision-making, managed by senior staff. In Chapter 6 I presented data from members who said this makes them feel part of the decision-making of the organisations, while also seeing the hierarchical arrangements as giving the organisations authority and legitimacy. This complex articulation and understanding of organisational structures builds on findings that young people are not as attracted to hierarchical organisations (Loader et al., 2014). These young people seem to accept a degree of hierarchy. But I find that some are responsive to newer forms of more 'distributed' hierarchy. A mix of hierarchy and structure, that incorporates direct participation, is important to members and for organisations seeking to attract and mobilise participants. These findings suggest a more complicated relationship between young people and organisational structures than is often assumed. Perhaps it matters more to young people who the organisations are led by and what their purpose or mission is, than the degree to which they are hierarchical or flat in structure?

In line with Chadwick's (2007) articulation of creating appealing and increasingly convergent forms of online citizen action, the organisations allow free debate to take place in closed Facebook groups, usually arranged by location. This crucial element

of the organisations' success allows members to engage directly in politically oriented discussions, while ensuring communications teams are responsible for campaign messaging and connecting with members. This structure ensures the organisations are able to maintain clear and strategic public messaging and clear communication with members.

The organisations' development of their own digital-media applications, such as Oaktree's Live Below the Line fundraising website, in conjunction with the affordances of external platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, highlights the organisations' further innovative use of digital media. It is a core capability and strength. The organisations also tap into subcultural themes (Chadwick, 2007). They quickly co-opt subcultural events to get their advocacy messages out, using it to draw attention to fundraising activities, and for connecting with members. The organisations deploy the affordances of technology to maintain their presence in terms of their advocacy messages and ensuring members are exposed to regular social-media content they produce as well as personalised communications

In Chapter 5 I detailed the tracking of interactions interviewees can have with the organisations. Oaktree and AYCC learn about members' preferences and target their next communications based on knowledge of past activity. Their aim is to move members across clearly articulated membership categories of increasing participation. This tracking and subsequent shaping and deployment of particular strategies takes time and substantial resources, thus calling into question their capacities to conduct advocacy activities. While these organisations take advantage of the scale and scope digital media affords, they still need to work hard to maintain their memberships and the resources needed to operate. While Oaktree and AYCC shape young people's political concerns and actions in significant ways, that shaping requires constant work in the form of connecting to attract members and build and maintain relationships with them.

Even a small sample of four members interviewed revealed a diversity of individual communication preferences; some prefer phone calls, some email, and some personalised texts. As discussed in Chapter 5, this helps to explain why Oaktree and AYCC employ diverse communication strategies. In response to these strategies, members spoke about the tactics they use to manage communications from Oaktree and AYCC. Members check phone numbers before answering calls, and use the affordances of text message and emails to give them time to consider responses. This results in a constant push and pull between organisations and their members to maximise engagement and tactically manage the demands of the organisations (de Certeau, 1988). While wishing to engage with the organisations, members also want some control over the communication strategies Oaktree and AYCC use to attempt to engage them. Because of the ways members use their agency, the organisations need to effectively recuperate members' preferences, which then become strategies for engaging members. While the organisations are carefully structured and strategic in the ways they approach and connect with members, the organisations' future renewal and existence depends upon their ability to learn about and innovate around member preferences and those of future members.

The organisations also need to manage technical challenges posed by digital media. The leaders discussed how digital-media platforms and interactions are time-intensive and require significant resources and labour, much of it unseen by members, to be effective engagement tools. While Oaktree and AYCC use the affordances of third-party offerings such as Facebook, the need to create their own platforms to work in conjunction with them to maximise their brand reach and connection with members and potential members is resource-intensive. The design and implementation of these platforms requires expertise, money and time, and strategic and technical capabilities to maximise their effectiveness.

The organisations purposefully serve as spaces for young people to develop a range of skills. Membership is designed to be a transformative journey, to heighten engagement, and skill-building is a key element of this pathway. Oaktree and AYCC

train young people in campaign strategy, digital engagement, event management and communication and administration. Organisation staff and volunteers spoke positively of the opportunities the organisations provided them, including the ability to take risks and make mistakes they felt wouldn't be tolerated in the workforce. This is one way in which these organisations add to Australia's traditional spaces of political learning such as political parties and advocacy organisations like GetUp! (Vromen, 2016). These benefits play a practical role for those involved, and shape their political concerns and actions as they learn particular ways of operating with the organisations.

The members I spoke with detailed the reasons they became involved with the organisations, through personal stories that developed into interests related to the organisations' stated issues. These experiences often extended back to childhood. The stories revealed in Chapter 6 examined how these members' reasons for getting involved with Oaktree and AYCC were both diverse and somewhat serendipitous. This means the organisations need to offer a number of interests and experiences to tap into young people's stories and motivations. Affect plays a role here, with members speaking about participating in the activities of these organisations because of past experiences that have touched them. Motivation for involvement can also come through connections with friends and as a way to meet and spend time with other young people. But belonging to an organisation also has a temporal dimension—participation ebbs and flows depending on what the organisations do and what is going on in the lives of these young people. It is not fixed.

Power flows through and around these organisations. It is evident in the organisational structures, communication strategies and advocacy techniques of Oaktree and AYCC. The organisations know the power of organisational structures and deliberate strategic engagement as well as the power of member input. Oaktree and AYCC demonstrate through their practices that they understand how to maximise the capabilities of different media forms in the ways they astutely deploy the affordances of specific applications for specific tasks and audiences. Facebook is

used to reach large numbers of members, while Twitter is used to engage sub-groups or -cultures via specific or celebrity personalities. They also demonstrate their sophisticated understanding of political advocacy when they target financial institutions to limit funding for projects with the potential to damage environmentally sensitive areas like the Great Barrier Reef. Through structure, communications and advocacy techniques, these organisations shape young people's political concerns and actions, and are important and powerful actors in Australian political life. But young people, through everyday practices, also shape the organisations.

Quiet power and subactivism

While the organisations' advocacy agenda is a key reason for young people's involvement, they also spoke about the ways the organisations contribute to their sense of identity. Some members identified themselves as 'do-gooders' and 'change-makers'. Involvement with the organisations reinforces this and enables young people to display this identity to others. Some spoke of the organisations as giving them a 'reputable' connection and identity. Unsurprisingly, members are involved in a range of activities outside of Oaktree and AYCC. The organisations have to compete for attention and are subject to the changing and often unpredictable preferences of members. Members do find new channels to act out their interests on issues they care about, and this reinforces the organisations' need to constantly communicate with members and explains why they track their activities so closely. At one level these young people could be understood as already politically engaged insofar as they are members of a politically oriented organisation, but their interests and activities also reveal a form of subactivism. This suggests that there is not a straightforward or linear relationship in the acquisition of political subjectivity. Rather people can occupy different 'subject positions' in relation to different issues. There are a constellation of engagements, practices and interests at play in the process.

For some members, everyday interests beyond the organisations manifest as a form of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009). An interest in skateboarding that developed into action towards supporting public skateboarding facilities is one example. This involvement was mediated by everyday use of digital technologies and through the frontier situation of organising skateboard events, and a trigger event catalysed further action in the form of completing an online survey. This activity connected with and extended to the members' broader beliefs about and commitment to reducing the need for cars as a way to reduce carbon emissions and create better communities. Members think through their politically oriented engagements over time and with care. These are often deeply personal, but manifest in connection with others, even if they don't consciously name the engagements as 'political'.

In Chapter 3 I detailed Bakardjieva's concept of subactivism and how speaking with even a limited number of young people not connected with the organisations revealed examples of subactivism (Bakardjieva, 2009). Stories of everyday activities and interests, presented in Chapter 6, demonstrated ways in which frontier environments are encountered and how trigger points catalyse into further action. In foregrounding this relatively obscure concept, I have shown how politics and everyday life are intricately connected and how the everyday is a powerful formative space for the practice and evolution of political life.

The young people I interviewed also spoke about being informed and informing others as an important part of their everyday lives and a way to be regularly engaged with politically oriented issues they care about. This provides evidence of Amnå and Ekman's (2014) theory of standby citizenship, which I discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Some spoke about being informed as a duty, even a responsibility. This adds an interesting dimension to Bennett's articulation of dutiful and actualising citizens—actualising citizens are framed as lacking in dutiful norms, but this finding provides a sense of overlap in these binaries of participation. These young people follow their specific interests carefully and share them through personally curated social-media networks (Loader et al., 2014), aiming to raise knowledge and

awareness. Young people are not passive consumers of news but agents in the selection, production, curation and dissemination of information. There is a cautionary point to be made here, however. While this may be viewed as positive in terms of progressive social change, it may also be the case for those with extremist or radical views, and thus raises questions about how the hybrid media system as well as other settings and institutions can support exposure and engagement with different ideas and viewpoints. This is important if for no other reason than that acquiring knowledge has the potential to catalyse into more public actions, through the networks they maintain and curate. In these ways, young people tactically deploy the tools available to them in their everyday lives as active agents of change. Young people engage with and experience these activities as important and meaningful, and they need to be understood as such.

Morozov (2011) argues that when communication practices are readily accessible, they are activated, but have minimal consequences. What this doesn't account for is the meaningfulness of such actions to the participants. Young people in my research spoke in mixed terms here. Some feel they have done something meaningful when they engage in politically oriented actions online, while others view this as an insufficient way to create tangible change. But I argue that these practices nurture participation that can lead to more public and significant future actions.

Affect is an important dimension of these young people's everyday activities and interests, and, as I argued in chapters 3 and 7, extends both the concepts of subactivism and standby citizenship. These practices, when viewed through the lens of affect, explain *why* young people engage in particular activities and interests. Young people's interests and engagements are often formed through earlier life experiences. Their affective experiences can lead them to learn more about particular issues and to seek to shape views and actions. In acting out these practices, their interests and interventions further shape these young people and those with whom they connect. Massumi (2015: 94) argues that affect is not individual, it is 'transindividual'—that is, it occurs between individuals—and my

research shows that young people strive to affect others in ways that change their environments. Listening to and examining young people's stories to understand the role of past experiences in their everyday practices demonstrates how the shaping of political subjects occurs. While this was evident in discussions with members, it is less clear that the organisations fully understand this. Everyday actions and interests matter to young people and need to be recognised and valued as increasingly important and legitimate forms of political participation. Organisations play a role in the shaping of young people's political concerns and actions, but they are not the only settings where this takes place.

Implications for other settings

As discussed in Chapter 4, I chose to study the structures, strategies and practices of Oaktree and AYCC because of their size, strength and longevity. My research demonstrates how their centrally organised structures, combined with local groups that enable member input, in conjunction with their communication practices, are effective mechanisms for connecting with young people on politically oriented issues. My findings reinforce that Oaktree and AYCC should continue to engage with young people through their existing practices and communication strategies. Other organisations—local government, churches, sporting organisations—wanting to encourage and engage young people can learn from these organisations by implementing both broad and targeted communications strategies, combined with clear structures that enable input from them. But such organisations should also be realistic about the work and resources required to engage large numbers of young people over time. The internet does not necessarily make connecting with young people easier—its diverse affordances also make engagement more complex and resource-intensive.

This research provides other politically focused organisations, including Australian political parties and advocacy groups such as GetUp!, with insights on why some young people engage with particular issues. It details some of the politically

oriented actions some young people find meaningful and the role of digital media in the everyday lives of young people who act on these interests. It finds that young people's approach to dealing with politically oriented organisations is carefully considered and that they cannot be labelled as disengaged or apathetic citizens. All the young people in my study were aware of their agency both with and beyond the organisations and deploy it tactically, within the context of the social constructions that disadvantage them and largely limit their capacities to act. Politically oriented organisations wanting to engage young people need to be responsive to them and prepare to be agile in their engagement strategies.

Beyond Oaktree and AYCC, I have shown how young people also engage in a range of practices in their everyday lives, showing them to be active and engaged citizens – and founders of action, networks and organisations. This research shows the need to pay greater attention to young people's everyday interests and practices, because this is often the genesis of more public action, and also because these practices are meaningful to young people. They are demonstrating how political life is constantly evolving and requires changing conceptualisations of what constitutes political life and action. The insights in this research point those wanting to connect with young people and political institutions and actors towards needing to implement diverse communication strategies. They need to connect with broad audiences and cater to individual preferences at the same time. They also need to have clear structures as well as facilitating input from young people.

8.2 Limitations and future directions

The challenges I encountered and discussed in Chapter 4 during the fieldwork stage of this research, namely the delays and lack of access to Oaktree, AYCC and their members for interviews, provided unexpected insights and changed the original project design and scope, resulting in a more nuanced project. The challenges served as an impetus to rethink aspects of the project and ask: do these challenges say something about young people's activities and the engagement practices of the

organisations themselves? The answers helped to answer the research question of how these organisations shape young people's political concerns and actions. It also showed how the organisations themselves are shaped through their engagements with members.

The access challenges first brought into focus the pressures Oaktree and AYCC are under. The organisations need to deploy constant communication strategies—website information, social media, emails and phone calls—and run events, such as meetings, protests and multi-day gatherings, to attract and retain members. They need to balance their contact efforts, being persistent in their attempts to engage while taking care not to discourage or annoy members and potential members. The organisations must maintain open lines of (friendly) communication and be cognisant of members' competing demands and activities to maximise engagement. Their members are also a key source of financial support, and therefore fundraising initiatives are regular and well-planned. The organisations need to carefully manage contact with the young people they engage with.

Oaktree and AYCC both expressed reluctance to send emails to members asking them to participate in this research, because it was not part of their communication strategy and it required additional time and resources. When emails were sent, the response was negligible. My initial approach to sourcing members also reinforced comments by AYCC leaders that young people don't read or respond to emails, which I highlighted in Chapter 5. Young people also have significant time constraints and there is little reward for them to participate in research such as this. This struggle reinforced for me the organisations' need to constantly expend energy and resources to attract and retain members. It also emphasised why the organisations have clear membership categories based on engagement practices and track member activity so closely. Oaktree and AYCC need to constantly monitor the kinds of activities that are attractive to members and to support and inform their strategies encouraging participation. This also suggests that the ties between the organisations and members were weaker than anticipated, meaning they are

perhaps more similar to new digitally enabled social movements, which are characterised by wide-shallow ties (Bennett, 2003).

Oaktree and AYCC are also challenged by their state of constant change and renewal, with significant staff turnover. Many staff are part-time volunteers. The organisations also serve as training spaces, especially for those who become senior leaders and then move to other organisations. The constant staff disruption became evident through my fieldwork difficulties. I built relationships with a number of senior staff who, prior to being interviewed, left the organisation. Staff changes are not unique to these organisations, but Oaktree and AYCC do have additional challenges to other organisations, such as upper age limits for membership. The challenges also drew into focus the time pressures faced by Oaktree and AYCC. These organisations seek to attract school and university students as members, requiring them to conduct many activities during school and university holidays. Such constraints mean the organisations have limited time to directly engage with members face-to-face. I have discussed these challenges here because they provide further context to youth-led political organising. Political organising is complex and demanding, and youth-led political organising holds specific challenges.

While my study was focused on surfacing and working with the subjective experiences of young people, there are a number of directions future research could take to address questions about young people's political participation and expanding definitions of what constitutes recognised or legitimate forms of citizenship. While I spoke with 13 senior leaders of Oaktree and AYCC, only four members of these organisations expressed interest in being interviewed. Future studies would be enhanced by interviewing greater numbers of participants, specifically members of Oaktree and AYCC across all four of each of their member categories, on a larger scale. This would provide yet further narratives of the diversity of practices of members, enable analysis detailing the engagement differences between members, and expand knowledge of how they respond to the organisations. Changes in the organisations' engagement strategies and structure

would also likely emerge. So too would the development of the affordances of applications and platforms and how they are deployed. Expanding the number of young people interviewed to include those from beyond Western Sydney would provide insights into local and cultural dimensions of young Australians' everyday practices, and allow for comparisons beyond the geographical boundaries of my study.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, social-media analysis was limited in this study because of the focus on understanding the meanings behind young people's activities and interest, and because I wished to emphasise the role of young people's stories. I therefore focused on methods that directly generated this data. But a study that undertook substantial network analysis of youth-led activist organisations' social-media engagements with members would reveal the size of young people's networks in their digitally mediated interactions. It would also provide information on the nature of young people's networks and boundaries and overlap. Such analysis would provide insights into organisation and member language styles and preferences. Ideally, this analysis would be conducted across both Oaktree and AYCC's publicly viewable social-media sites and the organisations' private groups to uncover differences in communication styles by the organisations and their members.

As I studied the origins and development of Oaktree and AYCC, my attention was drawn to the careers of past leaders. A number of earlier leaders of the organisations subsequently established and/or led other non-government organisations and are well known in the social activist space. This is similar to the career pathways of GetUp! campaigners (Vromen, 2014). In studying GetUp! campaigners, Vromen found that some have moved from progressive civil society to create 'new entrepreneurial, market facing, organisations' (2014: 1). Some former leaders of Oaktree and AYCC are now connected with political parties and have run for political office, with varying degrees of success. A study of the careers of these individuals and their networks would reveal the broader changes to Australia's

political landscape and the role of youth-led activist organisations. It would also show the complex ties between these organisations, other activist organisations such as GetUp!, and the major political parties. These linkages inform understanding of the changing dynamics of Australian democracy. A comparison of the practices of Australian political parties and their youth wings with those abroad, as Rainsford (2017) has conducted in the United Kingdom with Australia's youth-led activist organisations, would enable examination of the similarities and differences between these entities and provide information on young people's preferred engagement spaces and practices in Australia.

In conducting a study focused on young people's digital practices, I learnt how digital media facilitates self-expressive practices and interests across broad and moving networks. I also learnt about the power of personal connection. In listening to the leaders of Oaktree and AYCC, their members and other young people from Western Sydney, time and again it was made clear that personal connection is crucial to engaging young people. This can come through both face-to-face and digitally mediated communications. This lesson emerged in part because of the challenges encountered conducting this research. In personally connecting with people I was able to break through and make interviews possible. In speaking with people, by listening to their stories, and paying attention to what matters to them, I came to understand the importance of the everyday, the mundane, the way young people's concerns and actions are shaped, and the ways they become involved in more publicly oriented political engagements.

Young people's political concerns and practices emerge across contexts, including engagement with politically oriented organisations, and through everyday interests and activities with no immediately obvious political connection to the political domain. As I have argued, youth-led activist engagement strategies and the activities and interests of individuals are important for understanding the political potential of the everyday and an ever-expanding public space (Papacharissi, 2010). Youth-led organisations such as Oaktree and AYCC strategically engage with members and in

doing so play an important role in mobilising young people's political concerns and actions across this space. But young people also use their agency in ways that shape the organisations. Young people's everyday acts of tactical participation, and in some cases 'inaction', mean that the organisations need to constantly innovate and implement new strategies to maintain their relevance. This reciprocity needs to be understood by these organisations, and also by political parties and other institutions, if they are to maintain their relevance in the lives of young people.

Young people are already 'doing politics' in ways that are not yet deemed legitimate. In their everyday lives and communities, young people are using the means available to them to express themselves and the changes they want to see. As recent major political events have shown, these acts can rise up into actions with significant consequences, making it necessary to rethink what counts as legitimate political participation. Failure to do so will continue to challenge the efficacy and legitimacy of existing formal political institutions, organisations and processes by negatively affecting their ability to meaningfully engage with young people.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview schedule: Oaktree and AYCC leaders

Personal demographics: Closed questions

Name:

Role in organisation? Paid staff / Volunteer / other

Title:

When did you join Oaktree/AYCC?

In what capacity did you join Oaktree/AYCC?

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Place of birth of parents: Mother: Father:

Interview themes and questions: Open-ended questions

1. Organisational membership and engagement

- What is the role of young people at Oaktree/AYCC?
- How do you/does your role engage with young people at Oaktree/AYCC?
- Why do you think so many young people are engaged with Oaktree/AYCC? What does it offer them?

2. Role of the internet

- Tell me about the role of the internet/social media for young people at Oaktree.
- What platforms are most effective in your opinion and why?
- What are the benefits/disadvantages of using the internet to facilitate engagement with young people/ your members?

3. Organisational practice

- How does Oaktree facilitate young people? How about youth leadership?
- What sorts of systems, policies or processes are used in engaging young people at Oaktree/AYCC? What could enhance their engagement with Oaktree/AYCC?
- What do you think sets this organisation apart from other organisations who work with young people?

4. General questions: Young people's role in society

- What is the role of young people in society?
- Do you think young people play that role? Why/not?
- What is required in order to enable young people to play that role?

Appendix 2. Interview schedule: Oaktree and AYCC members

Interview date:

Location:

Interview no: __

Personal demographics: Closed questions

Date of birth?

Place of birth (city/town + state)?

Place of birth (city/town + state) of parents?

Mother:

Father:

Have you mostly lived your life in urban city, regional city or rural areas?

Which of the following best describes what you currently spend most of your time doing?

- Attending high school
- Attending TAFE, university or other tertiary education institution
- Attending TAFE, university, etc. AND working part-time
- Working AND studying at TAFE, university, etc. part-time
- Working full-time
- Looking for work
- Other:

If you are studying, what is the main topic of your studies (or what are you most interested in)?

If you are working, describe your job (what you do).

Interview themes and questions: Open-ended questions

Intro: in this interview I'd love you to walk me through what you do generally online, but also where your connection to Oaktree/AYCC might play a role in what you do—generally, but also online.

1. Use of the Internet (inc. technology walk-through)

- Where are you able to access the internet? And how often do you get online?
- What do you use most—mobile/tablet/PC/laptop?
- What are your most-used apps/sites?
- *Can you show me some of them and the kinds of things you post?*
- What do you use the internet for?
- What role does the internet play in your involvement in organisations such as Oaktree/AYCC? *Can you show me some of the things you have posted/sent/responded to with Oaktree/AYCC?*
- Are you involved offline orgs/activities? What/how?
- How many Oaktree/AYCC members do you know personally; how often do you contact them and what do you talk about?
- *Can I see some examples?*

2. Organisation membership and engagement

- How did you get involved with Oaktree/AYCC and why?
- What do you hope to achieve by being a member of Oaktree/AYCC?
- Can you give us any examples of something that you have done or specifically contributed that made you feel like you've made a difference during your time as a member of Oaktree/AYCC?
- How much time do you spend connecting with Oaktree/AYCC each week or month?
- Why do you continue to be a member of Oaktree/AYCC?

3. Organisational practice

- How does Oaktree/AYCC get you involved in their activities?
- How does Oaktree/AYCC communicate with you and which form/s of communication do you prefer?
- How could their communication be improved?
- What sets this organisation apart from other similar groups you may be involved with?

4. Issues and interests

- What are the things that concern you, or that you care about?
- In what ways do you engage with these issues? Personally? Publicly?
- What kind of Australian society would you like to see and what would be your place in it?
- Have you tried to get your friends or family members interested in participating in the same issues and organisations as you?
- Why do you think some young people do not engage in such activities?

Appendix 3. Interview schedule: Young people, non-members

Interview date:

Location:

Interview no: __

Personal demographics: Closed questions

Date of birth?

Place of birth (city/town + state)?

Place of birth (city/town + state) of parents?

Mother:

Father:

Have you mostly lived your life in urban city, regional city or rural areas?

Which of the following best describes what you currently spend most of your time doing?

- Attending high school
- Attending TAFE, university or other tertiary education institution
- Attending TAFE, university, etc. AND working part-time
- Working AND studying at TAFE, university, etc. part-time
- Working full-time
- Looking for work
- Other:

If you are studying, what is the main topic of your studies (or what are you most interested in)?

If you are working, describe your job (what you do)?

Interview themes and questions: Open-ended questions

Intro: In this interview I'd love you to walk me through what you do generally online and the variety of devices you use.

5. Use of the internet (inc. technology walk-through)

- Where are you able to access the internet? And how often do you get online?
- What do you use most—mobile/tablet/PC/laptop?
- What are your most-used apps/sites?
- *Can you show me some of them and the kinds of things you post?*
- What do you use the internet for?
- Are you involved in any organisations that you connect with online?
Can you show me some of the things you have posted/sent/responded to with them?
- Are you involved offline orgs/activities? What/how?
- How many organisation members do you know personally; how often do you contact them and what do you talk about?
- *Can I see some examples?*

6. Organisation membership and engagement (if organisation mentioned)

- How did you get involved with << org >> and why?
- What do you hope to achieve by being a member of << org >>?
- Can you give us any examples of something that you have done or specifically contributed that made you feel like you've made a difference during your time as a member of << org >>?
- How much time do you spend connecting with << org >> each week or month?
- Why do you continue to be a member << org >>?

7. Organisational practice

- How does << org >> get you involved in their activities?
- How does << org >> communicate with you and which form/s of communication do you prefer?
- How could their communication be improved?
- What sets this organisation apart from other similar groups you may be involved with?

8. Issues and interests

- What are the things that concern you, or that you care about?
- In what ways do you engage with these issues? Personally? Publicly?
- What kind of Australian society would you like to see and what would be your place in it?
- Have you tried to get your friends or family members interested in participating in the same issues and organisations as you?
- Why do you think some young people do not engage in such activities?

Appendix 4. Interviewees

Table 4. Interviews, July 2014–October 2015.

Name		Date of Interview
Oliver, 26	Oaktree leader	29 July 2014
Alex, 25	Oaktree leader	27 September 2015
Kate, 23	Oaktree leader	12 August 2014
Tania, 24	Oaktree leader	2 April 2015
Rachel, 24	Oaktree leader	22 July 2014
Erik, 24	Oaktree leader	11 August 2014
Evan, 20	Oaktree leader	1 April 2015
Bridget, 27	AYCC leader	22 April 2015
Yvette, 24	AYCC leader	22 April 2015
Christine, 26	AYCC leader	15 April 2015
Charlotte, 26	AYCC leader	16 April 2015
Abigail, 24	AYCC leader	20 April 2015
Andrea, 23	AYCC leader	21 April 2015
Amy, 20	Oaktree member	25 August 2015
Christopher, 21	AYCC member	20 May 2015
Eliza, 17	AYCC member	23 May 2015
Georgie, 21	AYCC member	22 July 2015
Connor, 22	Non-member	12 August 2015
Adrian, 20	Non-member	12 August 2015
Sarah, 19	Non-member	20 October 2015
Hannah, 19	Non-member	20 October 2015
Yvonne, 19	Non-member	29 July 2015
Alex, 18	Non-member	11 August 2015
Natalie, 20	Non-member	15 August 2015
Jane, 19	Non-member	10 August 2015