Chapter 8
Micro- to Meso- to Macro-Scale Coordinated Individual and Group Action(s) on Electronic Hive Minds

ABSTRACT
So many human endeavors are dependent on others’ actions and interests. On an electronic hive mind (EHM), coordination online may spark and sustain actions by the body (the members of the EHM). Such coordination occurs over a range of human endeavors and continuously at different scales: micro (individual, dyadic, and motif levels), meso (small to large groups), and macro (system-wide, societal, web-scale levels). This chapter explores EHM as planned-action entities and offers some early insights about some common practices based on multiple exemplars and the application of abductive logic.

INTRODUCTION

The time to take counsel of your fears is before you make an important battle decision. That’s the time to listen to every fear you can imagine! When you have collected all the facts and fears and made your decision, turn off all your fears and go ahead! - General George S. Patton

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Progress in America does not usually begin at the top and among the few, but from the bottom and among the many. It comes when the whispered hopes of those outside the mainstream rise in volume to reach the ears and hearts and minds of the powerful. - Jon Meacham, The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels (2018)

In some senses, “electronic hive minds” (EHMs) are transitory and abstract. Online interests are ephemeral, and fads by definition exist for brief and passing moments. EHMs exist in virtual space on the Social Web generally and on social media platforms and apps more specifically. And yet, they do not just exist as individual and collective consciousnesses (enabled by digital technologies) but also as bodies, with a mind-body connection; after all, underlying EHMs are the thinkers, the people and cyborgs (people augmented with automated agentry) (Hai-Jew, 2019). EHMs and bodies may be conceptualized as having body-awareness based on proprioception (with people serving as “human sensors” and the body’s nerve endings that inform proprioception for the collective physical body). In this cyber-physical confluence, what sparks in the mind may affect the body, which can achieve actions online and in the physical real life (RL).

Individual members can spark others’ through their knowledge, enthusiasms, and behaviors. They can “model” ways of being and expression that inspire others and galvanize some to action. Sometimes, even a small piece of information may be sufficient to cause a wide ranging number of different effects. Outcomes can be unpredictable (think “chaos theory” and “butterfly effects”). These effects may occur even if the relations between individuals are ephemeral weak ties. Individuals, in groups, can give each other courage for group actions. Their individual and cooperative actions may create reverberations that magnify some effects and nullify others. Spontaneous actions may spark unpredictably, and so, too, can planned or coordinated ones. Planned activities in EHMs can magnify out virally into online and physical spaces. Such coordination may occur at three main scales: micro (individual, dyadic, triadic, motif levels), meso (small to large group levels), and macro (mass-scale levels, such as country or societal). Depending on the objectives of the endeavor, the EHM membership size, the available member skills and expertise, the socio-technical and other tools available for coordination, the larger ecosystem, and other factors, varying levels of coordination may be required.

In this work, several EHMs focused around a particular action-oriented objective with implications at the micro, meso, and macro levels was identified.
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